

## **STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY**

*Last Updated: August 2023*

At Think Education, we are committed to building an organization that is recognized for its trustworthiness and commitment to ethical conduct. To achieve this, it is crucial for all our staff to fully understand and adhere to our code of conduct:

### **Commitment to Duty**

Reliability, punctuality, and a dedication to performing one's job to the best of their abilities are essential qualities expected of all our staff members. We require staff to be present at work on scheduled days and hours, reporting on time. If a staff member anticipates being absent or late, they should promptly inform their supervisor.

### **Devotion to the Company**

Staff should prioritize and commit their best efforts to advancing Think Education's business. Engaging in other business activities or employment, either directly or indirectly, without prior written consent from the company is not allowed.

### **Discipline and Performance**

We expect staff to maintain order and discipline in the workplace, fostering work efficiency, productivity, and cooperation among colleagues. Staff members should adhere to Think Education's performance standards, including attendance, punctuality, personal conduct, job proficiency, and compliance with company policies and procedures.

Failure to meet these standards or violations of our policies may result in appropriate disciplinary action, including termination.

Think Education may also implement corrective measures in suitable circumstances to guide staff in areas requiring improvement, such as attendance, punctuality, job performance, and compliance with company policies and procedures.

### **Integrity and Ethics**

Ethical and lawful conduct is paramount in all interactions conducted by staff on behalf of Think Education, whether with customers, suppliers, or any other parties. If staff members encounter situations where they are unsure about ethical considerations, they should seek guidance from their manager.

### **Avoiding Conflicts of Interest**

Staff members should avoid external business, financial, or employment activities that could conflict with Think Education's interests or their ability to perform their job effectively. Written permission from both Think Education's Program Lead is required for such activities. This policy extends to relationships with other employers, consultants, contractors, customers, or suppliers.

### **Confidentiality and Proprietary Information**

Safeguarding confidential and proprietary information belonging to Think Education and its customers is of utmost importance. This includes information related to research, designs, client lists, contact information, personnel data, training programs, methods, procedures, and any other proprietary information. Such information should be securely stored and not disclosed to third parties. Staff members should consult their supervisor when uncertain about the confidentiality of specific information.

Knowingly or unknowingly revealing confidential information may lead to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

### **Solicitation**

Staff should refrain from soliciting anything of value from individuals or organizations that have current or potential business relationships with Think Education. Similarly, they should not accept items of value in connection with business transactions involving the company.

### **Use of Company Property**

Staff members are responsible for maintaining office equipment and materials provided for the effective performance of their job duties. Any issues with equipment or supplies should be promptly reported to their manager. Theft, destruction, or negligence in caring for company property may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Company equipment should be used exclusively for business purposes. Upon resignation or termination, staff must return all company property, equipment, work product, and documents.

### **Inclusion and Diversity**

Think Education is committed to fostering an inclusive work environment that offers equal opportunities to all, irrespective of region, gender, age, religion, caste, disability, marital status, or any other factor. Staff should actively support this commitment by eliminating bias, prejudice, and harassment from their actions and interactions.

### **Child Safeguarding & School Visits**

Think Education staff must ensure their work does not harm or abuse children and should promptly report any concerns about the safety of children they work with to relevant authorities.

When visiting schools, staff should maintain the highest professional standards and treat everyone they encounter with fairness and respect. Failure to adhere to these standards may result in staff members being asked to leave the organization.

Staff should:

- Remain objective and impartial in all conversations and when providing feedback.
- Conduct evaluations in line with Think Education frameworks or other requirements.
- Base all evaluations on clear and robust evidence.
- Avoid any connections with schools or organizations that could compromise their professional relationships or objectivity.
- Report honestly and clearly, ensuring fairness and reliability in all documentation.
- Act with integrity, treating everyone with courtesy, respect, and sensitivity.
- Prioritize the well-being of the school community, including school leaders, teachers, staff, students, and parents.
- Engage in purposeful and productive conversations with school leaders and teachers, maintaining clear and honest communication.
- Respect the confidentiality of information, especially regarding individuals and their work.
- Respond appropriately to reasonable requests.

Special attention should be given to promptly addressing safeguarding and health and safety concerns, including corporal punishment, following the guidelines outlined in Think Education's Safeguarding Policy, which all staff will sign.

## **Sexual Harassment**

Staff should actively support Think Education's efforts to maintain an open and safe work environment that is free from any form of sexual or sexist harassment. This includes refraining from engaging in or tolerating such behavior and promptly reporting any violations to their supervisor.

Sexual harassment includes various unwelcome behaviors such as jokes, verbal abuse, intimidation, personal questioning, sexual innuendo, offensive displays, lewd gestures, comments, and physical contact without consent. It creates a hostile, offensive, or coercive work environment.

Staff members should report any violation of this policy to their supervisor, and if uncomfortable doing so, they can directly contact the Program Lead. An investigative process for such cases is detailed in the "Gross Misconduct" section.

