



Staff Code of Conduct

Date Ratified: 17 June 2022

Date Policy due to be reviewed: June 2024

Committee Responsible for policy: Board of Governance

Geraldine Kelly – Chair of the Board of Governors

Review No	Date	Summary of Changes	Reviewer

The Ridge Employability College

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Code of Conduct (“the code”) describes the standards of conduct and practice which College employees should follow. The purpose of this code is to ensure that all employees are clear about the standard of behaviour expected of them.
- 1.2 All employees have personal and legal responsibilities, including: treating others professionally and with dignity; acting honestly, using public funds and College equipment appropriately, adhering to health and safety guidelines and practising equal opportunities at all times. These expectations are set out below and should be fully observed by all staff, including the Head of College and Board of Governors.
- 1.3 The code forms part of the wider employment package of legislation, rules and guidance that relate to employment and services. This code is comprehensive but may not cover all eventualities; in such circumstances the spirit of the code is deemed to apply. Using the code at all times will help to provide high quality services and promote public trust and confidence.

2. Aims & Scope of Policy

- 2.1 This document is not a prescriptive guide to what employees should and should not do. It highlights the principal areas where employees need to be aware of their responsibilities when working in college, or representing college, and is a framework for behaviour. Employees should ensure they are familiar with the specific policies that underpin these behaviours. These documents should be supplied at induction, and if not provided, the employee should ask the College for copies.
- 2.2 The code applies equally to all employees regardless of position, grade, and length of service or terms of employment.

3. Compliance with the Code of Conduct

- 3.1 The Code of Conduct is a key element in the employment relationship: it is therefore an integral part of the contract of employment. It will form a major part of every employee’s induction. Failure to comply with it and with the associated policies (“Required Reading”) may result in disciplinary action being taken, and the College reserves the right to take legal action against employees where breaches of the Code warrant such action.
- 3.2 **The Ridge Employability College will ensure that:**
 - Written policies and procedures are in place to confirm and encourage statutory, professional and locally agreed good practices;
 - Its culture is promoted and adhered to in all respects;
 - A safe and supportive working environment is provided;
 - The diversity of employees is recognised;
 - Sufficient resources are available to carry out duties;
 - Communication with employees is open and effective;
 - Employees and the recognised trade unions are appropriately consulted about changes that are likely to affect them.

Professional Behaviour and Conduct

4.1 Treating other people with dignity and respect

- 4.1.1 All employees are expected to treat other colleagues, learners and external contacts, such as parents, professionally and with dignity.
- 4.1.2 Staff are required to comply with the college's equality policies in respect of colleagues, learners and other contacts such as parents. Unacceptable behaviour such as discrimination, bullying, harassment or intimidation will not be tolerated in college. This includes physical and verbal abuse and use of inappropriate language or unprofessional behaviour with colleagues, learners and parents.

4.2 Appropriate relationships with learners

- 4.2.1 College employees are expected to act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to suspect their actions or intent. Employees in College are in a position of trust and have a duty to protect children (not having obtained the age of 18 years) and young people from discrimination and harm and to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. It is equally important for staff to avoid behaviour that might be misinterpreted by others in order to protect both children, young people and themselves. Staff are required to read and understand College policies on child protection and safeguarding and should seek clarification on any points they are not clear on.

4.3 Lateness & Time Keeping

- 4.3.1 All staff are to ensure that they are in college and at their work stations at their contracted start time.
- 4.3.2 All staff are allocated an access fob and must ensure that they fob into and out of college each day. Should staff forget their access fobs they must sign in and out of college at reception.
- 4.3.3 Should staff be aware that they are going to be late to work they should contact the college as soon as possible or when necessary, inform their line managers the reasons for their late attendance in college. Failure to maintain a good record of time keeping will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

4.4 Professional Behaviour

- 4.4.1 Employees must not misuse or misrepresent their position, qualifications or experience or bring the reputation of the College into disrepute. Such behaviour may lead to disciplinary action.³

4.5 Criminal Actions

- 4.5.1 College employees must inform the Board of Governors immediately if they are subject to a criminal conviction, caution, ban, police enquiry, investigation or pending prosecution. The Board of Governors will discuss this with the employee in the context of their role and responsibilities in order to help safeguard children, adults (having attained the age of 18) and other employees at the college.

4.6 Required Reading

- College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- College's Single Equality Policy
- College's Whistleblowing Policy
- College's Health & Safety Policy

5. Management and Supervision

5.1 Managers Responsibilities

- Managers must ensure that all employees are aware of and understand the Code, including all temporary, casual and others employees under their guidance;
- Managers are required to take appropriate and reasonable steps if an employee fails to follow the Code;
- Managers are required to take account of the Code when dealing with conduct or performance issues.

