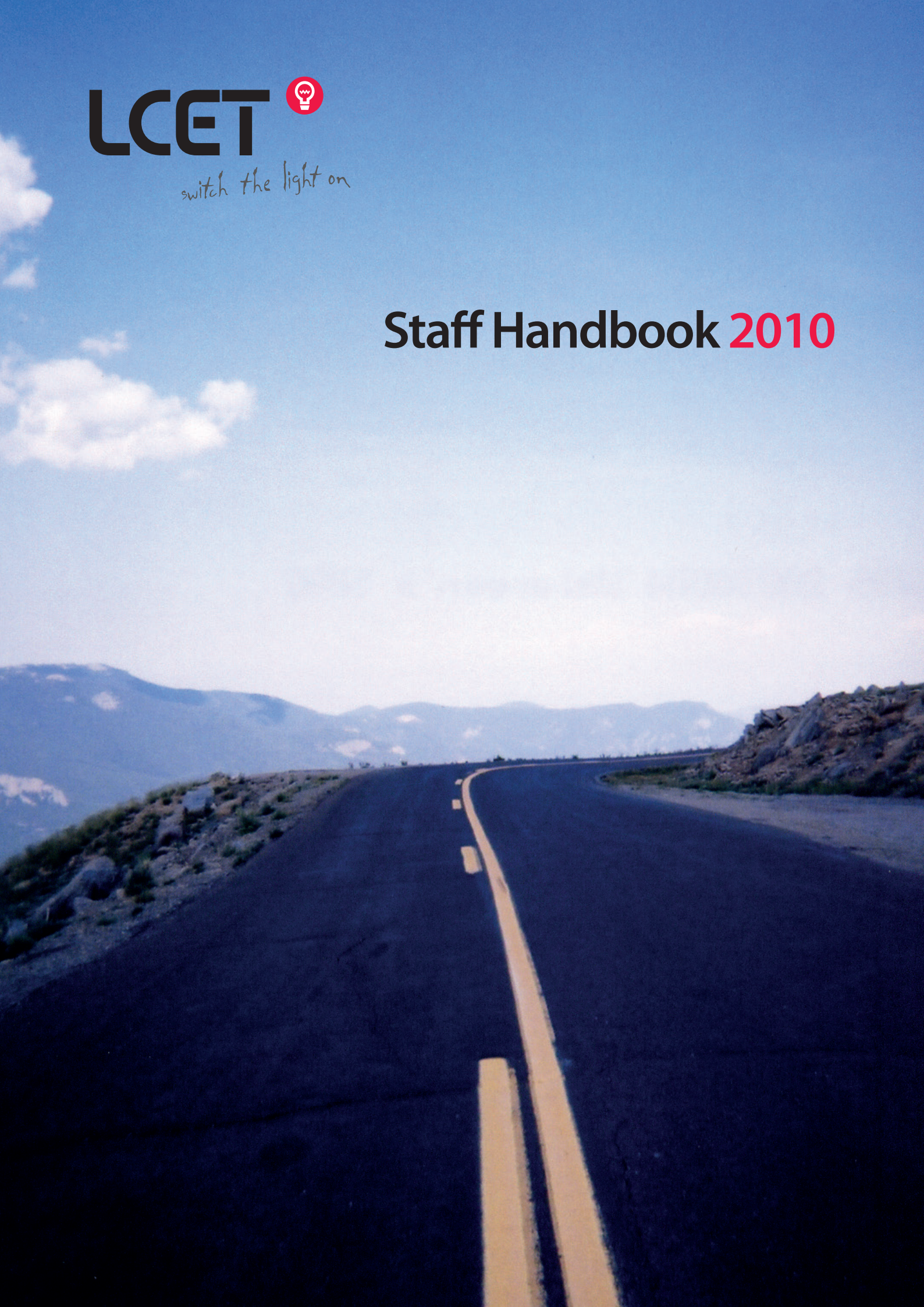




Staff Handbook 2010



Contents

General terms and conditions	7
Grievance and disciplinary procedures	13
Holiday and sickness	17
Use of LCET computers	19
Use of LCET vehicles	21
Professional development	23
Staff support	25
Staffing and parental permission for working with young people	27
Managing risk	29
Transport and travel	33
Running an activity	35
E-safety	39
Confidentiality	43
Reporting safeguarding concerns or disclosures	45

As an organisation established by Luton churches, our distinctive Christian ethos comes from a desire to see Christ's message of hope and justice expressed to and among young people.

Consequently, we seek, both corporately and as individuals, to live out our Christian values and faith in all aspects of our life and work.

1. Job Title And Description

1.1 An employee's job title, job description and normal duties, the date of the commencement of employment and Line Manager will be detailed in their contract of employment of which these terms and conditions forms a part.

1.2 In addition to their normal duties, an employee may be required to undertake other duties from time to time.

2. Probationary Period

2.1 The first year of employment will be probationary.

2.2 Employment may be terminated on one week's notice given in writing by The Luton Churches Education Trust (LCET) at any time during this period.

2.3 An employee's performance and suitability for continued employment will be reviewed throughout their probationary period and if, at the end of the period, their performance is deemed satisfactory, their employment will be continued for either a further fixed period or an open contract basis, commencing on the expiration of the probationary period.

2. Hours of Work

2.1 The nature of LCET's work will often lead to employees having to work irregular hours.

2.2 Overtime payments will not be made, but an employee's Line Manager may, at their absolute discretion, give time off to compensate for extra hours worked.

2.3 Employees will, in the course of their employment, be required to organise and attend residential activities organised by LCET, in particular staff retreats , youth events and weekends. Notice of such residential activities will be given at least two months in advance by the employee's Line Manager. Any expenses properly incurred as result of these duties will be repaid in accordance with the provisions outlined in section 8.

2.4 Part time employees will be advised of their hours of work in their contracts of employment.

3. Holidays

3.1 The holiday year runs from September 1st to August 31st each year.

3.2 All full time employees are entitled to a holiday entitlement of 20 working days plus public holidays each year, adjusted proportionally for part time employees. LCET may increase this allowance at their absolute discretion to reward, for example, seniority or long service. Any such increase will be notified to the employee in writing and will be effective from the following year.

3.3 For those employees starting or leaving other than at the start of the holiday year, this entitlement will

be adjusted proportionally to the length of employment in the holiday year.

3.4 Holiday may only be taken at a time when it is convenient to LCET and employees should seek their Line Manager's approval before booking a holiday. Employees must give at least one month's notice for every holiday requested. Holiday in excess of two weeks will not normally be approved.

