Staff Code of Conduct: Policy

ELT/SLT responsibility:	Executive Director of Human Resources, Organisation Development & Marketing
Applies to:	• All RNN Group Employees • All RES Employees and Workers • National Fluid Power Centre Employees • External Agency Staff • Sub-Contractors • Volunteers • Student Teachers • Contractors • Work Experience • Visitors
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Equality Impact Assessment	Approval Date: 4 September 2026
Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee	Approval Date: N/A
Executive Leadership Team	Approval Date: 10 November 2026
RNN Group Board	Approval Date: N/A
Related documents:	• Disciplinary Policy & Procedure • Grievance Policy & Procedure • Suspension Policy • Appeals Policy • Data Protection Policy • Acceptable Use Policy • Mobile Phone Policy • Social Media Acceptable Use Policy • Hybrid Working Policy and Procedure • Harassment Policy and Procedure • Group Financial Regulations • Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance)

DOCUMENT CONTROL

DATE	VERSION	ACTION	SUMMARY OF CHANGES
1 May 2019	1.0	Policy first implemented	N/A
1 May 2022	1.1	Policy reviewed	Minor changes to wording.
1 August 2024	2.0	Policy amended	Changes made to: Sections 2, regarding values. Section 3, gross misconduct reasons updated. Sections added: Section 4.4, section 6, Section 8, Section 10.2 and Section 11.
1 November 2026	3.0	Policy amended	Changes made to: Overall wording to use more inclusive, welcoming language. Section 4, Personal relationships based on E6 legislation for HE Institutions. Creation of separate policy. Section 10, changes relating to IT policies.

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1 Scope and purpose

1.1 This policy and procedure applies to all RNN Group (hereinafter referred to as the 'Group') stakeholders mentioned above including "designated senior post holders" as defined in the Corporation's Articles of Governance.

1.2 The policy and procedure is applied in accordance with relevant UK legislation, specifically in accordance with the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Services (ACAS) Code of Practice, 'Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures' and the Union Recognition Agreement.

1.3 This policy is designed to guide and support our managers and teams in understanding the shared values and behaviours we value that keep the Group a great place to work. Our goal is to maintain a professional, respectful environment, ensuring we all have the clarity and consistency needed to fulfil our shared responsibilities, helping us maintain a high standard of teamwork and personal responsibility.

1.4 This policy does not form part of the employee's contract of employment and so the right is reserved to depart from it where appropriate.

2 General Principles

2.1 We believe that creating a safe, respectful environment relies on the consistent actions of everyone and by aligning our practices with this code, it helps protect everyone's well-being. If conduct falls outside these guidelines, the Group will initiate a formal processes to understand the context, address the impact, and implement appropriate actions up to and including formal disciplinary procedures.

2.2 Employees and workers are expected to actively engage with the Group's policies and procedures. This includes maintaining professional boundaries, ensuring the safety and safeguarding of all learners, fostering an inclusive environment that values diversity, and modelling the core vision and values of the Group.

2.3 The public places their trust in our collective integrity and professional standards. This code serves as a supportive framework to guide staff interactions, decision-making, and daily responsibilities. These principles apply when carrying out duties and responsibilities associated with employment and when representing the Group at external events, ensuring we consistently provide a predictable, safe, and trustworthy environment for the public.

3 Personal Conduct

3.1 We are all committed to creating a safe, supportive, and respectful environment across the Group. In our daily roles and when representing the Group externally, we work together by guiding our actions with professionalism, mutual respect, and shared responsibility. Supporting our line managers and leadership team helps us maintain a reliable structure where everyone can thrive. We have a collective duty of care to our learners, ensuring their well-being is at the heart of what we do. By fulfilling our role responsibilities and upholding our shared employment agreements, we create a stable, predictable, and welcoming space for both our staff and students.

3.2 To maintain a supportive space for both staff and students, we outline clear professional expectations. When standard expectations are not met, the Group will address the situation constructively, considering the context of each individual case.

Serious breaches of professional standards, often referred to as gross misconduct, impact workplace safety and mutual trust so deeply that they may lead to commencement of a disciplinary process.

When concerns arise, the Group utilises the frameworks outlined in the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. Our goal is to ensure a fair, transparent, and supportive process that prioritises accountability, safety, and the wellbeing of everyone involved.

Conduct Concerns (Misconduct) occur when an individual's actions fall below the professional, lawful, respectful or safe standards expected, whether this is an intentional purpose or by indifference, to the consequences of the act / acts.

Serious Conduct Concerns (Gross Misconduct) occur when there are exceptional actions that fundamentally break the trust and confidence required between an employee and the Group.

The following examples provide guidance and help illustrate expectations but are not exhaustive nor exclusive and could be interchangeable.

Misconduct examples include:

- Repeated lateness and poor timekeeping including taking extended unauthorised breaks.
- Unauthorised absence from work, or improper use of the policies related to absence from work.
- Misuse of the Group property, facilities or equipment.
- Use of the Group facilities / equipment for personal use without seeking relevant senior permission (see section 5.3 for clarity).
- Communication or behaviour that falls below professional standards, including disrespectful, aggressive, or exclusionary language (this includes verbal or written).
- Inability to follow reasonable management instructions or meet agreed deadlines.
- Lack of reasonable care when handling the group goods, property, or vehicles or information i.e. repeated failure to identify phishing simulations.
- Repeated checking of student records where there is a personal relationship / link.
- A breach of trust or confidence
- Recording of meetings with RNN Group staff without their express consent.
- A breach of or failure to follow RNN Group policies, procedures or professional boundaries.

Gross Misconduct examples include:

- Theft or unauthorised removal or possession of any property or facilities belonging to the Group, or to any employee or student.
- Dishonesty, fraud including deliberate falsification of registers, reports, salary, accounts, timesheets, expense claims, absence forms, or other RNN Group documents.
- Deliberate damage to or severe misuse of the Group property, goods or vehicles.
- Reckless handling of personal data or serious breaches of GDPR.
- Bribery, corruption or serious acts of dishonesty.
- A direct refusal to carry out duties or essential, reasonable work instructions.
- Serious acts of insubordination.
- Serious negligence that results in unacceptable loss, damage, injury or a compromise to workplace safety.
- Being unfit for work due to the effects of alcohol or substances.
- Any violation of the Groups health and safety regulations or safeguarding procedures.
- Physical violence or intimidatory / threatening behaviour.
- Harassment, discrimination or bullying of another employee, a worker, a student, a visitor, a contractor or volunteer carrying out work on behalf of the Group (including online, via social media / social networking sites or outside of working hours which would impact the employee's suitability for a role).
- Criminal offences (whether committed during or outside the employee's hours of work for the Group) that directly impact an individual's suitability to work within an educational setting or damage the groups reputation.
- Accessing or distributing inappropriate, offensive, or pornographic material using college systems.
- A serious breach of trust or confidence.
- Conduct, whether inside or outside of the employee's work which is likely to bring the RNN Group into disrepute.

3.3 The Group values open communication and respects the legal right of all colleagues to constructively share opinions, ideas, or feedback regarding corporate decisions without fear of negative consequences. To maintain a positive, safe, and aligned working environment, we ask everyone to uphold the following standards of professional conduct:

- ***Champion Our Goals:*** Support and advance the strategic aims of the Group through positive work performance and professional conduct, ensuring our collective reputation is protected both inside and outside the workplace.
- ***Coordinate Media Inquiries:*** Direct all media communications through the Marketing team. For any other statements regarding the Group's affairs, please obtain advance authorisation from the Principal / Chief Executive (or a member of the Executive Leadership Team in their absence).
- ***Report Ethical Concerns Safely:*** Voice any concerns regarding ethical issues or malpractice securely and without fear of retaliation, in line with the Group Public Interest Disclosure ('Whistleblowing') Policy.
- ***Support a Safe Workplace:*** Raise any concerns regarding sexual harassment or any other form of harassment with the full assurance of a safe, supportive, and reprisal-free reporting process.
- ***Protect Confidentiality:*** Safeguard the personal data of colleagues, students, clients, agencies, and sponsors by maintaining strict confidentiality and complying with UK data protection legislation at all times.
- ***Foster Inclusion and Respect:*** Collaborate constructively with all colleagues, actively respecting their dignity, personal rights, and diverse backgrounds in accordance with our FREDIE Policy.

3.4 We respect that off-duty hours are personal time. We simply ask that all team members maintain a standard of conduct that reflects positively on the Group at all times, including socialising and when using personal social media. To protect both yourself and the Group, please ensure your private activities and interests do not conflict with your professional duties or create a clash of priorities.

3.5 While senior staff dedicate their professional focus exclusively to the Group, other staff may pursue additional external employment. To ensure these external roles do not conflict with the Group's interests, impact public confidence, or breach working time regulations, please notify the HR Department, who will help you seek the necessary approval from the Principal / Chief Executive before you begin. For clarity any external work must not be carried out on the Group premises or using Group tools / equipment — including computers, printers, phones. Misusing company time or resources may lead to a formal disciplinary process.

4 Personal Relationships

4.1 The Group requires staff to maintain strict professional boundaries and declare any personal, romantic, or family relationships that could impact working dynamics, with a strict prohibition on participating in employment-related decisions involving relatives or partners.

4.2 Relationships between staff members and students are strictly governed, with a zero-tolerance policy for sexual or romantic relationships with students under 18 or vulnerable adults, while new relationships with adult students must be declared and managed to prevent conflicts of interest.

4.3 The Groups Personal Relationships at Work Policy details professional boundaries clearly and should be referred to for clarification and the declaration process.

5 Business Conduct

5.1 Employees and workers should visibly display their name badges or lanyards during working hours to help Group users recognise and easily identify them.

5.2 The Group trusts its workers and employees to protect confidential information, personal data and other sensitive information entrusted to it. Workers are expected to ensure that such information is kept secure during their employment or engagement with the Group and after it ends, except where the sharing of information is authorised and necessary to carry out their duties. This includes:

- use for their own purposes, or for any purpose other than those of the Group, any confidential information or personal data obtained during the course of their employment or engagement;
- disclose, share, transmit or otherwise make available any confidential information or personal data to any unauthorised person, organisation or third party;
- discuss, publish or communicate any information concerning the affairs, business, operations, students, workers, partners or activities of the Group except where authorised and required in the course of their duties.

These obligations apply regardless of the format in which information is held, including paper records, electronic records, emails, databases, cloud services, audio or video recordings, photographs, artificial intelligence (AI) systems, and any other medium.

The restrictions above will cease to apply only to information that legitimately enters the public domain other than through an unauthorised disclosure or breach of confidentiality by the worker or any other person.

For the purposes of this Code, confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Information concerning the services offered or provided by the Group or any subsidiary, including the names and details of students, employers, customers, partners, suppliers or other organisations receiving those services, except where such information is publicly available;
- The Group's or any subsidiary's business plans, strategic objectives, marketing strategies, operational plans and commercial activities;
- Information relating to any proposed or actual reorganisation, merger, acquisition, expansion, reduction or other significant change affecting the Group or any subsidiary;
- Financial information relating to the Group or any subsidiary, except where such information is contained within published accounts or other publicly available documents;
- Information relating to workers, applicants, agency staff, contractors, governors or volunteers, including details of remuneration, benefits, performance, disciplinary matters, qualifications, experience, skills, aptitudes and employment records;
- Any personal data, special category personal data, criminal offence data or other information relating to an identified or identifiable individual processed by the Group or any subsidiary, including information relating to students, apprentices, workers, contractors, governors, employers, partners and service users;
- Any information that a worker has been informed is confidential, or which they should reasonably understand to be confidential by its nature or circumstances;
- Any information provided to the Group or any subsidiary in confidence by students, parents, carers, employers, partner organisations, funding bodies or any other person or organisation;
- Student records and information, including educational, pastoral, safeguarding, welfare, disciplinary, attendance, assessment and support information;
- Login credentials, passwords, security information, access controls, network information, cyber security arrangements and information relating to the security of the Group's systems and services.

Nothing in this section prevents workers from making a protected disclosure in accordance with applicable whistleblowing legislation or from exercising any legal right to report concerns to a regulatory, law enforcement or other appropriate authority.

Notwithstanding the above, the Group affirms that teaching staff have freedom within the law to question and test established ideas and wisdom relating to academic matters without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their employment or associated privileges, provided that such freedom is exercised responsibly and in the best interests of the Group and does not result in the unauthorised disclosure of confidential information or personal data.

