

A Star Learning Services Ltd

Staff Code of Conduct and Allegations About Staff Policy 2025/26

Reviewed: July 2025

Next Review: July 2026

Responsibility: Justin Talbot (DSL) & Nettie Hodson (DDSL)

Staff Code of Conduct

It is imperative that all staff adhere to this code of conduct at all times. Failure to do so will result in dismissal and may be followed up with a referral to any appropriate bodies, including police, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Staff MUST:

- Maintain a professional demeanour at all times
- Keep cameras switched on during online sessions, with backgrounds blurred where possible
- Dress appropriately, ensuring good standards of dress and avoiding unnecessary exposure
- Keep language consistent with learning
- Report any instances of inappropriate behaviour to the DSL team as soon as possible
- Report any safeguarding concerns as per the safeguarding policy
- Report any concerns they have about other members of staff to Justin Talbot as soon as possible
- Start sessions on time, and finish on time
- Use online platforms and digital tools as directed by Justin Talbot
- Adhere to all company policies, including the safeguarding policy
- Keep all information secure and take steps to ensure their learning environment (including online) is secure at all times
- **Disclose to Justin Talbot directly, if they are or have been subject to a police investigation, have been convicted of a crime, or if any children in their care are or have been subject to a Section 47 Child Protection investigation.**

Staff MUST NOT:

- Contact students via personal channels, including social media
- Share social media platforms with students or request them to join these platforms

- Offer to or meet up with students outside of any timetabled lessons (this includes any informal "support" arrangements which must be agreed by Justin Talbot)
- Use any discriminatory language (including, but not limited to, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity/race, body type, nationality or anything else that may be considered discriminatory)
- Use foul or offensive language or gestures
- Use 'pet' names or terms of endearment for students
- Make any record of students on any personal devices
- Share information about students outside of the organisation unless otherwise directed
- Post any information to social media about their work with A Star Learning Services Ltd
- Use language that may be interpreted in any way as intimidating, bullying, shaming or otherwise detrimental to the wellbeing of the child (this includes shouting)
- Use body language or facial expressions that may be interpreted in the above way
- Behave in any other way that may bring their professionalism or A Star Learning Services Ltd's reputation into disrepute

Managing Staff Allegations

Allegations about members of staff may arise from various sources, such as:

- Students
- Parents
- Members of the public
- External professionals
- Other members of staff
- The staff member themselves (self-disclosure)

All allegations of abuse of children by those who work with children must be taken seriously. Allegations against any person who works with children can cover a wide range of circumstances.

This procedure should be applied when there is an allegation or concern that a person who works with children, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children;
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The last bullet point above includes behaviour that may have happened outside an organisation that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children; this is known as transferable risk.

An allegation can relate to an adult's behaviour outside work, and their relationships with others, if they:

- Have behaved in a way in their personal life that raises safeguarding concerns. These concerns do not have to directly relate to a child but could, for example, include an arrest for the possession of a weapon;
- Have, as a parent or carer, become subject to child protection procedures;
- Are closely associated with someone in their personal lives (e.g. partner, member of the family or other household member) who may present a risk of harm to child/ren for whom the adult is responsible in their employment/volunteering.

Allegations of historical abuse should be responded to in the same way as contemporary concerns. In such cases, it is important to find out whether the person against whom the allegation is made is still working with children and if so, to refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Decisions regarding informing the person's current employer or voluntary organisation should be made in consultation with the LADO.

The procedure for raising a complaint should be displayed on the company website, and this should be followed by external stakeholders to raise an allegation. Staff members raising an allegation should contact Justin Talbot directly.

Justin Talbot is the main link for any allegations about members of staff. He will keep detailed written records of any allegation made. Allegations can sometimes be 'low-level' and, while one allegation might not warrant action, a series of these that builds a pattern could be cause for further concern and subsequent investigation. All allegations will be treated with confidence and will not be shared beyond a 'need-to-know' basis.

He will liaise with appropriate bodies, including external agencies if relevant. This includes the relevant LADO, who will be able to advise whether the allegation meets LADO threshold, or if it can be handled internally. He will always follow LADO advice as a priority, should this be present.

If the subject of the complaint is Justin Talbot, then a referral to the LADO in the relevant borough should be made directly. Details can be found on the relevant council's website.

Depending on the level of the allegation, Justin Talbot will decide what actions need to be taken. If there is any risk that a child has been harmed or is at significant risk of harm, the subject of the allegation will be stopped from working with children until the investigation is complete.

Normally the following procedures will take place:

- Written statements will be taken from all involved parties
- Any recordings or other evidence made will be scrutinised
- Usually, the student involved will be assigned to a different member of staff while the investigation takes place
- Sometimes, the staff member will be suspended while the investigation takes place
- Advice will be sought from relevant bodies on appropriate actions
- All involved parties will be informed of the outcome of the allegation, together with any further action taken

The outcome of the investigation will return one of five judgements:

1. **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation;
2. **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive;
3. **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;
4. **Unsubstantiated:** this is not the same as a false allegation. It means that there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation; the term therefore does not imply guilt or innocence;
5. **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

Depending on the outcome, the following actions may then be taken:

- Dismissal of the staff member and a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)
- A referral made to the DBS and/or the Police and follow up action with the LADO
- Retraining of the staff member to ensure the action does not occur again
- Reorganisation of the staff member's responsibilities, either generally or with the student(s) concerned
- No further action taken
- Other actions as deemed appropriate
- If an allegation is malicious or false, then services may be terminated and further legal advice will be sought about next steps to take with the complainant

Justin Talbot (A Star Learning Services Ltd)

justin@astarlearningservices.com

LADO Contact Details:

Dorset: Referral form can be accessed here:

<https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fpdscp.co.uk%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2025%2F06%2FDC-LADO-Referral-Template.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK> and email it to lado@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk - 01305 221122.

BCP: 01202 817 600; email on LADO@bcpcouncil.gov.uk