5.2 Managers must ensure that employees are suitable to enter the workforce and understand their roles and responsibilities by:

- Using rigorous and thorough recruitment, selection and induction processes focused on making sure that only applicants who have the appropriate level of competence and attitude are appointed;
- Checking criminal records, and other relevant registers and indexes, assessing whether people are capable of carrying out the duties of the job they have been selected for, before confirming appointments;
- Seeking and providing reliable references;
- Giving employees clear information about their roles, responsibilities and behaviours, relevant legislation and the organisational policies and procedures they must follow in their work;
- Managing the performance of new employees and taking appropriate action, if necessary, during the probationary period.

5.3 Managers must support good employment practice by:

- Making it clear that bullying, harassment or any form of unjustifiable discrimination against or by an individual or group, is not acceptable and taking action to deal with such behaviour;
- Establishing and promoting procedures for individual employees to report dangerous, discriminatory, abusive or exploitative behaviour and practice, and dealing with these reports promptly, effectively and openly;
- Making it clear that violence, threats or abuse are unacceptable, with clear policies and procedures in place for minimising the risk of violence and managing violent incidents;
- Supporting employees who experience trauma or violence in their work;
- Implementing written employment policies and procedures
- Providing appropriate and reasonable assistance to those affected by ill health or dependency on drugs, alcohol, or other substances and giving clear guidance about any limitations on their work while they are receiving treatment.

5.4 Managers must ensure that training and development opportunities are in place to strengthen and develop skills and knowledge by:

- Providing induction, training and development opportunities to help employees to do their jobs effectively and prepare for new and changing roles and responsibilities;
- Contributing to the provision of education and training, including effective workplace assessment and continuing professional development;
- Responding appropriately to employees who feel insufficiently prepared to carry out their work by providing relevant training, development and support.

5.5 Managers must ensure that the performance of employees is managed by:

- Undertaking annual Performance Development Reviews (PDR's), and 6 monthly reviews;
- Giving clear information and guidance about the employee's roles and responsibilities;
- Giving clear information about the performance expected of the employee;
- Managing and supervising employees to support effective working, good conduct and behaviour and supporting employees to identify areas for improvement in their performance;
- Having systems in place to enable individuals to report inadequate resources or operational difficulties, which might impede service delivery or individual performance.

5.6 Managers must ensure that employees are made aware of written policies, procedures and good practice by:

- Monitoring written policies regularly.
- Developing and promoting service specific policies and procedures to meet statutory requirements, government initiatives and local needs.

5.7 Managers must ensure that they recognise that they are responsible for the work that they have delegated to others by:

- Communicating effectively;
- Adequately supervising the work of others;
- Providing guidance and support as required;
- Taking corrective action if necessary;
- Promoting a learning and high performing culture.

5.8 Managers must promote this code of conduct by:

- Informing employees about this Code and their responsibility to comply with it at all times;
- Making service users aware of the Code and informing them about how to raise matters that relate to the Code. Taking account of the Code in making any decision that relates to the conduct of employees.

6. Employee Responsibilities

6.1 Employees should read the Code and seek advice from their line manager if they are unclear about any part of it. Employees should also ensure that they apply the Code in their role.

6.2 All employees must:

- Honour work commitments, agreements and arrangements and, when it is not possible to do so, explain why to their manager and other individuals appropriately;
- Be honest and trustworthy;
- Communicate in a clear, courteous, accurate and straightforward way;
- Be punctual and maintain good attendance;
- Report absence.
- Not make or condone fraudulent claims.
- Immediately declare issues that might create conflicts of interest and make sure that these do not influence their judgement or practice including gifts and hospitality;
- Follow The Ridge Employability College's policies and procedures;
- Never treat other employees less favourably because they use or are involved in The Ridge Employability College's procedures for reporting misconduct or poor practice;
- Not behave in a way, in work or outside work, which would call into question their suitability to work for The Ridge Employability College including but not exclusively any criminal activity;
- Report any criminal conviction relevant to their job.

7. Health & Safety at Work

7.1 All employees must comply with the College's Health and Safety procedures including:

- Work in a safe way at all times, including driving whilst at work;
- Wear protective clothing where provided;
- Be aware of health and safety policies and procedures and safe working practices;
- Not put themselves or other people at unnecessary risk;
- Follow risk assessment policies and procedures to assess whether behaviour or circumstances present a risk of harm to themselves or others including the lone worker policy;
- Report any accidents or dangerous occurrences in line with the College's policy;
- Inform their manager about any personal difficulties that might affect their ability to do their job competently and safely;
- Report medical conditions or medication that may affect their job;
- Advise their line manager if they undertake any additional employment or work.

