



# Code of Conduct Policy

East Birmingham Community Forum (EBCF)

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## **Document Control**

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## 1. Introduction

EBCF seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment where the welfare and health and safety of staff and students is paramount.

This code of conduct provides clear guidance on the standards of behaviour all staff volunteers and learners are expected to observe.

EBCF seeks to create and embed a culture of openness, trust and transparency in which EBCF's values and behaviours, as set out in this policy, are constantly lived, monitored, and reinforced by all staff.

EBCF is committed to maintaining high standards of professional conduct, integrity, and accountability across all areas of its operations.

All staff have a duty of care to keep students safe and are accountable for the way in which they use their authority and position of trust.

This code of conduct provides guidance as to how staff can reduce the risk of potential allegations / concerns being raised against them by acting professionally and appropriately at all times.

## 2. Relationship with other Policies and Procedures

This code should be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:

- Prevention of Harassment, Bullying Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Prevent Duty
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Anti-Bribery Policy
- IT and Social Media Policy
- GDPR Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure for Staff

Staff must ensure they are familiar with and comply with all relevant policies and procedures. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

It is accepted that the following does not provide an exhaustive list and staff must ensure that they conduct themselves in a manner that cannot be deemed to be or construed as inappropriate or unprofessional. If a member of staff has concerns as to how something will be portrayed/interpreted, then they should seek advice from the HR Department before pursuing that activity/course of action.

### **3. Behaviour / Conduct**

- 3.1 All staff are expected to behave professionally and appropriately at all times in their interactions with fellow staff, students, and stakeholders.
- 3.2 All staff must ensure that they engage with any training deemed relevant/essential to their role.
- 3.3 All staff should avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
- 3.4 Staff should demonstrate high standards of conduct and encourage students to do the same.
- 3.5 All staff are expected to engage in professional development and training accordingly.
- 3.6 Staff are expected to show tolerance of and respect for the rights of others and not undermine fundamental British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 3.7 Staff are expected to maintain high standard in their own attendance and punctuality.
- 3.8 Staff must always act with integrity, honesty and never act in fraudulent manner.
- 3.9 Staff must treat all other staff and students with dignity, courtesy and respect.

- 3.10 Staff are expected to devote their full attention to the effective undertaking of their role and must not undertake any other employment outside of EBCF without the prior and explicit permission of their Manager (in accordance with the Contract of Employment). Further guidance on this matter can be sought from EBCF's Human Resources (HR) department.
- 3.11 Staff must act in a manner that protects the reputation of EBCF at all times, including outside of the workplace where their actions may impact the organisation.

3.11 Staff that undertake teaching are also required to:

- Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge students.
- Promote good progress and outcomes for students.
- Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge.
- Plan and deliver well-structured and engaging lessons.
- Provide timely feedback to students.
- Adapt teaching to the strengths and needs of all students.
- Manage behaviour within the classroom effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment.

#### **4. Equality and Diversity**

All members must have due regard for Equality and Diversity legislation and ensure that they adhere to their obligation as set out in law under the Equality Act.

Staff must not discriminate, harass, stereotype, or victimise against staff or students.

All staff are expected to actively promote equality, diversity, and inclusion within their role.

#### **5. Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Staff are expected, with appropriate support and guidance, to take ownership of their own wellbeing and look out for the wellbeing of others. All staff must engage with management to work together to enhance employee wellbeing by ensuring that stress and ill health are reported to management as early as possible.

Staff should ensure that they develop and maintain a working environment which is supportive of individuals mental health and wellbeing and engage with training and development opportunities.

Where offered, staff should access training to increase their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing and to equip them to be able to identify mental health difficulties or wellbeing concerns in their students. This includes knowing who to refer to internally for guidance.

## **6. Safeguarding**

- 6.1** All staff have a role to play in the safeguarding of children/vulnerable adults.
- 6.2** All staff have a duty to ensuring the safeguarding and welfare of all students and ensure that they adhere to the obligations as set out in EBCF's Safeguarding Procedures.
- 6.3** All staff are responsible for their own actions.
- 6.4** All staff are required to read all pertinent guidance in relation to safeguarding to effectively discharge their obligations within their role, of particularly relevance is reading, on an annual basis, Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education as well as EBCF's relevant safeguarding policies and procedures and ensure that they are conversant with their roles/responsibilities under said procedures. If any member of staff is unclear or has any queries, these should be raised with their line manager (where the matter relates to staff) or one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (if the matter relates to students).
- 6.5** All staff are required to undertake relevant Safeguarding training which is refreshed each year. Staff are expected to undertake the training within a timely manner of the request being made. If staff wish to undertake this training prior to the yearly timeframe EBCF will be happy to accommodate such requests, just contact a Manager to make these arrangements.
- 6.6** All staff should take care of students under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.
- 6.7** Any safeguarding concerns should be reported to EBCF's Designated Safeguarding lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads in a timely manner.
- 6.8** Staff are encouraged to report any suspected infatuation or any situation which they feel may comprise their professional standing.
- 6.9** Staff should be aware that they may be vulnerable to accusations when working alone with a student. It is recognised however that such occasions are necessary at times. If possible, staff should leave the door open or use a room with a window

in the door. Staff should inform another member of staff as to their location and who they are meeting.

- 6.10** Staff should avoid travelling in a car with one student, unless explicit permission from one of EBCF's Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads has been sought and approved.
- 6.11** When communicating with students' staff should only use their work devices/email address or an allocated work phone number.
- 6.12** Staff should never contact with students outside of EBCF for the purpose of seeking friendship.
- 6.13** Staff should never allow allegations made by a student go unrecorded or not acted upon by gaining the relevant advice from one of EBCF's Safeguarding Leads.

## **7. Safeguarding – Low Level Concerns**

EBCF has developed a 'low-level' concerns policy which should be read and understood in conjunction with this policy. The policy defines:

- what a low-level concern is.
- The difference between a low-level concern and an allegation of harm.
- what behaviour may constitute a low level concern, making specific reference to the professional behaviours and standards expected of all staff as set out in this policy and.
- the procedure followed where such concerns are raised.

It is important that staff are aware of and familiarise themselves with the Safeguarding -Low level Concerns Policy, which is available on the Safeguarding portal and report any low level concern(s) to a DSL

## **8. Sexual Contact**

Intimate or sexual relationships between a member of staff and a student will be regarded as wholly inappropriate and a significant breach of EBCF's Safeguarding Procedure. Any

staff member who is in a relationship with an adult, who subsequently becomes a student at EBCF must report their relationship to their manager, prior to the student commencing or enrolling on their course/programme.

**9. Physical Contact**

Some staff will work in certain roles or settings where physical contact may be required i.e. supporting a student who is blind or has special educational and support needs. Physical contact should only take place when it is necessary and appropriate to a particular activity. It should take place in a safe environment and the student should be made aware of why the contact is necessary and appropriate.

**10. ID Badge**

Staff must ensure that they wear their staff ID badge and lanyard at all times whilst working to identify themselves as a member of staff. Should a replacement badge be required please contact the HR department.

**11. Criminal Offences**

In accordance with the contract of employment, staff must notify the HR department if they are charged or convicted of an offence during the course of their employment. The notification must take place at the earliest opportunity. The nature/severity of the offence or conviction will determine the appropriate course of action.

**12. “Whistleblowing” – Public Interest Disclosure**

When staff, students and stakeholders have concerns about serious malpractice which is in the public interest to raise, they can do so under EBCF’s Whistleblowing Procedure. Any individual raising a concern under this procedure must not be subject to victimisation or any action(s) which seeks to deter them from raising the issue as this will be regarded a serious disciplinary offence and will be investigated accordingly under EBCF’s Disciplinary Procedure,

All individuals raising concerns in good faith will be protected from detriment or victimisation.

All staff must ensure that they are aware of their obligations under this procedure.

**13. Acceptance of Gifts / Bribery and Adherence to EBCF’s Financial Regulations**

Compliance with the following policies is compulsory for all staff employed by EBCF:

- Anti-Bribery Policy

Failure to comply with these policies has potentially significant consequences, and thus it is important that you understand your obligations. Please note that being unaware of the obligations detailed in the policies, will not be justification for any non-adherence. If you have any queries or doubts about any issues covered by these policies, please contact a manager

All staff must declare any gifts or hospitality in line with organisational procedures.

#### **14. Company Property**

Staff should have due regard for all company property as well as property that has been issued to them for use outside of EBCF (i.e. for use at home). Staff are responsible for the safe handling and storage of such equipment. It is recognised that accidents can happen, and that property can be damaged.

Where any work property becomes damaged, this should be reported to the relevant department or to your line manager as soon as reasonably possible.

#### **15. Acceptable Use – IT Equipment/Access**

All staff must accept the terms of EBCF's IT and social media policy and must adhere to EBCF's Acceptable Use Policy for Network and Computer Facilities by signing and dating the statement.

#### **16. Information Security**

All staff must have due regard for the management and sharing of information. All staff utilising work IT systems must ensure that:

- The integrity and security of all electronic systems is maintained.
- All information is stored in a secure manner and that appropriate safeguards are in place to prevent improper access.
- Any attempts to gain improper access to information are detected and recorded accordingly.
- Work information systems are not compromised or used for unauthorised activities.
- Only authorised members of staff can collect and view pertinent information, which must then only be used for legitimate purposes.

- Information is only shared with legitimate and authorised users both inside and outside of EBCF.

Any data breaches or suspected breaches must be reported immediately in line with GDPR requirements.

#### **17. Social Media**

All staff must ensure compliance with EBCF's Social Media Policy regarding their behaviour and communication online. Staff must not accept "friend requests" or "followings" from a student

#### **18. Health and Safety at Work**

All members have an obligation to comply, support and co-operate with any policy that deals with the management of health and safety within EBCF, or within the undertaking of activities related to EBCF. All staff must ensure that they undertake health and safety training, which is refreshed yearly, and undertake any role specific training as identified 'essential' to the role that is being undertaken i.e. First Aid, Manual Handling, Working at Heights training etc.

All staff that are identified as requiring health surveillance must ensure that they adhere to the requirements of the Health Surveillance programme/policy, ensuring attendance at appointments and completion of relevant paperwork/assessments. Staff must not undertake any activity that they are not trained to undertake and should raise any concerns as soon as reasonably possible either with their line manager or a member of the Health and Safety team.

#### **19. Smoking at Work**

EBCF operates a no smoking policy in all of its buildings. Staff are only permitted to smoke within the designated smoking area which is clearly signposted on the campus.

#### **20. Adherence to all Company Policies**

Staff must ensure that they comply with all Policies and Procedures and ensure that they are familiar with their roles/responsibilities under these procedures to for the effective undertaking of their role. Copies of all polices are located on the website . A staff member should liaise with their line manager if they have any concerns/queries regarding their responsibilities under any given procedure.

Failure to comply with organisational policies may result in disciplinary action.

## 21. **Failure to adhere to Code of Conduct**

At EBCF we are committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and professional environment for all staff, learners, and volunteers. Any breaches of this Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and addressed in accordance with the appropriate policies and procedures.

All breaches will be handled fairly and consistently

All concerns will be investigated promptly and outcomes communicated clearly

### **Reporting a Breach**

If any staff member, learner, or volunteer becomes aware of a breach of this Code, they should report it as soon as possible. Reports can be made to:

- A line manager or supervisor (for staff and volunteers)
- A tutor or learning support officer (for learners)
- The HR Department (for formal complaints or staff-related breaches)
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (if the breach involves safeguarding concerns)
- Through the Whistleblowing Procedure (for serious misconduct or illegal activity) All reports will be treated seriously, confidentially, and in line with the appropriate policy.

No individual will face retaliation for raising concerns in good faith.

### **Investigation Process**

Once a breach is reported, an investigation will be conducted to determine the appropriate action. The process typically includes:

1. **Initial Review** – The relevant manager or department will assess the concern and determine the next steps.
2. **Fact-Finding Investigation** – This may involve interviews with involved parties, reviewing evidence, and consulting policies.
3. **Decision & Action** – Based on findings, appropriate measures will be taken, following relevant procedures.

### **Consequences of Breaching the Code**

Actions taken in response to a breach will be proportionate to the severity of the misconduct. Possible consequences include:

#### **For Staff & Volunteers:**

- Informal guidance, coaching, or additional training
- A formal verbal or written warning

- Suspension or dismissal in line with the **Disciplinary Policy**
- Referral to external authorities (if necessary) **For Learners:**
- A verbal or written warning
- Behavioural contracts or additional support
- Temporary or permanent exclusion, following the **Learner Behaviour Policy**
- Referral to external support services (if necessary)

#### **Appeal Process**

Individuals who believe that actions taken against them are unfair may appeal through the appropriate procedure:

- **Staff & Volunteers** – Follow the **Grievance Policy**
- **Learners** – Follow the **Appeals Process** in the **Learner Behaviour Policy**

All breaches and actions taken will be documented and monitored to ensure consistency and fairness in the application of this Code.

## **22. Policy Review**

**22.1** The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored annually and reviewed every year in light of experience and best practice.

**22.2** In considering the effectiveness of this policy, consultation will be undertaken with Trade Unions, Staff and Managers to assist in the review process.

## Version Control

Version	Description of Change	Author	Date	Approved by
1.0	First version	S.Carragher	May 2022	S.Johnson
2.0	Updated version	S.Khan	July 2023	Z. Sharif
3.0	Version 3.0	S.Khan	July 2024	<i>S. Khan</i>
4.0	Version 4.0	S.Khan / J.Hall	January 2025	<i>S. Khan</i>
5.0	Version 5.0 Policy updated to improve clarity, strengthen complaint handling processes, and enhance monitoring and accountability.	S.Khan (HR)	January 2026	S.Etheridge (Head of Quality)