

Safer Working Practice Policy

To be reviewed: Two yearly

Policy Agreed: 12th July 2017

To be reviewed: July 2019



Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People

Using the Guidance

It is important that all adults working with children understand that the nature of their work and the responsibilities related to it, place them in a position of trust. This practice guidance provides clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviours for all adults working with children in paid or unpaid capacities, in all settings and in all contexts. The guidance aims to:

- keep children safe by clarifying which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided;
- assist adults working with children to work safely and responsibly and to monitor their own standards and practice;
- support managers and employers in setting clear expectations of behaviour and/or codes of practice relevant to the services being provided;
- support employers in giving a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action will be taken;
- support safer recruitment practice;
- minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with children and young people;
- reduce the incidence of positions of trust being abused or misused.

Underpinning Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. This responsibility extends to a duty of care for those adults employed, commissioned or contracted to work with children and young people.
- Adults who work with children are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Adults should work and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
- The same professional standards should always be applied regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity.
- Adults should continually monitor and review their practice and ensure they follow the guidance contained in this document.

Guidance for Safe Working Practice

1. Context

All adults who work with children and young people have a crucial role to play in shaping their lives. They have a unique opportunity to interact with children and young people in ways that are both affirming and inspiring. This guidance has been produced to help adults working in all settings to establish safe and responsive environments which safeguard young people and reduce the risk of adults being unjustly accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.

2. 'Unsuitability'

The guidance contained in this document is an attempt to identify what behaviours are expected of adults who work with children and young people. Adults whose practice deviates from this guidance and/or their professional or employment-related code of conduct may bring into question their suitability to work with children and young people.

3. Duty of Care

The duty of care is in part, exercised through the development of respectful and caring relationships between adults and children and young people. It is also exercised through the behaviour of the adult, which at all times should demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgement.

This means that adults should:

- understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached
- always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests
- avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour

This means that employers should:

- ensure that appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are adopted, implemented and monitored
- ensure that codes of conduct/practices are continually monitored and reviewed
- ensure that, where services or activities are provided by another body, the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures
- foster a culture of openness and support
- ensure that systems are in place for concerns to be raised
- ensure that adults are not placed in situations which render them particularly vulnerable
- ensure all adults have access to and understand this guidance and related, policies and procedures
- ensure that all job descriptions and person specifications clearly identify the competences necessary to fulfil the duty of care

4. Confidentiality

Adults may have access to confidential information about children and young people in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances they may have access to or be given highly sensitive or private information. These details must be kept confidential at all times and only

shared when it is in interests of the child to do so. Such information must not be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the child or young person concerned.

This means that adults:

- be clear about when information can be shared and in what circumstances it is appropriate to do so
- are expected to treat information they receive about children and young people in a discreet and confidential manner
- should seek advice from a senior member of staff if they are in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them
- need to know to whom any concerns or allegations should be reported

5. Making a Professional Judgement

This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not appropriate behaviour for adults in all circumstances. There may be occasions and circumstances in which adults have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the child or young person which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their

behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge. In undertaking these actions individuals will be seen to be acting reasonably. Adults should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate and safe and applied equitably.

This means that where no specific guidance exists adults should:

- discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with a senior manager, or with the parent/carer if not working for an organisation
- report any actions which could be mis-interpreted to their senior manager
- always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with a senior manager
- always record discussions and reasons why actions were taken.
- record any areas of disagreement about course of action taken and if necessary referred to a higher authority

6. Power and Positions of Trust

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all adults working with children and young people are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care.

This means that adults should not:

- use their position to gain access to information for their own or others' advantage
- use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children or young people
- use their status and standing to form or promote relationships which are of a sexual nature, or which may become so

7. Propriety and Behaviour

All adults working 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.

This means that adults should not:

- behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model.
- make, or encourage others to make, unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or which might be interpreted as such

This means that adults should:

- be aware that behaviour in their personal lives may impact upon their work with children and young people
- follow any codes of conduct deemed appropriate by their organisation
- understand that the behaviour and actions of their partner (or other family members) may raise questions about their suitability to work with children and young people

Adults should inform a senior member of staff if they undertake any care of children outside of their working responsibilities, which might compromise them in their professional role.