8. Diversity & Equality

8.1 All employees must:

- Act in accordance with the Equalities policies and show respect and consideration for others at all times;
- Deal with and record or report complaints;
- Either challenge inappropriate behaviour and practice, or bring such behaviour to the attention of a manager;
- Participate in agreed diversity training and development.

8.2 The College recognises and values the diversity of its workforce and will take account of ethnic and religious dress and ornamentation requirements with sensitivity by ensuring that employees are free to observe them.

9. Capability

9.1 All employees must:

- Meet relevant standards of practice and work in a lawful, safe and effective way;
- Maintain clear and accurate records as required by procedures established for their work;
- Be aware of policies, procedures and good practice;
- Participate constructively in Employee Personal Development Reviews
- Undertake relevant training;
- Seek assistance from their manager if they do not feel able or are not adequately prepared to carry out any aspect of their work, or are not sure about how to proceed in a work matter.

10. Service & Confidentiality

10.1 All employees must:

- Treat stakeholders and service users with respect;
- Maintain statutory, professional and/or locally agreed standards of care at all times;
- Not discriminate unlawfully against any person;
- Respect and, where appropriate, promote the individual views and wishes of stakeholders and service users.
- Not disclose information given in confidence or acquired and believed to be of a confidential, personal or sensitive nature without the consent of the provider, a person authorised to give consent or unless required to do so by law;
- Not prevent any person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled
- Ensure confidential information, belonging to the College, is not disclosed to any person not authorised to receive it.
- Comply fully with the College's Data Protection Policies.

11. Resources

11.1 All employees must:

- Use public funds entrusted to them or handled by them in an honest, responsible and lawful manner;
- Take reasonable care of plant, equipment and materials;

- Not make personal use of College property or facilities unless properly authorised to do so.
- Not make personal use of ICT facilities for personal use in work time
- Prevent, not engage in or facilitate tax evasion or fraud (including Council tax fraud, Tenancy fraud, or Benefits fraud)

12. Declaration of Interests

12.1 All employees must:

- Not allow personal interests to conflict with the College's requirements;
- Disclose or seek advice on any potential conflict of interest;
- Not use their position to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person or organisation;
- Not be involved in the appointment or any other decision relating to the employment of a relative, associate or close friend (see definition below);
- Comply with College requirements in the registration of interests;
- Declare other employment, hospitality, benefits or gifts received as a consequence of employment.

12.2 Definitions for the purposes of this Code:

- A relative means a spouse, civil partner, partner, parent, parent-in-law, son, daughter, stepson, step-daughter, child of a partner, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece or the spouse or partner of any of the above.
- An associate means a fellow member of a club, association or business partner.
- A close friend means someone held in particular affection that is in regular contact outside of work.

13. Financial Inducements

13.1 Financial Regulations for Colleges

13.1.1 All college employees must comply with the College Financial Regulations. Employees should familiarise themselves with the regulations but some of the principal employee requirements are summarised below.

13.2 Business Contacts

13.2.1 In this section, "business contact" refers to any person, body or organisation with which the College is involved on a financial or charitable basis (including contractors; developers; consultants; regional or national charities). This also includes business contacts who are potential suppliers (e.g., they are tendering for future business).

13.3 Declaration of gifts

13.3.1 Any gifts that are received in the course of your employment should be declared in writing to the Board of Governors with the exception of those items specifically identified in sections 13.4 and 13.5 below.

13.4 Gifts or hospitality to an employee in the course of employment

13.4.1 As an employee of The Ridge Employability College, you are personally responsible for all decisions connected with your acceptance of any gift or hospitality and for avoiding the risk of damage to public confidence in the College.

- 13.4.2 You should treat with extreme caution any offer of gifts or hospitality made to you personally or to partners/members of your family. You should refuse any gift or hospitality which might be perceived by the public as influencing your decisions or actions as an employee of the College. Acceptance in the context of your employment of any fee or reward, other than your proper remuneration, can constitute a criminal offence.
- 13.4.3 Gifts or hospitality of nominal value (e.g., lunch/refreshments or a token promotional gift) may be accepted but always declare them. If the value of the hospitality is substantial, e.g., dinner to discuss business, get the approval of the Head of College or Board of Governors.
- 13.4.4 Tactfully refuse gifts or hospitality from any external commercial body where these might be seen by the public to compromise your integrity, e.g., complimentary tickets to sporting events, paid holidays etc. It may help to explain that this is College policy. If the gifts are sent to the College, return them if the sender can be identified. If it is not possible for you to return them, make arrangements for them to be officially appropriated to the benefit of the College or to a charity nominated by the College.
- 13.4.5 Any cash payments made in the context of your employment, e.g., a token payment following a talk you have given or a training session, must either be refused or, if intended for charity, paid via the College. It is not appropriate to make the donation yourself.
- 13.4.6 Declare all offers of gifts or hospitality, whether you accept them or refuse them.
- 13.4.7 Declarations must be made in writing to the Board of Governors.
- 13.4.8 If you have any doubt about whether to accept a gift or hospitality, seek the advice of the Principal or Board of Governors

