

# Code of Conduct- Staff and Volunteers



Dynamic Ducks seeks to provide a safe environment, which secures the well-being and the very best outcomes for children that visit Dynamic Ducks.

This code should clarify what is expected in terms of professional behaviour, it gives clear advice about what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered misconduct. It also describes safe practices and behaviour that should be avoided.

If a member of staff does not follow this code of conduct disciplinary procedures may be taken.

## Core Principles

1. The welfare of the children is paramount
2. Staff have a responsibility for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any contact which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivations and intentions.
3. Staff should behave and dress appropriately at all times
4. Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff over any incident, which may give rise to concern
5. All staff should know the name of their designated person for safeguarding, be familiar with safeguarding children policy and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children
6. Staff should be aware that breaches of the law could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

## Safe Working Practices for the Protection of Children and Staff

### 1. Introduction

This guidance has been conducted to help all staff establish the safest possible playing and working environments. The aims are to safeguard children and reduce the risk of staff being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional

### This means that these guidelines

- *apply to all adults working in Dynamic Ducks whatever their position, roles or responsibilities.*

### 2. Duty of Care

Staff are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority, manage risk, use resources and protect children from discrimination and harm. All staff, whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep young people safe and to protect them from emotional and physical harm. This duty is in part exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between staff and children and behaviour by staff that demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgement. When individuals accept a role that involves working with children they need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust in that role.

### This means that staff should:

- *understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached*

- *always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests*
- *avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motives and intentions*
- *take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour*

### 3. Professional Judgement

This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. It does highlight however behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interest of the child which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge and in so doing, will be judged to be acting reasonably.

**This means that where no specific guidance exists staff should:**

- *Discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with a senior colleague. This will help to ensure that the safest practices are employed and reduce the risk of actions being misinterpreted.*
- *Always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats manager*
- *Always record discussions, actions and justification.*

### 4. Power and Position of Trust

All adults working with children in a setting are in a position of trust in relation to the children in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a child cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people, Staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage and gratification. Staff should always maintain appropriate professionalism and wherever possible, they should avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others, and report and record any incident with this potential. Where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust established with a person that has only recently turned 16, any attempt to engage in sexual activity with that person will be a cause for concern and will be a breach of trust established in that prior relationship.

**This means that staff should not:**

- *Use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a child or family's detriment*
- *Use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine the child*
- *Use their status or standing to form or promote a relationship with a child, which is of a sexual nature.*

### 5. Confidentiality

Staff may have access to confidential information about a child in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a child or their family for their own, or others advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass a child. Confidential information should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where a children's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously. There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a child, for example

when abused is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass on the information without delay, but only with those with designated child protection responsibilities.

If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential they should seek guidance from their manager. Adults should be aware that although it is important to listen to children, they should never promise confidentiality or request a child to do the same under any circumstances. Additionally concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to a manager without delay.

#### **This means that staff**

- *Are expected to treat information they receive about children in a discreet and confidential manner*
- *In any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them should seek advice from their manager*
- *Need to be cautious when passing information to others about children*
- *Need to know whom any concerns or allegations should be reported*

## **6. Propriety and Behaviour**

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interest of children. They should adopt a high standard of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, children and public in general. An individual's behaviour in or out of the workplace, should not compromise their position within the work setting so it is important to exercise due care and attention when outside Dynamic Ducks environment. Membership or organisation whose goals are in conflict with those of Dynamic Ducks policies is not acceptable.

#### **This means that Staff should not**

- *Behaviour in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model.*
- *on trips or on other occasions when children are under their supervision, staff must ensure there are sufficient staff available and able to respond appropriately to any emergency that might occur*
- *make inappropriate remarks to children (including email, text messages, phone or letter etc)*
- *discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of children*
- *discuss a child's sexual relationship in inappropriate setting or context*
- *make (or encourage other to make) unprofessional comments in any form of communication (e-mail, conversations or social networking comments)*

#### **Staff must:**

- *be aware that their behaviour in their personal lives may impact their work with children*

## **7. Alcohol and Smoking**

All staff and volunteers whilst discharging their duties must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance that may affect their ability to care or respond to the needs of children. Smoking constitutes a fire hazard and can be unpleasant and dangerous for the smoker and colleagues. Smoking on the premises (in any form, including the smoking of e-cigarettes) is against Dynamic Ducks policy and therefore an offender will be subject to the

disciplinary procedures.

## 8. Appearance

Staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to the professional role. Smart and professional appearance is expected at all times. Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the task they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation.

**This means that staff should ensure their appearance:**

- *Promotes a positive and professional image*
- *Is appropriate to their role*

## 9. Gifts

Staff should be aware of the Dynamic Ducks policy regarding the declaration of gifts received and given. Staff need to take care that they do not accept gifts that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. Staff may not give personal gifts to children. It is acceptable for staff to offer prizes of small value in certain tasks or competitions.

