

# Staff Conduct Policy

Guidance

# Staff Conduct Policy

*This Guidance has been designed as a source of advice for Youth Work Organisations. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors and sessional workers.*

As a Youth Worker working in the organisation – whether as a member of staff or a volunteer – you have a responsibility to ensure that everyone attending activities, particularly children, young people and adults at risk, are protected from harm. It is the responsibility of each adult working within the organisation to ensure that:

- their behaviour is appropriate at all times
- they observe the rules established for the safety and security of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- they follow the safeguarding procedures regarding suspicions, disclosure or allegations of child abuse.
- they recognise the position of trust in which they have been placed; and that,
- in every respect, the relationships they form with the children, young people and adults at risk in their care are appropriate.
- abuse of a position of trust is prohibited, personal or sexual relationships with young people you work with are not permitted, regardless of the young person's age.

All persons who wish to work within the organisation, must accept and adhere to this policy. They must also agree to put these policies into practice for the safeguarding of children and adults at risk.

For clear guidance, the Code of Behaviour (below) provides a list of 'do's and don'ts' to help you ensure that:

- The welfare of the children and/or young people and/or adults at risk for whom you have a duty of care, is paramount at all times.
- Situations where misunderstandings or allegations could occur are minimised/avoided.

# Code of behaviour

*This code must be put into practice at all times*

<b>Do</b>	treat everyone with dignity and respect.
<b>Do</b>	respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems, and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to the group/organisation
<b>Do</b>	set an example you would wish others to follow.
<b>Do</b>	treat all young people equally - show no favouritism.
<b>Do</b>	plan activities that involve more than one other person being present, or at least are within sight and hearing of others.
<b>Do</b>	follow recommended adult/young people ratios for meetings and activities.
<b>Do</b>	respect the right to personal privacy of a child, young person or adult at risk.
<b>Do</b>	avoid unacceptable situations within a relationship of trust, e.g.: a sexual relationship with a young person or adult at risk over the age of consent. (see abuse of trust policy)
<b>Do</b>	have separate sleeping accommodation for children, young people, adults and young leaders working with a younger section, in any overnight activity.
<b>Do</b>	allow children, young people and adults at risk to talk about any concerns they may have.
<b>Do</b>	encourage others to challenge any attitudes or behaviours they do not like.
<b>Do</b>	avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour, e.g.: tantrums and crushes.
<b>Do</b>	follow your organisations 'alcohol and substance misuse' guidance.
<b>Do</b>	make everyone aware of procedures for safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk. remember this code even at sensitive moments, e.g. when responding to bullying, bereavement or abuse.
<b>Do</b>	keep other members of staff/volunteers informed of where you are and what you are doing.
<b>Do</b>	remember someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned.
<b>Do</b>	take any allegations or concerns of abuse seriously and refer immediately. (see safeguarding policy)

<b>Do not</b>	trivialise any form of abuse.
<b>Do not</b>	form a relationship with a child, young person or vulnerable adult that is an abuse of trust.
<b>Do not</b>	invade the privacy of children and young people when they are toileting or showering, changing or dressing.
<b>Do not</b>	permit abusive peer activities, e.g.: initiation ceremonies, bullying.
<b>Do not</b>	engage in inappropriate behaviour or contact - physical, verbal, sexual.
<b>Do not</b>	play physical contact games with children, young people or vulnerable adults, or engage in boisterous 'horseplay' type interaction.
<b>Do not</b>	make suggestive remarks or threats or inappropriate conversations to a young person, even in fun.
<b>Do not</b>	allow scape-goating or ridiculing of a child or young person
<b>Do not</b>	use inappropriate language - writing, phoning, email or internet.
<b>Do not</b>	allow inappropriate, foul, sexualised or discriminatory language to go unchallenged
<b>Do not</b>	allow bullying of any form, including name calling or constant criticism
<b>Do not</b>	let allegations, suspicions, or concerns about abuse go unreported.
<b>Do not</b>	just rely on your good name to protect you.

<b>Do not</b>	trivialise any form of abuse.
<b>Do not</b>	form a relationship with a child, young person or vulnerable adult that is an abuse of trust.
<b>Do not</b>	transport a young person alone unless this has been risk-assessed, approved and recorded.
<b>Do not</b>	attend work or activities under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
<b>Do not</b>	communicate privately with young people using personal social media accounts, private messaging or personal phone numbers

Concerns about adult behaviour, including low-level concerns, must be reported and will be managed under the organisation’s Complaints/Concerns about Staff and Volunteers procedure and Whistleblowing policy.

## Preferred Practice Approach:

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity at all times
- Involve young people in the decisions that affect them wherever possible
- Always work in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with young people (e.g. not sharing tents, shower facilities or having an inappropriate or intimate relationship)
- When organising events and meetings for children and young people, or their attendance at events/meetings, the following information/documentation should be requested by your organisation’s staff in relation to each child or young person attending the event/meeting:
  - A Consent Form for all events or specific activities;
  - Contact details for the family/guardians, including emergency contact numbers;
  - Information about any special issues, needs or requirements (e.g. medical, health, diet, language assistance)
- Only trained/authorised staff should administer medication or first aid. Always record actions taken and inform parents/guardians as required
- Use a reporting form to record any incidents or concerns
- If physical contact is necessary (e.g. in an emergency), tell the young person clearly what you are doing and why, seek their permission and give choices where possible. If possible, have another worker present.
- Every activity, event or session should be risk assessed to maintain the safety of all involved.
- When working with a mixed gender group there should be staff/volunteers of both genders to manage all activities.



**If any of the following occur, you must report it immediately to the person in your organisation who is responsible for safeguarding and child protection (Designated Safeguarding Lead). If anyone is at immediate risk of harm, call 999 first, then inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.**

- A young person is hurt
- A young person seems distressed in any way
- A young person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- A young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done
- An allegation is made about you or a colleague
- A young person tells you something that indicates they may be harmed or unsafe.
- You witness or suspect abuse, neglect or exploitation (including online).
- You have a concern about an adult's behaviour, including a low-level concern (e.g. boundary issues, inappropriate communication).
- You become aware of or suspect inappropriate contact outside activity (e.g. private messaging, gifts, lifts) or a breach of professional boundaries.

Do not promise confidentiality or investigate any concerns or allegations yourself. Make a prompt, factual written record and submit it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead the same day. Follow the organisations escalation route if the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable.

All reports will be recorded promptly, factually, signed/dated, and stored securely in line with the organisation's Data Protection Policy and retention schedule.

Where an individual undertaking regulated activity is dismissed (or would have been dismissed had they not resigned) because of harm or risk of harm to a child or adult at risk, the organisation will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service under our statutory duty.

Approved by

Date

Review date