8. Dress and Appearance

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However adults should dress in ways which are appropriate to their role and this may need to be different to how they dress when not at work.

This means that adults should wear clothing which:

- is appropriate for the task and work they undertake
- is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative
- does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding
- is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans
- is not considered to be discriminatory and is culturally sensitive

9. Gifts

The giving of gifts are only acceptable practise if this has first been discussed with the senior managers. Adults should ensure that gifts received or given are not misconstrued.

10. Social Contact

Adults who work with children and young people should not seek to have social contact them or their families, unless the reason for this contact has been firmly established and agreed with senior managers, or where an adult does not work for an organisation, the parent or carers. If a child or parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the adult should exercise her/his professional

judgement in making a response but should always discuss the situation with their manager or with the parent of the child or young person. Adults should be aware that social contact in certain situations can be misconstrued as grooming.

Where social contact is an integral part of work duties, e.g. pastoral work in the community, care should be taken to maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries. This also applies to social contacts made through interests outside of work or through the adult's own family or personal networks.

Social networking applications: Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Blogs, Online discussion forums, Collaborative spaces, Media sharing services, 'Microblogging' applications. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, MSN, You Tube. "In general terms, the Centre expects that the conduct of its employees is such that no justifiable complaint can be made by parents, pupils, colleagues, Governors, other bodies or agencies or members of the community in relation to conduct and behaviour of school staff." This principle applies to the use of social networking sites. The way in which centre staff present and conduct themselves on social networking sites can have an impact on the public perception of the centre and influence the way in which those staff members are perceived by pupils and parents of the centre. In their use of social networking sites, staff should be aware that their online behaviour could affect their professional standing, dignity and perception of their integrity.

It is recommended that centre staff take adequate precautions when using social networking sites / applications, both in vetting material that could be connected to them (through their own profile and information added about them) and through the use of appropriate security settings.

It is recommended that centre employees should not be "friends" with pupils on social networking sites as this could be viewed as a safeguarding issue.

It is recommended that management and centre staff do not identify their centre on social networking sites as this could directly link their behaviour outside of work with the reputation of the centre.

It is recognised that some adults may support a parent who may be in particular difficulty. Care needs to be exercised in those situations where the parent comes to depend upon the adult for support outside their professional role. This situation should be discussed with senior management and where necessary referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

This means that adults should:

- have no secret social contact with children and young people or their parents
- consider the appropriateness of the social contact according to their role and nature of their work
- always approve any planned social contact with children or parents with senior colleagues,
- advise senior management of any social contact they have with a child or a parent with whom they work, which may give rise to concern
- report and record any situation, which may place a child at risk or which may compromise the organisation or their own professional standing
- be aware that the sending of personal communications such as birthday or faith cards should always be recorded and/or discussed with line manager.
- understand that some communications may be called into question and need to be justified.

11. Physical Contact

All adults should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their contacts with children and young people.

This means that adults should:

- ensure that their relationships with children and young people clearly take place within the boundaries of a respectful professional relationship
- take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.

Not all children and young people feel comfortable about physical contact, and adults should not make the assumption that it is acceptable practice to use touch as a means of communication. Permission should be sought from a child or young person before physical contact is made.

When physical contact is made with a child this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a

different child. Adults, nevertheless, should use their professional judgement at all times, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and – so far as is possible - use a level of contact and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.

This means that adults should:

- be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described
- never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent
- always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny
- always encourage children, where possible, to undertake self-care tasks independently
- work within Health and Safety regulations
- be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and always be sensitive to issues of gender
- understand that physical contact in some circumstances can be easily misinterpreted

Where a child seeks or initiates inappropriate physical contact with an adult, the situation should be handled sensitively and care taken to ensure that contact is not exploited in any way. Careful consideration must be given to the needs of the child and advice and support given to the adult concerned.

It is recognised that some children who have experienced abuse may seek inappropriate physical contact. Adults should be particularly aware of this when it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the child's view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to some actions being misinterpreted. In all circumstances where a child or young person initiates inappropriate physical contact, it is the responsibility of the adult to sensitively deter the child and help them understand

the importance of personal boundaries. Such circumstances must always be reported and discussed with a senior manager and the parent/carer.