6. Dress Code

6.1 The Group encourages all team members to feel comfortable and confident while representing the workplace. These guidelines ensure safety, professionalism, and mutual respect across all roles, both on-site and during external business activities.

- *Role-Based Attire:* The Group expects team members to choose professional clothing that aligns with their daily duties and responsibilities.
- *Provided Workwear:* Where specific roles require corporate-branded clothing or Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), the Group provides these items directly.
- *Professional Standards:* To maintain a welcoming environment for everyone, the Group requests that individuals avoid clothing featuring potentially offensive graphics, slogans, symbols, or attire that is unsuitable for a professional workplace (excessively tight or revealing clothing).

6.2 The Group highly values and respects the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of all team members. Accommodations for religious and cultural dress requirements are gladly supported. In situations where strict health, safety, or security regulations apply, the Group prioritises those standards.

7 Disclosure of Interest, Gifts and Hospitality

7.1 The Group's Bribery Policy is designed to protect all workers, ensuring they feel confident and informed if ever faced with offers of gifts, rewards, or incentives. To maintain high standards of integrity, workers should note that accepting gifts, hospitality, or sponsorship can sometimes be misinterpreted as an unfair inducement. To protect both individuals and the Group under the Bribery Act, staff members should consult the Group Financial Regulations for detailed guidance on permissible practices.

7.2 To ensure transparency and prevent potential conflicts of interest, any worker who has a connection to a business supplying goods or services to the Group must declare this interest. This requirement also applies if the business relationship involves a spouse, partner (current or former), or a close relative. Staff members must disclose these associations to the Executive Director of Finance.

8. Safeguarding

8.1 Individuals should familiarise themselves with the Group's Safeguarding for All policy, processes, procedures, and guidance. This collaborative effort helps ensure that statutory, legal, and professional standards are met across all roles.

8.2 Individuals should complete the appropriate safeguarding training for their role. They are also encouraged to utilise the support, advice, and guidance provided by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other dedicated safeguarding professionals.

8.3 To ensure a safe environment, individuals are expected to maintain consistent professional boundaries with all learners. This involves avoiding behaviours that could be

misunderstood and maintaining privacy regarding personal information. Anyone who notices a policy breach, feels concerned, or encounters an unclear situation is supported in sharing this information with the Group's Safeguarding Team.

8.4 Reporting Pathway: All concerns regarding staff conduct—whether minor or severe—must be reported immediately via email to concerns@rnngroup.ac.uk or discussed directly with the Director of Safeguarding and Student Support.

9 Intellectual Property Rights

9.1 The intellectual property rights in any work produced by a worker in the course of their employment or service with the Group or using equipment, materials, services and facilities including time, are vested in the Group. These include books, articles, pamphlets or other publications, designs, models, computer programs, schemes of work, learning materials etc.

Any worker who undertakes work of this kind or uses the Groups resources for these purposes in a private company must obtain the written consent of the Principal / Chief Executive before doing so.

10 Use of IT Facilities / Social Networking

10.1 Use of IT facilities / social networking is permitted for work related purposes only. Use of such facilities / social networking without explicit or implicit authorisation, or for nonwork related purposes may lead to the withdrawal of access to the facilities and to proceedings under the Group's disciplinary policy and procedure. Clarification of acceptable use can be found in the Group's Staff Acceptable Use Policy.

10.2 In order to maintain Cyber Security protocols, the Groups' systems should only be accessed through Group issued/authorised equipment and not through personal devices.

10.3 Whilst some staff may choose to send communication via electronic means outside of core business hours, there should be no expectation for a response to be received, respecting the work-life balance of colleagues. Contact/communication with learners should only be made within working hours and through official established and authorised Group mechanisms.

10.4 The use of social media accounts shall be governed by the Staff Social Media Acceptable Use Policy.

11 Homeworking

Employees/Workers are required to adhere to the Hybrid working policy and whilst working from home subject to the same policies / procedures and expected standards of professional conduct, behaviour and performance as if working on the Group premises. All contractual obligations, duties, responsibilities and policies remain in place.

Employees / workers working under the hybrid working policy maintain the same professional standards, duties, and workplace policies while working from home as they do when on the Group premises. We value the commitment of all team members in upholding these high standards of conduct and performance across all work locations. All contractual obligations, responsibilities, and company procedures remain fully in place.