
Safeguarding Code of Conduct

March 2021

All British Council staff who work with children and adults must sign up and adhere to this Code of Conduct.

Introduction

In keeping with its vision and values, The British Council is committed to maintaining the highest degree of ethical conduct amongst all its staff and associated personnel. To help increase understanding, this Code of Conduct details The British Council's expectations of employees in key areas.

Scope and purpose

This Code of Conduct applies to all contracted staff, international and local, employed by The British Council. *Staff* is defined as anyone who works for the British Council, either in a paid or unpaid, full, or part-time capacity. This includes directly employed staff, trustees, contractors, agency staff, consultants, volunteers, and interns.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to set out the conduct expected of British Council staff whilst under contract to the organisation, and forms part of all contracts of employment. The code is always applicable. Breaches of the Code of Conduct are grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Whilst recognising that local laws and cultures differ considerably from one country to another, The British Council is an International Non-Governmental Organisation, and therefore the Code of Conduct is developed from International and UN standards. British Council staff are expected to uphold local law wherever they operate, except where the Code of Conduct is more stringent, in which case the Code applies.

Organisational Values

The values of the British Council underpin everything we say and do, how we work with people, behave towards them, and communicate. Here is a brief description of what each value means to us.

Open and Committed

Our belief in what we do translates into a deep and long-term commitment to people we work with and the places where we work. We tackle challenges and take responsibility with openness and honesty to bring about positive change.

Expert and Inclusive

Inclusion is at the heart of everything we do. By involving everyone in the conversation we learn from each other and bring together all our experience, knowledge and expertise to do the best work that we can.

Optimistic and Bold

positive and creative and we focus on what works. We are not afraid to make bold choices to shape a better future for everyone.

Code of Conduct Standards

As a British Council employee, you must

Uphold the integrity and reputation of The British Council by ensuring that your professional and personal conduct is consistent with The British Council's values and standards. You must:

Always:

- Treat all people fairly with respect, dignity, and non-discrimination
- When working in an international context or travelling internationally on behalf of the British Council, you will be observant of local laws and respectful of local customs.
- Seek to ensure that your conduct, at work and outside of work does not impact on or undermine your ability to undertake the role for which you are employed.
- Listen to and respect children and adults, empower them and let them participate in planning and delivering activities as much as possible
- As far as possible, be visible when working with children and Adults at Risk
- Consider your physical appearance at work and dress appropriately for the task undertaken
- Be aware of situations which may present risks for children and adults and take appropriate actions
- Contribute to ensure a sense of accountability amongst staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged.
- Report any concerns you may have about the protection or wellbeing of a child/children or adult at risk to your Safeguarding Focal Point, Line Manager or Corporate Safeguarding Team.
- Observe confidentiality and do not talk about any situations of actual or suspected abuse that occurs except in accordance with this guidance. This is necessary to protect the privacy of those involved.
- Teachers are encouraged to consult the Safeguarding intranet page which has additional resources to ensure teaching is as safe as possible.
- Always use business email accounts and copy in parents when sending communication to children.

Never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or abuse children or adults
- Behave in a way meant to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children or adults
- Show differential treatment, or favour particular children or adults to the exclusion of others.
- Use language or make suggestions which are inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Spend excessive time alone with a child or a vulnerable adult away from others
- Engage in abusive or exploitative conduct

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- Engage in sexual activity with a child (persons under the age of 18) or adult service users and beneficiaries. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence.
 - Pay for sexual services, of any kind at any time with anyone under the age of 18 years old, even if the age of sexual consent in a country is below 18, or with an adult service user or beneficiaries.
 - Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual favours or other form of degrading exploitative behaviour.
 - Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children or adults including child labour or trafficking
 - Expose children or adults to pornographic/indecent materials of any form
 - Permit or encourage children or adults to take part in activities that are illegal, unsafe or abusive.
 - Take or condone the taking of illegal drugs
 - Become intoxicated by alcohol during working hours
 - Sleep in the same room as a child or adult service user/beneficiary.
 - Invite, or allow a child/adult you have met through work into your home
 - Enter a child's home unless there is a responsible adult present
 - Enter an adult service user or beneficiaries' home without agreement of line management as to the purpose
 - Encourage children and adults to communicate privately with you using personal email accounts, social networking sites, mobile phones, or other means of communication.
 - Use the British Council's IT equipment to view, download, create, share or save in any format inappropriate or abusive material including but not limited to indecent images of children and or adults
 - Take photos of children or adults participating in British Council activities without obtaining their consent, where possible. Written parental consent or consent from a child's legal guardian is always required to take and use photographs, and audio or video materials
 - Allow allegations or disclosures of abuse to go unreported.
 - Agree to keep secret information relating to abuse or exploitation of a child or adult

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The overall principle is, that staff should avoid any actions or behaviours that maybe perceived as inappropriate or abusive.

Signature of staff member:

Position held:

Date:

In accepting employment with the British Council, I undertake to discharge my duties and to regulate my conduct in accordance with the requirements of this Code of Conduct which I have read and understood.