

## BDA Code of Ethics and Conduct

### 1. Aims of the BDA

The BDA exists to promote a dyslexia friendly world. To achieve this, it seeks to influence society and to provide support to dyslexic individuals. It also recognises its responsibility in setting and upholding the shared values and highest standards of behaviour to be achieved by those who operate in this field.

These aims are articulated in three main areas of action:

- a. Producing advice and comment in appropriate forms and based on current research and debate to decision makers and influencers to promote greater understanding of the needs of people with dyslexia and recognition of the support and resources needed to enable them to play a full part in society and fulfil their potential.
- b. By accrediting courses, encouraging and disseminating research, offering professional development opportunities for professionals and providing direct advice to the public through a dedicated Helpline and a nationwide network of District Associations ensuring that appropriate levels of professional expertise are readily available to clients.
- c. Through a spectrum of levels of membership and certification providing for clients clear and transparent information regarding the expertise and competence they may expect of professionals working in the areas of teaching and assessment of people with dyslexia.

### 2. Scope of this Code

This Code is intended to cover the behaviours of all those who influence or support others within the BDA. This includes all staff, volunteers, members, and those who hold qualifications and Practising Certificates approved by the BDA. It therefore includes those who trained for recognition under ALSA, APS, ATS, ATS (FE/HE), ATS (Dyscalculia) AMBDA, AMBDA (FE/HE), Teachers within the Mainstream and Workplace Assessors.

### 3. Purpose

This Code sets out the principles, values and behaviour required to ensure professionalism, respect of others, integrity, competence and responsibility for own behaviour. It recognises that ethics relates to the control of power and that this is critical as much of the BDA's work involves influencing, advice and support with others who may not hold as much authority or power. It is essential that trust is gained, the more vulnerable are protected and no abuse of power is permitted. Dyslexia is also an area within which there continues to be many deeply held opinions and convictions. The Code aims to ensure that the professional activities and statements of those recognised as competent by the BDA have due regard to, and are open about, such differences when dealing with clients.

### 4. Behaviours

To comply with this Code, individuals offering professional services to clients, individuals, groups or organisations should:

1. Maintain and develop their current knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes through both formal and informal CPD and submit the results of such CPD to the BDA on a triennial basis.
2. Ensure that any teaching, assessment, support or advice offered to clients is within their professional competence.
3. Should the needs of a client fall outside this competence or, through circumstances, they are unable to continue to fulfil those needs, make their best efforts to find an alternative source for the client.
4. Be honest and communicate clearly to potential clients the limits of their ability and/or the availability of resources. Ensure that any advice given, or methods used are impartial and not guided by financial or sectional interest.
5. Ensure that the client is always in the central position and their interests are prioritised. This particularly involves respecting the cultural differences between people, including (but not exclusively) those involving age, disability, education, ethnicity, gender, language, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital or family status and socio-economic status.
6. In all the above; if the client is a child, or of limited understanding, for whatever reason, deploy their best efforts to ensure that they understand the implications of any procedure and that they have given their informed consent to it and may withdraw such consent at any time.

7. Behave ethically and responsibly in creating contractual or other relationships with others by clearly defining terms, responsibilities and any remuneration where contracts are being agreed and declaring any personal or vested interest they may hold.
8. Ensure effective management of activities carried out, including appropriate controls and balances. Be responsible for the quality of activity they perform and the activities of those to whom they may have subcontracted. Only subcontract activity with prior consent from the client.
9. With reference to assessment activities:
  - a. Ensure that clients and/or their carers are informed of the purposes and consequences of an assessment.
  - b. Taking all reasonable measures to ensure that the client does not feel pressured or coerced into taking part in something against their will or that fatigue or any other circumstance affects the accuracy of the results.
  - c. Provide full and accurate data and conclusions as required by the purposes of the assessment but be conservative in relation to the methods and instruments used. Ensure that the client's comments and opinions have a significant place in the report.
  - d. Before any report is finalised discuss the proposed findings with the client and/or their carers and incorporate their comments within the conclusions.
  - e. Express conclusions clearly, succinctly and precisely and within the limits of the evidence collected recognising the level of understanding of the potential readers and the context within which the information will be used.
  - f. Resist pressure from any source to make statements or recommendations not supported by that evidence.
  - g. Ensure that clients are fully aware of the proposed circulation of reports and present clearly in the introduction to the report any restrictions the client and/or their carers wish to place on such circulation.

- h. Within the parameters of (f) above maintain complete confidentiality of both evidence and conclusions deriving from any assessments unless required to divulge information by a Court of Law. In such a case ensure that you have taken proper legal advice regarding such disclosure and inform the client and/or their carer that it is to take place.
- i. Maintain full and secure records of all assessments. In relation to records held by services or organisations, inform clients of the limits of those who will have access to them.
- j. If any professional activities are constrained by the policies, practices or resources of an employer make such constraints known to the client prior to the start of a professional relationship. If such constraints are inimical to effective work with the client, use best efforts to suggest an alternative source of help.

## 5. Professional Integrity

- a. Maintain appropriate professional relationships with clients. Should there be any danger of a difficult or inappropriate relationship developing transfer the client to an alternative source of support informing the client clearly of the reasons for doing so.
- b. Withdraw or refuse any assignments that may be compromised by any financial or business relationship, insurmountable personal bias or interest or offered inducement that may compromise objectivity of judgement or conclusions.
- c. At the start of an assignment inform clients and/or their carers of their rights of appeal and/or complaint to the BDA and/or their employers and the procedures by which such representations can be made.