

# Staff Behaviour Policy

This document provides a guide for adults working and volunteering in Larkrise Community Farm regarding acceptable and desirable conduct to safeguard children.

DATE CREATED: October 2023

DATE REVIEWED: N/A

SIGNATURE:



DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: October 2024

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated in line with any new recommendations or legislation as it is made available.

Key Personnel			
Role	Name	Tel.	Email
Farm Manager	Wendy Self	01225 751675	manager@larkrisefarm.org.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Lucy Allen	01225 751675	asstmanager@larkrisefarm.org.uk
Deputy DSL(s) (DDSL)	Jane Wallis	01225 751675	vicechair@larkrisefarm.org.uk
Education Officer	Natasha Sawyer	01225 751675	education@larkrisefarm.org.uk
The key safeguarding responsibilities within each of the roles above are set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023			

<b>Designated Officer for Allegations</b> <b>Children's Social Care referrals:</b> Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): Out of hours:	0300 456 0108  0300 456 0108 0300 456 0100
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If you believe a child is **at immediate risk** of significant harm or injury, you **must** call the police on 999.

## Introduction

Larkrise Community Farm is committed to providing positive social and emotional outcomes for our students and adult clients, underpinned by a strong safeguarding ethos. We are equally committed to the welfare of our staff, who are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professional behaviour to maintain confidence and respect of the general public and colleagues.

The trustees will make sure that this policy reflects national and local requirements to protect and support the children and adults in our school.

We will fulfil our local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following key documents:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- The procedures of Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP)

This policy:

- is based on the Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children, young people and vulnerable adults in education settings (May 2019 with April 2020 Addendum).
- aims to provide a guide for adults about acceptable and desirable conduct to ensure that staff maintain safe working practice and so safeguard both children and adults.
- does not provide a complete checklist of appropriate behaviour for staff in every circumstance. Staff must make judgements about their behaviour to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge and, in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably.

In *very exceptional* circumstances where a member of staff believes it is the best interest of the child or adult client to breach these guidelines, that person **must** tell the Business Operations Manager of the justification for any proposed, or action already taken, at the earliest opportunity. The Business Operations Manager will make a written record of that discussion including any areas of disagreement and actions taken.

## Scope

This policy is consistent with all other policies adopted by the trustees and should be read alongside the **Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and the Staff Code of Conduct** as well as the following documents relevant to the safety and welfare of our children:

- Behaviour policy
- Health and safety policy
- Complaints policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Online/e-safety policy

**This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working at our school.**

For the purposes of this policy:

- 'Staff' refers to all those working for the school, full time or part time, on a temporary basis, or permanent, in a paid or regular voluntary capacity.
- A 'volunteer' is a person who performs an activity that involves spending time, unpaid at Larkrise Community Farm (except for approved expenses).
- A 'position of trust' is one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over another, due to their work or the nature of their activity.
- 'Child' refers to all children up to the age of 18. Young person refers to all students between the age of 19-25. Adult clients refer to persons 26 years and over. All non-client adults are in positions of trust in relation to every client.

**(It does not apply to** employees of external contractors and providers of services (e.g. contract cleaners). Such staff are covered by the relevant Code of Conduct of their employing body.

## Expectations

All staff:

- are familiar with this policy and have an opportunity to contribute to its review.
- understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- are aware that failure to meet the standards of behaviour and conduct in this policy may result in disciplinary action. This includes dismissal, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity.

## Mandatory Procedures

### Confidentiality

The sorting and processing of personal information is governed by GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations 2018) - see Data Protection Policy (November 2022).

Client records are shared with those who have a professional need to see them. When staff have access to confidential information about colleagues, children or their parents/carers, the staff must treat such information in a sensitive and confidential way, sharing it only in the interests of a child and when legally permitted to do so.

Trustees should not routinely access client records. Exceptions to this would be for the purpose of an investigation in line with the Larkrise community farm's complaint policy and procedures.

Staff and trustees will not use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a client's or family's detriment.

If a member of staff is concerned that a child is being abused, is at risk of being abused or may have been abused in the past, they will follow the agreed procedure set out in the flowchart 'What to do if you are worried about a child', displayed in the staff room and in business office. See Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (March 2023).

If a member of staff is ever in any doubt about whether to share information or not, they should get advice from the designated safeguarding lead.

### Staff relationships with clients and parents

#### Staff responsibilities

All staff know that:

- they are in positions of trust in relation to all clients on roll. They ensure that the power imbalance is never used for personal advantage or gratification. They avoid behaviour which might be interpreted by others as an abuse of the position of trust and report any incident with this potential to the manager. This includes sharing personal contact details with clients or families.
- They have a legal duty to protect the interests of client and accept the obligations inherent in that responsibility.
- it is important that they determine how best to build trusted relationships with children, young people and adults which facilitate communication, using professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a client.
- they must not establish or seek to establish social contact with the client to secure a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship.
- they must inform the Business Operations Manager of any pre-existing (prior to the member of staff or client starting at Larkrise Community Farm) or new relationship with a client or close family member, which they feel, might compromise the school or their own professional standing.

- they should disclose any relationship or association (in the real world or online) that may impact on the Larkrise Community Farm's ability to safeguard clients.
- it is an offence (Sexual Offences Act 2003) for a member of staff in a position of trust to engage in **any** form of sexual activity with a client under the age of 18.

Certain behaviours are at odds with a position of trust. These include, but are not limited to:

- Harassment or discrimination based on any characteristic protected by the Equality Act 2010
- Loss of personal civility including, personal attacks or insults, displays of temper (such as throwing objects), unwanted physical contact (pushing, shoving, hitting) or the threat of the same.
- Staff must not swear, blaspheme or use offensive language in front of clients, nor use language which is discriminatory and demeaning in any way.

Such behaviours are disciplinary offences and may be referred to Local Authority and/or the police.

### **Communication with clients and parents, including social contact outside of the workplace**

Staff must use their professional judgement when requesting or accepting any social contact (including through social media). This means that they must:

- not accept any request from clients for contact via any social media platform.
- make a judgement about whether to maintain the connection in any cases where contacts were made before the client started at Larkrise Community Farm (e.g. a staff member being friends with a parent). Staff must discuss any decision to maintain such contact with the Business Operations Manager.

We acknowledge that staff may have friendships and social contact with parents of clients outside of Larkrise Community Farm. Staff will not engage in conduct outside work that could damage their professional reputation or the reputation of Larkrise Community Farm.

Any contact between staff and clients and/or parents that is deemed to bring Larkrise Community Farm into disrepute or that might lead a reasonable person to question the staff member's motivation or intentions will always be investigated and could lead to disciplinary action.

Staff must not make sexual innuendos or any comments of a sexual nature to any client, nor make any comments trivialising alcohol or drug abuse.

Occasionally, clients may develop an infatuation for a member of staff. In such situations, the advice of the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be sought. Staff should deal with these situations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned. They should remain aware, however, that such infatuations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and should therefore make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour is beyond reproach.

Staff must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead of any proposed or pre-existing arrangements between them and the families of clients on roll that take place outside Larkrise Community Farm e.g. baby-sitting, sports coaching, music tuition.

Staff are advised to wait until after an ex-pupil's 18th birthday before accepting any request on social media.

### **Gifts, rewards, favouritism and exclusion**

Staff must:

- declare any gift they receive from a parent or client. This does not include small tokens of appreciation such as at Christmas or the end of the year.
- not give gifts to individual clients. Any rewards or treats will be given only with the permission of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Farm Manager.
- advise the Designated Safeguarding Lead about the offer of any gift or hospitality, from outside or inside Larkrise Community Farm, which might be interpreted as an attempt to influence staff conduct towards client, parents or other employees.

## **Physical contact including intimate/personal care and behaviour management**

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one client, in one set of circumstances, may be inappropriate in another, or with a different client. Any physical contact will be in response to the client's needs, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, background and any agreed support or care plan.

The use of physical intervention including the use of reasonable force will always be in line with the following policies (Supporting children with medical needs policy (February 2023), Student positive behaviour policy (September 2023), Physical Intervention policy and procedures (September 2023).

Staff understand that:

- on a daily basis, it may be entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with children and that they do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the child's individual needs.
- some children are more comfortable with touch than others and/or may be more comfortable with touch from some adults than others. Whenever possible, adults seek the client's permission before initiating contact and are sensitive to any signs that the client may be uncomfortable or embarrassed.
- they have a responsibility to ensure the way they offer comfort to a distressed client is age appropriate.
- they must never touch a client in a way which may represent a misuse of authority or considered indecent.
- physical contact must never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult.
- they should be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and be sensitive to the issues of gender.

If a member of staff believes that an action by them or a colleague could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed which is possibly abusive, the incident and circumstances will be immediately reported to the DSL and recorded in writing.

Staff understand that a client who has suffered previous abuse or neglect may associate physical contact with such experiences. They recognise that such a client may seek out inappropriate physical contact and know to deter the client sensitively to help them to understand the importance of personal boundaries. Staff know that they must never indulge in play that involves rough-and-tumble or fun fights.

Clients with disabilities may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The arrangements are understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the client's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny. Staff always allow/encourage clients, where able, to undertake self-care tasks independently.

If a client's behaviour presents a serious risk to themselves or others, a robust risk assessment and, where relevant, a physical intervention plan is always put in place and reviewed regularly. In all cases where physical intervention takes place, staff record the incident and subsequent actions and report these in line with the school's behaviour and safeguarding policies.

### **First aid**

Staff adhere to the school health and safety policy, the policy for supporting pupils with medical conditions and for administering first aid or medication.

