

**code of conduct  
for staff and volunteers**  
Du Boisson Foundation



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(review April 2021  
or at a change of legislation)

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## Introduction

The Foundation seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment, which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children in our care. Along with this aim all staff and volunteers working for the Foundation have a duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children involved with the Foundation, and the safeguarding ethos is a key part of the Foundation's work.

### **If a member of staff or volunteer does not follow this code of conduct this may lead to disciplinary procedures being followed.**

There may be exceptional times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or which directly contravene the guidance given by the Foundation. It is expected that in these circumstances you will always advise the Artistic Director of your justification for any such action already taken or proposed as soon as practically possible.

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### In summary:

The information contained in this document sets out the Foundation's expectations of adults working for the Foundation in both a paid and unpaid capacity. You therefore need to ensure that you have read and understand this document. If you do not understand something it is for you to talk to the Artistic Director or your line manager and get an explanation.

This document can be used to provide guidance where an adult's suitability to work with children in the Foundation has been called into question. Ultimately, as an adult, you are responsible for your own actions and behaviour.

## Why do we need this document?

This document clarifies what is expected of Foundation staff in terms of professional behaviour. Staff are role models and are in a unique position of influence and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the children involved with the Foundation.

As a member of the Foundation community, every member of staff is responsible for their own actions and has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the Foundation, whether inside or outside working hours.

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff employed by the Foundation, including the Artistic Director. Volunteers and staff not employed by the Foundation (e.g. contractors), whilst not bound by this Code of Conduct are expected to uphold the same principles.

### Setting an example

As an adult working for the Foundation you are seen as being a responsible person and role model who works to make sure that children are safe and their best interests protected. Remember that your actions are being observed by those around you, and for children and young people your actions may be very influential in their thinking about how to deal with different situations.

It is therefore expected that you adopt high standards of personal conduct to ensure that you retain the confidence and respect of those around you (be that colleagues, children, families or the general public). One example of how this is done is through modelling respect for all members of staff and parents and maintaining a cheerful and positive outlook.

#### Examples of what this means include:

- Not agreeing with others or taking part when they are making negative comments about other adults or children.
- Not making remarks which may be deemed racist or behave in a way that may be considered to be discriminatory to other ethnic groups.

- Not swearing or using inappropriate language in front of children. This includes the use of the phrase "shut up" which can be very derogatory for children.
- Not calling children rude or inappropriate names (remembering also that children may have a different understanding of what rude is to you).

Challenge is a key part of any role within the Foundation. For example, staff may be challenged by the Artistic Director following an observation. If challenged it is expected that you respond maturely, even if you are unhappy with what has been said, with a view to addressing the issue in private at a suitable time in the future.

As part of the Foundation, it is expected that you present a professional image at all times whilst representing the Foundation.

#### Examples of what this means include:

- Ensuring that you only use your mobile phone when in staff only rooms (e.g. offices) and only during break / lunchtime – it is inappropriate to send and / or receive texts or make phone calls when with the children.
- If you have responsibility for a workspace (e.g. a classroom, office or desk) it is expected that this will be clear and tidy.

Our professional image also extends to how we dress. Unless you work in an area that requires a specific uniform (e.g. kitchen staff), how you dress is a matter of personal choice and self-expression. There are however agreed criteria that must be adhered to:

- No jeans.
- No sleeveless tops should be worn and all tops must have a style that ensures that no cleavage is on show.
- Trousers to be knee length or below.
- Skirts to be knee length or below, unless worn with opaque tights in which case they can sit slightly higher up the leg.
- Where possible all tattoos should be covered – if this is not possible due to the location of the tattoo then this should be discussed with the Artistic Director.
- It is expected that footwear is appropriate to the task in hand. Flip flops and similar loose fitting footwear is not appropriate. Where sandals are worn, these must have straps.

No member of staff should act in a way that brings the Foundation into disrepute.

## Safeguarding

All adults in the Foundation have a duty to keep children safe and protect them from harm and neglect, whilst treating them with respect and dignity.

**Where there is a concern for a child's welfare the Foundation's safeguarding policy should be followed.**

As a member of staff you have a duty to ensure that you are aware of and understand the Foundation's policies in relation to safeguarding.

All staff are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority, manage risk and use Foundation resources in order to protect children from avoidable harm. Within this there will be times when you will need to make professional judgements based on your training and knowledge of the situation.

If you make a judgement and it goes against guidance that is in place to make sure that the children are safe this needs to be reported to the Artistic Director and recorded. This is also the case if there is disagreement about a course of action that has been taken.

This means that as a member of staff you need to make sure that children are safe during the day to day activities within the Foundation and that risk assessments are completed where necessary. Within this there will be times when a Foundation procedure doesn't cover the situation you are in and you need to make decisions based on your training. This is OK, however there is a need to make sure that you record such decisions in certain circumstances.

**Further information can be found in the Safeguarding Policy & Procedures.**

## Child and parent relationships

As a member of staff in the Foundation you are in a position of trust. This requires you to ensure that you treat children and parents with respect (as set out above), and that you maintain a professional boundary at all times.

