

The ReConnect Programme – Staff Code of Conduct

OWNERSHIP:	The ReConnect Programme
AUTHORISED BY:	Chief Operating Officer
REVIEW:	August 2027

Purpose

This Code of Conduct sets clear standards of professional behaviour for everyone working for or on behalf of The ReConnect Programme. It protects young people, staff and the organisation by explaining the conduct expected, the boundaries that must be maintained and how concerns must be reported.

Scope

This policy applies to employees, directors, facilitators, agency staff, volunteers, students on placement, consultants and contractors who work with or have access to young people through ReConnect. External organisations must ensure their personnel follow standards at least equivalent to this Code while working on our sites or activities.

The Code applies on site, during transport, trips, off-site activities, remote work, online communication and any work-related event. Relevant conduct outside working hours may also be considered where it affects safeguarding, professional suitability, working relationships or ReConnect's reputation.

This policy does not form part of an employee's contract and may be amended following review or a change in law, guidance or organisational practice. Breaches may result in action under safeguarding, disciplinary, capability, contractual or volunteer procedures, including dismissal or termination of an arrangement.

Core Principles

Everyone covered by this Code must:

- put the safety, welfare, dignity and best interests of young people first
- act honestly, responsibly, fairly and within the law
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid conduct that could be misinterpreted
- model respectful, inclusive and emotionally regulated behaviour
- follow ReConnect policies, risk assessments, agreed plans and reasonable management instructions
- report safeguarding concerns, mistakes, boundary concerns and unsafe practice promptly
- remain accountable for their own decisions and seek advice whenever unsure

POLICY

Professional Standards and Setting an Example

Staff are role models and hold a position of influence and trust. Conduct must support a calm, respectful and inclusive culture. Staff must not shout at, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, threaten or use sarcasm to demean a young person. Swearing, discriminatory language, sexualised comments, aggressive behaviour and inappropriate jokes are unacceptable.

Staff must be reliable, prepared, appropriately dressed and fit to carry out their duties. They must cooperate with colleagues and external professionals, follow reasonable instructions and raise concerns professionally. Disagreement does not justify undermining a colleague, withholding important information or behaving disrespectfully.

Safeguarding Responsibilities

All staff must know and follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, understand how to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy and complete required training. Concerns about abuse, neglect, exploitation, radicalisation, online harm, peer-on-peer abuse or a young person's welfare must be reported without delay through the approved safeguarding system.

Staff must never promise confidentiality to a young person. They should listen calmly, avoid leading questions, explain that information may need to be shared and make an accurate, timely record using the young person's own words where possible. Immediate danger must be addressed through emergency services or children's social care as appropriate.

A staff member who believes safeguarding arrangements are not being followed, or that a concern is not being acted on, must escalate through the DSL, senior leadership or Whistleblowing Policy. Safeguarding concerns must never be suppressed to protect an individual or ReConnect's reputation.

Concerns or Allegations About Adults

Concern	Required action
Allegation or harm threshold concern	Report immediately to the Head of Provision or designated senior leader. If the concern is about that person, report to the COO or Director. ReConnect will consider referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer and other agencies.
Low-level concern	Share promptly with the designated senior leader, even where the behaviour appears minor, was witnessed outside work or creates only a sense of unease. Do not investigate it yourself.
Concern about own conduct	Self-report as soon as possible if an interaction, message, action or boundary may have been misinterpreted or fallen below expected standards.
Immediate risk or possible crime	Protect the young person, contact emergency services where necessary, preserve evidence and inform the designated senior leader without delay.

Staff must not confront the subject of a concern, question witnesses, discuss the matter widely or promise a particular outcome. Information must be shared only with those managing the concern. No person will be disadvantaged for raising a concern in good faith.

Professional Boundaries and Positions of Trust

Relationships with young people must remain professional, transparent and appropriate to the staff member's role. Staff must not seek emotional dependence, favouritism, secrecy, private loyalty or a friendship that blurs the adult-child boundary. A young person's apparent consent, maturity or invitation does not remove the adult's responsibility.

Sexual activity with, sexualised communication with or grooming of a young person is prohibited. Staff must not form an intimate or sexual relationship with a young person connected to ReConnect. Legal positions of trust apply regardless of a young person's apparent consent and may continue to be relevant where a young person is aged 16 or 17.