## **Gross Misconduct**

If a staff member's conduct, actions, or performance are deemed in violation or conflict with Think Education's policies and terms, they may face immediate termination of employment. Examples of grounds for immediate dismissal include but are not limited to:

- Theft, damage to, or removal of Think Education's property or material, including fraud related to the company's property or material.
- Actions that harm the integrity or reputation of Think Education, such as fraudulent activities or conveying a harmful image of the company in public forums.
- Physical assault on any individual, including co-workers or school staff.
- Harassment or bullying of any nature, including violent, abusive, or intimidating conduct or language.
- Verbal abuse or defamation of co-workers or the organization.
- Accepting or giving bribes.
- Incapacity to perform job duties satisfactorily due to the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs during work hours or being in possession of such substances during work hours.
- Breach of Think Education's confidentiality clause.
- Accessing, storing, or disseminating pornography or offensive materials at the workplace or to co-workers.
- Falsification of Think Education's records, including expense claims and reimbursements.
- Breach of trust or dishonesty.
- Conviction of a crime.
- Willful violation of established policies or rules.
- Falsification of company records.
- Gross negligence.
- Insubordination.
- Slander.
- Deliberate non-performance of work.
- Unauthorized possession or use of property belonging to co-workers, visitors, or customers of Think Education.
- Possession of dangerous weapons on the premises.
- Unauthorized possession, use, or copying of any records belonging to Think Education.
- Damaging or willful destruction of supplies, equipment, or property owned by Think Education.
- Fighting or serious breaches of acceptable behavior.
- Theft.

- Violation of the Company's Conflict of Interest/Outside Employment Policy and/or Confidentiality Policy.
- Gambling, conducting games of chance, or possession of such devices on the premises or during work hours.
- Undue and unauthorized absence from duty.
- Excessive absenteeism or lateness.

Please note that the above list is not exhaustive, and other actions may also result in disciplinary action. In case of dismissal for misconduct, all benefits will cease from the date of dismissal.

To report Gross Misconduct, please contact your manager. If you do not feel comfortable discussing the issue with your manager, you can directly contact the Program Lead.

#### *Process Followed in the Event of Gross Misconduct:*

**Step 1:** The staff member will meet at Think Education's office with their supervisor, a leadership team member, and a board of directors member. This meeting will be documented and allow for an investigation of the alleged Gross Misconduct.

**Step 2:** The investigation may continue after the meeting, and the staff member may be suspended pending further investigation.

**Step 3:** If the investigation by Think Education finds that Gross Misconduct, as defined by Think Education, has occurred, the Program Lead and Advisory Board may decide to, among other actions:

1. Place the staff member on a time-bound support plan.
2. Request the staff member's voluntary resignation, and if they refuse, terminate their employment.
3. Involve outside law enforcement to investigate claims.

#### **Resignation**

Staff wishing to resign from Think Education are required, under the terms and conditions of their employment, to provide written notice to their manager. The notice period is specified in individual employment contracts.

**Media Interactions:** As ambassadors of Think Education, staff should be familiar with the information available on our website (<http://think-education.org/>), including our vision, mission, Advisory Board, and other relevant information. Staff members are not authorized to contact the press or make public statements regarding Think Education's affairs without prior approval from their manager. The authority for media contact or public statements is vested only with the Program Lead, who may, when appropriate, delegate this authority to specified personnel.

#### **Safety, Health, and Environment**

Think Education is dedicated to maintaining safe and healthy working conditions for its staff. Safety is a collective effort, and all staff members are expected to be safety-conscious, comply with company health and safety norms, act safely, and promptly report unsafe conditions or health hazards.

#### **Intellectual Property / Product Ownership**

Think Education retains legal ownership of the products resulting from staff work. Work products created during employment with Think Education cannot be claimed as individual property, even after the end of employment or project completion. This includes written and electronic documents, audio and video recordings, concepts, ideas, or other intellectual property developed for Think Education. Staff may use work products as examples in certain situations, such as on a resume or during meetings with prospective clients. However, it must always be made clear that these work products are the sole and exclusive property of Think Education.

## **Working Together**

All staff have a role in fostering an open and mutually supportive work environment at Think Education. The following norms apply to office working:

### **Communication**

Every staff must endeavor to:

- Build relationships of trust and respect with team members.
- Use respectful and appropriate language in all verbal and written communication with colleagues and stakeholders.
- Refrain from defaming or abusing any Think Education team member inside or outside of the organization.
- Provide feedback respectfully, addressing concerns in a solution-oriented, direct manner while respecting people's time and dignity.
- Use Think Education's name and business card for mission-related work only.
- Respond promptly to all communication from any Think Education team member and ensure RSVPs where requested.
- Maintain and respect confidentiality for any grievance or investigation in which you are involved, as well as the privacy of other individuals and investigatory processes that Think Education may undertake.
- Communicate accurately at all times. If you are unsure about something, admit it or seek clarification.
- Ensure that external communications align with Think Education's core values.

### **Communicating Accurately:**

Ensure that all information about Think Education is communicated accurately, and do not alter the company's logo or branding without authorization.

If in doubt, refer to our website for the precise terminology and information you require.

### *Non-Negotiable in Communication:*

- Do not speak directly to the media without Think Education's permission.
- Do not host external marketing events without formal consent.
- Do not use internal or selective surveys or hold meetings to gather data without discussing concerns with relevant staff members. Data collection should be a collaborative effort to support continuous improvement.
- Do not slander any Think Education team member, either verbally or in written communication, whether internal or external. Address any concerns or grievances with a team member directly or through your supervisor. Slander is considered gross misconduct in our policies.
- Do not defame Think Education in public or private forums.