



# Staff Conduct Policy

Guidance

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*This Guidance has been designed as a source of advice with Youth Work Organisations.*

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 vulnerable adults, 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 vulnerable adults in their care are appropriate.

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 vulnerable adults.

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 vulnerable adults 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

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

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

### 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)
- 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 child protection

- A young person is hurt
- He/she 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