

Music & Arts for the Shepway Community (MASC)



Code of Conduct

Reviewed January 2022

Part A: Policy

1. Policy Statement

MASC expects the highest standards of personal and professional conduct from all employees, practitioners and volunteers.

As such MASC requires all employees, practitioners and volunteers to act in a manner which reflects the value and ethos of MASC.

Employees/practitioners/volunteers must ensure that their behaviour and actions are consistent with their position as a role model to young people and are compatible with working with young people and in a organisation setting.

Employees/practitioners/volunteers must act with integrity and honesty, and demonstrate ethical and respectful working practices towards young people, colleagues, parents/carers and other members of the community.

All employees/practitioners/volunteers have a responsibility to observe appropriate professional boundaries and act at all times in a manner which safeguards and promotes the welfare of young people.

Employees/practitioners/volunteers must disclose any relevant information which may impact on their job role or suitability to work with young people.

MASC requires employees, practitioners and volunteers to adhere to all MASC policies and observe the highest standards of business / financial practice.

Each employee/practitioners/volunteer has an individual responsibility to act in a manner which upholds MASC's interests and protects its reputation.

Employees/practitioners/volunteers are accountable for their actions and conduct and should seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) if they are not sure of the appropriate action to take.

Employees/practitioners/volunteers should be aware that a failure to comply with the following Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

This policy explains MASC's expectations with regards to the conduct of employees, practitioners and volunteers in the following areas:

- Professional conduct
- Safeguarding young people
- Use of ICT & Social Media

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all current employees, practitioners and volunteers of MASC.

This Policy should also be adhered to by all volunteers / supply and agency workers engaged by MASC.

3. Adoption Arrangements and Date

This policy was adopted by the Trustee Board of MASC on 9th February 2019 and supersedes any previous Code of Conduct.

4. Responsibilities of MASC

- Explain the provisions of the Code of Conduct to employees and volunteers and signpost employees and volunteers to other relevant policies, document and guidelines
- Provide additional advice and guidance to employees, practitioners and volunteers in relation to queries they may have regarding the application of the code of conduct
- Coach, support and provide feedback to employees, practitioners and volunteers on their performance in relation to the required standards of conduct
- Take appropriate action at the earliest opportunity to address breaches of the expected standards of conduct

5. Responsibilities of the employee/practitioner/volunteer

Employees/volunteers are required to sign the declaration at Appendix 1 to confirm that they have read and will comply with the Code of Conduct.

- To read, understand and comply with the Code of Conduct at all times
- To use this code, alongside other relevant MASC policies and professional codes, to guide them in their role
- To seek guidance from the DSL if they are unclear about the conduct or actions expected of them
- To alert the DSL at the earliest opportunity if they are aware that they have conducted themselves in a way which may have breached the expected standards of conduct.

6. Reference to Other Sources of Information

This Code of Conduct is not exhaustive and does not replace the general requirements of the law, common sense and good conduct.

The Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with MASC's associated policies relating to conduct.

Part B: Professional Conduct

7. General

Employees, practitioners and volunteers are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct.

Employees, practitioners and volunteers are required to work in a diligent and conscientious manner.

Employees, practitioners and volunteers are expected to work to the requirements of their job and are required to respect managerial authority and follow reasonable instructions.

Employees, practitioners and volunteers must conduct themselves in a manner which reflects the ethos and values of MASC and adhere to organisation policies and procedures at all times.

8. Honesty and Integrity

Employees, practitioners and volunteers must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. Employees, practitioners and volunteers should not behave in a manner which would call into question their motivation or intentions.

During the course of their work employees, practitioners and volunteers should ensure they do not:

- Provide false / misleading information
- Destroy or alter information / records without proper authorisation
- Withhold information or conceal matters which they could reasonably be expected to have disclosed
- Misrepresent MASC or their position
- Accept or offer any form of bribe / inducement or engage in any other corrupt working practice

Should an employee, practitioner or volunteer become aware of any conduct on the part of a colleague which raises concerns regarding health and safety, safeguarding or criminal activity – they have a duty to disclose this.

Allegations concerning fraudulent, dishonest or corrupt practices or the falsification or withholding of information may be addressed as a disciplinary matter.

9. Setting an Example

MASC staff and trustees are role models and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the young people within MASC and is appropriate in an organisation setting.

This includes:

- Refraining from abusive or potentially offensive / discriminatory language or actions
- Demonstrating tolerance and respects towards others
- Observing boundaries appropriate to an organisation setting
- Ensuring any topics of conversation with young people are suitable to MASC setting
- Refraining from allowing personal / political opinions to impact on the discharge of duties and/or unduly influence young people
- Maintaining high standards of personal presentation, attendance and punctuality

Should employees, practitioners and volunteers be in doubt about the appropriateness of their behaviour they should seek guidance from the DSL. Breaches of expected behaviour may be considered under the disciplinary procedure.

10. Confidentiality

Employees/practitioners/volunteers may have access to confidential or sensitive information about young people, colleagues or the business and operation of MASC as part of their role.

Such information must not be disclosed to any person who is not entitled to have access to this or legitimately needs it for work purposes.