### **One to one situations**

Staff carefully consider the welfare needs of clients when with them in a one to one situation. Windows and doors are kept clear from display materials to allow rooms to be overlooked. Internal doors remain open when practicable.

Clients are provided with age/developmentally appropriate advice about managing distressing feelings that may arise during 1-1 situations in Larkrise Community Farm.

**Staff appearance** (Also applies to online and virtual teaching)

Staff must dress smartly, in clothing appropriate to the role, compliant with professional standards and not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative. It should not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding. Political slogans must be avoided.

Any staff with tattoos that might be viewed as offensive, provocative or likely to give rise to misunderstanding must ensure those tattoos always remain covered when that adult is working for the school.

**The acceptable use of technologies**

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves, Larkrise Community Farm, or employer into disrepute. Staff should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have.

Staff must be circumspect in their use of **all** social media or any other web-based presence that they may have, including written content, videos or photographs, and views expressed directly or by association with websites/pages or posts established by others (e.g. 'liking', reposting or forwarding). This includes the use of dating websites where staff could encounter parents or students either with their own profile or acting covertly.

They must consider the long-term implications of any content published by them online, specifically how it might ever have an adverse effect:

- on their reputation as an individual working in an education setting
- their ability to maintain good professional boundaries with parents and with clients
- on the reputation of Larkrise Community Farm.

All staff are aware of their part in ensuring the DFE Filtering and monitoring standards and cyber security standards are upheld. If staff become aware of misuse by another member of staff (in or out of work), they must report those concerns using the concerns and allegations against staff (including self-employed staff, volunteers, contractors) procedures. These procedures now include adults from organisations or individuals using Larkrise Community Farm's premises procedures.

**Exceptional operating circumstances**

If the school is required to change the way we offer our provision to clients due to exceptional circumstances e.g. during a pandemic lockdown, staff safeguarding responsibilities to clients will continue to apply, in line with the safeguarding policy.

The DSL will ensure staff, clients, and families are provided with written:

- temporary changes to procedures for working with clients e.g. online.
- timescales for such changes so that all clients, families and staff understand when such arrangements will end, and arrangements revert to those in place prior to the events leading to the need for the temporary changes.

**Photography and recording**

Staff are not permitted to use their phones, cameras, smart technology, or any device that can be used for photographing or recording clients, when on duty for any purpose. Camera's and Phones belonging to Larkrise Community Farm are kept in the Education Office. Any pictures taken of clients by Larkrise Community Farm will be in accordance to the school E-security and Social Networking Policy published procedures (February 2023).

Staff will not:

- take images of a client's injury, bruising or similar (e.g. following a disclosure of abuse)
- make audio recordings of a client's disclosure.

## **Concerns and allegations against staff (including third-party & self-employed staff volunteers and contractors, and adults from organisations or individuals using Larkrise Community Farm's premises)**

If a member of staff is concerned about the behaviour of a person working or volunteering at the Larkrise Community Farm (including contractors), they will follow the agreed procedure set out in the flowchart 'Allegation against adults', displayed in the staff room and education office. See Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (March 2023).

Larkrise Community Farm operates a 'low-level' concerns policy in accordance with KCSIE. 'Low-level' refers to behaviour that is: inconsistent with expectations set out in this policy, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and/or does not meet the allegations threshold, or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the DOFA.

All concerns, no matter how small, will be shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with promptly and appropriately. This will serve our commitment to create and embed a culture of openness, trust, and transparency in which Larkrise Community Farm values and expected behaviour set out in this policy are constantly lived, monitored and reinforced by all staff.

'Low-level' concerns could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

We also encourage all staff to self-refer to their line manager or DSL where they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

### **Whistleblowing**

All staff and volunteers are expected and encouraged to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in Larkrise Community Farm's safeguarding regime. All staff within the school who wish to raise an issue relating to the organisation with someone in confidence can use the following whistleblowing procedures:

In the first instance, concerns about poor or unsafe practice within must be raised with: Wendy Self, Farm Manager.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with Wendy Self or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them:

- A member of the governing body: Rob Ham, Chair of Trustees
- The [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/whistleblowing) is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 or email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk) if:
  - they think the concern will not be dealt with properly or
  - may be covered up or
  - if they raised a concern but it has not been acted upon or if they are worried they are being treated unfairly.

### **Training**

All members of staff and volunteers have read and signed to confirm they understand this Staff Behaviour Policy.

### **Induction**

The welfare of all clients on roll is of paramount importance. All staff including volunteers are informed of this policy at induction and given the chance to question and discuss the expectations set out.

### **Staff support**

Work at Larkrise Community Farm is both rewarding and demanding. We support staff by prioritising time to discuss the challenges of their role linked to any aspect of this Staff Behaviour Policy with their line manager and seek further support as appropriate.

### **Monitoring and review**

This policy is reviewed annually or earlier as required by changes to legislation or statutory guidance.