3.5 To book holiday, once it has been approved by their Line Manager, employees must notify the Office Manager using the appropriate forms.

3.6 Holiday entitlement cannot be carried forward from one year to the next without the express permission of the employee's Line Manager. This will not normally be given for periods in excess of 5 days.

3.7 LCET reserves the right to require employees to work on a public holiday in return for which the employees shall be entitled to extra holiday, equal the period worked, to be taken as agreed with their Line Manager.

3.8 Time in lieu may be given where an employee works additional hours through participation in a special event or activity. Normal practice for a residential weekend is one day in lieu which must be taken immediately after the end of the activity.

3.9 In recognition of the extra hours an employee may work where time in lieu is not given, all employees are entitled to five days additional holiday allowance each year. This allowance must normally be taken during the summer holidays.

4. Maternity Pay and Leave

4.1 Entitlement to maternity leave is covered by statutory regulations.

5. Special Leave

5.1 Special leave is a privilege and may be granted by the Chief Executive's discretion subject to operational needs and commitments. Special leave may be requested for personal reasons (e.g. funerals) or any other reasonable grounds. Special leave will be paid or unpaid depending on the reason for, and length of absence, required.

6. Other Employment

6.1 It is considered that the demands of the full time positions within LCET are such that it is not desirable for employees to seek any other part time employment. If employees wish to take up any other concurrent employment they must first seek the permission of the Chief Executive after having discussed the matter with their Line Manager.

7. Other Engagements

7.1 In the course of employment occasions may arise where employees are invited to take an engagement during normal working hours related to their work with LCET, although the engagement may not be directly related to LCET. Permission may be given for this time to be taken as holiday but LCET recognises that some of these engagements may be beneficial to the broader work of LCET and may well enhance the reputation or advertise the work of LCET. They may also benefit the employee in that they broaden his or

her experience. Because of these factors, an employee's Line Manager may, at their discretion, allow special paid leave to be granted. If the employee is paid for the engagement then all or part of the payment may be retained by the employee at the discretion of the Line Manager.

8. Periods of Notice

8.1 Unless otherwise agreed in writing an employee's period of notice is one month and this is binding on both the employee and LCET.

8.2 LCET reserve the right to pay salary in lieu of notice.

9. Retirement Age

9.1 The retirement age for men and women is 65.

10. Employee Appraisal

10.1 All employees will receive an appraisal six months after beginning their employment with LCET and annually thereafter. The intention of the review is to agree personal and LCET related objectives and to identify any training or development needs.

11. Lateness

11.1 LCET regard good time keeping as vital. If employees are likely to be more than 20 minutes late for work on any one day, they should contact the Office Manager. The Office Manager will inform the Line Manager and postpone any relevant meetings.

12. Salaries

12.1 Employees will be advised of their salary in the letter that offers them employment.

12.2 Salaries will be in arrears, by such methods as LCET may from time to time decide on, or about, the last working day of each month.

12.3 Salaries will be reviewed by LCET as part of the annual budgeting cycle in July each year, and the revised salary will take effect from 1 September. Employees joining after 1 March will not normally have their salary reviewed until the July following twelve months service. Employees will be notified in writing of any change in salary resulting from a review.

12.4 LCET reserves the right to revise salaries at any time during the year where exceptional circumstances dictate.

13. Deductions

13.1 LCET reserves the right in its absolute discretion to deduct from an employee's salary any sums which they may owe LCET including, without limitation, any over payments or loans made to them by LCET or losses suffered by LCET as a result of an employees negligence or breach of LCET's terms and conditions or duties.

13.2 LCET also reserve the right to forfeit a day's pay for each day of unauthorised absence (including leaving employment without notice or during an employee's notice period without LCET's permission).

14. Expenses

14.1 Expenses will be reimbursed for all properly authorised petty cash expenditure provided that a receipt is obtained.

15. Authority to Commit to Expenditure

15.1 Where necessary, staff are able to make purchases without authorisation up to a value of £15, but not more than £30 in any month.

15.2 All expenditure is restricted by our budget and ultimately the amount of income we receive. This policy may therefore be limited if there are insufficient funds.

15.3 This policy applies to items bought via the internet or a catalogue as well as in person.

15.4 Where staff have used their own money, they can be reimbursed by submitting a receipt to the Office Manager. Expenditure may not be reimbursed where there is no receipt or evidence of purchase.

15.5 The Office Manager will confirm what expenditure code will be allocated and collect a receipt.

15.6 Reimbursement will normally be by bank credit, but can occasionally be through petty cash at the Office Manager's discretion.

15.7 Purchases between £15 and £100 can be made only with the permission of the Line Manager.

15.8 Purchases over £100 can only be made with the permission of the Chief Executive.

16. Insurance

16.1 LCET has arranged insurance covering its liability to employees to the limit required by law.

17. Confidentiality

17.1 Employees must not disclose any information of a confidential nature relating to LCET during or after their employment except in the proper course of their employment or as required by the law.

17.2 Employees must not remove any documents or tangible items which belong to LCET or which contain confidential information from LCET's premises at any time without proper authorisation.

17.3 Employees must return to LCET, upon the termination of their employment, all documents and tangible items which contain or refer to any confidential information and which is in the employee's possession or under their control.

18. Changes To Terms Of Employment

18.1 LCET reserve the right to make reasonable changes to any terms and conditions and will notify

employees in writing of any such changes at the earliest opportunity and, in any event, within one month after such changes have taken effect.

18.2 Such changes will be deemed to be accepted unless an employee notifies LCET of any objection in writing before the expiry date of the notice period.

19. Jurisdiction

19.1 These terms and conditions shall be governed by and construed in accordance with English law and each party agrees to submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts as regards any claim or matter arising under these terms and conditions.

Grievance and disciplinary procedures

1. Grievance Procedure

1.1 LCET recognises the importance of valuing its staff as an employer and treating them fairly in every respect. We aim to have a positive and fulfilling work environment where disagreements and problems can be openly and honestly resolved. We do also recognise that sometimes more serious issues may occasionally arise and have therefore set out a procedure to deal with them, however infrequently they may be referred to. If an employee has any grievance relating to their employment they should raise the matter initially with their Line Manager. They may be required to put any such grievance into writing. When a grievance involves an employee's Line Manager, an employee should raise the matter either with the Chief Executive or the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

1.2 Having enquired into an employee's grievance the Line Manager will discuss it with the employee and will then notify them of their decision.

1.3 If the decision of the Line Manager is not acceptable, or if it is not possible to settle the matter, an employee may refer the matter in writing to the Board of Trustees whose decision will be final and binding.

