

TITLE: Professional Conduct Policy	REF: HR006	VERSION: 1.1
APPROVAL BODY: Activate Learning Corporation	DATE: 16 April 2018	REVIEW DATE: April 2021
LEAD PERSON: Group Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development		
VERSION	REVIEWER/APPROVAL	REVIEW NOTES
1. 23 March 2018	GET	Increased clarity regarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility for Health & Safety • Responsibility for Safeguarding • Prohibitions on the unacceptable use of IT • That actions outside work may lead to disciplinary action if they bring the organisation into disrepute or call into question the individual's suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults
2. 16 April 2018	Activate Learning Corporation	

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT POLICY

1. Professional Conduct Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear framework for all employees within Activate Learning, whether directly employed or otherwise on the expected standards of personal behaviour and conduct at work.

We have clear standards of behaviour for staff and students:

- Take Responsibility – doing what we say we are going to do by planning ahead, staying focused and meeting agreed deadlines
- Earn Respect – being positive with each other by listening attentively and being honest
- Aim High – going further by learning from mistakes, setting challenging goals and improving continuously
- Make it happen – by taking initiative, inspiring each other to meet all these standards

All employees are ambassadors for the Activate Learning group and are responsible for upholding its reputation and brand identity. When staff members come into contact with people during the course of their duties, their conduct and personal behaviour significantly influences the impression they have of the group and so shapes its reputation.

Activate Learning strives to maintain a professional, supportive and harmonious work environment for its staff and a learning environment for its students in which honesty, integrity and respect for all members of the Activate Learning community is demonstrated and reflected in the personal behaviour and standards of conduct by all.

2. Workplace Health and Safety

You are required to read and familiarise yourself with the Health and Safety Policy and all risk assessments, safe systems of work and required protective equipment for the area / role in which you work

Activate Learning will ensure so far as is reasonably practicable you are kept safe and well whilst you are at work and expects all members of staff to work and go about their daily business in a safe and professional manner. Activate Learning will provide all relevant training, information and equipment for your role and make available any relevant health and safety procedures.

We expect you to work responsibly and safely, use the right equipment and follow any health and safety procedures that relate to your role. If you are unsure about how to work safely or the procedures for your area of work, your line manager will provide you with guidance. If you feel that there are unsafe working practices that could be dangerous to you or your colleagues or practices which we could improve, please let your manager or the Health and Safety Adviser know immediately.

3. Safeguarding

Activate Learning takes its safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all members of our community and you should take time to read our Safeguarding Policy and be clear on your responsibilities therein. All employees are required to complete Safeguarding training and to attend regular updates.

Commencement of employment is, along with other criteria, subject to the completion of Safeguarding training and failure to do so could result in a withdrawal of an employment offer or potential disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Every member of the Activate Learning community has a responsibility and duty to report any Safeguarding concerns to a Safeguarding Officer. Full details of the Safeguarding Team are available from the Staff Portal.

4. Privacy and Data Protection

Activate Learning has detailed privacy policies related to the collection, storage, use, transmission and retention of individuals' personal data. All employees are required familiarise themselves with these policies, attend training events related to privacy and data protection, always act in accordance with the provisions of our policies and report any breach of privacy immediately.

5. Confidentiality, Copyright, Inventions and Patents

Your contract of employment details your responsibilities in respect of these areas. Please ensure you fully understand your responsibilities and comply with them.

6. Conflicts of Interest

You must not put yourself in a position, either inside or outside work, where your personal interests conflict or may be perceived to conflict with Activate Learning's business interests. Do not do anything that might mean you stop being independent or objective, or that could lead to our students, customers, suppliers or fellow colleagues losing confidence in our integrity.

It is the policy of Activate Learning that spouses/ partners will not be employed where there will be a line management relationship between them. If a relationship develops this must be reported to your manager and the Group Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development, so that any potential conflict of interest can be identified and managed.

All appointment decisions must be based upon merit. Employees must not be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant, or have a close personal relationship with him/ her.

If you are involved in any activity or relationship that could lead to a conflict of interest, you must inform your manager and the Clerk to the Corporation, to ensure that the interest is entered on the Register of Interests, which is held in the Clerk to the Corporation's Office.

Conflicts of interest relating to the proceedings of the Corporation will be managed under the Conflicts of Interest Policy, and any staff attending a meeting of the Corporation or any of its committees should familiarise themselves with the contents of that policy in advance of the meeting.

7. Customers, Gifts and Hospitality

Activate Learning promotes the highest professional standards and expects all members of the Activate Learning community to act in the same manner. Always be professional, honest and fair with customers, students, suppliers and other colleagues. Never take advantage of another person or organisation by manipulating or hiding information, abusive privileged information or misrepresenting the facts.

