



**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE  
STUDIO SCHOOL TRUST**

# **Staff Code of Conduct**

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## **Staff Code of Conduct.**

### **1) Background**

This policy sets out the professional standards of conduct for all North Hertfordshire Studio School Trust (NHSST) staff, governors and volunteers and gives guidelines on what action to take in certain situations.

NHSST requires the highest standards of integrity, honesty and trust from all members of staff. This policy identifies key standards which must be observed at all times and sets out professional behaviour appropriate to the nature of the Trust's activities and services. Any breaches of this policy will be regarded as a serious issue to be dealt with under the disciplinary policy.

### **2) General Standards**

Every member of staff should ensure that they remain courteous, efficient and impartial to all groups and individuals in the delivery of services. Staff must accept that they are accountable for their decisions and will submit to the required level of scrutiny as appropriate.

A member of staff should not allow any personal relationship to conflict with their duties or the best interests of a service user, nor must they allow themselves to be compromised by or to take advantage of any relationship with a service user. If staff have any concern about a potential conflict they must discuss this with their line manager.

Staff need to wear clothing appropriate to their role and professional activity within the Trust.

Every member of staff will be as open as possible about all decisions they make. They should be able to give reasons for decisions and restrict information only when individual or commercial confidentiality clearly demands it.

Staff must not act in any way which could have an adverse impact on the reputation of NHSST.

All staff must comply with Health and Safety policies and Equality and Diversity policies as well as all other NHSST policies.

It is everyone's responsibility to make sure that funds and resources are used for the purpose for which they are intended and therefore resources must be safeguarded from abuse, theft and waste to ensure the very best value for money.

Staff are encouraged to raise any concerns in the right way, at the right time, to the right people. Further guidance on such disclosures can be found in the 'Public Interest Disclosure Policy' (Whistleblowing).

### **3) Relationships**

#### **Personal relationships between staff members**

NHSST is a large community and it may happen that some staff have a personal relationship with each other. The personal relationship could be with partners,

spouses, family members or close friends. Staff members who are in personal relationships must declare this in confidence to their line manager or HR so any conflict of interest will be addressed or avoided and favouritism cannot occur.

### **Personal relationships between staff and students who are family members or friends**

Staff may find that members of their family or close friends attend NHSST as students. This could cause a problem where the student is enrolled on a course in the same area as the member of staff is working, i.e. teacher / student relationship. If this occurs the member of staff must inform their line manager or HR and alternative arrangements may be made to verify and assess work to ensure that neither the student nor staff member is put into a vulnerable situation.

### **Personal relationships between staff and students of an intimate, sexual or affectionate nature**

NHSST does not permit any member of staff to have any form of intimate relationship with any student.. Intimate is a general term to describe any form of affection, intimacy or sexual activity, which could be interpreted by the student or another member of staff as inappropriate. Any breach of this policy will lead to disciplinary action.

Sixth Form students may invite staff to social events. It is not recommended for any member of staff to attend a social event with students without the prior permission from their manager. For protection there should be more than one member of staff attending the event, with staff agreeing in advance the arrival and departure times and arranging to arrive and depart together. If staff are invited to social events by pre-sixth form students it is inappropriate for them to attend unless the event is organised by the school.

### **Staff giving lifts to students**

It is Trust policy that staff should not give a personal lift on their own in a car to any student. Staff should not put themselves in a vulnerable situation and therefore should assist the student in finding alternative travel arrangements. If students are waiting for transport at night it is advisable that at least 2 adults should wait with the student.

In the event of an emergency staff should seek to take every precaution to ensure that they do not put themselves in a vulnerable situation. Staff should phone a senior colleague to inform them of the action that they are taking.

### **Students in staff offices**

Students are not usually permitted in staff offices and workrooms in order to protect confidentiality and privacy of staff whilst they are not teaching. If there is no option but to meet students in workrooms, the member of staff is responsible for ensuring that all accessible documentation is covered and protected under the data protection act guidelines.

### **Staff and students in one-to-one tutorials**

Staff should ensure that when conducting tutorials that they do not put themselves in a vulnerable situation. Wherever possible one-to-one tutorials should take place in an appropriate room.

#### **4) Language**

Staff should ensure that the type of language used is appropriate to those with whom they are working. Abusive, offensive, discriminatory or sexual language should not be used in any form of wording, whether verbal or written. Staff should not use over-familiar language with students and other staff to avoid creating the wrong impression.

#### **5) Alcohol and Drugs**

It is not permitted for staff to be at work in any capacity whilst under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs.

#### **6) Smoking**

Smoking is banned in all North Hertfordshire Studio School Trust sites. Staff who smoke must ensure this takes place away from school premises and students.

#### **7) Other work**

Staff should not engage with any other paid or unpaid work that conflicts with their role within the North Hertfordshire Studio School Trust. Staff may not undertake any other paid employment without prior approval. Any member of staff wishing to do so must obtain prior approval from their line manager. This approval will not be unreasonably withheld. Any other work must not have any detrimental effect on the Trust. Any other employment must not be carried out during hours when staff are required to be available for work for the Trust including sickness absence.

Staff must not undertake any paid activity on Trust premises, using Trust equipment, office facilities such as phones, postage or access to secretarial support. This restriction also covers unpaid or voluntary activities.

#### **8) Gifts, Entertainment and Hospitality**

Staff must not accept or give any gift or other inducement which might be construed as a favour in relation to the Trust's business. Gifts of cash or gift vouchers must never be accepted by staff. Staff should not accept gifts, entertainment or hospitality from any consultant, contractor, individual or organisation where it may be viewed that the motives could be to influence the Trust. In all cases offers of gifts or hospitality over the value of £10 must be drawn to the attention of the line manager and recorded on the school/academy register of gifts.

#### **9) Disclosure**

Staff must not at any time share information of a confidential nature gained in the course of their duties. In the case of a disclosure staff should consult their line manager. All media enquiries should be referred to the School/Academy/Executive Principal who will liaise with the NHC marketing department. Everyone else should not make any comments or answer any questions posed by a journalist or someone who may be a journalist.

### **10) Publications and Lectures**

Staff, governors and volunteers who are invited to speak or write for outside audiences are expected to adhere to the Trust's policies. No one may publish articles or deliver lectures relating to the work of the Trust without prior approval from the School/Academy/Executive Principal. If you are paid for writing or speaking during normal working hours the money you receive must be paid to the Trust.

### **11) Financial benefits, grants and loans.**

Staff may not obtain private advantage (other than their proper remuneration) from their employment with the Trust. The only loans and grants which can be obtained are those properly approved under the contract of employment and conditions of service.

### **12) Information Systems**

Staff should adhere to the school/academy IT acceptable use policy. They should apply the same level of care to e-mails, the internet and social networking sites as they should to phone calls and other correspondence, taking care not to:

- Commit acts of defamation
- Infringe intellectual property rights
- Breach confidentiality or data protection principles
- Send or accept offensive or critical material particularly where it relates to employees and students
- Accidentally create contracts or other commitments
- Disclose their own or anyone else's password
- Install inappropriate software onto any work computers

### **13) Use of NHSST Premises**

No one has the right to use the Trust's premises and equipment other than in the course of their duties, unless they are specifically authorised to do so.

### **14) Conflicts of Interest**

NHSST has to ensure that everyone who works within the Trust carries out their business in a way that is appropriate to the nature of our business and avoids conflicts of interests or allegations of bribery or compromise.

You must declare to your line manager any financial or non-financial interests that could be considered in conflict with the interests of the Trust. These may involve awarding contracts to a particular person or firm for example. If in doubt seek advice from your line manager.

You must also ensure that your personal interests do not influence your business decisions and that you don't use your position for personal gain of any sort, either for yourself or related parties.

In certain circumstances outside activities could overlap with the interests of the Trust. If in doubt discuss the matter with your manager and ask for written permission.

**Private use of contractors or consultants**

We recognise that it would be unreasonable to expect our staff not to use a contractor / consultant that is working for the Trust for private work.

However we do insist that the following checks are carried out to ensure that personal gain does not result out of this:

- you should ensure that the work has been quoted for, charged at market rate, paid for and a receipt received
- you should get written approval to use the contractor / consultant for private work from your line manager
- you must not request a personal discount or other arrangement from a contractor / consultant on the basis of them being employed to work for the Trust