13.5 Gifts or hospitality to the College

- 13.5.1 Where a business contact sends a gift to the College (for example, a stationery supplier sending a gift), these should not be accepted and should be returned to the supplier. Such offers should be declared to the Board of Governors.
- 13.5.2 If it is not possible to return the gift, the employee who usually deals with the supplier should declare the gift to the Board of Governors which will keep a record of it and decide how it is to be used. Such gifts remain the property of the College.
- 13.5.3 The only exceptions to this are low cost, functional items suitable for business use (as opposed to personal use), such as diaries, calendars or pens, which may be accepted.

13.6 Use of College Contacts

- 13.6.1 Apart from participating in concessionary schemes arranged by trade unions or other such groups for their members, employees shall not use College business contacts for the purpose acquiring materials or services at trade / discount prices for personal or non-college activities.

14. Dress and Appearance

14.1 Dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role (no jeans, smart black jeans are acceptable), which may be different to that adopted in their personal life. Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism and allegations.

12.2 All employees must:

- Wear protective clothing if provided at all times.
- Ensure that the type and style of footwear, clothes and ornamentation worn is appropriate to the work environment.
- Comply with any service specific dress and hygiene requirements.
- Not wear or display items (badges, banners etc.) which indicate your support or opposition to any political party or organisation that may cause offence.
- Ensure that all tattoos are covered as much as possible when in College or representing the College in any other capacity.

15. Personal and Political Relationships

15.1 All employees must:

- Not allow any personal relationship to influence their conduct at work
- Declare any close personal relationship with a colleague working in the same department/section to their manager.
- Must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work.

16. Press and Media Communication

All employees must:

- Not give reports or speak to the press and media on any issue relating to employment with the College, College Business or Decisions of the College, unless they are specifically nominated and authorised to do so by the Head of College or Board of Governors.
- If nominated to speak to the press, take care not to declare a view which is contrary to a position taken by the College and which may be deemed to be critical of that decision.
- Take care when using social media to ensure any communication regarding the College, College business or College employee is professional and does not breach the social media policy. Staff should not post any comments on social networking sites which could cause offence or which are potentially damaging to the reputation of the College. Any comments which are defamatory in nature will potentially be reported to the police and legal action could follow. Any such breach will also result in disciplinary action.

17. Use of College Premises and Equipment

17.1 College equipment and premises are available only for College-related activities and should not be used in relation to another job or post or for excessive or regular personal use, unless authorised in writing and in advance by the Board of Governors.

17.2 This includes photocopying facilities, stationery, telephones and computers and premises. Any college equipment that is used outside College premises, for example laptops, should be signed out of college and returned to the college when the employee leaves employment or upon request by the Head of College or Board of Governors.

18. Use of Alcohol and Illegal Drugs

18.1 The taking of illegal drugs during working hours is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All employees are expected to attend work without being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs and without their performance being adversely impacted by the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs.

18.2 If alcohol or drug usage impacts on an employee's working life, the College has the right to discuss the matter with the employee and take appropriate action, having considered factors such as the College's reputation and public confidence.

18.3 All College buildings and premises operate a no smoking policy.

19. Use of College Communication Systems

19.1 The College has the right to monitor emails, phone-calls, internet activity or document production, principally in order to avoid offensive or nuisance material and to protect systems from viruses, but also to ensure proper and effective use of systems by employees.

19.2 Employees should be aware that the College has the right to access employees' personal email and computer files if saved on College communication systems, if required for investigation of misuse.

19.3 It is recommended that employees do not use college systems (phone, email, and computers) for excessive personal use. Inappropriate usage, which includes excessive or regular personal use may result in disciplinary action for the employee and in serious cases could lead to an employee's dismissal.

19.4 Inappropriate use of email and internet systems also includes viewing, publication or circulation of illegal or offensive material, viewing, publication or circulation of junk mail, including chain letters, jokes or large attachments, gambling or gaming; these will be treated as disciplinary matters.

19.5 Passwords should not be shared and access to computer systems must be kept confidential. Breach of this confidentiality may be subject to disciplinary action.

19.6 Employees who receive inappropriate communications or any instance of illicit material being communicated that is considered to be offensive or nuisance in nature should inform their line manager immediately.

Employee's Declaration

I declare that I have read and understood the 'Code of Conduct for College Employees' and have been made aware of the policies and documentation communicated in item 4.6 of the Code of Conduct.

Name:

Signed:

Date: