



## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

The overriding principle of working safely with children and young people is that workers/volunteers should take every opportunity that is reasonable to ensure that their actions do not cause or fail to prevent harm or provide opportunity for misunderstanding, misinterpretation or unnecessary allegations to be made. In doing so, the following guidance should be followed:-

### **Confidentiality**

If an adult/volunteer who works with children is in any doubt whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance. Any actions should be in line with locally agreed information sharing protocols.

Whilst adults/volunteers need to be aware of the need to listen to and support children and young people, they must also understand the importance of not promising to keep secrets. Neither should they request this of a child/young person under any circumstances.

### **Powers and trust**

Adult/volunteers should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others.

### **Behaviour**

Adults/volunteers with children and young people have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of the public in general and all those with whom they work.

### **Gifts, rewards and favouritism**

Care should be taken to ensure that adults/volunteers do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when children, young people or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to adults eg on special occasions or as a thank you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

### **Infatuations**

Occasionally, a child, young person or vulnerable adult may develop an infatuation with someone who works with them. These adults should deal with such situations sensitivity and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned. They should remain aware, however, that such infatuations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and should therefore make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour is above reproach.



## **Communication with young people**

Adults/volunteers should also be clear in their communications with children so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give their personal contact details to children and young people including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do. Email or text communications between an adult and a child young person outside agreed protocols.

## **Other activities that require physical contact**

Adults/volunteers will have to initiate some physical contact with children, for example to demonstrate technique in the use of a particular piece of equipment, adjust posture, or perhaps to support a child so they can perform an activity safely or prevent injury.

Physical contact should take place only when it is necessary in relation to a particular activity. It should take place in a safe and open environment, ie one easily observed by others and last for the minimum time necessary. Contact should be relevant to their age or understanding and adults/volunteers should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non verbally by the child.

## **Behaviour Management**

All children and young people have a right to be treated with respect and dignity even in those circumstances where they display difficult or challenging behaviour.

Adults should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a child. The use of corporal punishment is not acceptable and whilst there may a legal defence for parents who physically chastise their children, this does not extend in any circumstances, to those adults who work with or on behalf of children and young people.

Where children display difficult or challenging behaviour, adult/volunteers must follow an agreed plan of work and use strategies appropriate to the circumstances and situation. The use of physical intervention can only be justified in exceptional circumstances and must be used as a last resort when other behaviour management strategies have failed. Where a child has a specific needs in respect of particularly challenging behaviour, a positive handling plan may be drawn up and agreed by all parties.

## **Use of control and physical intervention**

The use of physical intervention should, wherever possible, be avoided. It should only be used to manage a child or young persons behaviour if it is necessary to prevent personal injury to the child, other children or an adult to prevent serious damage to property or in what would reasonably be regarded as exceptional circumstances. When physical intervention is used it should be undertaken in such a way that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned.



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The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled and the nature of the harm they may cause. The minimum necessary force should be used and the techniques deployed in line with recommended policy and practice. In all cases where physical intervention is employed, the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported. The parents/carers should be informed the same day.

### **Children and young people in distress**

There are some activities where adults/volunteers are involved in managing occurrences of distress and emotional upset in children and young people, for example in pastoral care and counselling situations. In these circumstances adults should be aware of what is and what is not acceptable behaviour when comforting a child or diffusing a situation. This is particularly important when working on a one to one basis.

### **Personal care**

Young people are entitled to respect and privacy at all times and especially when in a state of undress, changing clothes, bathing or undertaking any form of personal care. There are occasions where there will be a need for an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people and/or satisfy health and safety considerations. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of this young people concerns and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

### **First aid and administration of medication**

It is expected that there should always be adults working with children and young people who are trained in basic first aid techniques. When administering first aid, wherever possible, adults should ensure that another adult is aware of the action being taken. Parents should always be informed when first aid has been administered.

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