

# Language Assistants Programme 2024-25

# Safeguarding Code of Conduct for Modern Language Assistants

## Introduction

In keeping with its vision and values, the British Council is committed to maintaining the highest degree of ethical conduct amongst all its programme participants. To help increase understanding, this Safeguarding Code of Conduct details the British Council's expectations of programme participants in key areas including the MLA programme.

**All British Council programme participants who work with children and adults must read and adhere to this Code of Conduct.**

## Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to set out the conduct expected of British Council programme participants whilst under contract to their respective organisation and should form part of all contracts of employment. The code is always applicable. Breaches of the Code of Conduct are grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Local laws and cultures related to safeguarding differ considerably from one country to another, therefore, this code of conduct is based on International and UN standards to reflect the British Council's global profile as an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO). British Council programme participants are expected to uphold local laws wherever they operate, except where the Code of Conduct is more stringent, in which case the Code applies.

## Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all **British Council programme participants**, contracted staff, international and local, employed by the British Council. The term 'staff' is defined as anyone who works for the British Council, either in a paid or unpaid, full, or part-time capacity. This includes directly employed staff, trustees, agency staff, volunteers and interns. It also covers consultants and contracted temporary personnel. Staff applies equally to national, international and UK personnel.

## British Council Values

The British Council has six corporate values arranged in three pairs which underpins what the organisation says and does, how the British Council works with people, behaves towards them and communicates:

- [Open and committed](#)
- [Expert and inclusive](#)
- [Optimistic and bold](#)

## Code of Conduct Standards

All British Council programme participants must uphold the integrity and reputation of the organisation by ensuring that their professional and personal conduct is consistent with the British Council Values and Standards.

### **British Council programme participants must always:**

- Treat all people fairly with respect, dignity and non-discrimination
- Observe and respect local laws and customs
- Seek to ensure that conduct, at work and outside of work does not impact on or undermine their ability to undertake the role for which they have been employed
- Listen to and respect children and adults, empower them and let them participate in planning and delivering activities as much as possible
- As far as possible, be visible when working with children and Adults at Risk
- Consider their physical appearance at work and dress appropriately for the tasks undertaken
- Be aware of situations which may present risks for children and adults and take appropriate actions
- Contribute to ensure a sense of accountability amongst colleagues so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged
- Report any concerns about the protection or wellbeing of a child/children or adult(s) at risk to the Safeguarding Focal Point, Line Manager or Corporate Safeguarding Team

- Observe confidentiality and not talk about any situations of actual or suspected abuse that occurs except in accordance with this guidance. This is necessary to protect the privacy of those involved.

- 

**British Council programme participants must never:**

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or abuse children or adults at risk
- Behave in a way meant to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children or adults at risk
- Show differential treatment, or favour particular children or adults at risk to the exclusion of others
- Use language or make suggestions which are inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Spend excessive time alone with a child or an adult at risk away from others
- Engage in abusive or exploitative conduct
- Engage in sexual activity with a child (persons under the age of 18) or adult service users and beneficiaries. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence
- Pay for sexual services, of any kind at any time with anyone under the age of 18 years old, even if the age of sexual consent in a country is below 18, or with an adult service user or beneficiary
- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual favours or other form of degrading exploitative behaviour
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children or adults including child labour or trafficking
- Expose children or adults to pornographic/indecent materials of any form
- Permit or encourage children or adults to take part in activities that are illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Take or condone the taking of illegal drugs
- Become intoxicated by alcohol during working hours
- Sleep in the same room as a child or adult service user/beneficiary.
- Invite, or allow a child/adult you have met through work into your home
- Enter a child's home unless there is a responsible adult present
- Enter an adult service user or beneficiaries' home without agreement of line management as to the purpose
- Encourage children and adults to communicate privately using personal email accounts, social networking sites, mobile phones, or other means of communication
- Use your employer's IT equipment to view, download, create, share or save in any format inappropriate or abusive material including but not limited to indecent images of children and or adults
- Take photos of children or adults participating in your organisation's activities without obtaining their consent, where possible. Written parental consent or consent from a child's legal guardian is always required to take and use photographs, and audio or video materials

- Allow allegations or disclosures of abuse to go unreported
- Agree to keep secret information relating to abuse or exploitation of a child or adult

**This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The overall principle is, that programme participants should avoid any actions or behaviour's that maybe perceived as inappropriate or abusive.**

*Read and understood.*