

# Our charity's Code of Conduct

Our Code of Conduct is based on our charity's values and should be followed by everyone who works or volunteers at our charity, alongside the professional codes of conduct relevant to individual roles. Our Code of Conduct is:

## 1. Safeguarding those in our care

We all have a duty for the safeguarding of those in our care, including our employees. Everyone must ensure we meet our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and adults that we support and those who work and volunteer for the charity. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

- **So always:** follow your local safeguarding processes if you have concerns
- **And never:** ignore a concern, be it with a child or person we support, staff member or volunteer

## 2. Stay within the law and our charity's policies

We all have a duty to follow the law and our charity's policies. Our policies exist to help everyone understand how to stay within laws like the Care Act or Social Services and Wellbeing Act, Children and Families' Act, Health and Safety Act, Data Protection Act and The Charities Act. Everyone should read and understand our policies.

- **So always:** read our policies on NAS Policies
- **And never:** break the law

## 3. Be professional

It takes a lot of different skills for our charity to excel. Whatever your professional background, we need to use your skills to the utmost. If your profession has a code of practice then follow it as well as this code. And as professionals, none of us should let a conflict of interest get in the way of doing the best possible work we can. A conflict of interest means there is a reason that you could act against the best interests of the organisation or an individual you support. For example, you might be related to someone who is working in the same service or school or to someone who is bidding to provide us with a service. You should talk to your line manager if you think there could be a conflict of interest.

- **So always:** report conflicts of interest
- **And never:** break your professional code of practice

## 4. Learn from experience

Our charity has spent over 50 years learning from experience and we expect everyone who works or volunteers to take opportunities to learn about autism and from their specific work here. We all have a duty to make every bit of our work as effective as possible, so we can create the maximum benefit for autistic people. Whether you work or volunteer directly with autistic people or in supporting roles, all of us should be open to new ideas to improve our practice, our processes and our ways of working. That could mean doing a formal service or project evaluation or just talking to your team or manager about how you can change how you work to make it better.

- **So always:** reflect on your work and how to improve it
- **And never:** dismiss new ideas without thinking them through

## 5. Tell it like it is

We should all be open about what we learn in our roles, good or bad. This could mean speaking to colleagues about new practices you have developed. For example you could arrange a meeting to discuss what you have learnt so that others can benefit. And if there is any bad news, like a mistake on a project or a disagreement or a safeguarding issue, we should be honest about it with our colleagues.

We won't always succeed at everything we try to do but we will succeed more if we are open about our achievements, challenges and disagreements.

- **So always:** share what you learn while working here – unless there is a really good reason not to, for example confidentiality
- **And never:** be dishonest with colleagues, even about difficult news

## 6. Inspire others

We won't change the world for autistic people by being negative. We should all be positive about what autistic people can achieve and should celebrate the progress we have already made in our 50 years. We are all representatives of our charity and should act in ways that reflect well on our organisation. That means being respectful, polite and courteous to each other and external contacts. For example we should all dress appropriately, only take personal calls when absolutely necessary at work and respond to communications within a reasonable timescale, even if we can't give a full response immediately.

- **So always:** be positive about what we can achieve together
- **And never:** be disrespectful to colleagues or partner organisations

## 7. Be courageous

Poor practice, prejudice and ignorance have no place at our charity and we should all speak up if we encounter it, by telling the people concerned and/or other colleagues if it is a serious problem. That means taking opportunities to educate others about autism and speaking up if autistic people aren't being treated with the respect and understanding they deserve. Or it could mean whistleblowing using the agreed procedure if you have been unable to address unsafe or unethical practices through usual routes.

- **So always:** speak up if you're concerned about poor practice
- **And never:** accept prejudice or ignorance about autism or autistic people

## Useful information

Our Code of Conduct is embedded in a number of our charity's policies so, for more information, please read these:

- Overarching Safeguarding Policy
- Safeguarding Adults policy
- Safeguarding Children policy
- Recruitment and Selection policy
- Induction and Probation policy
- Appraisal policy and procedure
- Conduct and Capability Management policy and procedure

If you have any questions, or are concerned that staff and/or volunteers are not following our Code of Conduct in your workplace please contact your line manager or HR manager.