There should be no secret social contact with children or their family. It is understood that there will be times when children and their families will be part of your family / social circle or different social networks meet, however this will be easily recognisable and openly acknowledged. You must disclose all such relationships to your supervisor or line manager.

Unless the child is a family member or the friend of a child in the family, you should never invite a child you are working with into your home.

The professional boundary also extends to your use of information technology - you should never provide personal information or personal contact details to a child, unless the need to do so has been agreed with the Artistic Director and the parent / carer of the child.

### Examples of what this means include:

- Never give a child personal email addresses, home phone or mobile phone numbers – always use the Foundation's email and telephones.
- Never add children from the Foundation as contacts on social media sites.

There is sometimes a risk that a child may develop an infatuation with an adult at the Foundation. If this does happen it should immediately be brought to the attention of the Artistic Director so that support can be provided and a management plan drawn up to address the situation.

For clarity, intimate or sexual relationships between children (anyone under the age of 18) and adults in the Foundation will be regarded as a grave breach of trust, as will any action that allows or encourages such a relationship to develop (this includes communication that could be interpreted as sexually provocative or suggestive).

Any such activity may be a criminal offence and will always be subject to disciplinary investigation, regardless of whether you believe the child consents or not. Sexual activity includes physical contact (penetrative and non-penetrative, including through clothes) as well as non-contact activities such as involving children in the making of pornographic material or the watching of such material. This also includes the act of grooming (gaining a child's trust so that sexual activity can take place).

If in a one to one situation you should take practical steps to ensure that secluded areas are avoided and others know where you are and who you are with (so far as possible). If you are in doubt or unsure you **must** seek advice and support from your supervisor or the Artistic Director.

## Honesty and integrity

Staff must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of Foundation property and facilities.

All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should follow the Whistleblowing Policy.

Gifts from suppliers or associates of the Foundation must be declared to the Artistic Director, with the exception of "one off" token gifts from students or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff to students are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted.

It is understood that relationships may develop between staff. It is expected that if a relationship develops into an intimate one, the Artistic Director is informed and whilst in the Foundation relationships remain professional.

Staff are expected not to use their position to canvas others for the purposes of achieving an appointment, whether undertaken directly by themselves or through a third party.

## Conduct outside work

The position of authority that you hold through working in the Foundation means that that association extends to when you are

outside of the work environment. You are therefore expected not to engage in any activity that could seriously damage either your reputation, the reputation of colleagues or the reputation of the Foundation. This includes staff use of information technology and social media sites.

### Examples of what this means include:

- Thinking about the photos that you are uploading to your Facebook account of you at a recent party and how others may see these.
- Facebook and other social networks ask for many basic details about you, including place of work, where you live, etc. We would therefore strongly suggest leaving these sections empty in order to protect both you and the young people you work with.
- Expressing views about particular circumstances – be these through social media accounts (e.g. Twitter) or in social situations. Education is constantly changing, with some changes being bought in being less popular than others. Whilst you are entitled to your views, please consider what expressing these views will mean for both your standing and that of the Foundation.

Criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable.

Staff may undertake work outside of the Foundation, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the Foundation nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance. Staff must also follow the directed time policy.

Some employees have contracts of employment that require them to obtain written consent from the Artistic Director and/or Trustees to take up any outside employment. All employees should be clear about their contractual obligations and should not take up outside employment that conflicts with the Foundation's interests or exposes themselves to a significant health risk.

## Confidentiality

By the nature of the work that is undertaken by the Foundation, there is a lot of confidential information that is held within the Foundation about the children and families who the Foundation works with. In your role you may have access to specific additional information about individual children, but even adults in roles which do not have access to this additional information will still invariably know a lot about children through their day to day activities within the Foundation.

All children and their families have a right to privacy and therefore no information should be shared about specific children or families with anyone outside of the Foundation.

Where there is a need to share information with parents this should be done either by an agreed member of staff (or the agreement of the Artistic Director).

### Examples of what this means include:

- If you are working with a child around a specific issue, such as their feelings around a close member of the family being ill, this information (both the work you are doing and the fact someone is ill in the family) is private and should not be shared outside of the Foundation.
- If there are issues with a child's behaviour, such as needing additional support or monitoring, this should not be shared outside of the Foundation.
- Information about specific children's abilities and levels at which they work should not be shared.

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a child is bullied by another child (or by a member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate Foundation procedure and must not be discussed outside the Foundation.

However, **staff have an obligation to share with the Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a child.** Staff must **never** promise a child that they will not act on information that they are told by the child.

If you receive any enquiries from the media or solicitors relating to the work of the Foundation, these should be passed to the Artistic Director immediately.

### Summary

You are likely to come across a lot of personal information about children in your role in the Foundation and you need to make sure that this is kept private at all times.

A good starting point is to ask yourself "Would I want this information shared about me?" You need also to be aware that if information is shared when it is not appropriate to do so you, as well as the Foundation, could be fined by the Information Commissioners Office.

Therefore if you are not sure about what to do, keep the information confidential and seek advice immediately.