

Code of Conduct

for the prevention of any form of abuse, violation of boundaries or sexual exploitation

Young Enterprise Switzerland (YES) is committed to being the leading provider of practice-oriented business and opinion-forming programs in Switzerland at various school levels. Children and young people experience and learn about our economy, recognize social contexts, and form an opinion. They develop their potential, network, and gain an insight into the world of work.

This learning content is taught through school programs and competitions by volunteers from partner companies, alumni, volunteers and YES employees. Practical representatives from the business world and course instructors who support the teachers are the focus of YES' teaching programs. Therefore, the following code of conduct was developed as a prevention tool.

The Code of Conduct is binding for all YES educational programs and all persons involved (employees, volunteers, alumni, volunteers, etc.).

1. Objectives of the Code of Conduct

The reappraisal of cases of abuse and sexual exploitation shows that subtle boundary violations begin long before the actual sexual exploitation. Perpetrators are experts in manipulation, proceed very strategically and build up sexual exploitation systematically. What begins with casual boundary violations is insidiously and covertly expanded.

Risky situations can also occur in YES educational programs. These are delicate situations of everyday life, which can be exploited for the gradual build-up of boundary violations and sexual assaults. Such situations cannot always be avoided. The point is to manage these situations carefully and transparently. Risky situations are delicate for everyone involved: for children, young persons, and employees with regard to boundary violations and assaults, for volunteers, alumni, and also employees with regard to misunderstandings, interpretations, and false accusations.

Boundary violations cross a person's personal boundary. They can be unintentional and yet be perceived as unpleasant and harassment. If boundary violations are repeated, they can severely violate a person's integrity. If boundary violations occur in the gray area, they are not punishable acts. In everyday life, boundary violations can occur between different groups of people.

Sexual exploitation or abuse is sexual activity by an adult in a position of power with a child or young person or other adult in a position of dependency. The perpetrator exploits a relationship of power or dependency to persuade or coerce trafficked persons to engage in sexual acts. The central element here is the obligation to maintain secrecy, which forces victims into speechlessness, defenselessness, and helplessness. Sexual exploitation is an official offense and is prosecuted ex officio.

Relationship work includes appropriate emotional and physical closeness. Equally important is role-conscious and situational distance. This requires permanent and careful reflection on one's own attitude and actions in specific situations. The Code of Conduct and concretely formulated standards in everyday life contribute to this thought process.

The Code of Conduct fulfills the important task of protecting children and young persons in the best possible way and strengthening and supporting volunteers, alumni, and employees of YES and its partner organizations in their activities. It also protects employees, alumni, and volunteers from any form of rumors of sexual harassment or assault.

2. Basic conduct

- **Power and responsibility**

I am aware at all times that children, young persons, and staff are dependent and vulnerable, therefore I subject all my actions to my mandate. I, in the more powerful position, am always responsible for maintaining and shaping boundaries and cannot delegate boundary setting to children, young persons, or other staff and alumni.

- **Role clarity**

I separate my role at YES from my personal life and avoid mixing. In this role, I am responsible for maintaining boundaries that are clearly different from my boundaries in the context of family and friends. My role and the specific task thus also determine the emotional and physical closeness to the children, young persons, and staff or alumni entrusted to me.

- **Collaboration**

I make sure that no sexual harassment takes place in the workplace or in work situations. It is discriminatory and violates the personality and dignity of the person or persons concerned. Every employee, alumni or volunteer has the right to report sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwanted behavior of a sexual nature that offends a person. This includes, for example, obscene jokes and gestures, staring, challenging looks, approaches and touching, showing pornographic material, unwanted invitations, any kind of persecution, including telephone calls and messages.

- **Protection concept**

I respect the mental, physical, and sexual integrity of children and young persons as well as employees, alumni and volunteers and avoid any action that violates it. I show maximum respect for and accept people's private and intimate sphere. This applies in the physical as well as in the virtual space and also to actions that require a special closeness in the context of my assignment.

- **Transparency**

I am prepared to make my considerations and actions in risk situations transparent to the teacher and the association's management at all times. I proactively address uncertainties, irritations or questions about risk situations or actions in the gray area and am open to suggestions and proposals for improvement. I treat my team members with trust, and, at the same time, I am demanding in terms of quality and transparency.

- **Self-reflection**

I take time to reflect on my role and my tasks during assignments. I actively address uncertainties about risk situations and discuss and clarify them with other colleagues, the responsible teacher, or leaders in the association. In this way, I consciously contribute to the highest possible quality of care and transparency in terms of proximity and distance.

- **Reporting requirement**

I undertake to immediately contact the responsible contact point or the management of the association in the event of justified suspicion of violations of boundaries, abuse or sexual exploitation by employees, alumni, or volunteers of YES. This applies, for example, to statements made by victims, their parents, or relatives regarding criminal acts. In the event of a suspicion of criminal acts, confrontation of the accused is never my responsibility and must be refrained from at all costs.

3. Standards at YES

Physical contact: Physical contact with children or young persons is to be avoided whenever possible. The responsibility for this lies with me as the volunteer/adult person/person responsible for the program. A handshake to greet or say goodbye is of course excluded from this.

Choice of rooms and locations: When choosing rooms and locations, I make sure that one person is not alone with a child or young person whenever possible. In situations where I am alone with the child, the room has glass walls and can be seen, or I leave the door open during the bilateral conversation (e.g., during a job interview). I arrange the seating so that physical distance is granted, and the responsible teacher is informed in any case and can enter the room at any time.

Giving guidance and tasks: Tasks and instructions are ideally given from the front or from the side to prevent children and young persons from feeling inferior.

Contact: * I separate my role for YES from my personal life. I do not contact children or young persons outside the educational program on my own initiative as a private person.

Language and choice of words: I use language that is appreciative, benevolent, appropriate, and not sexualized. I do not use derogatory remarks or embarrassments and do not tolerate them among the children and young persons during class. I call them by their names and do not use pet names or belittlements. Topics of conversation are set by the children or young persons and are appropriate to the topic of the lesson.

Photographing and filming: I do not photograph or film children without an order from YES and without the written consent of the parents, explaining the purpose of the recordings. Such recordings are used only in the context of YES's communication activities and are deleted at regular intervals and replaced by new ones.

Private contacts: I do not maintain any private contact – including via social media ** – with children or young persons entrusted to me as part of a YES assignment. I do not accept or extend private invitations. I kindly decline friendship requests via social media and give reasons for them. If a private relationship already exists with a child or young person, I make this transparent to YES and the teacher. When working for YES, I remain in my role for YES vis-à-vis the child or young person. In this way, I protect myself preventively from possible personal role conflicts.

Questions for specific situations for reflection

- What does my role entail?
- What does the task entail for my function?
- How do I make the situation low-risk and appropriate for children/young persons?
- Why is there a need for transparency?

* Establishing and maintaining contact between young persons and YES staff members (age group 16-30 years) is of course possible, taking into account all other standards.

** Social media contact between YES staff members and young persons is allowed during a programme for networking purposes. Contact for the acquisition and networking of YES alumni is also permitted.

4. Declaration of commitment

I have read the Code of Conduct and understand that it is an important tool in the prevention of sexual harassment and sexual exploitation of children, young persons, and fellow human beings and I fully agree with it.

I certify that I am not the subject of any pending criminal or investigative proceedings for acts related to sexual integrity, nor have I been convicted of such acts.

I acknowledge that repeated non-transparent and not conclusively justified deviations from the standards are not tolerated at YES. They may lead to sanctions and, if violated again, to termination of employment or volunteering assignment. If a volunteer or alumni violates this Code, YES may inform the employer.

First name, last name : _____

Institution/company : _____

Address : _____

Postcode/town : _____

Place, date : _____

Signature : _____

This Code of Conduct is accepted online (digitally) by means of a confirmation or must be signed by employees on the induction day, by alumni after their acceptance into the organization, and by volunteers after their training, but no later than seven working days before the first volunteering assignment and submitted to the HR department at YES. In justified cases of suspicion, YES may request a special private statement.