

Code of Conduct: Professional Standards for Safeguarding and Inclusion

Version	Effective Date	Review Date	Lead Authority
1.0	 Date	 Date	Board of Trustees / DSL

1. Introduction and Scope

This Code of Conduct establishes the professional standards and behavioral expectations for all staff, volunteers, and trustees of SENbetweeners Hub UK. Our primary objective is the safety and inclusion of children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) challenges, particularly those who are undiagnosed or "between" formal support systems.

This policy applies to all professional activities, including:

- Work within mainstream schools and alternative educational provisions (AEPs).
- Digital engagement across official websites, social media, and messaging platforms.
- Community-based workshops and events.

2. Core Principles of Professional Practice

- **Safeguarding First:** The welfare of the child is paramount. All staff must maintain an active duty of care and follow early intervention principles.
- **Neuro-Inclusion:** We view neurodivergence as a natural variation and reject deficit-based language.

- **No Diagnosis Required:** Staff must recognize that a formal diagnosis is not a prerequisite for support or reasonable adjustments.
- **Professional Boundaries:** Clear boundaries must be maintained in all interactions to prevent misunderstandings and ensure the safety of both users and staff.

3. Conduct with Vulnerable Children

When working with children in schools, AEPs, or workshops, staff must adhere to the following standards:

3.1 Physical Safety and Environment

- **Dynamic Risk Assessment (DRA):** Staff must utilize DRA to address the fluid nature of working with neurodivergent individuals.
- **Sensory Awareness:** Environments must be audited for sensory triggers such as noise, lighting, and crowding.
- **Security:** Ensure physical spaces are secured to prevent accidental injury or "bolting" by children who may lack typical danger awareness.

3.2 Communication and Interaction

- **Literal Language:** Avoid idioms, sarcasm, or metaphors (e.g., "pull your socks up") which may confuse or frighten SEN/SEMH users.
- **Processing Time:** Allow 10–15 seconds for a child to process verbal information before repeating or rephrasing.
- **Explicit Social Rules:** Do not assume children understand social norms; teach them explicitly through tools like Social Stories or Comic Strip Conversations.
- **Accessibility:** Adapt communication methods (visuals, symbols, or text-to-speech) to meet individual needs.

4. Digital Conduct and Online Safety

4.1 Professional Boundaries Online

- **Approved Channels Only:** Use only official, named accounts for communication. Private or anonymous accounts are strictly prohibited.
- **No Private Messaging:** All support and discussions must take place in moderated groups. There is to be no unmonitored one-to-one digital contact between staff and young people.
- **Supervised Contact:** One-to-one digital contact is only permitted if recorded and with explicit parental consent.

4.2 Content and Moderation

- **Active Moderation:** Official forums and social media posts must be moderated within 24 working hours.
- **Harmful Content:** Staff must immediately remove prohibited content, including hate speech, bullying, medical advice, or personal contact details.
- **Clear Guidance:** Always state that resources are for information only and do not constitute clinical or legal advice.

5. Statutory and Legal Compliance

All staff must operate within the following UK frameworks:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025):** Mandatory adherence to safeguarding requirements.
- **Equality Act 2010:** A proactive duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled users.
- **UK GDPR / Data Protection Act 2018:** Ensure all personal data is encrypted, stored securely, and shared only on a "need to know" basis.
- **Online Safety Act 2023:** Duty to protect users from harmful digital content.

6. Reporting and Accountability

- **Safeguarding Concerns:** Any suspicion of harm or neglect must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- **Whistleblowing:** Staff are encouraged to raise concerns regarding malpractice or safety without fear of reprisal.
- **Allegations:** Any allegation against a staff member or volunteer will be managed under the strict protocols of the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP).

7. Declaration

I, Person, confirm that I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the SENbetweeners Hub UK Code of Conduct.

Signature: _____

Date: Date