12. Other Activities that require Physical Contact

Adults should:

- always explain to a child the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take
- seek consent of parents where a child or young person is unable to do so because of a disability.
- consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a child might misinterpret any such contact,
- conduct activities where they can be seen by others

13. 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.

Where children display difficult or challenging behaviour, adults will follow the behaviour policy

This means that adults should:

- not use force as a form of punishment
- try to defuse situations before they escalate
- inform parents of any behaviour management techniques used
- adhere to the organisation's behaviour management policy
- be mindful of factors which may impact upon a child or young person's behaviour e.g. bullying, abuse and where necessary take appropriate action.

14. Intimate Care

Intimate care can be defined as care tasks of an intimate nature, associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene which demand direct to indirect contact with or exposure of the genitals. Examples include care associated with continence as well as more ordinary tasks such as help with washing. All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of a physical or intimate nature is required and depending on their abilities, age and maturity should be encouraged to act as independently as possible. Staff have a high awareness of child protection issues.

This means that adults should:

- Work in partnership with parents.
- Be respectful, the babies/child welfare and dignity is of paramount importance.
- No child should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.
- Staff will carefully communicate with each baby/child who needs help with intimate care.
- Babies and children will be listened to and their needs and preferences will be taken into account.
- Staff will always ensure that the baby or child is aware of what is happening and the reasons for it.
- Children will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities.
- Staff will encourage the child to do as much for themselves as they can.
- Where possible one baby/child will be cared for by one familiar adult (this is a staff member who has an enhanced CRB check).
- Parents /carers are encouraged to provide babies/children with their own changing equipment and clothes and these are used whenever possible.
- Intimate care plans may be drawn up together with the parents for particular children as appropriate to suit the circumstances of the child and the views of the child will be actively sought whenever possible.

If assisting young children with toileting or providing intimate care for children with disabilities or in the provision of medical care. The procedures listed in appendix 1 will be followed for changing babies or children.

15. First Aid and Administration of Medication

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.

This means that adults should:

- adhere to the organisation's policy for administering first aid or medication
- comply with the necessary reporting requirements
- make other adults aware of the task being undertaken
- explain to the child what is happening.
- always act and be seen to act in the child's best interests
- report and record any administration of first aid or medication
- have regard to any health plan which is in place
- always ensure that an appropriate health/risk assessment is undertaken prior to undertaking certain activities

16. One to One Situations

It is not realistic to state that one to one situations should never take place. There may be times where there is a need for a 1:1 situation, this must be agreed with a senior manager and/or parents/carers.

This means that adults should:

- ensure that when lone working is an integral part of their role, full and appropriate risk assessments have been conducted and agreed.
- always inform other colleagues and/or parents/carers
- always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague
- carefully consider the needs and circumstances of the child/children when in one to one situations

17. Home Visits

There are workers for whom home visits are an integral part of their work. In these circumstances it is essential that appropriate policies and related risk assessments are in place to safeguard children and young people and the adults who work with them.

Please see lone working and home visiting risk assessments

18. Transporting Children and Young People

There will be occasions when adults are expected or asked to transport children as part of their duties. Adults, who are expected to use their own vehicles for transporting children should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

It is a legal requirement that all passengers should wear seat belts and it is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure that this requirement is met. Adults should also be aware of current legislation and adhere to the use of car seats for younger children. Where adults transport children in a vehicle which requires a specialist license/insurance e.g. PCV or LGV staff should ensure that they have an appropriate licence and insurance to drive such a vehicle.

It is inappropriate for adults to offer lifts to a child or young person outside their normal working duties, unless this has been brought to the attention of the line manager and has been agreed with the parents/carers.

There may be occasions where the child or young person requires transport in an emergency situation or where not to give a lift may place a child at risk. Such circumstances must always be recorded and reported to a senior manager and parents/carers.

Refer to Transporting Children policy

19. Trips and Outings

Adults should take particular care when supervising children and young people on trips and outings, where the setting is less formal than the usual workplace. Adults remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays within clearly defined professional boundaries.

