

TRAINEE CODE OF CONDUCT

Policy Title	Trainee Code of Conduct		
Author / Reviewer/s	BASSCITT Programme Director Governance Lead		
Trustee Committee	BASCITT Executive Board		
Signed by Olly Parker (Chair of BASCITT Executive Board)			
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As a professional training programme there is an expectation that trainees will conduct themselves in a professional manner.

The expected standards of behaviour are set out fully in the statutory DfE Teachers' Standards document.

Partner schools will have their own Staff Codes of Conduct and all trainees are expected to follow these as well as adhering to the expectations of the Basingstoke Alliance SCITT.

Professional Conduct

Key Requirements: *On both the school-based training and the centre-based training professionalism will be demonstrated by:*

- *Regular attendance:* including adherence to the requirements for notifying absence from both placement establishment and the BASCITT.
- *Punctuality:* as required by placement and by the demands of training sessions, workshops, tutorials at the centre-based training. In placement establishments there will be a requirement that trainees are present at a specified time before the start of the day and for a specified time after the end of the day. SCITTCos and mentors will inform trainees of the exact requirements for the individual establishment.
- *Active and appropriate participation:* ensuring all set tasks and/or reading are completed for taught sessions; equipment is used appropriately; questions are asked to further develop personal understanding; participation in group discussions; all tasks set in sessions are completed in order to further

learning; a proactive attitude is demonstrated at the centre based training and whilst on placement.

- *Respect for others:* including all staff (teaching and non-teaching), other trainees, pupils and parents as required by the policies of the BASCITT and individual establishments.
- *Appropriate use of internet facilities:* as required by the policies of the BASCITT and individual establishments.
- *Ability to listen and act on feedback and advice:* from all staff working within the BASCITT and other work-related staff in schools.
- *Taking responsibility for own learning:* this will include being familiar with the information on the website and the requirements set out in the course handbooks. This will include maintaining and keeping up to date any placement documentation which includes planning teaching, learning, assessment, your professional development record (PDR) and lesson plan proformas throughout the placements.
- *Being proactive in own professional development and providing the evidence of meeting targets and the Teachers Standards in written and verbal formats.* Take responsibility for addressing concerns relating to individual experience on the programme by discussing such concerns with the appropriate staff.

On Placement, the following additional professional requirements also apply:

- *Maintaining an appropriate standard of dress and appearance:* as required by the establishment and BASCITT guidance detailed in the Programme Handbook.
- *Establishing and maintaining appropriate relationships:* with all of those involved with the school including children, parents, trainees, support staff, teaching staff and senior management.
- *Carrying out duties as required by mentors, other placement staff and the Programme Director:* in relation to classroom observation, meeting with and working with teachers and other staff, planning, teaching and assessment of pupils and other appropriate professional duties.
- *Taking responsibility for familiarising yourself immediately with key policies and procedures:* this includes, but is not restricted to, child protection, safeguarding, health and safety and fire evacuation policies and procedures.
- *Compliance with GDPR (general data protection regulations):* this includes data protection, use of ICT, e-safety and social media policies.

- *Carrying out reasonable instructions:* as requested by the BASCITT, Headteacher/principal, senior staff, tutors and other staff in the school.

Safeguarding Code of Conduct

Working with young people brings demands and challenges. There are also great rewards, not least of which are the good personal relationships, which help the growth and development of those young people. In a very small number of cases, things can go wrong. Allegations against trainees are rare, but the damage to all concerned is so great that all trainees must be aware of the issues and think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations can be minimised. It is not possible to prescribe courses of action for every circumstance, but trainees should observe these guidelines in the conduct of their work with young people.

Allegations are made by children against staff and trainees in schools from time to time. Some of these allegations are true, some are essentially true but exaggerated, some are mistaken, and some are malicious. In an environment in which the conduct of adults towards children comes under more and more scrutiny in the interests of protecting children, all trainees and staff in schools need to be aware that their actions or conduct may lead to formal investigations taking place under child protection procedures and this could in turn have implications for their employment records and future careers even where those concerns have not been substantiated.

Power and Positions of Trust

Where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust with a child under 18, it is an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or to cause or incite that that child to engage in or watch sexual activity (Sexual Offences Act 2003).

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, many adults working with children and young people in education settings are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care, where they have direct unsupervised access to children. A relationship between a trainee and a pupil cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people and trainees have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

Trainees must avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others, and Headteachers will record any incident with this potential and take measures to ensure such behaviour is not repeated.

Infatuations

Trainees need to be aware that it is not uncommon for pupils to be strongly attracted to a member of staff/trainee and/or develop an infatuation. All situations should be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of all concerned. Trainees should also be aware that such circumstances always carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff/trainees.

A trainee, who becomes aware that a pupil may be infatuated with them or a colleague, must discuss this at the earliest opportunity with a senior colleague so that appropriate action can be taken. In this way, steps can be taken to avoid hurt and

distress for all concerned. Trainees must also ensure that boundaries are maintained.

Social Contact

Trainees must not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Even if a young person seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the trainee must exercise her/his professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.

Trainees must not give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number or home, e-mail address to pupils or accept any contact on social media unless the need to do so is agreed and formally recorded with senior management. This will only be agreed in very exceptional circumstances.

Internal e-mail systems must be used only in accordance with school policy. Use of texting as a means of communication with pupils is prohibited as this may indicate an unprofessional relationship with a pupil.

Trainees should follow any school social media policies.

Care, Control and Physical Intervention

The circumstances in which staff/trainees can intervene with a pupil are outlined in the DfE document 'Use of reasonable force - Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies' revised in July 2015.

Latest guidance:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf

This is a complex area and trainees must have regard to current DfE guidance and must follow any school physical intervention policies.

Physical Contact and Intimate Care

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for trainees to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in line with the training they have undertaken.

The nature of some lessons requires physical contact to ensure the safety of both trainees and pupils (e.g. PE). Trainees must make pupils aware of the nature of any physical contact which needs to be made if a situation occurs where accidental contact which could be deemed inappropriate is made, a member of the SLT should be made aware as soon as possible. Those with parental responsibility should also be informed.

Intimate Care

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required (for example assisting with toileting or removing wet/soiled clothing). A care plan would have been drawn up and agreed with parents for all children who require intimate care on a regular basis.

Children should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is practicable. When assistance is required, trainees should ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of

the task to be undertaken. If another adult is not available, relevant information should be clearly and promptly recorded and reported to a member of senior staff at the earliest opportunity.

Additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical disability or learning difficulty should be considered with regard to individual teaching. Issues relating to gender, culture and religion should also be considered in all actions. As with all arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the child, their parents/carers and the organisation will have been negotiated, agreed and recorded.

A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most trainees and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with pupils this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Appropriate physical contact in schools may occur most often with younger pupils.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Trainees should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times and act in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a trainee believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be recorded as soon as possible by following the schools safeguarding policy or child protection policy and procedures.

Physical contact, which occurs regularly with an individual child or young person, is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is part of a formally agreed plan (for example in relation to pupils with SEN or physical disabilities). Any such contact should be the subject of an agreed and open school policy and subject to review. Where feasible, trainees should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Trainees should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and – so far as is possible - use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.

Specific attention should be paid to gender, culture and religious issues for children and their views should be sought about their preferences in relation to trainees who are required to assist with personal care.

Extra caution may be required where it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the child's view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to the child feeling anxious or upset. This may also lead to trainees being vulnerable to allegations of abuse. It is recognised that many such children are extremely needy and seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances trainees should deter the child sensitively by helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

Curriculum

Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit, or of an otherwise sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity, taking particular account of religious, culture and gender issues.

The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to pupils' questions can require careful judgement and trainees may wish to take guidance in these circumstances from a senior member of staff.

Care should also be taken to abide by the school's policy on sex and relationships education and the wishes of parents. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provided (but not from the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction necessary under the science curriculum).

Individual children may indicate their discomfort with specific materials and should be allowed to refrain from reading aloud and acting out parts of a play that they find sensitive, even if it is deemed appropriate for the class.

Educational Visits and After School Clubs etc.

Trainees must be aware of and follow school policies and DfE guidance.

Trainees must take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting or after-school activity.

During school activities that take place off the school site or out of school hours, a more relaxed discipline or informal dress and language code may be acceptable. However, trainees remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship. Clear boundaries must be maintained and trainees should be clear about acceptable behaviour by pupils regarding smoking/drinking.

Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Pupils, staff, trainees and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of the trip.

Health and Safety arrangements require trainees to keep colleagues/employers aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in an out of school activity.

Low Level Concerns

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work and
- does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO. Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:
 - being over friendly with children
 - having favourites
 - taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to school policy
 - engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door, or
 - humiliating pupils.