**This means that staff should:**

- *Ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared*
- *On birthdays cakes may be brought for children (dependent upon availability and /or days the birthday may fall).*
- *Generally, only give gifts to an individual child as part of an agreed reward scheme*
- *Where giving gifts other than above, ensure that it is done with the full knowledge of your line manager*

## 10. Infatuation

Staff need to be aware that it is not uncommon for children to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop an infatuation. Staff should be aware that such circumstances carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. Any staff who becomes aware that a child may be infatuated with them or a colleague should discuss it at the earliest opportunity with a manager so that appropriate action can be taken. In this way, steps can be taken to avoid hurt and distress for all concerned.

**This means that staff should:**

- *Report to their senior colleagues any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a child may be infatuated with a member of staff*
- *Be mindful if they are alone in a room with a child to leave the door open*

## 11. Personal Living Space

No child should be invited into the home of an adult who works with them, unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents and senior staff.

**This means that staff should:**

- *Be vigilant in maintaining their privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in a vulnerable situation.*
- *Be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries.*

## **12. Communication with children (including the use of technology)**

Communication between child and staff by whatever method should take place with clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobiles phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites, social networking sites, online gaming and blogs. Staff should not share any personal information with children. They should not request, or respond to any personal information from a child, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Staff should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny. Staff should be cautious in their communications with children so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give out their personal contact details to any child including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers. This also includes communications through internet-based web sites, such as social networking, instant messaging or gaming.

### **This means that staff should:**

- *Only make contact with children for professional reasons*
- *Not to use internet or web-based communication to send personal messages*
- *Not to have images of children stored on personal cameras, devices or home computers.*
- *Not make images of children available on the internet, other than through Dynamic Ducks network/website, without permission from the parent/guardian.*
- *Be cautious in their contact with ex-service users as they could be in contact with current users*

## **13. Social Networking and Online Gaming**

Staff may use social networking sites for personal use. However, profiles and photos should be locked down as private so that children or parents do not have access to your personal data or images. Staff should deny access to their profile so they do not put themselves in a vulnerable position. Where relationships exist between staff and parents at Dynamic Ducks, or personal friends, social networking is acceptable but caution must be exercised so that professional standards are maintained and staff don't compromise themselves. As soon as any staff become aware that they are in an online game with a child of Dynamic Ducks they should cease to play. They should not seek out or share their own gamer tag/ID with any children from Dynamic Ducks.

### **This means that staff should:**

- *Lock down their profile to ensure that data and images are not freely available*
- *Do not permit current users or parents to have access to your profile*

## **14. Physical Contact**

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children, but it is crucial that they only do so in way appropriate to their professional role. A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with a child this should be in response to their needs at the time and of limited duration. Staff should use their

professional judgement at all times about the appropriateness of any physical contact. Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted then they should report the incident and circumstances to their manager. On occasion physical contact may be required to help support a child so they can perform certain tasks safely, to demonstrate the use of a piece of equipment. This should be done with the child's agreement. Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment. Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the child.

**This means that staff should:**

- *Consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a child might misinterpret any contact, perhaps involve another member of staff, or another child to help demonstrate.*
- *Always explain to the child the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take unless their safety is at immediate risk.*

## **15. Distressed Children**

There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comforting and reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

**This means that staff should:**

- *Consider the way in which they offer comfort to a distressed child*
- *Always tell a colleague when and how they have offered comfort to a distressed child*
- *Record situations that may give rise to concern.*

## **16. Physical Intervention**

Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a child from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, or causing damage to property. Staff should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others. Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence. In all cases where physical intervention is deemed necessary, the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported.

**This means that staff should:**

- *Always seek to defuse situations*
- *Only use minimum force for the shortest period necessary (you may have to justify the amount of force used)*

## **17. Sexual Contact**

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a child is both inappropriate and illegal. Sexual activity does not just involve physical contact. It may also include non-contact activities, such as causing children to engage in or watching sexual activity.

**This means that staff should:**

- *Not pursue sexual relationships with children either in or out of the setting.*

- *Avoid any form of communication with a child which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative ie. Verbal comments, letters notes, e-mail, phone calls, text, physical contact.*

## **18. Intimate Care**

Staff will always refer to the intimate care policy. All Children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required (for example removing wet or soiled clothes). Children should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own care as is practicable. When assistance is required, staff should ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken

### **This means that staff should:**

- *Make other staff aware of the task being undertaken*
- *Explain to the child what is happening*

This policy was adopted by: <a href="#">Dynamic Ducks Ltd</a>	Date: April 2024
To be reviewed: April 2025	Signed: <a href="#">E Wilkinson- Duck</a>

*Written in accordance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2024)*