



Staff Code of Conduct

Approved by:	Lauren Meston	Date: 27/08/2026
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1. Purpose and scope

Future Pathways expects every adult working in or on behalf of the organisation to maintain the highest standards of personal and professional conduct. This Code of Conduct defines the behaviour, boundaries and safeguarding expectations that apply to employees, agency and temporary staff, contractors, volunteers, trainees, Directors and any other adult whose role brings them into contact with learners.

The Code is a safeguarding document as well as an employment standard. It should be read alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Low-Level Concerns Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Online Safety and Mobile Phone Policy, Behaviour Policy, Use of Reasonable Force Policy, Data Protection Policy and Safer Recruitment Policy.

Future Pathways is a trauma-informed alternative provision. Staff are expected to understand the impact of trauma, SEND, SEMH needs and adverse experiences while maintaining clear, predictable and professional boundaries at all times.

2. Core principles

place the safety, welfare and education of children and young people at the centre of professional decision-making

act with honesty, integrity, fairness and respect

treat all learners with dignity and never exploit their vulnerability, trust or dependence

maintain appropriate professional boundaries in person, online and outside work

challenge discrimination, harassment, bullying, sexualised behaviour and unsafe practice

act on safeguarding concerns immediately and never investigate a disclosure personally

work within competence, training, risk assessments and Future Pathways procedures

be open to professional challenge and report concerns about the conduct of adults, however small

understand that conduct outside work may be relevant where it raises safeguarding, suitability, reputational or professional concerns.

3. Professional standards and relationships

Staff must uphold public trust and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour. The principles of the Teachers' Standards concerning dignity, mutual respect, safeguarding, professional boundaries, tolerance and responsible expression of personal beliefs are expected across Future Pathways, whether or not an individual holds qualified teacher status.

Use respectful, age-appropriate and non-humiliating language.

Do not shout at, ridicule, shame, threaten or deliberately intimidate a learner.

Do not use discriminatory, sexualised, degrading, aggressive or offensive language.

Do not create favourites or special relationships that could be perceived as exclusive, secretive or dependent.

Do not use rewards, gifts, money, food or privileges to create inappropriate loyalty or dependency.

Maintain consistent boundaries while adapting support appropriately for individual need, SEND, disability, trauma or communication difficulty.

Do not encourage learners to keep secrets from parents/carers, safeguarding staff or other professionals.

Never enter into a sexual or romantic relationship with a learner or young person for whom the adult holds a position of trust.

4. Safeguarding responsibilities

All staff must read KCSIE 2026 Part One and understand the local safeguarding arrangements provided at induction and through annual updates. Safeguarding concerns about a learner must be reported to Lauren Meston (DSL) or a trained DDSL without delay. If a child is in immediate danger or at risk of serious harm, staff should take emergency action, including contacting 999 where necessary.

Listen carefully and take disclosures seriously; do not promise confidentiality.

Record concerns factually, including the child's own words where relevant, actions taken, decisions and rationale.

Do not conduct an investigation, repeatedly question a child or seek evidence beyond what is needed to establish immediate safety.

Share safeguarding information on a need-to-know basis. Data protection law must not be used as a barrier to appropriate safeguarding information sharing.

Remain professionally curious, particularly where behaviour, attendance, mental health, injuries or changes in presentation could indicate harm.

Do not assume that a safeguarding indicator is simply caused by SEND, disability, trauma or SEMH.

5. Concerns or allegations about adults

Future Pathways promotes a culture of openness, trust and transparency. A low-level concern is not insignificant: it is any concern, however small, that an adult working in or on behalf of Future Pathways may have acted inconsistently with this Code of Conduct but the behaviour does not appear to meet the harm threshold.

Examples can include over-friendliness, favouritism, taking photographs on a personal device, unnecessary secluded one-to-one contact, inappropriate messaging, boundary-blurring behaviour, or intimidating, sexualised or offensive language.

Low-level concerns, including self-referrals, must be reported promptly in accordance with the Low-Level Concerns Policy.

