



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
Centre for Open Learning

COL Summer School

Pre-university Staff Code of Conduct

January 2024

Purpose and scope

At the Centre for Open Learning (COL), we are committed to creating and maintaining a safe environment for all young people attending the Pre-university Summer School. This can only be achieved within a framework of mutual trust, respect and confidence between staff and students, and where staff take responsibility for their actions and the promotion of student welfare and safety. This Code of Conduct addresses the principles and standards of behaviour expected of staff, to keep all parties safe from harm and to protect against behaviour that may be misconstrued.

This Code of Conduct sets out:

- The responsibilities of staff
- How to respect young people
- How to maintain appropriate relationships with young people
- Inappropriate behaviour when interacting with young people
- Expectations for staff to uphold this Code of Conduct
- How to report issues and concerns
- Key contacts

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff involved in the delivery of the Pre-university Summer School, and encompasses:

- Activities which take place on the University of Edinburgh campus including areas such as classrooms, accommodation, libraries, student unions, labs and sports facilities
- All educational and social activities
- Activities and/or communication which takes place online
- Any activity not covered by the above points which is believed to adversely affect the safety, interests or reputation of COL and the University of Edinburgh, its students and staff

Staff responsibilities

As a member of staff working with young people, you are in a position of trust and authority and have a duty of care for Pre-university Summer School students. All staff are responsible for:

- Prioritising the welfare and safety of young people
- Providing a safe environment for young people, in-person and online
- Following COL's principles, policies and procedures related to pre-university safeguarding
- Staying within the law at all times
- Modelling good behaviour for young people to follow
- Challenging all inappropriate behaviour and reporting breaches of this Code of Conduct
- Reporting any issues or concerns related to a student's welfare and safety

Respecting young people

The needs of young people are different to those of adults, and staff need to be conscious of this when interacting with them. Staff are expected to build supportive and professional relationships with Pre-university Summer School students by:

- Listening to and respecting them at all times
- Treating them fairly without prejudice or discrimination, and challenging any contradictory behaviour in this regard from any party
- Respecting differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious beliefs, and appreciating that all students bring value
- Understanding that they are individuals with their own needs
- Valuing and taking their contributions seriously, and actively involving them in activities
- Respecting their right to personal privacy
- Explaining to them at the outset, and explicitly, if confidentiality needs to be broken in the interests of safeguarding
- Encouraging them to speak out about attitudes or behaviours that make them uncomfortable

Maintaining appropriate relationships

Young people will likely see staff as role models, and as such, staff must always act appropriately. This includes behaviour that takes place on-campus, off-campus and online. All staff should:

- Promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect
- Use positive and appropriate language with and around young people
- Be aware of the effect their appearance might have on young people, and ensure they dress appropriately

- Avoid showing favouritism
- Exercise patience
- Use caution when discussing sensitive issues
- Ensure that any contact with young people is relevant to the Pre-university Summer School activity
- Ensure that there is more than one adult present during Pre-university Summer School activities (with the exception of classroom teaching). If a situation arises where a member of staff is alone with a young person, they should remain within sight and/or sound of other adults (e.g. if alone with a young person in a room, the door should always be left open, etc)
- Respond carefully to requests from a young person for individual time with them. Where there is a legitimate need for this, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputy Safeguarding Leads should be informed in advance (e.g. explanation of the context and circumstances, which student they will be with, where they will be with the student, etc)

Inappropriate behaviour

Any inappropriate behaviour towards young people, whether in-person or online, is strictly prohibited. Staff must not:

- Allow any issues or concerns to go unreported
- Take any unnecessary risks
- Smoke, vape, consume alcohol or use illegal substances when on duty and/or interacting with young people
- Initiate, encourage and/or develop inappropriate relationships with young people
- Arrange or agree to participate in any activities with young people, in-person or online, that are not part of the planned Pre-university Summer School programme, however well-intentioned or innocent (e.g. ad-hoc invitations to go somewhere or to meet up, etc)
- Engage in any abusive behaviour, including having any form of sexual contact with a young person
- Act in a way that could be perceived as threatening, manipulative and/or intrusive
- Use inappropriate and/or aggressive language with or around young people
- Patronise or belittle young people
- Make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in the presence of young people
- Dress in an inappropriate manner when around young people
- Provide young people with their personal contact details, or the personal contact details of anyone else (e.g. phone numbers, email or postal addresses, etc), or have any contact with them via personal social media accounts
- Be in a closed space by themselves with only one young person, unless there is a legitimate need to do so (e.g. to respond to a medical emergency, etc)
- Enter a young person's private bedroom at their University of Edinburgh accommodation, whether invited to do so or not, unless there is a legitimate need (e.g. to respond to a medical emergency, etc)

Upholding this Code of Conduct

Staff must always follow this Code of Conduct and never rely on the reputation of COL and the University of Edinburgh to protect them. Any member of staff who behaves inappropriately and/or is in breach of this Code of Conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. Depending on the seriousness of such incidents, statutory agencies such as the police and/or local authority services may be notified.

Reporting issues and concerns

If a member of staff has any issues or concerns regarding a student's welfare and safety, or if they observe a breach of this Code of Conduct, they must report and record it.

If there is an immediate risk of harm to a student, staff should:

1. Contact emergency services on 999 and notify the University security team on 0131 650 2257
2. Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputy Safeguarding Lead(s)
3. Submit a written report using the COL Safeguarding Form

If there is no immediate risk of harm to a student, staff should:

1. Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputy Safeguarding Lead(s) to inform them, and to seek advice if required
2. Submit a written report using the COL Safeguarding Form

All staff will receive mandatory training prior to Pre-university Summer School, and should always refer to and follow the COL Summer School Pre-university Safeguarding Procedures when dealing with young people.

For the avoidance of doubt, all concerns must be reported, even if you are unsure whether there is a problem or if you doubt your own judgement.

Key contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Claire Fox

Deputy Safeguarding Leads:

- Nicola Wilson
- Fraser Maxwell

Email: col.safeguarding@ed.ac.uk

Office: Paterson's Land, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8AQ