Specifically all employees, practitioners and volunteers must:

- Work in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (2018) and associated legislation
- Observe MASC's procedures for the release of information to other agencies and members of the public
- Not use or share confidential information inappropriately or for personal gain
- Not speak inappropriately about MASC community, young people, parents, staff or governors including discussing incidents, operational or employment matters with parents / members of the public
- Ensure all confidential data is kept secure and password protected

Should employees, practitioners and volunteers be in doubt about the appropriateness of sharing information they should seek guidance from the DSL.

11. Working Relationships & Relationships with other Stakeholders / Community

MASC expects employees, practitioners and volunteers to maintain positive and professional working relationships. Colleagues, young people, parents and other stakeholders should be treated with dignity and respect.

Employees/practitioners/volunteers should be polite and courteous in their interactions with parents / young people and other stakeholders / members of the community.

Behaviour which constitutes bullying and harassment, intimidation, victimisation or discrimination will not be tolerated and may be addressed via MASC's disciplinary policy. This includes physical and verbal abuse and use of inappropriate language or unprofessional behaviour with colleagues, children, vulnerable adults and parents.

Employees/practitioners/volunteers should treat all stakeholders in a fair and equitable way and not behave in a manner which may demean, distress, offend or discriminate against others.

Employees/practitioners/volunteers should ensure that policies relating to equality issues are complied with. Employees/practitioners/volunteers should be aware of MASC's Complaint Procedure and address any concerns from parents/young people and other stakeholders in accordance with this document.

12. Conduct Outside of MASC

Employees/practitioners/volunteers must not engage in conduct outside of MASC which has the potential to:

- Affect or is likely to affect the suitability of the employee/practitioner/volunteer to undertake their job role or work with children/young people/vulnerable adults or in an organisation setting
- Impact on the operation or reputation or standing of MASC
- Impact on the operation or reputation of MASC's relationship with its staff, parents, young people, or other stakeholders
- Seriously undermine the trust and confidence that MASC has in the employee/practitioner/volunteer to undertake their job role or work with children/young people/vulnerable adults or in an organisation setting

The above actions may be the subject of disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal

13. Duty to Disclose

All employees, practitioners and volunteers have a duty to immediately disclose to the DSL prior to the start of their employment, at the start of their employment or during the course of their employment, any change in their circumstances or any information which may affect or is likely to affect the suitability of the employee/practitioner/volunteer to undertake their job role or work with children/young people/vulnerable adults or in an organisation setting.

This includes, but is not restricted to:

- The employee/practitioner/volunteer being subject to any police investigation / enquiry, arrest, ban, charge, caution, reprimand, warning, fine or pending prosecution or criminal conviction. This includes any actions committed overseas which would be subject to a police investigation or formal action if such actions had been committed in any part of the United Kingdom
- The employee/practitioner/volunteer being subject to the inclusion on the DBS Children's Barred List and any change in DBS status during employment, or any referral, made to, or any, investigation or proceedings being undertaken by the DBS
- The employee/practitioner/volunteer being subject to any referral, made to, or any investigation, proceedings, or prohibition order being undertaken by any other regulatory or professional authorities or actions of other agencies relating to child protection and/or safeguarding concerns
- The employee/practitioner/volunteer being subject to any orders made in relation to the care of children, the refusal or cancellation of registration relating to childcare, or children's homes, or being prohibited from private fostering
- The employee/practitioner/volunteer being subject to any 'live' disciplinary process, formal sanction or any other relevant information arising from a previous or current secondary employment / voluntary work which may impact on the employee/practitioner/volunteer's suitability to undertake their role or work with children/young people/vulnerable adults or in an organisation setting. This includes substantiated safeguarding allegations
- The employee/practitioner/volunteer's close personal relationships outside of MASC presenting a 'risk by association' to the safeguarding of children/young people/vulnerable adults

This list is not exhaustive. Should an employee/practitioner/volunteer be unclear about whether it is appropriate to disclose a matter they are encouraged to seek guidance from the DSL at the earliest opportunity.

Employees, practitioners and volunteers must also report any current or historical information in the public domain or which is likely to come into the public domain which may be of relevance to their role or their suitability to work with children/young people or in an organisation setting or matters which may be subject to adverse media attention or have a detrimental impact on the reputation of MASC.

How MASC will respond to employee/practitioner/volunteer disclosures

Disclosures will be handled sensitively and discreetly, and with regard to data protection considerations.

The DSL will consider carefully any disclosure which is made and the appropriate response.

This may result in a suspension from duties while an investigation / risk assessment takes place.

In instances where the information disclosed constitutes a risk to the safeguarding of children/young people or vulnerable adults or is incompatible with an employee/practitioner/volunteer's job role or their suitability to work with children/young people/vulnerable adults in an organisation setting, termination of employment/role may be considered.

Any failure to disclose any information required in the course of employment or any other information that may have a bearing on an individual's suitability to carry out their job role or work with children/young

people/vulnerable adults or in an organisation setting may be the subject of disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal.

14. Dress and Presentation

All employees, practitioners and volunteers must ensure their dress, personal appearance and personal hygiene is appropriate to the professional nature of their role in MASC and promotes a professional image.