It is important that low level concerns are recorded and reported correctly: these may form a wider context and therefore all trainees are aware that even minor and low level concerns must be taken seriously, and reported to the Head of your placement school and following placement school policy processes or, if the low level concern is

regarding another trainee, this should be reported to the BASCITT Programme Director.

The Head/BASCIT PD is the ultimate decision maker in respect of all low level concerns, although it is recognised that depending on the nature of some low-level concerns, the Head/BASCITT PD may wish to consult with the DSL. Safeguarding training includes identifying low level concerns and identifying these for early intervention. All low-level concerns are recorded in writing. The records include details of the concern, the context in which the concern arose, and action taken. The name of the individual sharing their concerns is also be noted, but if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that is respected as far as reasonably possible. Records of concerns are kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). Records are reviewed regularly so that potential patterns of concerning, inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour can be identified.

Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, the school/BASCITT decides on a course of action, either through the disciplinary procedure or, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a low-level concern to meeting the harm threshold, in which case it is referred to the LADO. Consideration is also given to whether there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled the behaviour to occur and where appropriate policies and procedures could be revised, or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

The school/BASCITT retains information related to individuals where low-level concerns have been reported until the individual leaves their placement/programme. The Safeguarding Team additionally review pastoral notes and incidents to ensure that any low level safeguarding issues are considered. Once a low level concern has been reported, the Safeguarding Team will ensure that this is handled correctly, escalating if required. Low-level concerns will be reported to the same persons as set out above in relation to concerns and allegations that meet the harms test. This escalation will depend on the threat of harm, which is assessed frequently and robustly. If there are any doubts, the Safeguarding Team seeks advice from Social Services and Trafford SCP. Reports of trainees should be notified to the BASCITT so that any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified. When a low-level concern has been raised by a third party, the Head/DSL will collect as much evidence as possible by speaking (where possible) with the person who raised the concern, to the individual involved and to any witnesses.

Reports of low-level concerns will be recorded in writing, with details of the concern, the context in which it arose and action taken. The name of the person reporting should be noted, respecting wishes to remain anonymous as far as reasonably possible. Records of low-level concerns are reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and responded to. Where a pattern of behaviour is identified, the school/BASCITT will decide on a course of action. This might be internal disciplinary procedures, or referral to the LADO if the harms threshold is met. The school will consider if any wider cultural issues in school that enabled the behaviour to occur and if appropriate policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of recurrence. The rationale for all decisions and actions taken must be recorded.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff and trainees can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. All educational

establishments are required to have a clear and accessible whistleblowing policy that meets the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

All trainees should understand their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern about children, colleagues or volunteers to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies in writing. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk. Trainees will be judged to be failing in their duty to safeguard children if they do not report such matters, and such failure could result in formal disciplinary action.

It is important that if concerns are expressed about alleged child abuse or inappropriate behaviour towards a child, this must be reported to the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Such concerns should be pursued to reach a conclusion, with or without a formal complaint being made, even when the child or parent is not asking for further action to be taken about this matter. Concerns about the Headteacher should be dealt with by the Chair of Trustees.

Use of internet

It is not acceptable for trainees to download inappropriate material using any device to which pupils may have access, or to make use of such material in a school.

Any trainee who receives inappropriate material on the internet on a school device, should report the matter urgently to their manager and ensure that the material is removed.

Trainees need to be aware of the school's policy on the use of internet using devices, i.e., mobile phones, tablets, computers etc to communicate with children.

- Trainees must not access social networking sites for personal use during school hours.
- Trainees must act in the best interests of the school and not disclose personal data or information about any individual, including staff members, trainees, children and young people. Any communication via social media relating to the school, colleagues and pupils is regarded as inappropriate.
- Trainees should not 'friend' pupils on social networking websites.
- Access may be withdrawn, and disciplinary action taken if there is a breach of confidentiality or defamatory remarks are made against the school or any individual at the school.

Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents

All trainees must be aware of the school's child protection procedures, including procedures for dealing with allegations against staff and trainees, which are informed by the DfE Guidance. Trainees who are the subject of allegations are advised to contact their trade union and/or professional association.

In the event of an incident occurring, which may result in an action being misinterpreted and/or an allegation being made against a trainee, the relevant information must be clearly and promptly recorded and reported to senior staff.

Trainees should feel able to discuss with their mentor, SCITTCO, and Programme Director any difficulties or problems that may affect their relationship with pupils so that appropriate support can be provided, or action can be taken.