Health and Safety arrangements require members of staff to keep colleagues/employers aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in activities outside the usual workplace.

Refer to offsite policy

20. Photography and Videos

Working with children and young people may involve the taking or recording of images. Any such work should take place with due regard to the law and the need to safeguard the privacy, dignity, safety and well being of children and young people. Centre cameras/video should only be used. Informed written consent from parents or carers and agreement, where possible, from the child or young person, will always be sought before an image/video is taken for any purpose. (See image/Photograph form)

Adults need to remain sensitive to any children who appear uncomfortable, for whatever reason, and should recognise the potential for such activities to raise concerns or lead to misunderstandings.

Any visitors taking photos in the centre should be informed that they may only take photos of the environment not the children.

It is not appropriate for adults to take photographs of children for their personal use.

Refer to Image/photo consent form

21. Access to Inappropriate Images and Internet Usage

There are no circumstances that will justify adults possessing indecent images of children. Adults who access and possess links to such websites will be viewed as a significant and potential threat to children. Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children on the internet is illegal. This will lead to criminal investigation and the individual being barred from working with children and young people, if proven.

Adults should not use equipment belonging to their organisation to access adult pornography; neither should personal equipment containing these images or links to them be brought into the workplace. This will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the adult to continue to work with children.

Adults should ensure that children and young people are not exposed to any inappropriate images or web links. Organisations and adults need to ensure that internet equipment used by children have the appropriate controls with regards to access. e.g. personal passwords should be kept confidential.

Where indecent images of children or other unsuitable material are found, the police and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be immediately informed. Adults should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves, as this may lead to evidence being contaminated which in itself can lead to a criminal prosecution.

22. Protection of children

Children protection procedures will be adhered to by staff. All staff members receive child protection training and have enhanced DBS checks

As part of PSE all children are taught about personal safety as appropriate to their developmental level and degree of understanding. This work is shared with parents who are encouraged to reinforce the personal safety messages within the home.

Refer to Child Protection Policy and Whistle blowing policy

23. Whistle blowing

Whistle blowing is the mechanism by which adults can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Each employer should have a clear and accessible whistle blowing policy that meets the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. Adults who use whistleblowing procedure should be made aware that their employment rights are protected.

Adults should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

Individuals should be aware of our child protection procedures, including procedures for dealing with allegations against adults. All allegations must be taken seriously and properly investigated in accordance with local procedures and statutory guidance. Adults who are the subject of allegations are advised to contact their professional association.

Refer to Whistleblowing Policy

PROCEDURES FOR CHANGING A CHILD IN NURSERY SCHOOL

- Inform another member of staff that you are needed to change a child
- Gather change of clothes – where possible child to keep own spare clothes in nursery.
- Change in children’s bathroom with the door open.
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- Be sensitive to the child’s need for privacy
 - Child to use cubicle and change independently where possible
 - Adult to monitor from main bathroom and give encouragement
 - Adult to give assistance when asked
 - If child needs cleaning with wipes adult to ask permission first – gloves to be worn
- Soiled clothes to be placed in a tied carrier bag and hooked on child’s peg
- Adult to report change to parent/carer at end of session
- Adult to inform senior member of staff and record any unusual behaviour when changing a child
- When changing a child in a nappy
 - Inform another member of staff that you are going to change a child
 - Bathroom door to be kept open
 - Encourage children to be as independent as possible
 - Be sensitive to timings of nappy change when bathroom is less busy

PROCEDURE FOR CHANGING A BABY/CHILD IN THE CRÈCHE

- Changing accessories will be collected from parent and have child’s name attached

- Staff to choose an appropriate area for baby nappy change which is visible to other members of staff in the centre
- Protective clothing- plastic gloves and apron to be worn
- Be sensitive to the child's need for privacy
 - Child to use cubicle and change independently where possible
 - Staff to monitor from main bathroom and give encouragement
 - Staff to give assistance when asked
 - If child needs cleaning with wipes adult to ask permission first – gloves to be worn
- Soiled clothes to be placed in a tied plastic bag and placed in the named bag.
- Lotions and creams will not be applied by staff, parents to be informed of this.
- Soiled nappy to be double bagged