If a young person appears unusually attached, flirtatious, dependent or focused on a member of staff, the staff member must maintain boundaries, avoid shaming the young person and seek guidance from the DSL or manager. Staff must not manage such situations privately.

One-to-One Working and Private Situations

One-to-one work is a normal part of ReConnect's provision but must be planned and visible through timetables, sign-in systems, communication records and agreed locations. Where practicable, doors should remain open or rooms should have visual access. Staff must not arrange unrecorded meetings, take a young person to a private location without authorisation or create unnecessary isolation.

Where a situation requires privacy, such as a sensitive conversation, staff should use an appropriate room, maintain professional positioning and ensure another suitable adult knows where they are. Any circumstance that departs from normal arrangements must be recorded and reported where it could raise a concern.

Physical Contact, Personal Care and Restrictive Interventions

Physical contact must be necessary, appropriate to the professional role, proportionate to the circumstances and sensitive to the young person's wishes, communication, SEND, trauma and cultural context. Contact must never be secretive, sexual, for the adult's gratification, used as punishment or intended to cause pain or humiliation.

Staff should explain necessary contact in advance where possible, seek cooperation and use the least intrusive approach. Personal care may only be provided by authorised staff in line with an agreed plan, risk assessment and relevant policy. Staff must not provide intimate care informally or without suitable safeguards.

Restrictive intervention may only be used lawfully, as a last resort and by staff acting within their training and ReConnect procedures. Prevention and de-escalation must be prioritised. Every significant incident must be reported immediately, recorded accurately, reviewed and notified to parents or carers and commissioners in accordance with current requirements and the Restrictive Intervention Policy.

Searching, Prohibited Items and Young People's Property

Staff must not search a young person or their possessions unless authorised and acting under ReConnect's current procedure and lawful powers applicable to the setting. Where an item may present an immediate risk,

staff should keep people safe, seek senior support and contact the police where appropriate. Searches must respect dignity, privacy, SEND, trauma and safeguarding needs and must be recorded.

Staff must not confiscate, inspect or access a young person's phone, account or private content outside an authorised procedure. Suspected illegal or harmful content must be preserved and referred to the DSL or police without forwarding, copying or viewing it unnecessarily.

Communication, Technology and Social Media

Communication with young people and families must use ReConnect-approved accounts, devices, platforms and channels. Staff must not use personal phone numbers, personal email, private messaging, disappearing-message services or personal social-media accounts to communicate with young people, unless an emergency arrangement has been expressly authorised and recorded.

Staff must not accept or send social-media friends or follow requests, privately message young people, share personal content, exchange images for non-work purposes or engage in online behaviour that blurs professional boundaries. Online sessions must follow the same safeguarding, recording and professional standards as face-to-face work.

Staff must protect passwords, use multi-factor authentication where provided, lock unattended devices and report loss, compromise, accidental disclosure or inappropriate content immediately. They must not access, create, share or display illegal, sexual, violent, discriminatory or otherwise inappropriate material using ReConnect systems or in the presence of young people.

Photography, Video and Recording

Images or recordings of young people may only be made for an authorised purpose, with the required consent and on approved equipment or systems. Staff must not use a personal device to photograph or record a young person unless an exceptional safeguarding or emergency reason has been authorised or subsequently reported immediately.

Images and recordings must be stored, shared and deleted in accordance with ReConnect's Data Protection Policy, Privacy Policy and consent arrangements. Staff must not publish or retain images for personal use.

Transport and Off-Site Activities

Staff transporting young people must be authorised, appropriately licensed and insured and must follow the Transportation Policy, vehicle checks, journey planning, consent, seat-belt and recording requirements. Journeys must be part of approved delivery and known to the administration or leadership team.

Unplanned one-to-one transport should be avoided unless necessary for safety or welfare. Where it occurs, the route, reason, departure and arrival must be communicated and recorded. Staff must not make unauthorised detours, transport additional passengers or use a vehicle when unfit, unsafe or affected by alcohol, drugs, medication, fatigue or distraction.

