



**YOUTH
WITHOUT
LIMITS**

Code of Conduct and Professional Boundaries Policy

APRIL 2023



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Content This document contains information as follows:		
Policy statements	Must be followed	Y
Procedure	Must be followed	N/A
Guidance	Recommended practice that should be followed	N/A



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Definitions

Staff: anyone employed by DofE including agency staff, those on secondment or placement and contractors.

Volunteer: anyone carrying out a volunteer role for DofE in which they are managed by and/or it has been agreed in writing that they are directly responsible and accountable to DofE whilst carrying out their role. This includes but is not limited to Trustees, volunteers for programmes such as DofE Direct and Youth Ambassadors and others acting as ambassadors for DofE from time-to-time. The term excludes those persons acting in a volunteer capacity for LOs or AAPs or any organisation other than DofE.



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The Policy

This policy is part of the DofE's Safeguarding framework and it applies to all DofE staff and its volunteers. This includes agency staff, contractors, those on placement or secondment.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all DofE staff and volunteers know and understand DofE's expectations in relation to their behaviour. This will include behaviour both inside and outside of work at DofE, whether paid or unpaid.

DofE is committed to promoting the welfare of our participants, staff, volunteers and others we may come into contact with, in the course of our activities. Safeguarding is at the heart of all we do. Setting standards for our behaviour and making sure we conduct ourselves within professional boundaries is key to building a safeguarding culture and putting it into practice.

This means holding one another to account and being willing to challenge behaviour that falls short.

Code of Conduct

What the DofE expects of you as a staff member or volunteer:

- » Be a positive role model, in line with DofE's mission and values
- » Be proactive in helping us safeguard others
- » Treat everyone equally and with dignity and respect
- » Maintain professional boundaries at all times
- » Follow DofE policies and procedures
- » Be responsible and accountable in all you do

You must not act in a way that would put another person at risk or bring DofE into disrepute. This includes failing to act when it is your duty to do so.

Breach of the Code of Conduct will be followed up by DofE in a way that is proportionate and in line with relevant policies. Serious or repeat breaches may lead to disciplinary action.



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Professional Boundaries

The Children Act 2004 states that anyone who comes into contact with children and young people in their work has a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare.

Understanding and maintaining professional boundaries is a key factor to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk. Professional boundaries help create a safe space, demonstrating good safe practice to those DofE come into contact with. Maintaining professional boundaries can help protect our staff and volunteers from allegations.

Everyone working in a way that is guided by professional boundaries and a Code of Conduct is essential to DofE's reputation and its commitment to safeguarding.

As such, the Code of Conduct and Professional Boundaries Policy is a standard that DofE expects all staff and volunteers to comply with.

Staff and volunteers have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children, young people and adults at risk. There may be times where an individual's actions in their personal life could compromise their position within a work setting in relation to the protection of children, young people or adults at risk, resulting in loss of trust and confidence, or bringing the DofE into disrepute.

Staff and volunteers should behave in a manner that would not lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children, young people or adults at risk.

Staff and volunteers must inform their line manager without delay if

- » any cautions, convictions or if they have been arrested or charged with a criminal offence come to light;
- » they believe they may have crossed or blurred professional boundaries;
- » they believe a colleague (staff or volunteer) has crossed or blurred professional boundaries.



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What to do if you have concerns

If you have concerns that a DofE staff member or volunteer has breached the Code of Conduct and/or not maintained appropriate boundaries, you must act without delay and report it to the DSL.

Even where the breach or inappropriate behaviour seems small or a nagging doubt, it should be reported as a Low-Level Concern so that appropriate action can be taken.

In the case of a low-level concern, the action taken may simply be a reminder to the individual concerned regarding DofE's expectations.

Where the concern is more serious or immediate, you must report it as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours of the incident or behaviour coming to your attention. You should report the matter to the DSL.

Doing nothing is never an option. If in doubt, speak to the DSL who will advise you.

Ownership and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to follow this policy.

The DSL shall be responsible for

- » keeping this policy under regular review and updating it to reflect legislation and best practice;
- » ensuring that staff and volunteers receive appropriate training, support and information regarding this policy.

Relevant policies and further information

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Managing Allegations Against Adults Procedures
- Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- HR and Volunteer Management Policies