All complaints, concerns or allegations against a trainee that have child protection implications, or might relate to a risk posed by a person in a position of trust must be fully recorded. Records must include how these complaints, concerns or allegations were investigated and the outcome of any investigation with the rationale for this decision.

Conclusion

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which trainees relate to young people and where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

In all circumstances, professional judgement will need to be exercised. For the vast majority of trainees the above guidelines will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. If trainees have any doubts about the advice contained in this document, they should consult the BASCITT team.

Dos & Don'ts of working with children

Trainees must be aware of how to conduct themselves. This list summarises what to do and not to do but is not exhaustive.

Do:

- Read and follow the school's child protection and safeguarding procedures.
- Report to the Headteacher/DSL any concerns about child welfare/safety.
- Report to the Headteacher any concerns about the conduct of other school staff/trainees/volunteers/contractors.
- Formally record all relevant incidents using the school's method for doing so.
- Work in an open and transparent way.
- Discuss and report any incidents of concern or that might lead to concerns being raised about your conduct towards a child.
- Report to the Headteacher any incidents that suggest a pupil may be infatuated with you or taking an above normal interest in you.
- Dress appropriately for your role.
- Only use e-mail contact with pupils via the school's system.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with children.
- Ensure you understand the rules concerning physical restraint.
- Where physical contact is essential for educational or safety reasons, gain pupil's permission for that contact wherever possible.
- Allow children to change clothes with levels of respect and privacy appropriate to their age, gender, culture and circumstances.
- Avoid working in one-to-one situations with children where possible, except where this is explicitly part of your role.

- If working in a one to one situation with a child, ensure that you are within sight of another adult – e.g. by having a door open/being behind a glass partition/working in one corner of a room whilst another adult is operating elsewhere in the room.
- Ensure senior staff are aware of when and where you are holding a 1:1.
- If you are unhappy about the venue arrangements, take this up with your Headteacher before entering into these.
- Never volunteer to house children overnight.
- Ensure that areas of the curriculum that may involve sexually explicit information are taught in accordance with school policies.
- Follow school guidelines about recording images of pupils and ensure you use school/BASCITT equipment to do so
- Contact your professional association or trade Union if you are the subject of concerns or allegations of a child protection nature.
- Fully co-operate with any investigation into child protection issues in the school. Any concerns raised, founded or unfounded should be reported immediately to the Headteacher.

Don't:

- Take any action that would lead a reasonable person to question your motivation and/or intentions.
- Abuse or misuse your position of power and influence over children, in any way.
- Use any confidential information about a child to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass a child.
- Engage in activities out of school that might compromise your position within school.
- Establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils outside of school.
- Accept regular gifts from children.
- Give personal gifts to children.
- Communicate with pupils in inappropriate ways, including personal e-mails, social media and mobile telephones.
- Pass your home address, phone number, e-mail address or other personal details to pupils/children.
- Make physical contact secretive.
- Arrange to meet with pupils in closed rooms without senior staff being made aware of this in advance.
- Use physical punishment of any kind.
- Confer special attention on one child unless this is part of an agreed school plan or policy.
- Transport pupils in your own vehicle.
- Take, publish or share images of pupils or other children without their parents' permission.
- Access abuse images (sometimes referred to as child pornography) or other inappropriate material.

- Allow boundaries to be unsafe in more informal settings such as trips out, out of school activities etc.

Action to be taken by the school and the BASCITT Management

If a trainee fails to follow the Code of Conduct, or if their personal or professional conduct gives concern, the Headteacher or delegated staff of the establishment will inform the BASCITT Programme Director and in conjunction, will follow normal procedures in relation to staff discipline. In extreme circumstances, inappropriate behaviour may result in immediate removal from the premises.

On other occasions it may involve the issuing of a warning (formal or informal) or advice about more appropriate professional behaviour. For example, a tutor may discuss targets for improvement in relation to professional conduct, which will be recorded alongside targets relating to teaching.

Serious breaches of the Code of Conduct

In the case of a serious breach of the Code of Conduct or the Safeguarding Policy the Headteacher or delegated staff of the establishment will wish to remove a trainee from the placement. If instructed to leave the premises by the Headteacher or delegated staff, then the trainee must do so immediately.

The establishment will immediately notify the BASCITT Programme Director of its intention to remove a trainee from the placement by notifying BASCITT. The disciplinary policy will be invoked.

I have read and understand the contents of the trainee code of conduct and agree to abide by it, in conjunction with appropriate school policies.

Print Name:

Signed:

Date: