

XP Trust Staff User Guide

Welcome

Welcome to our community! Our hope is that you stay with us, grow as a person and allow us to benefit from your energy, intelligence and commitment for educating kids with us.

For us to have the best start, middle and graceful end, this user guide aims to help you negotiate getting started with us, give a flavour of how we operate and how you can belong in our journey together, creating and maintaining some of the best schools in the world.

Getting Started

What you get:

1. **A culture of empowerment**
2. **People to help you** negotiate your way around our community
3. **Professional tools to do a professional job**
4. **Clarity of process** that allows you to do less and have more impact
5. A pledge that **your voice will be heard**, and ways to use it

1. A culture of empowerment

At XP, lines of communication are open, lines of accountability and responsibility are strictly adhered to, our work is shared publicly, open to critique, celebration and rigorous accountability, and our voice is heard.

Leadership at all levels is in service to you, ensuring you have what you need to do a great job (the only thing they won't do, is your job).

No-one should feel stuck, or that their role is untenable as you can use your voice if you need to.

In turn, we are vigilant of anyone closing down communication, the separation of people, the forming of cliques and memes that harm the integrity of our culture.

Habits of Work and Learning and Character Traits

In our schools we expect our children to develop **Habits of Work and Learning** (HoWLs) and to activate our **Character Traits** (CTs) where they can.

What's good enough for our kids is good enough for us, so we expect everyone in our community to develop their HoWLs and activate our CTs where we can. They are the same ones we use with our kids.

- Our [HoWLs](#)
- Our [Character Traits](#)

Our HoWLs and CTs allow us to reflect and check that we are in the right space to develop ourselves and each other.

The integrity of XP culture

We all work together to build and protect our open, supportive and challenging culture, and we are vigilant of the signs of entropy and hubris, fear and ego.

 The integrity of XP culture

Stewardship

Underpinning our culture is the principle that we are all stewards of ourselves and each other, our community and our world. We know what we've got, we look after our stuff and we degunge and leave no trace after using our shared community spaces.

 XPT CURRICULUM SEAMS.pdf

Stewardship forms the foundations of our school curriculum and our work as adults.

A commitment to professional development

As we look after what we have already got, we develop from within. Professional pathways are open to everyone and we have a strong commitment to developing leadership. We expect you to lead your own learning, and all opportunities are open. Your line manager can help with this.

2. People to help you

Your **Line Manager** is who you are directly responsible to, and who holds you accountable through our Professional Engagement Programme (PEP)¹. Your line manager is written on your **PEP** and visible through our [Organisation Map](#).

¹ Unless there is a conflict of interest, in which case, we will assign another leader to ensure your performance management is carried out objectively

You meet with your line manager regularly throughout the year in scheduled crews, networks and 1:1 meetings, and they are available to you when you need to **use your voice** for anything.

During induction, we also pair you up with an **XP buddy**; This is someone who is not in your immediate team, but who has been part of our community for a while, and who can point you in the right direction when you have a question and don't quite know where to turn. Their details are also on your PEP and they will introduce themselves to you and check in periodically.

For anything regarding your contract and conditions of work, our **HR team** is your first port of call, and we also have **Staff Wellbeing** self help resources if you feel you need more help.

Crew

We are Crew. Crew is [our teamwork approach to school culture](#). You will be part of at least one staff crew depending on your role. Crew checks in periodically and ensures we are getting the right challenge and support we need. We look after each other through compassionate candour, being actively kind, not just nice. Your crew(s) will be detailed on your PEP.

Networks

Our networks are our professional meetups to get work done. They have clarity, purpose and allow us to share our work publicly with each other, making them both celebratory and rigorously accountable. Again, your networks must be on your PEP, and these are scheduled throughout the year.

3. Professional tools to do a professional job

We all need professional tools to do a professional job, and you will be issued with an Apple laptop or iPad, or both, and any other device you need to do your job.

You will also be given a username / email address to access the collaborative technologies we use to communicate effectively with each other.

We use the following professional tools across our Trust:

- [Apple](#) and [Adobe](#) creative software
- [Google](#) Workspace for Education
- [Basecamp](#) - for professional engagement, networks and projects
- [SMAPS](#) - for our school curriculum and professional learning
- [SOS](#) - our management information system

You will also have access to our common curriculum resources. Ask your **digital leaders** about this!

We allow our staff to use their own personal devices appropriately. Please read and abide by the [XP Trust Staff Acceptable Use of ICT Agreement](#) - we do not expect any staff member to use their own personal devices if they don't want to.

Ordering things

Any staff member can request to order anything. [Here's how...](#)

Improving your working environment

Any staff member can request to improve the school building or facilities as well as log a repair. [Here's how...](#)

4. Clarity of process

The quality of an organisation IS the quality of the communication within it. We all have a responsibility to communicate effectively. This is why we provide you with the tools to do this.

Notifications and expectations of response

Our professional tools (Google Workspace, Basecamp, SMAPs, SOS) notify you when you have a communication, and we expect you to respond to these notifications in a timely manner. While most of our communication tools can also generate email notifications, these can rightly be managed by you, including turning them off, so we expect you to be professionally responsible for responding in a timely manner, and to check your communication (not just your emails) at least once every working day.

Professional documentation and XP University

Many things are covered in our professional documentation, held in [XP University](#), with hours of practice, thought and experience captured within it, all in service to helping you discharge your professional responsibilities effectively. So we expect you to **read, understand and gain clarity around the professional documentation** created for you, especially your own professional responsibilities.

For clarity:

- You are responsible for responding to professional communication **in a timely manner**
- You are expected to check your professional communication **at least once every working day**
- You are responsible for **reading, understanding and gaining clarity** around the professional documentation you need to discharge your professional responsibilities

Our **Human Resources** policies [are here](#)

Core Practices

Our Core Practices are a collection of structures, rituals and memes that have written and agreed purpose. These are formed over the years as we create and grow the XP community and we must refer back to them so that the purpose of why we do things is not eroded, lost, muted or mutated.

Our Core Practices [are here](#)

Meetings

Similarly, our face to face in person or online meetings are a crucial aspect of communication within XP. They are our most expensive element of our organisation, and are crucial for the smooth running of our community, therefore we must ensure we gain best value by following our [Professional Meetings protocol at XP](#).

- You are expected to **actively engage** in every meeting you attend, **without distraction**.

If there is a perceived emergency you have to attend to, we expect you to remove yourself from the meeting to do this, and return if possible as soon as you can. This is to minimise interruptions and maximise engagement, so we achieve high quality communication.

If you are unable to attend a meeting for any reason, you must use all endeavours to **communicate with the meeting lead** to ensure they are aware of this, **giving as much notice** as you can before the meeting.

Any unintended lateness to a meeting should be apologised for as a professional courtesy.

Deadlines

To ensure the smooth running of our community, we have strategic planners and calendars that show when things are expected to happen and deadlines for getting things done. Other deadlines will be issued through business as usual to ensure we discharge our professional responsibilities and create a great educational experience for our kids. Deadlines should be reasonable and mindful of the strategic calendar to not overload us.

If you cannot meet a deadline for any reason, you must **communicate with the person that has set it**, giving **as much notice as you can** to resolve the situation.

Cascading consequences

All deliberate decisions have cascading consequences. This means that decisions made now ripple their effects into the future. This works both positively and negatively.

Often, when the quality of communication is low, these have negative effects, and often for people who are not the ones responsible for the low quality communication. For instance, when a meeting or deadline is missed, the negative effects are often for the person setting the deadline, not the person missing the deadline. The cascading consequences are normally that this **causes more work for the person who hasn't done anything wrong.**

- If you miss a deadline or meeting, **you are expected to put this right** yourself as best you can, being mindful of the added workload you may have caused.

Accountable teams

To add clarity to a process that involves more than one person, we use a simple mechanism called 'RACI' that clarifies the roles within the team in terms of decision making.

R = Responsible

- This is always **one person**, and it is the person responsible for ensuring the work gets done, but not necessarily the person doing all the work. This is the 'leader' of the work and decision making is delegated to them if a consensus is needed.

A = Accountable

- This is the **one person** holding the responsible person to account for getting the work done. They do have 'veto', which means they can override decisions made by the responsible person, but only in extreme circumstances. The accountable person has delegated responsibility to the leader, and will expect to see their work in return for trusting them with their delegation.

C = Collaborators

- There can be many collaborators that the responsible person works with and in return can hold to account, but the responsible person must communicate effectively with the accountability lead if they cannot get collaborators to do their work.

I = Informed

- There can be many stakeholders that need to be informed of the work being done.

There are many teams and crews in our Trust and RACI clarifies the team roles within them. When roles are not clear, we need to use our voice to get this clarity written down and committed to.

Consensus

Our work is extremely collaborative, and inevitably everyone will not always agree on what is the best way to do things. To resolve these situations, we must form a consensus, an agreed way forward (for now) that we all commit to.

The person '**responsible**' in a team has been delegated decision making on consensus. It's ok to disagree and we expect staff to use their voice. There are always opportunities in the future to review decisions and improve them, but when we form a consensus, we commit to this professionally and agree to carry this out even if we think a different way may be better.

- We give ourselves **permission to disagree** when discussing a way forward.
- When the responsible person decides on a consensus, we are expected to **professionally commit to the decision**, knowing there will be an opportunity to review things in the future.
- It is against our code of conduct to give the impression we will do something, then not do it.

Setting you up to succeed

Our work, like our kids' work, is open to critique, so be prepared for this; expect and embrace it.

"I'm going to hold you accountable for rigorous work, and I'm going to support you along the way—that's Crew" - EL Annual Review 2023

Being vulnerable and showing humility are strengths, not weaknesses, and as long as you are working with us to improve, we will work with you. **As long as you are prepared to learn, we will work alongside you.**

- You are expected to **use your voice** if you need help

When we fall short of our expectations, we expect to be held to account, and things like missing deadlines and meetings without good cause and good actions to put things right are risks to ourselves and our community, so these things are recorded to help us achieve more in a supportive environment inline with our [appraisal, conduct and discipline policies](#).

5. Your voice is heard

At XP, we commit to the design process of cyclical improvement, from our design principles through every process we carry out. Ideas are often fragile and need space and respect to flourish. At XP, we have many opportunities for autonomy, to try things out; in your classroom, your crews and networks, professional meetings etc.

If you feel your voice is not being heard, your line manager is your first port of call, but you have the opportunity to shortcut leadership if you have tried this and you feel you are being shut down.

You can contact any leader yourself and they will listen to you, and adhere to our strict lines of accountability, not undermining anyone else's delegations, to ensure you are heard.

There is also a form that will be heard by the Trust leadership. [Here it is...](#)

And by the way, don't tell anyone, but the CEO's mobile phone number is **07886190332**

In Crew.

XP Trust

All staff must read, understand and abide by this user guide as it forms part of an employee's contract of employment as part of XP Trust Staff Code of Conduct required reading.