Activate Learning's full policy on gifts and hospitality is outlined in the Gifts and Hospitality Policy, and all staff should familiarise themselves with the contents of that policy.

You must not allow yourself to be put in a position where a gift or hospitality could be seen to influence a business decision:

Make sure you get the right approval before you either offer or accept gifts or hospitality.

Register any gifts or hospitality that are offered to you on the Gifts and Hospitality Register, by submitting a completed Register of Gifts and Hospitality form (which can be found as an appendix to the Gifts and Hospitality Policy) to the Clerk to the Corporation. This register is held in the Clerk to the Corporation's Office.

There are occasions when a student and/ or parent wish to pass a token of appreciation to staff. This is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. Similarly it is inadvisable to give personal gifts to students. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe or to single out a student. Rewards should only be given as part of any recognised Activate Learning reward schemes that are in place at the time. Prizes for quizzes, etc. in a classroom context are acceptable.

8. Discrimination and Harassment

Activate Learning has a firm commitment to equality and diversity and inclusion. We are committed to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation and advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. We are also committed to fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

We will not tolerate harassment or bullying of one member of our community by another, including learners, staff, volunteers and contractors. All staff should familiarise themselves with the Equality and Diversity Policy; the purpose of this policy is to assist in developing a working environment in which harassment and bullying are known to be unacceptable and where individuals have the confidence to complain about harassment and bullying, should it arise, in the knowledge that their concerns will be dealt with appropriately and fairly. The policy outlines procedures to be followed if a member of staff feels they are being harassed or bullied in the course of their work or as a result of their employment by Activate Learning. Advice to students on harassment and bullying is also detailed in the Student Handbook.

Activate Learning welcomes diversity and respects the right of all individuals to work and study in an environment which is free from harassment. All employees, students and visitors are entitled to pursue their legitimate business at an Activate Learning site without exposure to unsolicited contact, comment or gesture which may cause offence or distress.

Managers have an obligation to tackle issues of poor performance and therefore harassment and bullying is to be distinguished from a manager legitimately and appropriately invoking approved performance management or disciplinary procedures in accordance with Activate Learning policies.

9. Improper Payments and Bribes

In order that both Activate Learning and you comply with the anti-bribery laws you must not offer, promise or give financial or other advantage or bribe linked to any improper performance of your role, function or activity. You must not offer, promise or give a financial or other advantage or bribe to any third party with the intention to influence a business decision, obtain an advantage in the conduct of business, to keep business or win new business. If you are not sure whether a payment is allowed, please give full details to your manager.

More information is contained within Activate Learning's Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy, with which all staff should familiarise themselves.

10. False Statements

Employees must not make any false statement, e.g. on expenses claims, timesheets/schedules and overtime forms. Making false statements may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal and/ or prosecution.

11. Misuses of Drugs and Alcohol

You must not be under the influence of alcohol, non-medically prescribed drugs or substances during your working time, or carry any of these items. If any employee is suspected of dealing drugs or substances during working hours the police will be informed immediately. Misuse of drugs, alcohol and substances may lead to disciplinary action.

12. Abuses of Email/ Internet and Social Media Usage

You are required to read and adhere to the IT Services Acceptable Use Policy. This policy outlines your responsibilities when using any of Activate Learning's IT equipment or networks, whether you are onsite or using equipment or accessing networks from outside. Whilst we encourage the use of technology to improve our business and administrative systems and to aid communications, unauthorised and/ or inappropriate use of Activate Learning's email and intranet system or inappropriate postings on social media networks during the course of employment may lead to disciplinary action.

Finally you must not use Activate Learning's equipment or network to view, transmit, store or display offensive, indecent or obscene material. Any such action will be treated as an act of gross misconduct.

13. Personal Behaviour including behaviour while not at work

Activate Learning expects the highest standards of personal and professional conduct from its workforce and in return will treat all employees with professionalism, respect and integrity. We expect employees to act with self-control and tolerance, treating students, suppliers and

colleagues with dignity, respect and courtesy. Employees are expected to behave in a manner which does not discredit the organisation or undermine student confidence and promotes our values. The use of inappropriate language or behaviour in any dealings with students and colleagues will not be tolerated.

Behaviour outside of the workplace which brings the organisation into disrepute or which calls into question the individual's suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults will be considered as a disciplinary matter. This includes individual's use of social media.

As a professional community, Activate Learning recognises that employees will, from time to time, wish to meet and engage socially as a group or team outside of the workplace. The same models of behaviour are expected wherever individuals and groups are clearly identifiable as employees of Activate Learning.