Concerns that may meet the harm threshold must be reported immediately to the appropriate senior person and considered under KCSIE/LADO procedures.

Where the concern is about Lauren Meston, staff must use the alternative senior/governance route set out in the safeguarding and low-level concerns policies.

Staff must not investigate concerns about colleagues themselves or alert the person concerned where doing so could compromise safeguarding action.

Knowingly failing to report unsafe adult conduct may itself be a disciplinary and safeguarding concern.

6. One-to-one working and visibility

One-to-one work may be appropriate, but it must be professionally justified and conducted in a location and manner that protects both the learner and member of staff.

Use rooms with visibility panels/open doors where appropriate and avoid unnecessarily secluded locations.

Where a learner's risk assessment, safeguarding plan or activity requires additional staffing, those arrangements must be followed.

Do not arrange private meetings with learners outside Future Pathways arrangements or meet learners socially.

Where privacy is needed for a safeguarding, medical, pastoral or trauma-support conversation, staff should balance confidentiality with safe-working arrangements and ensure relevant colleagues know where the session is taking place.

7. Physical contact, personal care and reasonable force

Appropriate physical contact must always be necessary, proportionate, professionally justified and sensitive to the learner's age, SEND, communication needs, trauma history, culture and wishes. Staff should be alert to how contact may be experienced or perceived.

Do not initiate physical contact for personal gratification, affection or as a means of creating exclusivity.

Never use physical contact as punishment, humiliation, intimidation or retaliation.

Restrictive intervention or reasonable force may only be used in accordance with the Future Pathways Use of Reasonable Force Policy and current DfE guidance.

Use de-escalation and the least restrictive response wherever reasonably possible.

Record and report any significant physical intervention in accordance with policy.

Where intimate or personal care is required, staff must follow the learner's agreed plan and safeguarding arrangements.

8. Communication with learners

Communication must take place through approved Future Pathways channels and for legitimate educational, safeguarding or pastoral purposes.

Do not give learners personal telephone numbers, private email addresses, personal social-media handles or gaming/contact details.

Do not privately message learners through WhatsApp, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Discord or similar personal services.

Any exceptional contact needed for an emergency or approved off-site activity must use the agreed organisational method and be transparent to management.

Language, emojis, images, jokes and tone must remain professional and appropriate to the adult-child relationship.

Do not delete or conceal professional communications that should form part of an organisational record.

9. Personal mobile phones, photographs and recordings

Staff must follow the Future Pathways Online Safety and Mobile Phone Policy. Personal devices must not be used to photograph, film or record learners. Images used for legitimate educational evidence must only be captured using an authorised Future Pathways arrangement/device and handled in accordance with consent, safeguarding and data-protection requirements.

Personal mobile phones should not be used during direct teaching/supervision except where a specific role-based exception has been authorised.

Do not allow a learner to use a staff member's personal device.

Do not store learner photographs, videos, contact details or safeguarding information on personal devices or personal cloud accounts.

Never make covert audio/video recordings of learners or colleagues unless expressly authorised under a lawful organisational procedure.

Report accidental capture, loss, sharing or storage of learner information immediately as a safeguarding/data-protection incident where appropriate.

10. Social media and online conduct

Do not accept or initiate social-media connections with current learners.

Do not use social media to communicate privately with learners or to monitor them informally.

Use privacy settings appropriately but remember that online content can become public.

Do not post confidential information, learner images, safeguarding information, internal disputes or material that could reasonably undermine professional trust or bring Future Pathways into disrepute.

Do not engage in online harassment, discriminatory conduct, impersonation, sexualised communication or conduct incompatible with working safely with children.

If a learner contacts a member of staff through a personal account, do not continue the conversation; preserve relevant evidence if necessary and report it through the appropriate safeguarding route.

11. Online safety, technology and AI

Staff must use Future Pathways systems responsibly and comply with filtering, monitoring, cyber-security and acceptable-use arrangements. Pete Meston is the Designated Online Safety Coordinator; safeguarding responsibility remains with the DSL/DDSL team.

Do not bypass filtering or monitoring controls, use unauthorised VPNs or facilitate learner access to blocked services.

Do not share passwords or leave logged-in devices accessible to learners.

Report harmful or concerning online content, searches or communications through the safeguarding route.

Generative AI must not be used to process confidential, special-category or safeguarding data unless the system and use have been expressly approved.

AI-generated images, deepfakes, nudification, impersonation or sexualised content involving learners must be treated as safeguarding concerns.

12. Confidentiality, data protection and records

Keep learner, family and staff information confidential and only access information needed for the role.

Do not discuss learners in public places, on personal messaging groups or with people who do not need to know.

Use approved systems for records and communications.

Keep safeguarding, attendance, medical and personal information secure; do not leave records unattended in vehicles, public spaces or unsecured rooms.

Never falsify, backdate, destroy or deliberately omit a required record.

Report data breaches, misdirected emails, lost paperwork/devices or unauthorised access immediately.

13. Equality, inclusion and discrimination

Staff must uphold Future Pathways' Inclusion Policy and the Equality Act 2010. Discrimination, harassment, victimisation and prejudice-based conduct by staff are unacceptable.

Treat people fairly and respectfully regardless of protected characteristic, background, family circumstances, SEND, care status or other difference.

Challenge discriminatory language and behaviour rather than normalising it as banter.

Make reasonable adjustments and follow individual plans where required.

Do not impose personal political, religious or ideological views in a way that exploits a learner's vulnerability or inhibits balanced education.

Maintain an inclusive, trauma-informed environment while preserving safeguarding and professional boundaries.

14. Behaviour management and professional authority

Apply the Behaviour Policy consistently, calmly and proportionately.

Do not use sarcasm, ridicule, humiliation, collective punishment or retaliatory sanctions.

Do not escalate conflict to win an argument or prove authority.

Use trauma-informed de-escalation while maintaining clear boundaries and expectations.

Consider whether behaviour may indicate unmet SEND, mental-health, exploitation or safeguarding needs.

Record significant incidents accurately and report safeguarding concerns separately where required.

15. Medication, first aid, allergies and medical needs

Only administer medication or undertake medical procedures in accordance with Future Pathways policy, training and authorisation.

Follow Individual Healthcare Plans, Allergy Action Plans and emergency procedures.

All staff must know the location of the emergency spare adrenaline auto-injectors and follow their training where anaphylaxis is suspected.

Do not withhold medically necessary support as a sanction.

Medical information must be treated confidentially but shared where necessary to keep a learner safe.

16. Gifts, money, favouritism and financial boundaries

Do not lend or borrow money from learners or enter into private financial arrangements with them or their families.

Do not give significant personal gifts to individual learners or accept gifts that could create obligation, preferential treatment or perceived impropriety.

Low-value tokens given openly as part of an approved reward system are permitted where consistent with policy.

Any unusual gift, offer, financial request or boundary concern should be discussed with a manager.

17. Transport, off-site work and lone working

Follow the Transport, Lone Working, Educational Visits and Absconding procedures relevant to the activity.

Do not make unauthorised detours, personal stops or private arrangements while transporting learners.

Use company/approved vehicles and required safety equipment in accordance with policy.

Where lone transport is authorised, follow the approved risk controls, including dash-camera arrangements where applicable.

High-risk home visits or activities identified as requiring two staff must not be undertaken alone.

Maintain the same professional boundaries off site and during community activities as on Future Pathways premises.

18. Staff conduct outside work

Future Pathways respects staff privacy. However, conduct outside work may become relevant where it raises concerns about an individual's suitability to work with children, creates a safeguarding risk, breaches professional trust, involves criminality or discriminatory/harassing conduct, or significantly damages confidence in the organisation.

Staff must promptly disclose arrests, charges, cautions, convictions, professional restrictions or other relevant changes in circumstances where required by law, contract or safeguarding policy.

Staff must not form inappropriate relationships with learners outside Future Pathways.