1.4 When starting a grievance an employee may be accompanied by an advocate of their choice.

1.5 If an employee believes that they are being sexually or racially harassed or the victim of some other form of harassment or unlawful discrimination within LCET, they should report any incidents to the Chief Executive who will investigate. Their report will be treated as confidential unless an employee agrees otherwise.

2. Disciplinary Procedures

2.1 The purpose of the disciplinary procedures is to ensure that LCET behaves fairly in investigating and dealing with allegations of unacceptable conduct or performance. Accordingly, LCET reserves the right to depart from the precise requirements of its disciplinary procedure where it is expedient to do so and where the resulting treatment of the employee is no less fair.

2.2 All cases of disciplinary action under these procedures will be recorded and placed in LCET's records. A copy of LCET's disciplinary records concerning an employee will be supplied to them at their request.

2.3 Offences under LCET's disciplinary procedures fall into 3 categories namely

- Misconduct
- Gross misconduct
- Incapability

2.4 The following steps will be taken, as appropriate, in all cases of disciplinary action:

Investigations: No action will be taken before a proper investigation has been undertaken by LCET into the matter complained of. If appropriate, LCET may, by written notice, suspend an employee for a specified period while the investigation takes place. If an employee is so suspended their contract of employment will continue together with all their rights under their contract including the payment of salary, but during

the period of suspension they will not be entitled to access to any of LCET's premises except at the prior request or with the prior consent of LCET and subject to such conditions as LCET may impose. The decision to suspend an employee will be notified to them by the Chief Executive and confirmed in writing.

Disciplinary Hearings: If the Chief Executive decides to hold a disciplinary hearing about the matter complained of, an employee will be given details of the complaint against them at least three working days before the hearing. At the hearing the employee will be given an opportunity to state their case. The employee may be accompanied by an advocate of their choice. No disciplinary penalty will be imposed without a disciplinary hearing, but a hearing may proceed in an employee's absence if they fail to turn up.

Appeals: Employees have a right to appeal against any disciplinary decision to the Board of Trustees of LCET. They should inform the Chief Executive in writing of their wish to appeal within five working days of the date of the decision which forms the subject of their appeal. The Board of Trustees, as appropriate, will conduct an appeal hearing as soon as possible thereafter at which the employee will be given an opportunity to state their case and will be entitled to be accompanied by an advocate of their choice. The decision of the Board of Trustees, as appropriate, will be notified to an employee in writing and will be final and binding under this procedure.

3. Misconduct

3.1 The following offences are examples of misconduct:

- Bad time keeping
- Unauthorised absence
- Minor damage to LCET property
- Minor breach of LCET rules
- Failure to observe LCET procedures
- Abusive behaviour

These offences are not exclusive or exhaustive and offences of a similar nature will be dealt with under this procedure.

3.2 The following procedure will apply in cases of alleged misconduct:

First warning: This will be given by the Chief Executive and may be oral or written according to the circumstances. In either event, an employee will be advised that the warning constitutes the first formal stage of this procedure. If the warning is verbal, a note that such a warning has been given will be placed in LCET's records.

Final warning: This will be given by the Chief Executive and confirmed to an employee in writing. This warning will state that, if the employee commits a further offence of misconduct during the period specified in it, their employment will be terminated.

Dismissal: The decision to dismiss an employee will not be taken without reference to the Board of Trustees and will be notified to the employee in writing.

4. Gross Misconduct

4.1 The following offences are examples of gross misconduct:

- Theft or unauthorised possession of any property belonging to LCET or any employee.
- Serious damage to LCET property.
- Falsification of reports, accounts or expense claims or documentation relating to absence from work.
- Refusal to carry out duties or reasonable instructions.
- Toxication by reason of drugs.

4.2 In the event of gross misconduct the period of notice does not apply and employment is terminated with immediate effect. The decision to dismiss an employee will not be taken without reference to the Board of Trustees and will be notified to the employee in writing.

5. Incapability

5.1 The following are examples of incapability:

- Poor performance
- Incompetence
- Unsuitability
- Lack of application

These examples are not exhaustive and instances of a similar nature will be dealt with under this procedure.

5.2 The following procedure will apply in cases of incapability:

First warning: This will be given by the Chief Executive and may be oral or written according to the circumstances. In either event, an employer will be advised that the warning constitutes the first formal stage of this procedure. If the warning is verbal, a note that such a warning has been given will be placed in LCET's records.

Final warning: This will be given by the Chief Executive and confirmed to an employee in writing. This warning will state that, if the employee commits a further offence of misconduct during the period specified in it, their employment will be terminated.

Dismissal: The decision to dismiss an employee will not be taken without reference to the Board of Trustees and will be notified to the employee in writing.

6. Unsatisfactory Sickness Record

6.1 The following are examples of unsatisfactory attendance:

- Long term absence due to injury or sickness.
- Frequent short-term absence due to minor ailments.

6.2 In appropriate circumstances, LCET may require an employee to be:

- Examined by an independent medical practitioner of its choosing. In this event, an employee must agree to cooperate with such a request and to permit the medical practitioner to discuss with LCET the findings of their examination and their prognosis for the employee's future recovery; and/or
- Interviewed by a LCET welfare officer (at an employee's home if necessary) if there is a possibility, in LCET's opinion, that an employee's absence is wholly or partly due to personal or domestic difficulty or there are

other circumstances where LCET might be able to assist an employee.

6.3 The findings of the medical practitioner and/or the welfare officer will be taken into account when LCET considers the kind of action, if any, it will take against an employee in any respect of their absence from work.

6.4 If appropriate, after such examination/interview, an employee may be given a first warning by the Chief Executive which will be confirmed to an employee in writing. This warning will specify a period, the length which will depend upon the particular health or welfare difficulties:

- Over which an employee's attendance will be monitored by LCET and a specified measure of improvement will be required of you; or
- At the end of which an employee will be expected to have returned to work.

If appropriate at the end of such a period, an employee may be required to undergo another examination and/or interview the results of which LCET will take into account when it considers the kind of action which it is appropriate to take against an employee.

Such action may include :

- The removal, reduction or suspension of an employee's eligibility for sick pay ;
and/or
- The removal or reduction of an employee's entitlement to holiday;
and/or
- The issue of a final warning by the Chief Executive which will be confirmed to the employee in writing and will specify a further period over which an employee's attendance will be monitored and the level of improvement expected of an employee during such a period. This warning will state that failure to show the necessary improvement within the specified period will result in an employee's dismissal;
and/or
- An employee's dismissal on notice if LCET concludes, following an employee's medical examination, that they are not likely to be fit to return to work in the foreseeable future and that, in all the circumstances, the needs of its business render it impracticable to await further an employee's return to health or fitness.

The decision to dismiss will not be taken without reference to the Board of Trustees and will be notified to an employee in writing.

6.5 Subject to satisfactory performance and conduct, any warning under these procedures will be removed from LCET's records after two years.

1. Holidays

1.1 Notification of an agreed holiday should be made to the Office Manager using the appropriate form at least two months in advance.

2. Sickness

2.1 Employees, or someone they authorise, must notify the Office Manager of their incapacity by sickness or injury before 10.00am on each working day of their absence and give an indication, where possible, of when they will be able to return to work. The Office Manager will notify the employees' Line Manager and cancel any appointments as necessary.

2.2 For absences due to sickness or injury of 7 days or less an LCET absence statement must be completed as soon as an employee returns to work. For absences due to sickness or injury of eight days or longer (including weekends), a medical certificate from an employee's GP must be provided by the tenth day. Thereafter medical certificates must be provided to cover any continued absence.

2.3 LCET reserves the right to ask employees to provide a GP's medical certificate for absences of eight days.

3. Sick Pay

3.1 If employees are absent from work due to sickness or injury and comply with the requirements in section 15.0, employees will be paid statutory sick pay in accordance with provisions of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 (for statutory sick pay purposes an employee's qualifying days are Monday to Friday) and sick pay in accordance with the terms of LCET's sick pay scheme.

3.2 Under the provisions of LCET's sick pay scheme, employees will be entitled to sick pay if they have completed one month's continuous service.

3.3 LCET's sick pay will be paid for up to a maximum of 16 weeks in any 12 month period of employment with LCET and when payable will be as follows :

- For the first 8 week period of any such absence, full salary less any statutory sick pay or social benefits recoverable by the employee (whether or not recovered).
- For the second 8 week period of any such absence 50% of any normal employees normal salary less any statutory sick pay or social security benefits recoverable by the employee (whether or not recovered).
- Thereafter an employee will receive statutory sick pay only to the extent the same is payable.

3.4 LCET reserve the right to withhold sick pay if an employee's absences are due to causes within their control (e.g. dangerous sports or excessive drink); or neglecting their doctor's instructions.

3.5 LCET reserves the right to require an employee to be examined at any time by an independent doctor at its expense and to cease payment of sick pay if it is advised by the doctor that an employee is fit to return to work.

3.6 If an employee is absent from their duties due to sickness or injury for a period or periods in excess of their maximum LCET sick pay entitlement, LCET will not be obliged to make any further payments to the employee. However, if LCET does decide, in its absolute discretion, to make any further payments to the employee (in what ever amount LCET may decide) any such payments may be varied or discontinued at any time.

3.7 If an employee is absent from work for any reason (excluding annual and public holidays) for a period in excess of 100 working days in any period of 12 months, LCET will be entitled to terminate employment at any time by written notice on the date specified in the notice.

1. Computers

1.1 LCET are privileged to own a number of portable computers for the use of staff. This raises a number of new issues regarding the care and safety of these computers both to come within insurance requirements and in order for LCET to be a responsible steward of its property.

1.2 When transporting a portable computer, staff should use a padded case provided for the purpose.

1.3 Staff must not leave a portable computer in an unattended vehicle.

1.4 Regrettably, portable computers should not be lent to anyone outside of the sight of the staff member given responsibility for it, with the exception of other LCET staff.

1.5 Portable computers are unsuitable for use by young people.

1.6 Staff should not leave a portable computer unattended in insecure surroundings.

1.7 When in doubt, staff should confirm with their Line Manager as to the correct procedure.

1.8 Where these rules are not followed, staff may make themselves liable for any replacement or repair costs incurred by them or by a third party.

1.9 These rules are meant to ensure the proper care and safety of portable computers, rather than restrict or hamper work. The aim is to ensure that LCET works in a responsible manner with all its resources, particularly those which have a high replacement value.

1. LCET Vehicle

1.1 The LCET vehicle may be used by any staff member or volunteer over the age of 25 who has signed the LCET vehicle form.

1.2 The vehicle must be left secured when not attended.

1.3 Where fuel is purchased, a receipt must be kept and submitted to the Office Manager. Reimbursement will normally be by bank credit, but can occasionally be through petty cash at the Office Manager's discretion. Expenditure may not be reimbursed where there is no receipt or evidence of purchase.

1.4 By signing the LCET vehicle form, staff agree to pay a proportion of the insurance excess in the following terms:

- 50% of the excess (£250) for accidents where a claim is made against the driver's insurance by a third party or where other damage has been caused to the vehicle by the driver.
- 75% of the excess (£425) for a second accident within 6 months of a previous claim made against the driver's insurance by a third party or where other damage is caused to the vehicle by the driver.
- 50% of the excess (£250) for theft or attempted theft of the vehicle where the vehicle is not properly secured.
- 75% of the excess (£425) for a second theft or attempted theft of the vehicle where the vehicle is not properly secured within 6 months of a previous claim for theft or attempted theft.

1. Professional development policy

1.1 LCET is committed to the principle of ongoing professional development for its staff, in order to equip them for their role within LCET and beyond. In addition to the internal training programme and external short term courses, the Trust may support staff undertaking a programme of academic study leading to a qualification or accreditation.

1.2 Programmes must have a direct relevance to the role of the staff member, and must develop their professional and academic portfolio. Such courses may include Foundations Degrees, Bachelor's Degrees, Master's Degrees and PhD's, or courses with progression to clear professional accreditation such as BACPs Counselling certificates. Priority will be given to staff pursuing a Bachelors Degree or Masters Degree who do not already hold them, and to those appointed into roles that require these qualifications in order to carry out the work satisfactorily.

1.3 All LCET staff who have completed one year of service, or will have at commencement of the programme, and have an adequate disciplinary record, are able to make a request to undertake a programme of academic study. Each candidate will need to prove his or her suitability.

1.4 Staff must first discuss their proposal with their Line Manager, and then put their request in writing to the LCET Chief Executive, no later than 31st May for all programmes that will commence in the next academic year. Research into available course should not take place during working hours.

1.5 The written request should contain an outline of the identified course, the programme of study, the costs and the duration and study time required. Staff should also include in their written request why they feel they should be considered for this programme and what they anticipate gaining from it, together with any implications taking the programme may have on their work at LCET. The request will be considered by the LCET Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team. If agreed, it will be forwarded to the Financial Director to cost into the Annual Budget, before receiving final approval from the Board of Trustees. If the application is from a member of the senior management team, it will be considered by a delegated group convened from the Board of Trustees for this purpose. The Board of Trustees will consider the annual budget and training requests and make a final decision, based on the recommendation of the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team and any budgetary constraints.