14. Dress and Appearance

Activate Learning expects all employees to present a 'professional' image at all times. This can be affected by a number of factors, including standards of dress and personal appearance. Being well presented is part of being professional, inappropriate dress or an unkempt appearance gives an impression of inefficiency, can cause offence and may be interpreted as disrespectful by members of the public, visitors and students.

Our dress code means that men and women do not necessarily have to wear formal business suits. However, whilst this code acknowledges that some staff may prefer to dress less formally they are reminded that as representatives of an educational service they need to present a smart image at all times. Whilst many items of 'fashion' clothing may be perfectly acceptable in a social or informal setting, they are not considered to promote a professional image or to be appropriate for a place of business. Similarly, body piercings and body art are forms of self-expression and matters of personal choice. In the professional work environment excessive facial or other visible piercings are not acceptable; body art, tattoos, etc. should be kept covered particularly where this contains statements or depicts images likely to cause offence.

All employees, contractors and visitors are required to wear and display their lanyard during working hours. If work or corporate clothing or uniform is provided, e.g. overalls or branded clothing, this must be worn as confirmed by the line manager. Failure to wear uniform or other provided clothing may result in disciplinary action.

Religious and Other Considerations

Activate Learning values and welcomes diversity in its workforce and will take account of ethnic and religious dress requirements with sensitivity by ensuring that employees are free to observe them where this does not compromise health and safety or security requirements.

15. Professional Boundaries and Accountability

Governors, parents and other stakeholders have legitimate expectations about the nature of staff professional involvement in the lives of students. When individuals accept a role that involves working with young people, students and vulnerable adults, they need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent in that role.

All employees of Activate Learning must be aware and recognise the importance of maintaining appropriate professional boundaries when dealing with students. All employees whatever their position, roles or responsibilities have a crucial role to play in shaping the lives of young people, students and vulnerable adults and must take responsibility for recognising when they are at risk of crossing professional boundaries and addressing the issue immediately.

You should always act, and be seen to act, in the student's best interests and ensure that your actions would not lead any reasonable person to question your motivation and intentions.

Our values and learning philosophy mean that all employees are expected to provide supportive pastoral care to students whilst being sensitive to issues surrounding professional boundaries. Failure to understand or adhere to professional boundaries can lead to career threatening allegations. Even an unfounded allegation of professional misconduct could be permanently damaging to any member of staff, to their family and to the reputation of Activate Learning.

16. Student/ Staff Relationships

Occasionally, a young person/ student may develop an infatuation with a member of staff who works with them. All employees should deal with these situations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned. They should remain aware, however, that such infatuations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and should therefore make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour is above reproach.

Activate Learning does not permit any employee or student to initiate any form of intimate relationship with each other. This includes any form of affection, intimacy or sexual action, which could be interpreted by students or another member of staff, as inappropriate.

For this reason Activate Learning employees should not establish or seek to establish social contact with students 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, you should exercise your professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued. You should not issue your personal details to students such as home or mobile phone number and personal email addresses, or allow acceptance onto student's personal networking sites.

You should report and record any situation which you feel might compromise Activate Learning or your own professional standing.

17. Criminal Convictions

If an employee is convicted of a criminal offence whilst employed by Activate Learning they must inform the Group Director of HR & Organisational Development in writing. Full details relating to the conviction must be sent in a sealed envelope marked private and confidential. The definition of 'conviction' is any conviction, caution and/ or bind-over including those regarded as 'spent'.

The relevance of the conviction will be considered using the same criteria as outlined in the Employment of Ex-Offenders Policy. The Group Director of HR & Organisational Development will decide if the conviction has any relevance to the member of staff's post and where the conviction bears no relevance to their role at Activate Learning no further action will be taken.

The employee's line manager will only be informed if there is a specific reason for doing so, and the conviction is considered directly connected with their job. In these circumstances the employee will be invited to discuss the reasons behind this decision with the Group Director of HR & Organisational Development.

Employees are also encouraged to declare if they are subject of a police investigation in the UK or abroad, which may lead to one of these sanctions. The reason for this disclosure is for the colleges to protect their reputation and safeguard the interests of its students, and to provide appropriate support to the individual employee.

18. Speaking Up

Activate Learning promotes a culture of high ethical standards and it is responsibility of every member of the Activate Learning community to promote and uphold our code of conduct. If you have real concerns that another employee might be acting fraudulently or dishonestly, tell your manager, an HR team member or a senior manager straight away. Alternatively you can use the Activate Learning Public Interest Disclosure Policy (Whistleblowing Policy).