

# Professional conduct policy

## 1. Policy statement

Articulacy expects the highest standard of behaviour from its employees, freelancers or other associates and for everyone to be aware of how their behaviour can affect others. To achieve this standard, it is the general expectation that all employees, freelancers or other associates, including others who may be working on behalf of Articulacy, will behave in an acceptable manner - treating others with courtesy, respect and consideration – and conducting themselves professionally when interacting with School Staff, Pupils, Student Ambassadors and members of the community.

We are fully committed to creating and sustaining a positive and mutually supportive working environment where employees, freelancers or other associates can work collaboratively and productively together, and where employees, freelancers or other associates are equally valued and respected.

## 2. Acceptable Behaviour

Articulacy expects that employees, freelancers or other associates will conduct themselves in a professional and acceptable manner when interacting with and influencing others, or when managing colleagues.

All members of Articulacy should be aware of their own behaviour and how it impacts on others. We recognise that personalities, characters, and management styles are all different but the expectation is that the way that we approach our working life must always be acceptable to others through applying principles such as:

- Working co-operatively with others to achieve objectives
- Managing performance in an appropriate and fair manner
- Giving and receiving constructive feedback as part of normal day-to-day work activity, that is evidence-based and that is delivered in an appropriate manner
- Using understanding of other people's perspectives to help reach agreement
- Establishing good working relationships

## 3. Unacceptable behaviour

Unacceptable behaviour may involve actions, words or physical gestures that could reasonably be perceived to be the cause of another person's distress or discomfort. Unacceptable behaviour does not necessarily have to be face-to-face, and may take many forms such as written, telephone or e-mail communications or social media. Such behaviours may also contravene equality and/or employment legislation.

Some examples of unacceptable behaviour are included below:

- Aggressive or abusive behaviour, such as shouting or personal insults
- Spreading malicious rumours or gossip, or insulting someone
- Lack of awareness or consideration of diversity, particularly when related to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010
- Overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position

- Unwanted physical contact
- Offensive comments or body language

## 4. Confidentiality

Employees, freelancers or other associates involved in any proceedings taken under this Policy shall seek to ensure that confidentiality is maintained where practicable. Any investigations carried out under this Policy shall be undertaken with discretion and all parties will be made aware that they must treat as confidential any information shared during any proceedings.

## 5. Informal resolution

Except where the alleged behaviour is deemed by the Articulatory management team to be sufficiently serious to warrant an immediate formal investigation, unacceptable behaviour should in the first instance be dealt with at the lowest possible level, ideally through the individual who perceives that they are the recipient of unacceptable behaviour raising and discussing it with the person subjecting them to the behaviour. In many cases, this may resolve the issue without taking any further action and a constructive way of working in the future can be agreed.

If this approach is not successful or if the individual experiencing the unacceptable behaviour feels unable to take steps to resolve the issue themselves, then they should inform the Appropriate Manager or Business Manager of the situation as soon as possible. Managers and Directors have an active role to play in resolving any issues that are raised under this policy and are expected to act if any incidents involving unacceptable behaviour are brought to their attention, seeking advice and support from the Articulatory management team as appropriate.

If the Appropriate Manager is responsible for the unacceptable behaviour, then another Appropriate Manager should be informed.

The protected characteristics cover age, gender, race, religion/belief, disability, marriage/civil partnership, sexual orientation, pregnancy/maternity, and gender reassignment.

The manager should meet with the member of staff who is claiming that they have been subject to unacceptable behaviour and discuss the situation with them – establishing the circumstances, the impact that the individual considers it has had, and any steps that the individual may have already taken to address the situation. Staff are encouraged to keep a record of any examples of the unacceptable behaviour that can support their complaint during these discussions.

The manager will then seek to agree a course of action with the individual. Wherever possible, resolution will be sought through informal means. This will usually involve a meeting between the individual(s) and the person(s) who has allegedly behaved unacceptably that is facilitated by the Appropriate Manager with support from the relevant Articulatory manager as appropriate. The individual and the subject of the complaint can each be accompanied by a representative for support as necessary. The aim of such a meeting is for agreement to be reached on what might constitute a more acceptable form of behaviour in the future.

## 6. Formal investigation

No formal action will be taken under this policy without prior consideration of the potential for informal resolution, unless the behaviour involved is deemed by Articulatory to be sufficiently serious to warrant a

formal investigation. Advice from an external body will be sought before proceeding. Formal investigation under this policy need not be triggered by a specific complaint.

When making a formal complaint, the following process should be followed:

1. Formal complaints should be set out in writing – with any accompanying evidence – and addressed to the Articulacy Business Manager and copied to the individual’s Directors. Articulacy has two Directors, Ali Shorer and Julia Ward and one Business Manager, Leanne Fennell. If the complaint refers to any one of these, then copy should be sent to the other two. The written complaint should include details of any informal resolution that has been attempted, notes of any discussions and provide the names of any members of staff who have agreed to act as witnesses to the alleged unacceptable behaviour. Any evidence supporting the allegations made – such as emails – should also be submitted as part of the written complaint.
2. The Articulacy Manager will meet with the complainant to clarify the grounds of the complaint and explain what happens next.
3. The Articulacy Manager will then arrange to meet with the person(s) who has allegedly behaved unacceptably and a copy of the written complaint will be provided. They will be given the opportunity to respond in writing to the allegations – providing evidence as appropriate - and to identify any witnesses who have agreed to be included in the formal investigation.
4. An independent investigator will be identified by Articulacy and asked to investigate the complaint made, establish whether there is a case to answer, and - where there is a case to answer - make recommendations. This will normally involve meeting both parties and any witnesses as appropriate, and consideration of any supporting evidence. A written record of the findings of the investigation will be submitted to the Articulacy management team, who will then discuss any recommendations made.
5. The Articulacy Business Manager will write to both the complainant and the person against whom the allegations were made informing them of the outcome of the investigation. A copy of the investigator’s report will also be provided. The content of the letter and report will be kept confidential by all parties involved.
6. Both parties will also be informed of the outcome of the investigation as appropriate, and will be involved in the implementation of any recommendations and for monitoring the situation with support from Articulacy as necessary.

## 7. Employees, freelancers or other associates

Articulacy aims to provide a fully supportive network for employees, freelancers or other associates and will provide feedback opportunities and mandatory CPD training on an annual basis.

Articulacy employees, freelancers or other associates are not expected to deal with difficult situations without support from the Business Manager or Directors. Difficult situations may include but are not limited to unacceptable behaviour from Pupils in a workshop or Student Ambassadors. In these events, freelancers are required to contact a Director as soon as the situation is deemed to be becoming unmanageable who will respond to resolve the situation with you in person.

It is essential for trainers to be aware that Articulacy aims to maintain an excellent reputation in both the corporate and school divisions and any complaints against our trainers will be fully investigated. If the

management team find that a trainer has damaged the Articulacy reputation in any way, they will no longer be used on a freelance basis.

Articulacy employees, freelancers or other associates are non-judgmental and are expected to maintain a professional relationship with Pupils and Student Ambassadors at all times.

**This policy was last reviewed by Articulacy on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

Signed on behalf of Articulacy



Print name here

Leanne Fennell

Date

12<sup>th</sup> February 2020