1.6 Staff will be informed in writing if their application is successful or unsuccessful, and given the opportunity to discuss this with both their Line Manager and the Chief Executive or, if relevant, a member of the Board of Trustees.

1.7 It is possible, on courses with high take up, for staff to apply at the first available opportunity and then if necessary make the decision to take up a place based on LCET's decision which will be made when the budget is decided for the year concerned, usually in the July prior to the year commencing. Before commencing a programme of academic study, a learning contract will be drawn up summarising the agreed terms, and signed by the member of staff.

1.8 LCET will contribute up to 100% of course costs and placement fees. LCET will not contribute to books,

materials, resubmission, travel expenses and associated childcare costs. These and any other costs are the responsibility of the staff member to cover and are seen as part of their commitment to the training. LCET will release a staff member for between 2 and 8 hours per week for study, at a time agreed by the staff member and their Line Manager. It is understood that this time will often not cover the total time needed for study and therefore the staff member will be expected to find the rest of the required time outside of their working hours. If a programme is expected to take more than 16 hours study a week in total, it is unlikely that LCET will allow such a programme, as it will detract from the quality of work a staff member is able to deliver. Due to the nature of the work cycle at LCET from time to time staff members will be asked to miss study time for LCET events such as team retreats.

1.9 The staff member needs to be able to prove that they are able to perform to the highest of their abilities in their remaining practice at LCET and if are unable to do so, funding maybe withdrawn. This will be reviewed on a termly basis and be discussed both in appraisal and supervision. If for any reason the staff member fails their studies, they may be eligible to either repay LCET for the course costs or to pay for their own resubmission to continue with the programme. If for any other reason the staff member needs suspend their studies this needs to be agreed in advance with the relevant senior manager. If the staff member is disciplined on any form of gross misconduct, misconduct or incapability the staff member runs the risk of having their training privileges terminated.

1.10 LCET's financial contribution to the programme is reliant on the staff member working for one full year for LCET on completion of the programme. If a member of staff leaves before this time they may be expected to pay back the course costs and placement fees in full. If the staff member chooses to leave before completion of the programme, they may be expected to pay back their training costs in full and pay a contribution to cover the study time for which they were released. Maternity leave will be an exception to this requirement, where this time period will be suspended for the duration of the maternity leave. When a member of staff has their employment terminated by the staff member for any reason, any retrospective payment decisions are made based on the nature of the dismissal and the timing of such event.

1. Mentoring

1.1 We believe our spiritual and moral lives are profoundly connected to the work we do and, as a result, encourage staff to find a personal mentor to provide a safe context for reflection. This includes being honest about our failings, seeking advice and prayer, and being held accountable for our actions.

1.2 Finding a mentor is primarily the responsibility of the member of staff who has a free choice in who to approach. However, we suggest that the best mentors have proved to be people of the same gender who are not already close friends of the member of staff.

1.3 Discussions with a mentor are confidential.

Staffing and parental permission for working with young people

1. Basic preparation

1.1 There must be permission for an activity from the relevant Line Manager.

1.2 The activity should have a clear purpose.

1.3 If there is more than one team member involved, one person must be appointed activity leader and will take overall responsibility for the activity.

2. Staffing for the activity

2.1 There must be the the correct ratio of staff to young people. Normally this is 1:10, but some specialist or dangerous activities, like night walking, may require a smaller ratio. It is the responsibility of the activity leader to confirm the appropriate ratio required by law, in consultation with their Line Manager.

2.2 For mixed groups, there must be at least one staff member of each gender.

2.3 Volunteer staff must have successfully completed an application process to become an LCET volunteer including a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau Enhanced Disclosure.

2.1 Where the activity is residential or is outside Luton, there must be a nominated contact who remains in Luton for the duration of the activity, in case of emergency. This person must have a written list of the young people and staff on the activity, together with emergency contact numbers. They should be available to be contacted by phone throughout the activity.

2.1 All staff should have the purpose of the activity and their roles and responsibilities explained clearly to them. In addition, they should be fully aware of the emergency and fire procedures as well as any other relevant information.

3. Parental permission

3.1 Parental permission is required for a young person under 18 to attend an LCET activity, for example, a residential, day trip or a meeting with a member of the LCET team. You should make sure that parents are fully aware of:

- The type of activity.
- Details of what the activity will involve.
- The start and finish times.
- Transport arrangements.
- A means of contacting their child in the event of an emergency.
- Any special equipment or clothing required.

3.2 There are two exceptions to the requirement for parental permission.

- Parental permission is not required for a young person to attend an open b.1 cafe session.
- Parental permission is not required for a young person to attend a therapeutic group if they are over 16.

3.3 When working with a young person regularly, it can be appropriate for a parent to give permission for ongoing activities and meetings.

3.4 Permission is not required for unintended meetings: e.g. meeting someone by accident in McDonalds and sitting down to talk.

3.5 Where an activity is residential, hazardous or lasts longer than 6 hours, parents must complete an LCET medical form.

1. Risk assessments

1.1 All activities with young people need a written risk assessment. Some activities may already have a risk assessment which can be reviewed and updated if necessary. A risk assessment is a method of anticipating hazards or what can go wrong and ensuring adequate precautions are taken to ensure the health and safety of our staff, those for whom we are responsible and anyone else who may be affected by our actions. Always use the LCET risk assessment form when doing a risk assessment.

1.2 Check if there is an existing risk assessment for the activity. There may already be a written risk assessment for activities that are repeated. In this case, you should still assess if any circumstances have changed since the original risk assessment was written and, if so, update it accordingly. You will need a new risk assessment form for each activity, even if it is using information from a previous risk assessment.

1.3 Identify the hazards. A hazard is anything that may cause harm. It may be anything that could cause personal injury, the failure or misuse of equipment being used, road accident, fire, food poisoning, insect or animal bites, aggression or a host of other hazards. When identifying hazards:

- Ensure that all parts of the activity have been included.
- Take account of the routine as well as the non-routine. E.g. what would happen if the vehicle broke down or the number people was more or less than expected.
- Be systematic. Use the hazard checklist which identifies the different hazards you are likely to come across.
- Be on the look out for anything that has not been foreseen and always add any new hazard to the check list as soon as you identify it so that it may benefit others doing their risk assessment.
- Always look at the way the activity is organised and identify critical areas of communication. Hazards are often caused solely through a misunderstanding or other failure in communication.