Gifts, Favouritism and Personal Financial Dealings

Staff must not give personal gifts to individual young people, lend or borrow money, enter private financial arrangements, buy or sell personal items, or provide preferential treatment. Modest, transparent gifts made on behalf of ReConnect or to a whole group may be permitted with management approval.

Gifts or hospitality received from young people, families, suppliers or partners must be declared in accordance with ReConnect procedures. Token gifts may be accepted where appropriate, but anything that could create obligation, influence a decision or be misinterpreted must be declined or referred to a manager.

Honesty, Integrity and Organisational Resources

Staff must be truthful in records, timesheets, expenses, qualifications, applications, reports and professional communications. Fraud, theft, falsification, deliberate omission, misuse of funds or property, bribery and unauthorised personal use of ReConnect resources are prohibited.

Any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest must be declared, including outside work, family or personal relationships, business interests, gifts, commissioning connections and relationships with suppliers. Outside employment or volunteering must not create a safeguarding risk, conflict with ReConnect's interests, breach working-time requirements or impair performance.

Confidentiality, Information Sharing and Records

Confidential information about young people, families, colleagues or ReConnect must be accessed and shared only for a legitimate work purpose. Staff must follow the Data Protection Policy, Privacy Policy, retention rules and safeguarding information-sharing requirements. Confidential matters must not be discussed in public places, with unauthorised colleagues or on social media.

Confidentiality does not prevent appropriate safeguarding disclosure. Information indicating risk to a young person must be shared with the DSL or relevant authority. Staff must never promise to keep a safeguarding disclosure secret.

Records must be factual, timely, accurate, respectful and clear about observation, reported information, professional judgement and action taken. Staff must not alter, conceal, destroy or retrospectively manufacture records. Errors must be corrected transparently under the relevant procedure.

Equality, Dignity and Inclusion

Staff must comply with the Equal Opportunities Policy and make agreed reasonable adjustments. Discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying, sexual harassment, discriminatory jokes or stereotyping are unacceptable. Staff must challenge inappropriate conduct safely and report serious or repeated concerns.

Professional standards apply equally to interactions with young people, parents and carers, colleagues, applicants, commissioners, contractors and visitors. Staff must use respectful names and language and avoid assumptions about identity, culture, disability, family circumstances or need.

Health, Safety, Fitness for Work and Substance Use

Staff must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others, follow risk assessments, use equipment only when trained and authorised, and report accidents, hazards, defects and near misses. They must not improvise activities or controls in a way that creates an unmanaged risk.

Staff must be fit to work and must inform an appropriate manager where illness, fatigue, stress, medication or another factor may affect safe performance. Staff must not possess, use, supply or be under the influence of illegal drugs at work. Alcohol must not be consumed during duties or before work where it may affect performance. Smoking and vaping are prohibited in accordance with ReConnect policy.

Dress, Identification and Personal Presentation

Clothing and presentation must be clean, safe, practical and appropriate to the role, activity and professional setting. Staff must wear or carry identification where required and use suitable protective clothing or equipment. Dress must not display offensive, discriminatory, political or otherwise inappropriate messages to young people.

Attendance, Timekeeping and Notification

Staff must attend reliably, arrive ready to work, follow absence reporting procedures and keep calendars, timetables and availability accurate. They must not leave young people unsupervised, leave site during duty without authorisation or arrange informal cover. Persistent lateness, unauthorised absence or inaccurate time recording may be addressed formally.

Conduct Outside Work and Public Statements

Staff must avoid conduct outside work that creates a safeguarding concern, seriously damages trust, undermines professional suitability, disrupts working relationships or brings ReConnect into disrepute. Relevant arrests, charges, cautions, convictions, restrictions, professional investigations or other matters affecting suitability must be disclosed promptly in accordance with safer recruitment and contractual requirements.

Only authorised people may speak to the media or make public statements on behalf of ReConnect. Personal views must not be presented as ReConnect's position. Staff should use privacy settings but must understand that online content may become public and may be considered where it affects safeguarding or employment.

Supporting Young People's Development

Staff must follow individual plans, risk assessments and reasonable adjustments; maintain appropriate ambition; and cooperate with colleagues, families, commissioners and external agencies. Practice should be trauma-informed without excusing unsafe conduct or creating inconsistent boundaries.

