



Going to School Ethics & Values Policy

Our Integrity Charter and Organizational Ethics & Integrity Framework *Accountability. Inclusion. Courage. Honesty. Respect.*

1. Introduction

At *Going to School (GTS)*, ethics are not just about avoiding wrongdoing—they are the foundation of **how we work, why we work, and the world we are helping to build.**

This **Ethics & Values Policy** sets out GTS's commitment to upholding a culture of **integrity, respect, fairness, and courage** across all levels of the organization. It defines how every person connected to GTS—from a child in a classroom to a board member in a meeting room—should be treated and how decisions should be made when no one is watching.

We recognize that as a child- and community-centered organization, the stakes of our behavior and decision-making are **deeply human**. Our ethics directly shape **how children learn, how stories are told, how funds are used, and how inclusion is built.**

2. Purpose of the Policy

- To establish the **core values** and **ethical principles** that guide GTS's work, culture, and decision-making.
- To build a **shared language of integrity**, applicable to all programs, partnerships, and leadership levels.
- To serve as a **compass** when navigating ethical dilemmas or grey areas in the field, in relationships, or in strategy.
- To foster **collective responsibility**, where every team member is accountable for upholding the dignity, rights, and trust of those we serve.

3. Who This Policy Is For

This policy applies to:

- **All GTS employees:** full-time, part-time, contractual, probationary
- **Interns, volunteers, and freelancers**
- **Board members, trustees, and advisors**
- **Vendors, service providers, and consultants**



- **Partner organizations** and their teams
- **Children, youth, families, and community representatives** involved in GTS programs

Every individual associated with GTS is expected to **read, understand, and embody** the Ethics & Values Policy.

4. Core Values and Ethical Principles

4.1 Integrity

We tell the truth, follow through on our commitments, and act in a way that is consistent—across locations, power dynamics, and stakeholders. Integrity means making decisions based on principle, not convenience or image.

4.2 Respect for Dignity and Rights

Every person—especially children, persons with disabilities, and those from marginalized communities—deserves respect, safety, and a voice. This includes respect for cultural differences, gender identities, privacy, and consent.

4.3 Justice and Equity

We acknowledge that systems are unequal—and we take steps to redistribute voice, access, and resources fairly. We challenge casteism, patriarchy, ableism, and other forms of structural injustice in our practices and partnerships.

4.4 Transparency

We are open about our processes, decisions, and use of funds. We communicate clearly and honestly with our team, our community partners, and our donors.

4.5 Accountability

We own our mistakes, share power, and welcome feedback. We create systems where wrongdoing can be reported without fear, and we hold ourselves and others accountable through action.

4.6 Courage and Ethical Leadership

We speak up when something is wrong—even if it is difficult, uncomfortable, or unpopular. We protect those who raise concerns and model ethics from the top.

5. Integrity & Ethics Charter

This Charter is GTS's public declaration of the **ethical standards we uphold**. All members of the GTS community are expected to:



- Always act in the **best interest of children and communities**
- Be **honest and lawful** in financial, programmatic, and interpersonal dealings
- Refuse to offer or accept bribes, favors, or manipulation in any form
- Call out disrespect, discrimination, or abuse of power
- Avoid personal gain from organizational resources or influence
- **Disclose conflicts of interest** openly and act to resolve them transparently
- Maintain confidentiality where required, but never to cover up harm

6. Organizational Ethics & Integrity Framework

This framework operationalizes the Ethics Charter across GTS functions:

Area	Ethical Expectation	Implementation Mechanism
Leadership & Governance	Ethical tone from the top	Annual ethics affirmations by board; ethics briefing for trustees
Program Delivery	Child-centric, inclusive, equitable	Child Safeguarding, DEI, Accessibility, and POSH policies
Finance & Procurement	No fraud, favoritism, or misuse	Dual-signature protocols; vendor due diligence; transparent audits
Hiring & HR	Merit-based, inclusive, safe	Bias-aware recruitment, DEI metrics, POSH compliance
Storytelling & Media	Dignity, consent, truth	Ethical storytelling policy; inclusive representation standards
Fieldwork & Community Engagement	Cultural humility, co-creation, safety	Training in ethical facilitation; feedback loops with communities
Digital & Data	Privacy, consent, minimalism	Data Protection for Minors policy; informed digital use guidelines

7. Implementation of the Policy

7.1 Training and Orientation

- Mandatory induction session on ethics and values for all new staff and interns
- Annual refresher workshops for all departments
- Inclusion of this policy in all vendor and partner agreements

7.2 Ethics Point of Contact



- GTS appoints an **Ethics Focal Person** and forms an **Ethics & Integrity Review Panel**
- This body advises on dilemmas, investigates misconduct, and tracks learning

7.3 Ethics in Action Sessions

- Quarterly internal learning spaces where teams reflect on ethical dilemmas in fieldwork, partnerships, or storytelling

7.4 Safe Reporting Mechanisms

- All stakeholders may report violations through:
 - **integrity@goingtoschool.com**
 - **Anonymous online form**
 - In-person dialogue with an Ethics Focal Person

8. Accountability and Consequences

Breaches of this policy—whether related to abuse of power, misuse of funds, or unethical conduct—will be addressed through:

- Formal warning, suspension, or dismissal
- Contract cancellation (in the case of vendors/partners)
- Referral to law enforcement or regulatory bodies
- Organizational apology and systems correction

Every complaint or breach will be handled **confidentially, fairly, and with protection for whistleblowers.**

9. Integration with Other Policies

This policy is a cornerstone document and complements:

- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- DEI Commitments
- Whistleblower Policy
- POSH Policy
- Anti-Bribery and Anti-Fraud Policies



- Code of Conduct
- Data Protection Policy

10. Review and Evolution

This policy is reviewed:

- **Annually** by the Ethics Panel and Board
- After any significant incident, audit finding, or legal change
- Through regular input from staff, children, community partners, and auditors

Ethics is a living commitment. This policy will evolve with feedback, reflection, and the ethical growth of our work.