1.4 Hazard Examples. In identifying the hazards, take account of the following checklist:

- Animals.
- Bunk beds.
- Camping gas.
- Collision with moving object.
- Collisions between people.
- Corrosive agents.
- Driving.
- Falls from a height.
- Fights and aggression.
- Fire.
- Fireworks.
- Flammable liquids.
- Glass and other sharps.
- Hand tools.
- Illness/sickness.
- Insects.

- Knives.
- Lifting and carrying.
- Lost people.
- Lost keys/money/property.
- Machinery and equipment.
- Medicines.
- Missing buses, trains.
- Roads.
- Scalding water/steam.
- Slips and trips.
- Toxic/poisonous substances.
- Trapped by tide or rising water.
- Unhygienic toilets.
- Vehicle breakdown.
- Water.

1.5 Identify who might be harmed. This includes everyone in your care, other LCET staff and any member of the public who could be harmed. You should list them in summary: for example, staff, pupils, public.

1.6 Evaluate the risks. The risk considers the likelihood and the severity of harm or injury. Consider various scenarios of what may happen and the nature of injuries or harm that could result. LCET uses three levels of severity:

- Minor: This is a minor injury which does not require hospital treatment and from which the injured party will fully recover in a short time.
- Serious: This is any injury or ill health that may require medical treatment.
- Major: This is anything that may cause permanent effects or even loss of life.

Also consider the likelihood of the hazard happening. It is possible to use a scale of likelihood but this is less precise and if something is possible we should take precautions to ensure the likelihood of it happening as small as possible.

1.7 Preventive and Protective Measures. Having identified the hazards and the nature and severity of harm or injury it is necessary to implement measures that will, if possible prevent harm or injury. The risk classified as major and significant are the most important. In deciding which measures to take use the following in order of priority:

- If possible avoid the hazard altogether
- Try to prevent the source of harm or injury. E.g. tiredness is a cause of road accidents therefore do not drive when too tired.
- Ensure the activity is matched to the age and capability of those taking part
- Reduce the severity by replacing the "dangerous" with the "non-dangerous" or "less dangerous"
- Ensure all aspects are considered: communication, organisation, interaction between different groups, weather conditions,
- Give appropriate instructions to those taking part.

The written risk assessment is complete when all hazards have been identified, preventive and protective measures have been agreed and all necessary actions have been implemented.

1.8 Recording and Approval. A risk assessment form must be completed for every activity. Each risk assessment must be approved, signed and dated by your Line Manager. They should be kept on file for future reference.

1.9 Review and Revision. After every activity review the risk assessment to determine if it could be improved in any way. Was any risk overlooked or were the precautions too cumbersome? Pass your recommendations for amending the risk assessment to your Line Manager.

1.10 Ongoing Risk Assessment. There will always be unforeseen risks that need assessing as the moment arises during an activity. You should always be on the lookout for new risks and carry out a mental risk assessment on the spot. This is as important as your written risk assessment.

1. Transporting young people to and from an activity

1.1 Parental consent should be given for all journeys, however short, for young people under 18. Consent may be verbal, but it is good practice for it to be written using the LCET parental permission form.

1.2 All drivers should have a full driving licence and must have been driving for at least 1 year. They must be familiar with LCET's safeguarding policy and procedures and have successfully completed an LCET Volunteer Form or Staff Information Form and a Criminal Records Bureau Enhanced Disclosure.

1.3 Seat belts should be worn and the maximum insured number of passengers for the vehicle must not be exceeded. You should also ensure that your vehicle insurance specifically includes transporting young people. The vehicle must be roadworthy, insured, taxed and have a valid MOT. The vehicle must also have a first aid kit.

1.4 Only drivers who have satisfied LCET that they have adequate experience of driving minibuses are able to transport young people using these vehicles. Minibus drivers must meet the minimum age requirement for insurance purposes. A second person must accompany the driver of a minibus when transporting young people. Local Authority minibuses may only be driven by those who have completed a Luton Bough Council Assessment Course and hold a valid Driver Permit.

1.5 Drivers should not spend unnecessary time alone in a car with a young person. If a young person wants to talk to a driver about something and has waited until other young people have been dropped off, the driver should explain that it isn't convenient to talk and then arrange to meet with the young person at a suitable location and time. It is reasonable for a driver to be alone with a young person for short periods: e.g. dropping off the last young person. The driver should ensure that they have discussed with the activity leader who is the most suitable young person to be dropped off last and have planned the route accordingly. At collection or dropping off points drivers must not leave a young person on their own. They should make sure young people are collected by an appropriate adult and, where necessary, wait with them until that person arrives. Drivers should discuss with the activity leader where it may be unwise for them to transport a child: e.g. where they have had a disagreement that evening or where the young person has a 'crush' on a driver. Alternative arrangements must be made.

1.6 Where necessary, the activity leader may need to consider special arrangements for young people with disabilities or behavioural difficulties.

1.7 If young people make arrangements for transport to or from any LCET activity, other than any official transport provided, LCET must not be involved in the arrangements in any way. LCET staff should be sure that the young people and parents concerned understand they are making a private arrangement.

1.8 For longer journeys, drivers must strictly observe the maximum journey time of 10 hours in any 21 and a 30 minute break taken every 3 hours where the driver can obtain rest and refreshment. In addition, a break of 1 hour should be taken every 1 hours of driving.

1.9 For longer journeys, especially those over a long distance, a weather forecast should be obtained to

evaluate any potential hazard.

1.10 Where there is more than one vehicle travelling, the activity leader should ensure that all drivers have clear directions to the destination, and the contact telephone numbers of the activity leader and the nominated contact. The nominated contact should have a list of names and emergency contacts of the people in each vehicle.

1. Running the activity

1.1 You should make sure that another staff member is aware of where you are, whom you are with, what you are doing and your planned timetable. This may be important in the event of an accident. When undertaking an activity that does not require a nominated contact, another staff member (preferably your Line Manager) still needs to know where you are going with a young person and when you are due back.

1.2 You should aim to work with young people in as public a context as possible. Being alone with a young person in a building or a private place is bad practice. You should choose public areas where you are visible as much as possible or have other staff present. Suitable contexts might include a cafe or room where there are others nearby. Where you are meeting a young person alone in a room, you should ensure that there is some link to others nearby. Suitable provisions might include an open door or a window to another office. Staff should also be aware of the most suitable time of day to talk with young people. Late night meetings, except in extreme emergencies, are not appropriate.

