MLA
Code of Conduct

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION 03

Professionalism: Setting an Example 04

Intoxicating substances 04

Smoking 04

Digital Practice and Social Media 04

Personal Relationships 05

Safeguarding Children 05

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns 06

Appropriate Contact & Reasonable Use of Force 06

Guidelines for Appropriate Contact 06

Guidelines for Physical Restraint 06

Transport & Cars 07

Dress Code\Unifrom\Tattoos\Body Piercing 07

Conduct Outside of Work 07

INTRODUCTION

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour that all MLA staff and those acting on behalf of MLA are expected to observe.

- Staff must ensure they read and understand MLA Policies and Procedures
- Breach of the following guidelines could be considered gross misconduct. In the case of a disciplinary for gross misconduct, staff would normally be terminated immediately.
- All staff report to the Centre Director.
- Any complaints should be put to the Centre Director or a Senior Manager in a professional manner.
- You should take a genuine interest in the academic and non-academic needs and problems of the students.
- If you are concerned about a student you need to alert your manager, adhere to procedures instructed in your safeguarding training and follow up on action taken.
- MLA expects you to carry out your role in a positive and cheerful manner.
- We expect you to complete your contractual obligations and adhere to the highest standards of professional integrity.
- Failure to treat students and colleagues equally regardless of race, nationality, gender, sexual orientation or age will result in disciplinary action, termination of contract and if necessary, referral to outside authorities.
- You are the ambassadors of MLA in every moment off-duty and on-duty.

Professionalism: Setting an Example

All relationships with students and clients must be professional, at all times. You are temporarily employed as a representative of the company. You are expected to create and maintain a favourable image of MLA with our students, group leaders, colleagues and suppliers.

All staff set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by students. Therefore, all staff must:

- avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times.
- demonstrate high standards of conduct to encourage our students to do the same.
- not show favouritism or create “special relationships” with individual students.
- not give or accept gifts from students unless approved by the Centre Director.
- avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct.
- be punctual for classes, briefings, trips and activities.
- Wear the MLA uniform or follow MLA dress code (academics) and wear the MLA lanyard all the time while on duty.

Intoxicating substances

- Drinking alcohol on-site is not permitted.
- Drinking in the presence of students is not permitted.
- When on-duty either on-site or offsite, drinking alcohol is strictly forbidden.
- Possess, take or be under the influence of drugs in an MLA centre is strictly forbidden
- MLA staff must not consume intoxicating substances before coming on duty or when they may be required to attend work at short notice. Intoxicating substances, such as alcohol, may remain in the system for some time and even small amounts can impair performance and jeopardise safety, which may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.

Residential staff: On your day off, if you have been drinking (providing it is off-site), you must not interact with group leaders, students or staff, and only come back to the premises when you can display a professional image of MLA.

The possession of illegal drugs will be considered a serious breach of contract, which will be reported to the relevant authorities if necessary and result in instant dismissal and possible criminal proceedings.

Smoking

While on duty you are not permitted to smoke in the presence of the students. You are also required to comply with any rules imposed by our venue providers in respect of smoking.

Digital Practice and Social Media

Staff may use the MLA computers for work purposes at the discretion of the Centre Director/Director of Studies.

Misuse of equipment and software, including browsing or downloading material from illegal or pornographic websites is not permitted and will result in instant dismissal.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social media sites which may bring themselves, MLA or the MLA community into disrepute. Staff should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have. Staff must also abide by the following guidelines:

- Staff must not attempt to connect with students or former students via any method or platform.
- Staff must not give students their personal phone number, email, social media handle, or messaging app contact.
- Staff should ensure their social media accounts are set to private and/or hidden and that automatic photo uploads to a cloud service is disabled.
- Staff must not accept friend requests or follow/friend current or former students.

- If a student requests access on social media, staff must:
  - decline the request,
  - and report it to the Centre Director.
- Staff must not send or accept requests from students on social media, chat services or video streaming channels.
- Staff must not use mobile phones for personal matters on duty as it is inappropriate and distracts them from paying full attention to those in their care.
- Personal calls should be taken and made during break times unless there is an emergency.
- Work phones are never to be used for private calls.
- Staff must switch off automatic cloud backups of photos on personal devices if they use them for work.
- Staff must never take photos or videos of students on personal devices.
- All digital images must be taken only on MLA-approved devices.
- Staff must not use personal messaging apps to communicate with students unless through official, monitored MLA systems.

Personal Relationships

- Maintain Professionalism: Staff members must not engage in amorous relationships or displays of affection during work hours or at work-related events. This includes any behaviour that could compromise professionalism or create discomfort for colleagues. Please refer to our Preventing Sexual Harassment Policy.

- Please note that pursuing an unwanted relationship or inappropriate behaviour towards a colleague could be deemed to be sexual harassment.

- Disclose Pre-Existing Relationships: Employees engaged in a romantic or intimate relationship, whether established before or during employment, must disclose the relationship to their line manager to ensure transparency and avoid potential conflicts of interests, abuse, sexual harassment and discrimination concerns. This measure aims to ensure that situations do not develop where any employees feel that a personal relationship is having an adverse impact on their own employment. Information shared will be handled discreetly, with an expectation that all employees conduct themselves with professionalism at all times.

