
Safeguarding Code of Conduct

Version 2 – September 2021

Introduction

In keeping with its vision and values, The British Council is committed to maintaining the highest degree of conduct amongst all its staff and associated personnel. To help increase understanding, this Code of Conduct details The British Council's expectations of employees in key areas.

Scope and purpose

This Safeguarding Code of Conduct applies to anyone working with or for the British Council

This includes directly employed staff, trustees, contractors, agency staff, consultants, volunteers, and interns.

The purpose of this Safeguarding Code of Conduct is to set out the behaviour expected of all staff, ensuring that everyone is aware of their responsibilities. Therefore, providing confidence and assurance to all about the British Council's ongoing commitment to promoting and achieving safe environments. This Code of Conduct sits alongside the Safeguarding Strategy, the Safeguarding Policy and other procedural documents that form the Safeguarding framework. The Safeguarding Code of Conduct is always applicable. Breaches of the Code of Conduct may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

The British Council is the United Kingdom's ("UK") international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. It was founded in 1934 and was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1940. A Supplemental Charter of Incorporation was granted in 1993. It is registered as a charity in England and Wales and in Scotland. The British Council receives an annual grant-in-aid from and is sponsored by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), from which the British Council has operational independence. As well as its legal status as a charity incorporated by Royal Charter, the British Council is classified by the Office of National Statistics as a public non-financial corporation and as an executive non-departmental public body.

The Safeguarding Code of Conduct is applicable in the UK and globally wherever local conditions allow. Where practices and legislation are more developed and extensive, we aim to meet these. British Council staff irrespective of their work location are expected to abide by local laws and are required to ensure their behaviour conforms with the Code of Conduct.

Organisational Values

The values of the British Council underpin everything we say and do, how we work with people, behave towards them, and communicate. Here is a brief description of what each value means to us.

Open and Committed

Our belief in what we do translates into a deep and long-term commitment to people we work with and the places where we work. We tackle challenges and take responsibility with openness and honesty to bring about positive change.

Expert and Inclusive

Inclusion is at the heart of everything we do. By involving everyone in the conversation we learn from each other and bring together all our experience, knowledge, and expertise to do the best work that we can.

Optimistic and Bold

Positive and creative we focus on what works. We are not afraid to make bold choices to shape a better future for everyone.

Safeguarding Code of Conduct Standards

As a British Council employee, we should:

Uphold the integrity and reputation of The British Council by ensuring that your professional and personal conduct is consistent with The British Council's values and standards. You should

Always:

- Treat all people fairly with respect, dignity and non-discrimination
- When working in an international context or travelling internationally on behalf of the British Council, be observant of local laws and respectful of local customs.
- Seek to ensure that your conduct, at work and outside of work does not bring the British Council into disrepute or impact on or undermine your ability to undertake the role for which you are employed.
- Listen to and respect children and adults, empower them and where appropriate, allow them to participate in planning and delivering activities as much as possible
- As far as possible, be visible and accessible when working with children and adults
- Dress appropriately for the task undertaken and in situation which we are working
- Be aware of situations in which you are working that may present risks for children and adults and take appropriate actions
- Exercise due care in all matters.
- Contribute to ensure a sense of accountability amongst staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged.
- Report any concerns you may have about the protection or wellbeing of a child/children or adults at risk to your Safeguarding Focal Point, Line Manager or Corporate Safeguarding Team.
- Observe confidentiality and only share information relating to situations of actual or suspected abuse that occurs in accordance with this guidance. This is necessary to protect the privacy of those involved.
- Teachers are encouraged to consult the Safeguarding intranet page which has additional resources to ensure teaching is as safe as possible.
- Always use British Council business email accounts and copy in parents when sending communications to children.
- Adhere to all legal and health and safety requirements in effect at your work location

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- Comply with any organisational health and safety and security guidelines and procedures.
 - Behave in a manner such as to avoid any unnecessary risk to the safety, health and welfare of yourself and others including beneficiary organisations and local communities.

Never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or abuse children or adults
- Behave in a way meant to shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade anyone
- Show differential treatment or favour children or adults to the exclusion of others.
- Use language or make suggestions which are inappropriate, offensive, or abusive
- Spend time alone with a beneficiary / customer child or adult/s at risk away from other
- Engage in abusive or exploitative manner
- Engage in sexual activity with a child (persons under the age of 18). Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence.
- Pay for sexual services, of any kind at any time with anyone under the age of 18 years old, even if the age of sexual consent in a country is below 18, or with an adult service user or beneficiary.
- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual favours or other forms of degrading exploitative behaviour.
- Engage in any exploitative activities for personal or commercial gain with children or adults including child labour or human trafficking activities
- Expose children or adults to pornographic/indecent materials of any form
- Permit or encourage children or adults to take part in activities that are illegal, unsafe, or abusive.
- Take or condone the taking of illegal drugs
- Work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Sleep in the same room as a child or vulnerable adult who is a British Council beneficiary or service user.
- Invite, or allow a child you have met through work into your home
- Enter a child's home without invitation, without agreement of line management as to the purpose, and without another responsible adult present
- Enter the home of an adult beneficiary without agreement of line management as to the purpose
- Encourage children or adults to communicate privately with you using personal email accounts, social networking sites, mobile phones, or other means of communication
- Use British Council IT equipment, software or e-mail and social media platforms to engage in activity that is illegal under local or international law or that encourages conduct that would constitute a criminal offence. This includes any material that intimidates or harasses any group based on protected characteristics, or encourages extremism
- Use the British Council's IT equipment to view, download, create, share or save in any format inappropriate or abusive material including but not limited to indecent images of children and or adults
- Take photos of children or adults participating in British Council activities without obtaining prior consent. Written parental consent or consent from a child's legal guardian is always required to take and use photographs, and audio or video materials
- Allow allegations or disclosures of abuse to go unreported
- Divulge confidential information relating to colleagues, work-related matters or any sensitive information unless legally required to do so.
- Agree to keep secret information relating to abuse or exploitation of a child or adult

The overall principle is, that staff should avoid any actions or behaviour's that may be perceived as inappropriate or abusive.

Signature of staff member:

Position held:

Date:

In accepting employment with the British Council, I undertake to discharge my duties in accordance with the requirements of this Code of Conduct which I have read and understood.

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To be reviewed September 2022.

Safeguarding Team