Code of Conduct

Whilst undertaking a role with Vision for Education, ABC Teachers or Smart Teachers, you are acting in a position of authority and have a duty of care towards the children, young people and vulnerable adults we work with. You are likely to be seen as a role model and are expected to act appropriately both inside and outside of your role.

General conduct

Be sure to dress appropriately - no jeans or trainers. Collar and tie for men. Some schools and alternative provisions have specific policies relating to dress and personal appearance - always ask your consultant or check your booking confirmation if you are unsure.

Take your original DBS certificate, photo ID (passport or driver's licence) and overseas police check (if applicable) with you wherever you go. Schools and alternative providers will ask to see these documents before allowing you on-site.

Follow the lesson plan if one has been left and ensure you mark any work you have set during the day. Make sure you leave the classroom clean and tidy.

Always familiarise yourself with the school's own policies and procedures (eg safeguarding and child protection, online safety, health and safety and IT policies and procedures) and adhere to them fully. You should also be aware of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) for the site at the start of the booking. For advanced bookings, we'd recommend checking the school's website. If it's a last-minute booking, you can always ask for copies on your arrival at the school. If these policies are not presented to you, it is your responsibility to seek them out.

Sickness and absence

If you are sick or unable to get to your placement for whatever reason, it is imperative that you let us know as soon as possible, so we can contact the school and organise alternative cover if required. Please avoid emailing or texting, as these can be missed - calling your local branch to let them know is much more reliable. If you are going to be absent for more than one day, please call the branch before 6pm to let them know of any ongoing absence and a potential return to work date (if you know it). Each branch has an on-call service, so you can reach us outside working hours for urgent queries.

Harassment of our employees by supply workers

Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our employees is essential. We expect all supply staff to treat our employees respectfully at all times, and take very seriously any threatening, abusive or violent behaviour against any of our staff.

We operate a zero-tolerance policy with regard to harassment. This includes both verbal and physical harassment in person, over the phone, via email or letter, through messaging apps or any other forms of communication.

Any supply staff found to be harassing any of our employees will automatically be permanently struck off our database and we will make the necessary referrals to the police.

Conduct and suitability

Your conduct in both professional and personal circumstances is a key factor in your suitability to work in education settings. We will not tolerate poor conduct in relation to our clients or their staff whilst on placement, and all communications with colleagues should be respectful and appropriate. It is our expectation that all of our agency workers represent us and themselves to a high standard in both professional and personal environments, and any work seeker's failure to uphold professional standards will result in our work finding services being retracted. The right to a formal meeting will not apply, and under our agency worker Terms of Engagement, we reserve the right to immediately terminate all bookings and withdraw our services should an agency worker engage in conduct detrimental to our agency or our client. Depending on the nature of the misconduct, we will also consider our wider responsibility to refer.

Social Networking Policy

Our **Social Networking Policy** contains broad guidance for online conduct and must be adhered to at all times – see Appendix 2 for our **Social Networking Policy**.

Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults

We operate a no contact policy, which should always be adhered to apart from in the following circumstances:

- In the event that a student is at risk of harming themselves.
- In the event that a student is at risk of harming others.
- Where you are providing personal care as part of your agreed job role. You should carry out the task with sensitivity and respect. Ensure another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken.
- Supply workers who are Team Teach trained (please provide your consultant with current proof of qualification).
- Supply workers who are first aid trained and are in a situation where first aid is required (please provide your consultant with current proof of qualification).

If physical contact is necessary, always be mindful that physical contact with a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be misinterpreted.

Usually, you should never be on your own with a child. If you cannot avoid this, make sure you keep the classroom door open and do not block any exits.

Be mindful that schools are often sociologically complex and multi-cultural, so sensitivity is key to success in teaching.

When working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, you must not:

- Allow allegations or concerns to go unreported.
- Take unnecessary risks.
- Consume alcohol, smoke or use illegal substances.
- Develop inappropriate relationships with children, young people or vulnerable adults. If you think a student may be infatuated with you, speak to the school or setting's DSL or Deputy DSL as soon as possible, so that appropriate action can be taken.
- Make inappropriate promises to children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Touch a student in any way that could be considered indecent, nor indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights.
- Engage in behaviour that is in any way abusive, including having any form of sexual contact with a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Let a child, young person or vulnerable adult have your personal contact details (including but not limited to mobile number, email or postal address), or have contact with them via a personal social media account.
- Accept gifts from students or their parents/carers. That said, occasionally students or their parents or carers may wish to give tokens of appreciation (for example at Christmas). These may be accepted if they are not of significant value.
- Offer lifts to a child, young person or vulnerable adult outside the agreements of your role.
- Spend time with students off-site outside of the agreements of your role.
- Accept invitations to events on the school grounds offered by students, without first making school staff aware that you plan to attend.
- Use pupil toilets

You should:

- Promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect.
- Be patient with others.
- Exercise caution when you are discussing sensitive issues with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Be vigilant and respond accordingly to instances of peer on peer abuse, including any sexual violence and sexual harassment between children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Ensure your contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults is appropriate and relevant to the work you are involved in.

You are responsible for:

- Prioritising the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Providing a safe learning environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

- Having good awareness of issues to do with safeguarding and child protection and taking action when appropriate.
- Reporting all safeguarding and child protection concerns immediately in line with our **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**.
- Following our principles, policies and procedures.

If staff have safeguarding concerns, or an allegation is made about another member of staff (including supply staff and volunteers) posing a risk of harm to children, then this should be referred to the Headteacher or Principal.

Allegations against teachers and other staff, including supply staff and volunteers, will be managed in accordance with the Department for Education's 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021' guidance. Any safeguarding concerns or allegations must be reported immediately to the school or alternative provision's DSL where it is alleged that anyone working in a school or alternative provision, including supply staff, has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child, young person or vulnerable adult
- committed, or possibly committed, a criminal offence against, or related to, a child, young person or vulnerable adult
- behaved, or may have behaved, in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children, young people or vulnerable adults, or
- behaved, or may have behaved, in a way that indicates he or she may not be suitable to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

If any incidents occur, you should first record what has happened on paper and report it to the DSL or Deputy DSL for the school or alternative provision.

If a student discloses information that they, or another child, young person or vulnerable adult, are at risk, or you have any other reason for concern regarding a child, young person or vulnerable adult, then immediate action must be taken. You have a duty of care to report this to the school or alternative provision's DSL or Deputy DSL as soon as possible.

All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

You must also record the incident or disclosure as factually as possible, by writing down what was said (word for word if possible), the date, time and your name. Be careful that you do not over question the pupil or take a full statement.

Incidents and allegations

The company rules are designed to encourage supply workers to achieve and maintain high standards of conduct and safeguarding. Supply workers are required to complete safeguarding and child protection training, which will be provided by the company, if equivalent training has not been completed within the last year.

The aim of this procedure is to set out the actions to be taken when these rules are breached and to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all.

This procedure is designed to establish the facts quickly and deal with safeguarding matters consistently. No action will be taken until the case has been fully investigated.

This procedure may be implemented at any stage if the supply worker's alleged misconduct warrants such action. This procedure applies to all supply workers regardless of length of service.

Incidents and allegations procedure

Whilst working for the company, should an incident or allegation be made against you, the following procedures will be followed:

- If a school or alternative provision informs us of a particular incident, but they do not wish to take the matter further, a Safeguarding Manager will call you to arrange a meeting to discuss the incident or allegation. You will not be offered any further work until after the meeting and will not be paid by the company during this time. During the meeting, you will have the opportunity to discuss the incident and put forward their version of events. After the meeting, a decision will be made regarding whether you can continue to work for the company. Where it is decided that further work will be offered, it is expected that additional training will be completed before recommencing work, including child protection, safeguarding and GDPR training and, if appropriate, a Team Teach

course.

- If a school or alternative provision informs us of a particular incident or allegation, and they are takingthe matter further, the school or alternative provision will inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the school will investigate the incident or allegation. If the incident or allegation reaches the LADO threshold, a position of trust meeting will be organised, where representatives from the company, the school or alternative provision and, in some instances, the police and social workers meet with the LADO to discuss the incident or allegation. This process can be lengthy, and you will not be allowed to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults in any capacity during this time. You will not be paid by the company during this process. Our decision regarding whether to work with you again will be based on the outcome of this process. Outcomes will be oneof the following:

1. **The allegation is malicious** – you will be able to continue to work in regulated activity and can continue working through our agencies.
2. **The allegation is unsubstantiated** – you will be able to continue to work in regulated activity and can continue working through our agencies.
3. **The allegation is unfounded** – you will be able to continue to work in regulated activity and can continue working through our agencies.
4. **The allegation is substantiated and the harm level has been reached** – you will not be able to continue being registered with Vision for Education, ABC Teachers and Smart Teachers.
5. **The allegation is substantiated but the harm level has not been reached** – you will be invited to a safeguarding review meeting and a decision will be made as to whether you can continue working through our agencies.

Safeguarding review meeting

A safeguarding review meeting will be held by a Safeguarding Manager and a note taker. As supply workers are not employees, you do not have the right to be accompanied. However, in the interest of general fairness we will allow a trade union representative or work colleague to accompany you if you feel that is necessary. If you intend to be accompanied, then advance notice must be given.

Depending on the seriousness of the incident or allegation, we may also make a report to statutory agencies such as the police, Disclosure Barring Service, Teaching Regulation Authority and the local authority's Child Protection Service.

Please note that if you become the subject of an allegation or investigation by another agency, employer, the TRA, police or any other body, you must notify your local branch immediately.

Appendix 1

Low Level Concerns

Allegations/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold are referred to as 'low level' concerns. The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold of harm.
A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct*, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

*As a member of supply staff, we ask that you make considerations of our **Safeguarding Policies** and **Code of Conduct** alongside that of the client school or setting.

Examples of such behaviour that may constitute a low level concern could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

Our **Low Level Concerns Policy** applies to any adult working in or on behalf of our agency – meaning that low level concerns can be self-reported by and/or shared about them. An individual may wish to self-report - occasionally a member of staff may find themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, or might appear compromising to others. Equally, a member of staff may, for whatever reason, have behaved in a manner which, on reflection, they consider falls below the standard set out in the staff code of conduct. These concerns should be shared with the headteacher or principal of the school or setting, along with the agency's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). DSL contact details can be found in our **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**.

How to report a low level concern

It is crucial that all low level allegations/concerns are reported immediately to the headteacher or principal of the school or setting.

Low level concerns can be reported either verbally or with a written summary. Some schools or settings may also provide a low level concern form. All supply staff are expected to familiarise themselves with the client school/setting's policies and forms at the start of their placement.

Appendix 2

Social Networking Policy

Vision for Education, ABC Teachers and Smart Teachers acknowledge that social networking sites provide a number of benefits, but all professionals should be aware of the many challenges and potential difficulties associated with electronic communication and social media. The aim of this policy is to provide clear guidance to all candidates whilst engaged in schools and alternative provision.

- Social networking sites should not be visited during the school day.
- Protect your mobile phone, laptop and computer with a PIN whilst in school to protect access to its content and potential misuse.
- Differentiate friends from professional connections by using access and privacy settings. Keep these under review and regularly audit and re-evaluate the information about you and who has access to it.
- Headteachers, parents, pupils and prospective employers may look you up on social media. Ask yourself if you would be comfortable about your content being viewed. If not, remove any dubious material.
- Do not engage in online activities that may bring yourself, the school or alternative provision, or the agency into disrepute. Derogatory, defamatory or offensive comments about pupils, parents and carers or colleagues must not be posted.
- Always maintain a professional tone online. Use of expletives, sexual content or any form of discrimination or harassment is always unacceptable. Do not allow pupils or parents and carers to make you their online 'friend' and do not instigate any befriending yourself. Parents and carers should be encouraged to use more formal channels to contact you.
- Do not exchange private texts, phone numbers, personal email addresses or photos of a personal nature with pupils or parents and carers.
- Do not allow others to tag you in photos without your permission – this needs to be agreed with your friends, especially on a night out.
- No confidential information about pupils, parents and carers or colleagues may be disclosed on social networking sites.
- Do not use networking sites to raise concerns about work or your colleagues – use the appropriate internal channels or call your Vision for Education, ABC Teachers or Smart Teachers' consultant.
- If you do post your opinions online, make it clear that these are your personal views and not those of your employer by adding a statement to that effect.
- Respect copyright and fair use. Credit authors for their work and ask for the necessary permissions where appropriate
- Contact your consultant if you come across any material that is likely to reflect badly on yourself, the school or Vision for Education, ABC Teachers or Smart Teachers.

For further information regarding cyberbullying and cybercrime, please refer to our **Safeguarding and Child Protection policy**