1.3 You should work with young people of the same gender wherever possible. In general, you should concentrate on working with young people of the same gender, especially where there are staff of both genders available to work with young people. Where it is unavoidable, you should always make sure that there are other staff present or that it is in a public area. You should not become involved in long-term personal work with a young person of the opposite gender.

1.4 You should only have appropriate physical contact with young people. You should be aware of the danger of physical contact being misinterpreted by the young person or by another person present, or simply being inappropriate. Contact should be appropriate to the context: for example, contact whilst playing a sport would be different to contact whilst talking. In all cases, prolonged hugging, sitting on a young person's lap or allowing a young person to sit on your lap are always inappropriate.

1.5 You should never place yourself or another young person in danger. Your safety, and that of the young people you are working with, is paramount.

- You should always be aware of potential sources of harm and danger and take appropriate steps to avoid them. You should never take a young person to a place where they are in danger of harm.
- You should be aware of the security of the place where you are holding an activity. There should be a system for controlling who has access to the premises and a means of identifying other adults present. You should always err on the side of caution and challenge anyone you are suspicious of to explain what they are doing.
- You should make sure you are aware of the fire safety systems and have communicated any necessary information to staff and young people at the beginning of the activity. This may involve a test fire evacuation drill. You should always have a list of staff and young people attending the activity for use as a fire list.
- You should hold roll calls regularly during an activity and especially after outside activities. For this purpose you should always have a written list of staff and young people attending an activity. It is also important for an activity leader to have access to a telephone during an activity.
- You should appoint a designated first aider for residential activities or activities over 6 hours in duration.

- You should have a first aid kit with you for activities where there is no other first aid kit readily available.
- You should ensure that food is prepared in clean and hygienic surroundings and that at least one person preparing food has a current food and hygiene certificate.
- You should make arrangements for the safe keeping of any valuables or money during the activity.
- You should make arrangements for the safe keeping and dispensing of any medication during the activity.

1.6 You should take appropriate action if a young person does not turn up to an activity or leaves an activity. Where a young person does not turn up for an arranged activity or meeting, you should investigate immediately and contact those responsible for them to find out what has happened. In some instances, this might be the young person's parents, their school or a local authority body like the Youth Offending Team or Social Services.

- Where a young person wants to leave your care, for example by running off, insisting that they go somewhere or leaving an activity early, your duty will depend on the age and maturity of the young person. There is a higher duty of care for young people who are younger in age or maturity. In general, you should do all you can to persuade them to stay with you until the end of the activity. Where this is impossible and the young person does actually leave your care, you should contact your Line Manager immediately and discuss what action should be taken, including whether to contact those responsible for them. You should also make a record of the incident using the LCET Incident Form.
- You cannot use force or restraint to prevent a young person from leaving an activity early.

1.7 You should take appropriate action if an activity is cancelled. Where a planned activity is cancelled, you should contact each young person and their parents to inform them with as much notice as possible. Where an activity is suddenly cancelled, you may need to make provision for someone to meet the young person at the arranged departure point and ensure they are able to return home safely. You should not normally entrust spreading information about a cancellation to other young people.

1.8 You should take appropriate action if a young person has an accident during an activity. Where a young person is injured whilst in your care, and requires medical attention, you should take whatever action is necessary to provide them with that medical attention as soon as possible. This may include providing first aid or, in more serious situations, taking them to the emergency department of a hospital or calling the emergency services to the scene. In more serious situations, you should contact the young person's parents and your Line Manager as soon as possible to tell them what has happened. You should also make a record of the incident using the LCET Accident Book.

6.8 You should treat the young person with respect. In all work with young people, the young person's safety and well-being are the most important factors. The role of the LCET staff member is to help a young person make positive developments in their life: whether they are physical, social, emotional, mental or spiritual. With that in mind, a staff member should always treat the young people they work alongside with the utmost respect and care. For example, a staff member should never demand or insist that a young person tells them something or that they adopt a particular theological approach. The emphasis is always on listening to the young person without being judgmental, and seeking to help them in whatever way possible. Staff should also be aware of their own limitations. Wherever a staff member feels that they do not have the appropriate experience, or are unsure of how to help a young person, they should always refer to their Line Manager.

1.9 You should deal with difficult behaviour appropriately. You should make sure that the young person is aware of the LCET Code of Behaviour, together with any other additional rules related to a particular activity, and the consequences of breaking those rules.

- Once stated, you should stick to what you have said and be consistent: both from activity to activity and towards all the young people you are working with.
- Where a young person is misbehaving, give clear warnings, together with the consequences of the behaviour continuing. Avoid getting into arguments or debates and remain firm and friendly throughout. Where a young person's behaviour is dangerous to themselves or others, take action immediately.
- You should never inflict any physical punishment on a young person.
- A young person may be sent home from any activity provided all other means of dealing with their behaviour have been exhausted and the parent has been contacted and given their permission. A staff member should accompany the young person being sent home or alternative safe arrangements must be made.

1.10 You should take particular precautions where the activity is residential. This should include a planning visit to the venue prior to the activity. In addition to the directions given in this section:

- You should have the contact telephone numbers for the nearest doctor, emergency department of a hospital and dentist.
- You should have a supply of spare washing kit, sleeping bags (where used) and any other essentials.
- You should make arrangements for a team member to be on call throughout the night, and ensure that other staff and the young people know where to contact them in case of emergency.
- You should ensure that there is separate sleeping accommodation for males and females.
- You should ensure that staff are in separate sleeping accommodation to the young people on the activity. Where this is not possible, you should obtain specific permission from parents for any other arrangements.

1.11 You should ensure others have the appropriate qualifications to lead hazardous and special activities. Where a hazardous or special activity is led by another organisation, you should ensure that they have the appropriate legal qualifications for leading the activity. You should view any certificates in person and keep a record. Examples of activities that require qualifications are canoeing, abseiling and rock climbing. You should inform WRS Insurance about the activity in advance, by emailing or faxing your risk assessment to them with a covering note. (enquiries@wrsinsurance.co.uk)

2.0 Insurance

2.1 LCET are required to inform its insurers when specific activities are taking place that are outside of the regular day to day commitments: for example, day trips and residentials.

2.2 You should arrange with the Office Manager for the details of the event to be sent to the insurance company at least two weeks before it is due to take place. The details must include:

- Where the activity is taking place.
- An outline of the programme, noting any activities that might be hazardous.
- Expected numbers attending.

1.0 Rationale

1.1 LCET welcomes the development of new technologies for communicating and will use them wherever they are appropriate to enhance our work with young people.

1.2 We recognise our responsibility to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to young people's welfare are minimised; and, where there are concerns about young people's welfare, to take appropriate actions to address those concerns.

