

Staff Behaviour and Code of Conduct

Including Dress Code | Little Lanes Out of School Club

Version: October 2026 | Applies to all staff, volunteers and students

Purpose and expectations

Our staff are trusted adults and role models. This policy sets out how we work professionally, protect children and maintain safe boundaries. It includes the Little Lanes dress code updated in September 2026. Staff must read, understand and follow this policy alongside the Club's safeguarding and other relevant procedures.

- Treat children, families, colleagues and visitors with courtesy, dignity and respect. Value each child as an individual and make appropriate adjustments for their needs.
- Use calm, appropriate language. Do not swear at, threaten, humiliate, bully, harass or discriminate against anyone. Never use corporal punishment or threaten it.
- Arrive ready for work, follow agreed duties and safe instructions, maintain supervision and tell the session leader before leaving an allocated area.
- Report hazards, incidents, mistakes and concerns promptly. Make accurate records and never conceal or falsify information.

Physical contact and professional boundaries

Staff must not routinely pick up, lift or carry children, or allow children to sit on their lap or body. Comfort children with calm words, reassurance and appropriate support at their level. Necessary help in an emergency or under an agreed individual care plan must remain proportionate, safe and respectful.

Staff may sensitively offer a side hug when a child is upset or needs reassurance, without pressure or expectation. The child must freely agree, and staff must respect any refusal, hesitation or discomfort. Contact must be brief, appropriate to the child's needs and visible to others. Staff must never ask children for hugs to meet their own emotional needs. Children may instead choose reassurance through conversation, sitting nearby or another appropriate form of support.

When hand-holding is appropriate, offer an open hand and allow the child to take and lead it. Never grip tightly, pull or drag a child. Staff may calmly direct, prompt and guide children but must not physically force them to move.

Exceptions are immediate danger, a medical emergency, necessary assistance under an agreed individual care plan, or minimum reasonable intervention to prevent injury. A care plan does not authorise punishment or unnecessary force. Follow the Club's physical intervention procedure and report and record any intervention promptly.

Care tasks must protect privacy and dignity while remaining accountable to colleagues. Do not create secret relationships, favouritism or unnecessary isolated one-to-one situations. Never promise a child to keep a safeguarding concern secret.

Safeguarding concerns about adults

Report concerns about any adult's conduct promptly through the Safeguarding Policy, including conduct that feels inappropriate even if it appears minor. Record facts and the child's own words where relevant. Do not investigate allegations yourself or wait for a supervision meeting.

Report to the designated safeguarding lead and the appropriate manager under the Safeguarding Policy. If the concern is about that person, use the alternative reporting route. Staff may contact the LADO, Children's Social Care, police or Ofsted directly where appropriate, particularly if internal action is unsafe or ineffective. Call 999 in immediate danger.

Management will assess concerns, including patterns of lower-level concerns, and follow the applicable safeguarding referral and notification requirements. Allegations that may meet the LADO threshold must be handled through that process; an internal disciplinary investigation must not undermine external safeguarding enquiries.

Staff must raise unsafe practice through the Whistleblowing Policy. Genuine concerns raised in good faith will be taken seriously. Confidentiality is respected, but information may need to be shared to protect children and investigate fairly.

Relationships and communication

Use authorised Club channels for work communication with children and families. Do not privately message children, add them to personal social media, give them personal contact details or arrange private meetings. Declare relevant pre-existing family or personal connections and any proposed private childcare arrangements to management so boundaries and conflicts can be considered.

Declare gifts or offers that could influence decisions or suggest favouritism. Do not give secret or personal gifts to individual children. Seek management advice if unsure. Conduct outside work is relevant where it affects safeguarding, suitability or the employment relationship; this policy does not prevent lawful private life or raising legitimate concerns.

Fitness and continued suitability

Tell management promptly about matters that may affect suitability to work with children, including arrests, charges, convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands, warnings or disqualification, before or during employment. Protected convictions and cautions are excluded under applicable law; seek advice if unsure. Complete the Club's annual suitability declaration, without waiting for it to report a change.

