



SAFEGUARDING POLICY HANDBOOK

GUIDANCE FOR WORKING WITH
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

4. GUIDANCE FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

This guidance applies to all staff and adults working for and on behalf of the Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) and will help them to work with children and young people in a safe, respectful and supportive way. The guidance has been developed to provide advice which helps to protect children, and also identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse. This guidance will provide standards which help all adults to monitor their own behaviour and to identify inappropriate behaviour by others which might raise safeguarding concerns.

Those working for or on behalf of OCC are in a position of trust - the public expect the highest standards. Adults must be aware that they may be seen as role models by children, and must act in an appropriate manner at all times. This guidance is also underpinned by key legislation and other rules for the protection of children: for example that forbidding any sexual relationship with a child encountered through work with OCC, even if they are of or above the age of consent, and that regarding the giving or receiving of gifts.

If in doubt, staff and other adults must always consider how an action or activity may be perceived as opposed to how it is intended.

Below are some specific guidelines on good practice for working with children and young people. They must be implemented within the positive framework of the OCC key principles of ethical practice:

1. Climate and environment:

- Always try and plan in advance for meeting and working with children and young people. It will be useful to identify the factors that will assist you in effective planning e.g. ages or access and support needs.
- Always work with children and young people in an open, safe and transparent way. Other adults must always know about the work you are doing with children.
- Respect children and young people at all times; be aware of showing favouritism, disapproval or prejudice.
- Always try to meet with children and young people and young people in a work setting but if you are meeting somewhere else, make sure it is with their parents' or carer's knowledge and consent.

2. Personal behaviour:

- Seek support from your manager if you become concerned about a young person's behaviour to you personally.
- Consider your appearance, and dress appropriately for the task and the age group you are working with.
- Always consider the appropriateness of your language. While the use of humour can help to diffuse a situation, avoid sarcasm, demeaning comments and suggestive remarks.

- Do not smoke or drink alcohol whilst working with children and young people.
- If you need to comfort a child or young person who has become distressed it is important that you do so in a way which is both age appropriate and respects their personal space. Never act in a way which may be perceived as threatening, intrusive, or over-familiar and check with them before you act.

3. Communication and contact:

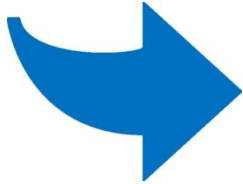
- Do not agree to keep any information relating to the harm of a child or young person confidential. Follow the procedures for reporting concerns.
- Do not engage in or tolerate any inappropriate activity involving children and young people, whether based on talking or touching or potentially sexually provocative games.
- The focus of the relationship with a child or young person you have met through your work must always remain on the work. The aim must never become to develop that into a friendship or relationship.
- Do not exchange personal contact details, like phone numbers and email addresses with any children and young people you may meet through your work.
- Do not engage with children and young people you have met through your work on social networking sites, e.g. Facebook. Be aware if you have a twitter account that some children and young people may follow you. Make it clear it is not a good idea - it is a personal account and they should follow the organisational account.
- Never invite or allow a child or young person you have met through your work into your own home.
- Do not offer to transport a child or young person alone in your car. In unavoidable circumstances ensure other responsible adults you work with have been informed and a record is made of the circumstance.
- Avoid unobserved situations of one-to-one contact with a child or young person.

Some circumstances may arise which are potentially in conflict with this guidance: for example one to one contact with a child or giving them a lift in a car. These actions must be subject to discussion with a manager and a record kept of the decision. Staff and adults must always be mindful of situations which may lead them to be in a position which conflicts with this guidance. Staff who breach this guidance outside of these specific circumstances will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE

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