1.3 We recognise the need to protect staff and volunteers from inappropriate contact from young people in their personal lives and from situations that may make them vulnerable to allegations of wrongful conduct.

1.4 We acknowledge that working for LCET requires appropriate conduct in public spaces outside our work and in our personal lives and that this includes electronic communication.

2.0 Definitions

2.1 Electronic communication includes using mobile phones, computers and other devices for email, text, instant messaging and social networking.

3.0 Compliance with Safeguarding Children agenda

3.1 We will ensure that our staff and volunteers follow the requirements of all relevant legislation as well as the policies and procedures of the local Safeguarding Children Board.

3.2 We will train our staff and volunteers to follow this policy and we will regularly monitor its implementation. In addition, we will carry out a full review of this policy annually.

4.0 Reasons for contacting a young person using electronic communication

4.1 It is not appropriate to have private non-work related contact with young people with whom LCET is working using electronic communication.

4.2 We recognise that there will be times when it is necessary and important to use electronic communication: for example, sometimes it is easier for a young person to express a concern, thought or question using a text message or email rather than in person.

4.3 We will only use electronic communication for genuine reasons relating to work with a young person, not for general socialising or unnecessary contact.

4.4 Genuine reasons could include responding to a question or comment from a young person, contacting them to reassure them of support or confirming arrangements for a meeting or activity.

4.5 Unnecessary contact could include sharing personal issues or anything that might burden a young

person. Excessive contact will also be inappropriate.

4.6 Staff and volunteers should make their Line Manager or team leader aware when they are using electronic communication with a young person.

5.0 Parental awareness and consent

5.1 We recognise that electronic communication is difficult for parents and carers to monitor. We will explain our policies and practice to parents and carers and seek to ensure they are aware that we use electronic communication as part of our work with young people.

5.2 Unless a young person is at risk or there are extenuating circumstances, we will observe a parent or carers wish that we do not use electronic communication to contact a young person.

6. Mobile phones and texting

6.1 Staff and volunteers should not give their mobile phone number to young people with whom LCET is working unless they have agreed with their Line Manager or team leader that it is appropriate to do so.

6.2 Staff and volunteers should not initiate or respond to contact with a young person between 9pm and 8am unless the young person is at risk and there is no alternative means of communication.

6.3 Staff and volunteers should take great care not to use language that might give the wrong impression or create misunderstanding when communicating with a young person, especially when using the informal language and shorthand often used in texts. Staff and volunteers should seek advice from a Line Manager or team leader whenever there is doubt or concern over the content or context of electronic communication.

6.4 Where it is possible, a record of texts sent and received should be kept backed up electronically for reference and made available to a Line Manager or team leader if required.

7.0 Email

7.1 Staff and volunteers should only use an agreed email account for email contact with young people with whom LCET is working, which will normally be an account set up specifically for this purpose. Staff and volunteers must not use their personal email accounts for contact with young people.

7.2 Staff and volunteers should observe the same care in language used as detailed in 6.3.

7.3 A record of emails sent and received should be kept back up electronically for reference and made available to a Line Manager or team leader if required.

8.0 Social networking and instant messaging

8.1 Unlike email or texting, social networking and instant messaging involves the possibility of contact with the friends of the young person or of the staff member or volunteer. This raises particular concerns for safeguarding young people.

8.2 Staff and volunteers should only use an agreed social networking or instant messaging account for contact with young people with whom LCET is working, which will normally be an account set up specifically for this purpose on behalf of a group rather than an individual.

8.3 Staff and volunteers must not use their personal social networking or instant messaging accounts for contact with young people. It is appropriate to have contact with young adults with whom LCET has previously been working unless they are identified by LCET as 'vulnerable adults'.

8.4 Staff and volunteers should ensure that the content of their social networking accounts, including pictures are appropriate. Comments and other content must not be derogatory towards those with whom LCET is working, including young people, school staff and other organisations. Applications, groups and other content must be appropriate to the role of a staff member of LCET.

1. Handling personal information from a young person

1.1 The question of whether to keep information given by a young person confidential is complex and, both morally and legally, often unclear. LCET staff should adopt the principles outlined here, but seek further advice and guidance from their Line Manager whenever they are unsure.

1.2 Never promise absolute confidentiality. This is bad practice and limits what you are able to do should the young person share something that demands outside involvement and help.

1.3 Never share confidential information unless:

- The information is crucially relevant to the work of another LCET staff member.
- You are consulting your Line Manager for advice.
- The young person, or another person, is at risk.
- You are required to do so by law (e.g. evidence in court).

1.4 In all cases, you should always explain the LCET policy on confidentiality to a young person before they share any confidential information.

1.5 Where you intend to share confidential information, you should always tell the young person what you are doing first. In many cases they will approve of your decision to share the confidential information. Even if they do not, it is good practice to inform them of what you are intending to do.

1.6 LCET is under no legal obligation to do so but will generally inform social services if they believe a young person is at risk of or is experiencing abuse.

1.7 LCET is under no legal obligation to do so but will generally inform the police or other authorities (e.g. school management) if they believe a crime or serious misdemeanour has been, or will be, committed.

1.8 LCET will generally not inform parents or guardians of confidential information shared by a young person unless they believe it is in the best interests of the young person or unless it is required under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Reporting safeguarding concerns or disclosures

1. LCET safeguarding procedures

1.1 You should always be alert to any signs of abuse when working with young people.

1.2 Where a young person discloses a safeguarding issue, you should do three things:

- Tell the young person that you must report what you have heard and reassure them that the disclosure they have made will only be passed on to those who need to know in order to help that young person.
- Report the disclosure to the LCET Safeguarding Officer without delay, whatever the time of day or night. If the Safeguarding Officer is not available, contact the Trust Chief Executive.
- Make a note in writing as soon as possible of everything the young person has said. You should not attempt to interview or question a young person about any abuse or suspicion of abuse. You may make other LCET staff aware that a difficult case has arisen, but the names and details should be kept confidential.

1.3 Where you have suspicions that a young person has a safeguarding issue, you should do two things:

- Report your concerns to the LCET Safeguarding Officer without delay, whatever the time day or night. If the Safeguarding Officer is not available, contact the Trust Chief Executive.
- Make a note in writing as soon as possible of what your concerns are and the reasons you have those concerns. You should not attempt to interview or question a young person about any abuse or suspicion of abuse. You may make other LCET staff aware that a difficult case has arisen, but the names and details should be kept confidential.

1.4 The LCET Safeguarding Officer will decide if a referral will be made to the Local Authority or another body.



This edition: August 2009