Staff must not work while impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs, medication or another substance. Alcohol and illegal drugs must not be brought onto Club premises. Management will remove an impaired person from child-facing duties, maintain safe staffing and arrange appropriate next steps.

Tell management if any medicine may affect safe working and seek medical advice. Only work directly with children if that advice confirms the medicine is unlikely to impair safe care. Agree adjustments confidentially. Store personal medicines in the designated secure medication storage, inaccessible to children, with safe access for the staff member when needed. Do not rely on a car for emergency medicines or where storage temperatures would be unsuitable.

Confidentiality and records

Only access and share personal information for an authorised work purpose and with those who need it. Do not discuss children, families or colleagues with other parents, friends or in public areas. Follow the Data Protection and Safeguarding policies, use approved systems and report any loss, wrong recipient or other data breach immediately.

Consent is not the only lawful basis for sharing information. Necessary safeguarding information may be shared without consent when there is a lawful basis. Seek safeguarding advice if unsure, but do not delay urgent protective action. Share relevant information securely and record the reason for significant safeguarding disclosures.

Phones and personal belongings

Personal phones must normally be kept in the locked black box on top of the cupboard during working hours. Coats, bags and other belongings belong in the designated staff area, inaccessible to children and clear of doors, walkways and fire exits. Unsafe items must be in designated secure storage.

Urgent personal calls may be made using the Club phone, or a personal phone in the kitchen or a designated zone when it is child-free, with the session leader's agreement and supervision covered. If a family emergency means a phone needs to be kept to hand, obtain permission from the manager or deputy.

Megan may carry her phone for authorised Club work, including access to emergency contacts. Routine use must take place in a child-free area with supervision maintained. In an emergency, staff may use an available phone immediately where needed to call for help or access emergency information; moving away from children must not delay the response or leave them unsupervised.

Approved work access on a personal device must use a passcode and authorised accounts, protect information from others and avoid saving child records to personal photo galleries or personal cloud accounts. A work-access exception does not permit personal photography or routine personal phone use around children.

Wearable technology and photographs

Staff must not wear smartwatches, Fitbits or other smart wearable devices during sessions. Any medically necessary device requires an individually agreed adjustment that protects children's privacy and safety.

Use only the Club camera or another specifically authorised Club device for photographs or recordings, for an approved purpose and in line with recorded permissions and the photographs policy. Never photograph or record children on a personal phone, camera or wearable device. Do not take images during intimate care or where this would compromise dignity.

Social media

Do not publish information, photographs or other material about Club children or families on personal accounts. Club-related posts must be authorised and use approved channels, with privacy and image permissions checked. Do not discuss confidential work matters or make abusive or discriminatory posts. This does not prevent protected disclosures or lawful reporting to relevant authorities.

Smoking and vaping

Staff must not smoke or vape while wearing Little Lanes uniform, on school grounds or immediately outside the grounds, including the front gates. This includes time waiting before or after a shift. When smoking or vaping away from school, remove or fully cover the uniform. Store cigarettes, vapes and lighters securely away from children.

Dress code

Uniform requirements by role

- **Managers** may wear their own clothing, provided it is clean, professional and meets the safety and practical requirements below.
- **Team leaders** may wear their own clean, professional clothing but must wear at least one item of Little Lanes uniform: a fleece, jumper or top.
- Playworkers must wear the full Little Lanes uniform.
- Everyone must wear their Little Lanes safety-release lanyard during every shift. Do not alter or replace it without permission. Report damage or snagging risks to management and agree a safe alternative where needed.

Staff should wear clean, presentable clothing that is safe, comfortable and practical for active childcare work. Clothing must allow staff to bend, kneel, reach, run and sit on the floor comfortably. These expectations relate to how clothing fits and moves during the job, not anybody's body shape.

Clothing and coverage

- Clothing must remain secure and provide suitable coverage when standing, bending, reaching, running and sitting.
- Keep underwear and the midriff covered. Clothing must not be transparent or become see-through when stretched.
- Clothing must not contain offensive, discriminatory or otherwise inappropriate words or images.
- Clothing must be in good condition and free from holes or tears that reduce coverage or create a snagging risk.

Lower necklines, vest tops and sleeveless tops are permitted provided they remain secure during movement and underwear stays covered. Check clothing while bending, reaching and sitting. If it shifts or does not provide suitable coverage, add a covering layer or choose a different item.

Little Lanes uses outdoor areas in cold weather and light rain when conditions are safe. Staff must come prepared with suitable layers, a warm coat, waterproof clothing and appropriate footwear so they can comfortably supervise and join in outdoor activities. Clothing must also be suitable for messy play. Hoods must remain down while supervising children. Hats are permitted, but must not restrict staff's vision or hearing; staff must be able to see and hear all children in their care.

If clothing does not meet the dress code

Concerns will be discussed privately, sensitively and respectfully. If clothing does not provide suitable coverage or cannot be worn safely during normal duties, a staff member may be asked to add a covering layer, change into a spare item or change before beginning or returning to child-facing duties. Staff are encouraged to keep a plain spare T-shirt at work. Management must maintain safe supervision while any change is arranged.

Footwear and jewellery

Footwear must be secure, comfortable and suitable for running and active play. Jewellery must not create a scratching, snagging or choking risk. Avoid dangling earrings and loose bracelets. Keep necklaces underneath clothing or remove them during active play. Rings and other jewellery must not interfere with safe play, food preparation or first aid.

Hair and nails

Tie long hair back whenever it could obstruct vision, contact food, catch in equipment or interfere with safe or messy activities. False and acrylic nails must be clean, secure and short enough for safe play, food preparation, first aid and support for children. Follow task-specific hygiene requirements and address any contamination or injury risk before the task.

Equality and adjustments

Apply these expectations consistently and respectfully. Little Lanes will consider reasonable adjustments connected to disability, pregnancy, health needs, religion or belief and other protected characteristics. Staff can speak privately to a manager. Discuss any safety, hygiene or safeguarding concern sensitively and consider an appropriate alternative.

Responding to breaches

Management will consider the circumstances, seriousness, impact, support or training needs and relevant adjustments. Minor concerns may be addressed through guidance or supervision. Serious or repeated breaches may lead to formal disciplinary action under the Staff Disciplinary Policy. Safeguarding action must not wait for that process.

Gross misconduct may result in dismissal without notice, but only following a fair procedure. Staff will be informed of the allegation, given an opportunity to respond and allowed the applicable right to be accompanied at a formal disciplinary hearing. Decisions will be confirmed with a right of appeal. No outcome is automatic.

Examples of conduct that may amount to gross misconduct, depending on the circumstances, include:

- Child abuse, serious safeguarding breaches or deliberate concealment of a child safety concern.
- Physical violence, serious bullying, harassment or discriminatory abuse.
- Theft, fraud or deliberate falsification of records.
- Serious or deliberate breaches of safety rules, or gross negligence placing others at risk.
- Serious misuse of confidential information or unauthorised images of children.
- Working while impaired by alcohol or drugs, or serious refusal to follow a lawful and reasonable instruction.

A change in health, suitability or disqualification is not automatically misconduct. Management must protect children, assess the facts and follow the relevant legal and employment process. Deliberately withholding information that staff are required to disclose may be considered separately.

Reading and applying this policy

Staff must read this policy at induction and after updates, ask if anything is unclear and record their acknowledgement on the staff policy checklist. Management will explain expectations, provide relevant training and address concerns promptly. Staff remain responsible for seeking help when a situation falls outside their competence.

Approval and review

Adopted by: Little Lanes Out of School Club

Date approved: October 2026 Review date: October 2027

Signed: MG Name and role: Megan Garratt - Manager

Review within 12 months of adoption, or sooner following an incident, change in guidance or change to Club arrangements.

References and related policies

EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective September 2026; DfE information-sharing advice; Acas Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures. Read with Safeguarding, Whistleblowing, Staff Disciplinary, Data Protection, Mobile Phones and Photographs, Behaviour Management, Intimate Care, Health and Safety, and Medication policies.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2

www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-sharing-to-safeguard-children-and-young-people

www.acas.org.uk/acas-code-of-practice-on-disciplinary-and-grievance-procedures/html