

Code of conduct

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Our Code of Conduct sets out what is expected of us at all times in upholding the charity's reputation and keeping deaf children and their families safe. It forms a set of guiding principles and is common practice across the charity sector. In addition, the Charity Commission and the Department of International Development expect all charities to have a Code of Conduct in place.
- 1.2 The Code of Conduct reflects international and UN standards, in recognition of the work of Deaf Child Worldwide, the international arm of the National Deaf Children's Society. Our staff should also follow the local laws and customs of any country in which they are working or travelling for the charity, except where the Code of Conduct is more stringent (in which case the Code applies).
- 1.3 Working at or on behalf of the National Deaf Children's Society puts you in a position of trust and you are responsible for upholding our values and reputation when dealing with colleagues, customers, beneficiaries and local communities.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The Code of Conduct applies to anyone working on behalf of the National Deaf Children's Society and Deaf Child Worldwide and includes all staff, volunteers, sessional workers, consultants, contractors, agency staff and students. We use the term 'staff' throughout this document to refer to all of the above.
- 2.2 The Code of Conduct is vital in upholding our vision, values and reputation so any breach will be considered in line with employment and volunteering policies. For staff this could lead to disciplinary procedures and ultimately dismissal, and for volunteers it may lead to the termination of their relationship with the charity. There shouldn't, however, be anything surprising or worrying in the code – it's there to help all of us work towards our shared vision of a world without barriers for every deaf child.

3. Key Values and Principles

3.1 I will champion the charity's reputation and values by:

- treating everyone with fairness, dignity, honesty and respect
- making sure that my conduct within the workplace and outside of work doesn't bring the charity into disrepute or impact on or undermine my ability to do my job
- having zero tolerance of illegal or unethical behaviour, such as discrimination, harassment and abuse, and supporting others to challenge this behaviour too.

3.2 I will be a positive ambassador for the charity by:

- acting in a way that supports and upholds the charity's reputation and being a role model to others

Please note: We use the term 'the charity' throughout this document to refer to both the National Deaf Children's Society and Deaf Child Worldwide.

- ensure that my involvement in politics, religious groups, or community leadership does not contradict the mission of the charity

3.3 I will place the welfare and safety of children and vulnerable people above everything else by:

- following health and safety, safeguarding and security guidelines and avoiding unnecessary risk to myself and others
- not harming children, young people, vulnerable adults or anyone with whom I come into contact, through action or omission
- not getting into a one-to-one situation with a child or young person, when engaged in any activity on behalf of the National Deaf Children's Society, unless this is a specific requirement of a role or activity and has already been agreed with a line manager. Wherever possible I will make sure another adult is in sight and that the child or young person is aware of the need for this.

3.4 I will avoid any conflicts of interest by:

- declaring at the earliest opportunity, any financial or personal interest or family or personal relationship which may impact on the charity's work or where the charity's work or activities may provide benefit to myself, my family or someone with whom I have a close connection
- not being involved in awarding benefits or contracts for goods or services, to any person with whom I have a financial, personal or family relationship
- Seeking authorisation from the Executive Director before I use contractors, consultants or other suppliers used by the charity for my own private business
- not accepting personal gifts or any payment from governments or communities that we work with, or from donors, suppliers or other people which have been offered to me as a result of being employed by the charity
- obtaining permission before being nominated as a candidate or taking on any other official role for a political party
- disclosing any past or existing personal relationship between myself and another staff member, where one manages or supervises the other. Managers shouldn't be involved in the recruitment, selection, performance review or promotion of someone they are or have been in a relationship with.

3.5 I will respect confidentiality by:

- following the charity's Data Protection guidelines
- not sharing any confidential or sensitive information about colleagues or work-related matters unless legally required
- not speaking inappropriately or negatively about the charity with other organisations and/or the media
- getting clearance from the Head of Media and PR (or the Chair of the Trustee Board, in the case of Trustees) before making statements to the media on behalf of the charity
- not mentioning the charity as my employer in any statement I make to the media in a personal capacity.

3.6 I will act on and report any concerns I have while working for the charity including:

- any incident, abuse or concern that I witness, am made aware of, or suspect which appears to breach the standards in this code
- any concerns about bribery or corruption
- any concerns about security or safety
- any concerns about the welfare of a child or vulnerable person
- any concerns about the behaviour of a representative of the charity in connection to safeguarding
- taking immediate action and referring any report or concerns from another employee in line with our Complaints policy and procedures.

3.7 I will fulfil my ethical and legal responsibilities by:

- not taking advantage of my position as a representative of the charity to control or coerce service users
- not engaging in sexual activity with children or vulnerable adults. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence
- not engaging in sexual relationships with current or recent service users
- not engaging in a sexual manner that may bring the charity into disrepute/or be reasonably perceived by other(s) as inappropriate, offensive, exploitative or invasive.
- not engaging in sex-related acts or behaviour on one's own behalf or others in exchange for money, goods or services which could bring the charity into disrepute
- not encouraging, assisting or colluding with others who are acting illegally
- respecting and following local laws and customs when working or travelling internationally for the charity, except where the Code of Conduct is more stringent (in which case the Code applies).
- having the correct visa and legal right to work in a country
- not working under the influence of alcohol or using, or being in possession of, illegal substances on charity premises or accommodation.

4. Complaints and concerns

- 4.1 If you have a complaint or concern relating to a breach of the Code of Conduct you should report it immediately to your line manager or volunteer supervisor. If you don't feel comfortable reporting to this person (for example, if you don't think the report will be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern) please report your concerns to another staff member, for example, a senior manager or a member of the People department. Concerns can also be raised by emailing talkback@ndcs.org.uk
- 4.2 The reputation of the National Deaf Children's Society is paramount to delivery and sustainability of our Charity and its beneficiaries; hence, breaches of this code will be taken seriously with appropriate action. Any serious breaches of the Code of Conduct will be handled under Employment & Volunteering Policy guidelines.

5. Supporting and Related documents

5.1 This code is designed to create good practice and sits alongside our mission, vision and values and our Behaviours Framework. This code should be read in conjunction with a number of other policies, such as:

- Bullying and Harassment policy
- Anti-Fraud policy
- Complaints policy and procedures
- Confidentiality and information sharing
- Conflicts of Interest policy
- Data Protection policy
- Disciplinary policy
- Electronic Mail policy
- Emergency Access to Accounts policy
- Equality and Diversity policy
- Gifts and Hospitality guidelines
- Guidance for Safer working
- Health and Safety policy
- IT Acceptable Use policy
- Kidnapping for Ransom policy
- Risk Management
- Safeguarding policy
- Trustee Board: Code of Conduct
- Trustee Board: Grievance
- Trustee Board: Whistleblowing
- Volunteer Problem Solving procedure
- Volunteer bullying and harassment
- Whistleblowing policy

5.2 For further information or queries, including advice on implementing the code please contact the deputy director, people or the safeguarding assurance manager.