Staff must not impose personal political, religious or ideological views on young people. Relevant topics should be handled impartially, respectfully, accurately and in an age-appropriate way. Concerns about extremism or radicalisation must be reported through safeguarding procedures.

Raising Concerns and Whistleblowing

Staff are expected to raise concerns about unsafe, unlawful, dishonest or unprofessional behaviour, including concerns about senior leaders. Concerns may be raised with a line manager, the DSL, Head of Provision, COO or Director as appropriate. Where internal reporting is unsuitable or ineffective, staff should use the Whistleblowing Policy or contact the relevant external authority.

A person raising a concern in good faith will be supported and must not be victimised. Knowingly false or malicious allegations may be addressed under the relevant procedure, but an allegation that is unsubstantiated or mistaken is not automatically malicious.

Responding to Breaches

Possible breaches will be considered fairly, proportionately and without avoidable delay. ReConnect may take safeguarding action, impose interim arrangements, investigate under an appropriate procedure, refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer, police, Disclosure and Barring Service, professional regulator, commissioner or another authority, and take disciplinary or contractual action where required.

Serious misconduct may amount to gross misconduct and may result in dismissal without notice. Examples include abuse, grooming, sexual misconduct, serious boundary breaches, violence, deliberate safeguarding failures, serious dishonesty, theft, unlawful discrimination, serious data misuse, intoxication at work and retaliation against a person who raises a concern.

Roles and Responsibilities

Chief Operating Officer and Directors

- Approve the Code and ensure suitable safeguarding, HR and reporting arrangements are available.
- Provide resources, oversight and a culture in which concerns can be raised safely.
- Ensure serious concerns are referred to external authorities where required.

Head of Provision, DSL and Managers

- Model the Code, communicate expectations and address concerns consistently.
- Ensure staff receive induction, training, supervision and access to relevant policies.
- Maintain records of concerns, decisions, referrals and actions on a need-to-know basis.
- Review patterns, low-level concerns and organisational learning.

All Staff and Workers

- Read, understand and follow this Code and related policies.
- Seek advice before acting when the correct course is unclear.
- Report concerns, errors, conflicts and changes affecting suitability promptly.
- Cooperate honestly with safeguarding, complaints, audits and investigations.
- Complete mandatory training and confirm acceptance of the Code when requested.

Training, Monitoring and Review

The Code will be covered during induction and reinforced through safeguarding updates, supervision, observations, team discussion and role-specific training. Leaders will monitor concerns, incidents, complaints, whistleblowing, data breaches, restrictive interventions and feedback to identify patterns and improve practice.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner following a serious incident, identified learning, a change in law or guidance, or a material change to ReConnect's operation.

Policy Context

AP context (non-school AP): The ReConnect Programme operates as a non-school Alternative Provision (AP). Staff may work one-to-one or in small groups with young people who have SEND, SEMH needs, disabilities, disrupted education, trauma or other vulnerabilities. Professional curiosity, predictable boundaries, accurate recording, safe communication and trauma-informed practice are therefore central to safe conduct.

Although ReConnect is not a school, we adopt Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and recognised safer-working practice as benchmark standards. The commissioning school or local authority retains its own safeguarding and statutory responsibilities. ReConnect will cooperate with commissioners, local safeguarding partners, the Local Authority Designated Officer and other agencies as required.

Related ReConnect Documents

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure and Grievance Procedure
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Restrictive Intervention Policy
- Transportation Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

Appendix 2: Key Legal and Guidance Framework

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Guidance for safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people in education settings
- Equality Act 2010

Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004

Education Act 1996 and Education and Inspections Act 2006 where applicable

Bribery Act 2010

UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and current Prevent guidance

Current DfE guidance on restrictive interventions, searching, screening and confiscation

This Code is an organisational framework. Current legislation, statutory guidance and case-specific safeguarding or employment advice take precedence where requirements change or a complex issue arises.

VERSION CONTROL

We will review our documentation regularly and we reserve the right to amend our policies and procedures at any time.

Version	Date	Change Summary	Author/ Reviewer	Approved by:
1	29/08/2026	Initial Version	Naomi Hamer	Director