- **Residential Staff**: Visitors are not permitted on-site, enter student residential areas or to stay in staff bedrooms overnight.

Safeguarding Children

- During their period of employment with MLA, all staff are responsible for students' welfare and well-being.
- MLA has a zero-tolerance policy regarding any type of abuse perpetrated on children or other adults at risk. Please refer to MLA Safeguarding Policy.
- Personal or sexual relationships with ANY current MLA student (under or over 18) are strictly prohibited and constitute gross misconduct.
- Physical relationships with students are not permitted and may lead to a criminal conviction. Encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which may lead to an inappropriate relationship will be viewed as a grave breach of trust.
- MLA aims to build community resilient against hateful and harmful narratives displayed in extremist organisations. MLA promotes freedom of speech within the limitations of our equality statement against 'hate speech' and 'minority discrimination'.
- Staff should avoid physical contact with students, it is also discouraged unless unavoidable (e.g., first aid).

Do <u>NOT</u> be alone with a student behind a closed door.

- Staff must avoid being alone in a room with a student under 18 unless:
  - the door remains open,
  - or the room has full visibility (e.g., glass panels),
  - or another adult is nearby.

- or there is immediate threat to the safety of a student(s).

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) all MLA staff have a duty to:

- report concerns about any child immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Centre Welfare Manager.
- Staff must also report:
  - any low-level concerns
  - any boundary breaches
  - any allegation involving a staff member or Group Leader
  - Staff must record concerns verbatim and use official MLA reporting systems.

Appropriate Contact & Reasonable Use of Force

Guidelines for Appropriate Contact

As a general principle, staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with students of any age. However, this does not constitute a 'No Contact' policy, because a complete ban on contact could stop staff from fulfilling their duty of care or from taking necessary action to prevent a student from being harmed. For example, contact may be required when staff need to provide medical attention, assist a student in distress or give help to students with disabilities. In general:

- Staff should avoid being alone with a student under the age of 18 (e.g. in a room with a closed door or in a car) – where possible leave the door open or ask another member of staff to be present
- Staff must avoid sharing personal contact details, private information or opinions with students

Some students may form an attachment to one teacher or other member of staff and seek their attention, approval or other form of contact in excess of normal school duties. Staff may feel they should provide extra attention to a needy or disadvantaged student or feel obliged to keep a student's confidence and protect their privacy. However, all staff must report any unusual behaviour, concerns or incidents immediately to the Welfare Manager, Centre Director or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Guidelines for Physical Restraint

There may be times when staff have to intervene physically in order to restrain students and prevent them from coming to harm. Such intervention will always be the minimum necessary to resolve the situation.
All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force to prevent students from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.

Passive physical contact, such as standing between students or blocking a student's path, may be enough in some circumstances to diffuse a situation and prevent escalation or,
Active physical contact may be required in other circumstances to prevent serious harm. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm (e.g. across a busy road) through to restraining a student to prevent violence or injury. Restraint means to hold back physically to bring a student under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two students are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

In such circumstances, the measure of restraint must be proportionate and no more force than is necessary should be used. This will be the minimum amount of force necessary to avert injury or serious damage to property applied for the shortest possible time, deemed 'reasonable in the circumstances.'
The following restraint techniques are deemed by official guidance as presenting unacceptable risk and must NOT be used:

- 'Double basket hold' which involves holding a person's arms across their chest
- 'Seated double embrace' where two members of staff would force a person into a sitting position and lean them forward, or
- 'Nose distraction' technique which involves a sharp upward jab under the nose

It is an offence to lock a person in a room without a court order except in an emergency, for example where the use of a locked room is a temporary measure while seeking assistance. Any incident involving the use of force or leading to staff restraining a student (or other staff / public) must be reported immediately to the Centre Director and DSL and recorded on the Safeguarding Incident Log.

Transport & Cars

- Staff must not transport students in their personal vehicles.
- Staff may only use MLA-approved transport and follow supervision ratios at all times.

Dress Code \ Uniform \ Tattoos \ Body Piercing

As mentioned above, MLA staff are expected to remain professional at all times throughout their employment, this includes maintaining high standards of personal presentation:

- Staff must not wear excessively tight or revealing clothing, including miniskirts, low-cut tops, or clothing revealing the mid-section.
- You may be asked to remove or cover excessive tattoos or body piercing whilst on duty at the discretion of your Centre Director.

Conduct Outside of Work

Staff must not engage in conduct outside work which could seriously damage the reputation of the school or the reputation of other members of the MLA community.

Any conduct or behaviour that indicates an employee may not be suitable to work with children is likely to be regarded as unacceptable.

Members of staff involved in criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are to be regarded as unacceptable where it brings into question their suitability or ability to do their role/work.

Any work-related social event is considered to be an extension of the workplace where the standards of behaviour expected are in line with this code of conduct.

This Code of Conduct aligns with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024), the Online Safety Act (2023), Worker Protection Act (2024) and the UK GDPR / DPA 2018 in relation to lawful processing and information sharing.

Revised Date: January 2026
Date of Next revision: January 2027

THANK YOU!

mlaworld.com/en

MLA

mlaworld.com/en