
Language in Action

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Group Leader code of Conduct

As Group leaders you have a shared responsibility to keep students under your care safe whilst staying at a language in Action Centre.

Whilst the school has ultimate responsibility for you and your students, your help and support will be needed on a number of occasions. These will vary from centre to centre but most will want you to:

- Make an effort to speak English with your students, even if you have to repeat it in your language afterwards.
- Be contactable at all times.
- Be at school to supervise meal times.
- Actively supervise your students in their free time.
- Assist in supervision of students under your care during Trinity exams if they are taking them
- Attend regular daily or weekly meetings with the senior centre staff.
- Abide by, and ensure that your students adhere to, the school's code of conduct and rules.
- Reporting any student concerns to the senior centre staff as soon as possible, even for students other than yours

1. Purpose

This Code of Conduct is intended to help group leaders to minimise the risk of any vulnerability to false or malicious allegations of misconduct or abuse towards pupils and students with whom they work. All staff working with young people will understand and appreciate that a Code of Conduct cannot cover all eventualities and will not totally remove the risk of false or malicious allegations. This code does not replace or take priority over the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Everyone should be aware that any group leader who does not strictly adhere to this code of conduct risks ruining their own reputation, even if their actions were intended quite innocently.

2. General

Group leaders should take care that their relationships with pupils reflect the age, gender and maturity of the pupils. It will be particularly important to ensure that all aspects of demeanour, language and attitudes – however conveyed- do not give rise to misunderstandings. Ambiguous or ambivalent comment and conduct, in particular, should be avoided.

3. Physical Contact

There will be some rare occasions when physical contact is acceptable. In general these will fall into one of the categories below:

I) Action to prevent harm or injury to the pupil or to others.

If it is necessary to prevent a pupil causing injury to him/herself or to others the use of minimum force and contact necessary to prevent harm or injury is acceptable and defensible. Such incidents should always be reported to the Centre Manager.

II) Comforting a pupil in distress.

Group leaders should, in all aspects of their conduct, recognise the possibility of misinterpretation. Individual professional judgements will be required from time to time about the level of physical

contact with individuals. Group leaders should take account of the student's age and understanding, personality and cultural and social background.

Alternative means of providing comfort, such as counselling, should always be preferred to physical contact. However, on rare occasions and not as a matter of course, an arm around the shoulders of a student who is very distressed is acceptable. Group leaders should consider how others might perceive the action, and ensure that it does not develop into unnecessary contact or contact which could be misinterpreted. It is unacceptable to physically comfort the same pupil on repeated occasions: alternative means of dealing with the problem should be used. Again, any incidents should be reported to the Centre Manager.

III) First Aid and health issues.

Please report any health concerns for any of your students immediately to the welfare officer at each centre.

Medication

If you give medicine to one of your students, please make sure you inform the Welfare Officer at your centre. This is for safety reasons in case of any adverse reaction later on.

- All medicines must be labelled correctly and have English instructions.
- If you have a student taking prescribed medication please tell your centre. If that student has to go to hospital with an emergency, we have to be able to show them very quickly exactly what medication they are on

Medicine needs to be locked away at all times or stored with you.

- Under no circumstances, can you give medication to a student who is not in your group, even if their parents say that you can.

If something happens to one of your students, the first person your school would contact is you.

Each centre has their own 24 hour emergency phone numbers for you to contact in case you need help or support. We should point out that parents will not be able to talk to you or their students on this phone, it is only for emergencies

4. Dealing with unruly behaviour

Under no circumstances is physical contact for the purpose of reprimanding a student acceptable, and may be unlawful, except as outlined in 3.1 above.

5. Private Meetings

Private meetings provide opportunities for misinterpretation and should be avoided. Where such a meeting is demonstrably unavoidable it is advisable to avoid remote areas of the school and to ensure that the door is left open and/or visual contact with others is maintained. Steps to prevent others entering a room by the use of 'Meeting in Progress' are not appropriate.

Under no circumstances should meetings with individual pupils be arranged off the school premises, including giving students lifts in cars.

6. Comments and Discussions with Pupils

Group leaders must avoid comments to or about pupils which could be taken to have sexual overtones. It is equally unacceptable for staff to encourage debate and discussion between groups of students which could be interpreted as having sexual overtones which are not justified in the context of the teaching programme.

It is recognised that, in order to discharge particular welfare responsibilities, group leaders may from time to time need to engage in conversation with students which cover sensitive matters. Group leaders should consider carefully whether to offer advice, sympathy or counselling if a discussion enters a sensitive area or, alternatively, refer the pupil to the welfare officer.

The use of sarcastic, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is abusive and therefore unacceptable.

LIA group leaders should use clear and simple vocabulary and always refrain from using foul, blasphemous and offensive terminology.

7. Dress

Group leaders should wear clothing that is appropriate to their role and is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative. This clothing should not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding. Clothing should be absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans.

8. Infatuations and Crushes

Infatuations and crushes can involve students and staff of both sexes on both a heterosexual and homosexual basis. In such situations the advice of the Centre Manager must be sought without delay. The situation should be taken seriously and the group leader should be careful to ensure that no encouragement of any kind is given to the students. It should also be recognised that careless and insensitive reactions may provoke false accusations.

LIA recommends that group leaders do not pose for photographs with individual students but should always do this as part of a larger group.

9. Fraternisation and Position of Trust LIA strictly prohibits:

- Even if consensual, any sexual, intimate, dating or other romantic relationship between any group leader and any current student.

- Any form of communication with a child which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, email, phone calls, texts – Group leaders discussing their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of children

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 states any person in a Position of Trust who engages in any sexual activity of any sort with students under the age of 18 is breaking the law and in our policy this applies to all students.

10. Social Media

In order to protect children and group leaders from adverse effects that could result from the improper use of Social Media, group leader use of Social Media must comply with LIA Fraternisation Policy (point 9 above).

In addition to this, group leaders should not:

- Initiate or accept 'friend' or similar requests from any current or former LIA students under the age of 18 and for as long as they are under 18

- Use the internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to children

Group leaders are provided with a full copy of LIA's Social Media policy which they are expected to sign and return to the Centre Management staff.

11. Alcohol and Drugs

Group leaders must not distribute, purchase or sell alcohol or drugs (including tobacco) to any children for which LIA is or could be held responsible. The use or storage of illicit substances on LIA-rented premises is strictly prohibited and will result in immediate removal from campus and the prospect of referral to law-enforcement agencies.

12. Out of School Activities

Each Lia Centre will place different demands on their Group Leaders but most schools will want you to supervise your students at meal times (if at school) and in their free time.

During these periods, we would like you to be present, contactable and making sure that your students follow the school rules.

Generally, Group Leaders have a lot of free time during classes and, sometimes on activities. During these periods you will often be able to go off site and relax but you must be contactable.

Active supervision means that you are encouraging them to speak English, are interacting with your students and are aware of what they are doing. Failure to actively supervise means that you could be held responsible for your students misbehaving, as well as endangering their safety.

On coaches or on public transport, please make sure your students follow British law and have respect for their fellow passengers. E.g. wearing seatbelts, putting rubbish in bins, not using priority seating areas and not shouting or causing disturbance etc.

Please make sure you assist the school staff by being contactable and ensuring that your students are on time.

Continual co-operation with the school staff will make your day more safe, enjoyable and focused.

Please be aware that meeting times are non-negotiable on the day of your trip. The school and their transport provider will have a timetable to stick to. Each school has deadlines and transport must leave on time.

If you are not at the meeting point on time, then the school will have to leave without you and will supervise your students on the journey home.

If any of your students are not at the meeting point on time, it is your responsibility to wait for them and return to the centre by public transport at the expense of the students.

In the unlikely event that one of your students goes missing, the school will have procedures in place. Please adhere to them.

13. Supervision on group trips

The itinerary for each trip has been pre-arranged and pre negotiated with the agency you work for. If you want any changes, you need to discuss this with your centre at least a week before the trip. Any changes will be considered and the risks will be evaluated. The agency will also be contacted.

If the centre manager does not feel that the proposed changes meet health and safety requirements they have the right to refuse them

On the day itself, for safety reasons, it is impossible to make changes as all centres will have made bookings and trained staff for that schedule.

If one of your students is ill, it is normally your duty to remain on site. In these instances, the school staff will supervise your students on the trip. In some cases the centres may be able to make alternative arrangements so it is important to liaise with them.

14. Reporting Incidents

Staff should report, to the Centre Manager, any concerns they may have following any incident where they feel that their actions may have been misinterpreted, or where a student or third party has complained to them either about their own actions or the actions of another colleague.

The Group leader should also be aware that they may report directly to a Designated Safeguarding Person at each centre.

I have read and understood the Group Leader Code of Conduct.

Signed:

Date:
