

## OUR CODE OF CONDUCT

### Introduction

REACT's work is based on deeply held values and principles. It is essential that our commitment to our humanitarian principles is supported and demonstrated by all colleagues of REACT and its commercial subsidiary REACT Group Solutions Ltd (RGS), hereafter referred to simply as REACT. The term **colleague** includes trustees, employees, Responders, volunteers, workers, contractors and interns.

In order to meet our objectives, REACT must retain its reputation as an organisation of integrity and respect. As a colleague of a team that brings assistance to vulnerable communities, you represent REACT in your work and life. The Code of Conduct outlined below is designed for your guidance and protection to help you understand what REACT considers to be acceptable professional and ethical behaviour.

### Scope of the Code

- This Code of Conduct forms part of your contract of employment or voluntary agreement with REACT and failure to adhere to it could result in your volunteering with REACT being terminated, or for paid colleagues, the Disciplinary Procedure being invoked with penalties available up to the possibility of dismissal from your employment contract.
- The Code of Conduct covers everyone who works for REACT, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- All locations where REACT works/deploys are covered by the Code.
- In highly unusual circumstances where conditions relating to locally employed staff/volunteers' conflict with this Code, such circumstances must be discussed with the in-country Operations Team and Director of Operations.

### Professional Ethics, Neutrality and Impartiality

- As a humanitarian, you are expected to perform your duties from a position of neutrality and impartiality.
- Where you are also in a profession with established professional ethical codes you are requested to continue to abide by those ethical codes, as well as the REACT Code of Conduct. (For example a medical or clinical registration)
- International Responders are strongly encouraged to review significant international documents such as the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.

REACT is a signatory to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief and all standards of this code must be adhered to. These include the following principles: -

- The humanitarian imperative comes first.
- Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.
- Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.
- We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.
- We shall respect culture and customs of the people we serve.

- We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities.
- Ways shall be found to involve the affected population in the management of relief aid.
- Aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs.
- We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.
- In our information, publicity, and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified human beings, not hopeless objects.

## General Conduct

- You should represent yourself and REACT with the highest standard of professional conduct; never violating the principles of your training or profession.
- You will not take part in any form of bullying, discrimination, harassment, or abuse (physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, verbal, organisational/institutional, discriminatory, financial, modern slavery, etc.), intimidation or exploitation, or in any other way infringe the rights of others inside or outside of REACT.
- You will adhere to this Code of Conduct, the Prevention of Sexual Harassment policy, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and the Safeguarding Policy. **Everyone is responsible for safeguarding and you have a duty to report any incident, concern or genuine suspicion to the Designated Safeguarding Officer at [safeguarding@re-act.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@re-act.org.uk).**
- You will avoid and not engage in any activities that are illegal, contravene human rights, or compromise the work of REACT.
- You will not operate outside the scope of your physical, mental, or emotional ability.
- Any pre-existing conditions, either mental or physical, must be raised with the relevant manager prior to an operation or activity if they have the capacity to impact on your ability to discharge your duties.
- Disaster response activity can be physically and emotionally draining. It is important to take appropriate measures to manage your wellbeing, attend daily debriefs and inform a Team Leader if you are struggling.
- You should be on time for required activities and listen to all safety or operational briefings given.
- There are risks involved with disaster response activity, REACT will provide appropriate training and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), which must be completed / used as directed.
- You must maintain your personal record with us and ensure up-to-date Next of Kin, General Practitioner and any other relevant emergency contact details prior to deploying.
- You must adhere to all legal and organisational health and safety requirements in force at the location of work, or volunteer activity, including any security guidelines. You must adhere to the Health & Safety Policy.

## Abuse of Power

- You are not to use the power of your position for your own benefit or for the benefit of family, colleagues or friends.
- Kickbacks, bribes or other forms of personal enrichment **are not** permitted in any circumstances. You must adhere at all times to the Anti-Bribery Policy.
- You should never receive personal gifts of money, materials, or services from beneficiaries or sub-contractors. See the Gifts and Hospitality policy.

- In situations where contracts to provide services for REACT are being facilitated by you, all such contracts are to be reviewed and due diligence conducted to ensure fair, equitable, written and able to be signed by all parties.

**Humanitarian work is a privilege and as a result of ongoing high standards REACT continues to enjoy respect amongst our beneficiaries.**

## **Conflicts of Interest**

Occasionally situations arise where a conflict of interest occurs between REACT activities and personal activities. This can particularly occur in the areas of service provision and business contracts.

- You are not permitted to form business relationships between colleagues of your own extended family and REACT.
- Those of you who also manage private businesses or have a financial interest in businesses are not permitted to sign contracts between REACT and those businesses.
- Where you become aware of a potential conflict of interest you must immediately discuss this matter with your manager. REACT will make every effort to ensure that you will not be disadvantaged by the process of enhancing neutrality and fairness.

## **Use of REACT assets and institutional knowledge**

- REACT has established a significant database of expertise and knowledge relating to our humanitarian work, as well as to the work of its commercial subsidiary REACT Group Solutions (RGS) . This knowledge remains the property of REACT and must be protected. You must abide by general requirement to maintain confidentiality and commercial integrity and General Data Protection Requirements (GDPR) where personal data is involved.
- You should never use institutional knowledge for personal advancement.
- Expenditure of REACT funds must be in compliance with financial rules and controls, be reasonable for the purpose and maximize impact for every £ spent.
- Expenditure of RGS funds must be in compliance with financial rules and controls, be reasonable in order to maximise the amount of profit that is released back to REACT for charitable purposes.
- REACT may provide equipment such as computers in order to assist the local community recovery effort. REACT recognises that in some circumstances this equipment is able to be used for private purposes. Where permission is granted to use equipment for personal use, discretion must be exercised in order to maintain the reputation of the organization.
- All assets, finances and property must be accounted for at the end of an operation or activity.
- Expenses must be dealt with in accordance with the Expenses Policy.

## **Relationships with the Local Community**

REACT encourages colleagues to develop comprehensive relationships with the local community. The overall success of our work will be significantly enhanced through positive local relationships.

- Where personal interest is present, colleagues are encouraged to join with local cultural, community and religious groups.
- Involvement in local political movements or leadership in community activities that might compromise REACT's objectives in the field country should be avoided.
- Considerable care should be exercised in the area of religious activities. Although REACT will not restrict religious practice of any kind, colleagues need to be aware of local sensitivities towards particular religious' practices and take the appropriate actions to minimise risk to themselves and the people they are working with.

Local workers are colleagues of the community and will have relationships with many community activities.

- In the context of such relationships such workers are encouraged to ensure that their personal activities are not seen as being the official position or representation of REACT.
- If in doubt about this, or any other aspect of this Code please consult your Manager or Team Leader.

## Media Relations

REACT regards media coverage of our activities as being positive and pivotal to the success of our programmes and is strongly encouraged. Disaster response operations are expensive. While it is in no way required when you are deployed, fundraising for operations is much appreciated. Sharing the story of your work with friends and family and involving them with REACT allows us to continue to deploy colleagues and equipment for operations. It is also pivotal to the success of our programmes and the ability to win new business opportunities for REACT's commercial subsidiary.

- All media contact must be directed through the appointed Communications Lead, including any requests for personal interviews or comments.
- Do not post anything related to REACT on social media without reference to the Social Media Policy to avoid reputational or personal damage, or breaching the privacy and security of an individuals, service users, or stakeholders.

## Photography/Videography

- You may be asked to capture photography/videography and you will be given a brief and guidance on what is needed.
- Photographing government installations can be a security risk and may be illegal in many countries. Be aware of local rules or legislation regarding taking of photos/videos and ensure you comply at all times.
- Be conscientious if you pull out a mobile phone for a shot of properties / people/ damage, this may be necessary to deliver operational objectives, however it should never appear that we are chronicling the damage that occurred (disaster tourism). This should be cleared with a Team Leader and respect to the affected population must be shown at all times.
- **Informed Consent** should always be sought prior to photographing a person/ their property.
- REACT reserves the right to take photographs of training, operations and other activities which will feature staff, interns and volunteers and to copyright, use and publish the same in print and/or electronically. If you do not wish your photograph taken/used please ensure you inform Team Leader/Course Instructor as soon as possible.

- Photographs may be used by REACT with or without a Colleague's name and for any lawful purpose, including for example such purposes as publicity, illustration, advertising, and web content.

## Relationships with Colleagues

You are encouraged to maintain open and professional relationships with each other. Differences in culture, religion and politics should be respected.

- You must not take part in any form of bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or abuse (physical, sexual or verbal), intimidation or exploitation, or in any other way infringe the rights of others inside or outside REACT. You must adhere to the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy.
- While it is to be expected that friendships will develop between you, such relationships must not interfere with operational objectives.

## Sexual Conduct and misconduct

REACT strongly encourages careful consideration and caution with regard to the development of any sexual relationships.

- You must behave according to accepted UK and International standards and laws with regard to sexual conduct.
- You must also comply with local laws and prohibitions in the country in which they are operating.
- Regardless of local laws, or lack of such laws, you must never engage in any sexual activity or form a sexual relationship with a child (anyone under 18 years of age).
- Sexual relationships with the affected population, their family, or persons employed by businesses contracted to REACT, are never permitted.
- You must never purchase, or seek to obtain through other influence, sexual relationships of any form.
- You must never take part in or support any illegal activities, particularly in relation to the trafficking of persons.
- Any concerns arising about such matters will be investigated sensitively and any alleged misconduct will be managed as a disciplinary matter.

## Weapons

- REACT prohibits the carrying, storing or use of any firearms or illegal weapons in any building owned or operated by REACT, including operational accommodation.
- REACT prohibits the carrying of any firearms or illegal weapons in vehicles operated by REACT. Armed civilian and military personnel are not permitted in REACT vehicles. If armed persons threaten violence, then the provisions of the REACT Operations Safety and Security Policy are to be followed.
- You are not permitted to own or otherwise possess illegal firearms or weapons while on operation or training.
- Any concerns arising about such matters will be investigated sensitively and any alleged misconduct will be managed as a disciplinary matter.

## Alcohol and Drugs

- You are never permitted to work or participate in any REACT activity whilst under the influence of any drug related substance, legal or illegal, that affects the ability to perform your duties.
- No such substances are permitted on REACT property, offices, accommodation or in vehicles.
- Working under the influence of alcohol is considered gross misconduct and Colleagues affected by alcohol during work periods will be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure/Volunteer Performance Policy.
- REACT does not seek to restrict Colleagues' activities during private periods whilst on deployments. However, please remember that whether you are undertaking REACT tasks or enjoying private time you are likely to be viewed as a representative of REACT. Therefore, you are encouraged to maintain self-control at all times.
- In environments where the possession and/or use of alcohol are illegal, you must not possess, consume or store alcohol.
- Required prescription drugs that are to be continued during an international operation should be communicated and fully documented via the pre-deployment Occupational Health process before deploying.

## Criminal Records

- All Colleagues will be asked to undertake an appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check in accordance with the DBS Policy.
- Any matters revealed on a DBS certificate will be discussed with the individual in a respectful and fair manner, and will not automatically prevent anyone from participating in REACT activities. A written Risk Assessment may be carried out in these circumstances.
- Volunteers must engage with the DBS Update Service, any changes will be notified to REACT and will be discussed with you before any changes are made with regard to your volunteering.
- Colleagues must immediately notify REACT of any criminal charges that arise during their period of employment or volunteering.

## Enforcement of the Code of Conduct

REACT Directors, Managers or Team Leaders when on operational duty, are responsible for administering the provision of the Code and acting to resolve issues under the Code. Any issues with volunteers may lead to the Volunteer Performance Policy being invoked, or for paid employees, disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the REACT Disciplinary Procedure. REACT Directors, Managers, Team Leaders and the individual have the right to escalate any issue to the Director of People & Resources for resolution.

## Duty to Report

Any known or suspected instance of abuse, exploitation, harassment, bullying or sexual harassment must always be brought to the attention of the line manager, team leader, the REACT's Designated Safeguarding Officer, or if preferred the Director of People & Resources.

The reporting of a concern may result in an investigation being conducted. Such investigations are kept confidential unless an individual is a danger to themselves or others, or there is a legal requirement to engage the Police or other relevant agencies, for example:

- Anyone involved, is a danger to themselves, others involved or those of the public.
- The law is being broken such as terrorism, drug trafficking, human trafficking and money laundering.
- Concerns raised relate to child protection, the protection of a vulnerable adult; this also includes reporting concerns of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Those reporting possible concern, violations and/or involved in such investigations – including the subject of the complaint - must be protected against any form of intimidation, threats, reprisal, or retaliation resulting from their investigation of the alleged incident. If any colleague is found intimidating or retaliating against a person making a complaint or conducting or assisting in an investigation, disciplinary action - up to and including dismissal - will be imposed, or for volunteers, the Volunteer Performance Policy will be invoked with the possibility of removal from the database of deployable volunteers. All information related to the case will be held in the strictest confidence and disclosed only on a need-to-know basis to the relevant stakeholders to resolve the matter.

Any intentionally false, malicious, or vexatious statement, misrepresentation or accusation against another employee, volunteer or third party will be considered gross misconduct and will result in disciplinary action with penalties available up to and including dismissal. All reporting, and allegations must be done in good faith.

Everyone is responsible for safeguarding; therefore, you are to adhere to report any incident, concern or suspicion regarding any breaches of this Code to the Director of People & Resources, and/or REACT's Designated Safeguarding Officer at [safeguarding@re-act.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@re-act.org.uk).

## Declaration

By joining REACT you agree to abide by **the Code of Conduct and its associated policies** (Safeguarding, DBS, Equality & Diversity, and Volunteer Performance Policy or Disciplinary procedure), and commit to uphold the standards of conduct required to support the core values and mission of REACT.

You acknowledge that failure to comply with any principles of the Code of Conduct or its associated policies may result termination of your volunteering relationship with REACT, or for paid colleagues, the Disciplinary Procedure may be invoked. Where applicable, your failure to comply may result in civil or criminal proceedings against you.

## Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly, or sooner if there has been a breach. The review will ensure the policy remains up-to-date in line with UK legislation and best practice, as well as assessing the effectiveness of how the policy is working in practice.

Date: January 2026

Next review : January 2027