Personal social-media activity should not compromise safeguarding, confidentiality, professional boundaries or public trust.

19. Alcohol, drugs, smoking and fitness for work

Staff must not work while impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs, misused medication or any substance that makes them unsafe to perform their duties.

Illegal drugs must never be brought onto Future Pathways premises or activities.

Prescription medication that may materially affect safe performance should be considered through appropriate occupational-health/risk arrangements without unnecessary disclosure of medical information.

Smoking and vaping must comply with site rules and must not take place with learners or in a way that models prohibited learner behaviour.

20. Health and safety and duty of care

Follow risk assessments, safe systems of work and instructions relevant to the role.

Report hazards, accidents, near misses and defective equipment promptly.

Do not undertake tasks requiring specialist competence, authorisation or training unless appropriately trained and authorised.

Maintain appropriate supervision of learners, particularly in higher-risk vocational, catering, salon, gym/boxing and off-site activities.

Know emergency, fire, lockdown/invacuation, first-aid and lone-working arrangements relevant to the role.

21. Whistleblowing and challenging unsafe practice

Staff have a professional responsibility to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice. Concerns should be raised through the Whistleblowing Policy where appropriate. Nobody should be disadvantaged for raising a genuine concern in the public interest or for appropriately challenging unsafe safeguarding practice.

If a staff member feels unable to raise a safeguarding issue internally or believes a genuine safeguarding concern is not being addressed, they should use the external routes identified in the Whistleblowing and Safeguarding policies, including the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line where appropriate.

22. Breaches of the Code

A breach of this Code will be considered according to its seriousness, context and safeguarding implications. It may result in management guidance, training, supervision, a low-level concern process, disciplinary action, referral to the LADO, police, Disclosure and Barring Service, Teaching Regulation Agency or another professional/regulatory body where applicable.

Not every breach is gross misconduct. Future Pathways will assess matters fairly and proportionately. However, conduct involving abuse, serious safeguarding failures, sexual misconduct, violence, serious discrimination/harassment, deliberate misuse of confidential information, serious dishonesty, prohibited relationships, or conduct that creates a serious risk to children may amount to gross misconduct.

A concern being unsubstantiated does not mean that a person raising it acted maliciously. Staff must not retaliate against, intimidate or disadvantage someone for raising a genuine concern.

23. Monitoring and review

Lauren Meston, Managing Director and DSL, has overall responsibility for ensuring this Code is implemented alongside the organisation's safeguarding and employment procedures. Managers must model the standards expected and address concerns promptly rather than allowing boundary drift or unsafe practice to become normalised.

The Code will be reviewed at least annually, and sooner where KCSIE, DfE guidance, employment/safeguarding law or Future Pathways procedures change, or where learning from an incident indicates that amendment is required.

Appendix 1 - Staff safeguarding boundaries: quick guide

Area	Expected standard
Professional communication	Use approved Future Pathways channels; no private social-media or personal messaging with learners.
Photos / video	Never use a personal device to capture learner images. Use only authorised arrangements.
One-to-one work	Keep it professionally justified, appropriately visible and consistent with risk/support plans.
Physical contact	Necessary, appropriate and proportionate only; follow the Use of Reasonable Force Policy where intervention is required.
Gifts / money	No loans or private financial arrangements; avoid gifts that create obligation or favouritism.
Low-level concern	Report promptly, even if it feels small or is a concern about your own conduct.
Safeguarding concern	Tell DSL/DDSL without delay; record facts accurately; do not investigate yourself.
Whistleblowing	Speak up about poor or unsafe practice; use external routes if internal concerns are not addressed.

Appendix 2 - Staff declaration

I confirm that I have received, read and understood the Future Pathways Staff Code of Conduct. I understand that it applies to my conduct on site, off site, online and, where relevant to safeguarding or professional suitability, outside working hours. I understand my responsibility to raise safeguarding concerns, low-level concerns and unsafe practice promptly and to seek advice if I am unsure about a professional boundary.

Name: _____

Role: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Manager/Induction sign-off: _____