Dress should be appropriate to the activities an employee/practitioner/volunteer is engaged in and any related health and safety requirements.

Employees, practitioners and volunteers should not dress in a manner that is potentially offensive, revealing or sexually provocative.

15. Health and Safety

All employees, practitioners and volunteers must, by law, take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others in MASC.

Employees, practitioners and volunteers are required to comply with MASC's Health and Safety policy and agreed procedures at all times.

This includes:

- Avoiding risk of injury or danger to yourself or others
- Using any protective clothing and equipment supplied
- Complying with hygiene requirements
- Reporting, at the earliest opportunity, any hazards, defects, accidents or incidents to the DSL or other designated person
- Not interfering with, or misusing, anything provided for health, safety or welfare
- Informing MASC of any medical condition or medication which has been prescribed which may have an impact on health and safety in the workplace

16. Whistleblowing

Employees, practitioners and volunteers may raise concerns about any aspect of the operation of MASC which is not directly related to their own employment through the Whistleblowing Policy.

Employees, practitioners and volunteers raising a concern with reasonable grounds for doing so will not be subject to discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

17. Misconduct

Failure to follow the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Employees, practitioners and volunteers should ensure they are familiar with type of conduct which may be regarded as a breach of organisation rules.

Examples of behaviours which are likely to be regarded to constitute misconduct are set out in the MASC's Discipline and Conduct Policy and Procedure. Allegations of misconduct will be managed in accordance with this procedure.

Part C: Safeguarding Young People and Vulnerable Adults

18. General Obligations

All employees, practitioners and volunteers have a responsibility to:

- Safeguard young people and vulnerable adults from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect
- Promote the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and provide a safe environment
- Identify children and vulnerable adults who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm
- Report as soon as possible and without delay any concerns regarding child protection / safeguarding to the DSL

All employees, practitioners and volunteers must ensure they have read, understood and comply with MASC's Safeguarding Policy.

Employees, practitioners and volunteers must attend and comply with any training as required by MASC associated with the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults.

19. Appropriate relationships with young people

Employees, practitioners and volunteers must maintain appropriate professional boundaries with young people and vulnerable adults.

Employees, practitioners and volunteers are expected to act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to suspect their actions or intent. In order to protect both children, vulnerable adults and themselves, employees, practitioners and volunteers should also avoid behaviour that might be misinterpreted by others.

20. Allegations Against Members of Staff and Volunteers

All employees, practitioners and volunteers have a duty to report to the DSL at the earliest opportunity the conduct of a colleague which may place a child or vulnerable adult at risk.

Where the concerns relate to the DSL these should be reported to the Police.

Failure to report such concerns may be regarded as a disciplinary matter.

Part D: ICT and Social Media

21. General Obligations

Whilst working on behalf of MASC or using a work device all employees, practitioners and volunteers must:

- Ensure all electronic communication with young people, parents/carers, colleagues and other stakeholders is compatible with their professional role, appropriate boundaries and in line with organisation policies
- Not to use work IT equipment to browse, create, transmit, display, publish or forward any material / images which is illegal, sexually explicit, obscene or could offend, harass or upset others or anything which could bring an employee/practitioner/volunteer's professional role or MASC into disrepute
- Not to use personal IT equipment to browse, create, transmit, display, publish or forward any materials / images which are illegal or could offend or harass others or anything which could bring an employee/practitioner/volunteer's professional role or MASC into disrepute
- Ensure that ICT system security is respected and password protocols are observed – including the use of strong passwords and encryption
- Not install personal software on organisation equipment or make unauthorised copies of organisation registered software

Employees, practitioners and volunteers should seek guidance from their DSL if they are unclear about the conduct or actions expected of them.

Breaches of expected use of ICT may be considered under the disciplinary procedure.

22. Use of Social Media

Employees, practitioners and volunteers must ensure that their online presence / profile is compatible with their professional role.

All employees, practitioners and volunteers should:

- Ensure appropriate privacy settings are applied when using social media sites
- Refrain from sharing confidential/privileged information, discussing incidents, operational or employment matters or making critical / negative comments about MASC / young people / parents or colleagues on such forums
- Not browse, create, transmit, display, publish or forward any material / images which is illegal, could offend or harass or anything which could bring an employee/practitioner/ volunteer's professional role or MASC into disrepute
- Never share / post images of young people
- Not post images of work colleagues without permission

Employees, practitioners and volunteers should not make contact with young people via personal social media accounts or have these individuals as social media 'friends' / 'contacts'.

Employees, practitioners and volunteers should seek guidance from their DSL if they are unclear about the conduct or actions expected of them.

Appendix 1: Code of Conduct – Confirmation of Compliance

Please sign the declaration below and return this to the MASC Secretary

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the provisions of MASC's code of conduct.

Should I have any queries about any aspect of the code or am unclear of MASC's expectations I will discuss these with the DSL at the earliest opportunity.

Name:

Job Title:

Signed:

Date:

(It is suggested that employees, practitioners and volunteers should re- read this policy on an annual basis to ensure they are familiar with any changes which have been made)