

Staff Code of Conduct

Staff are expected to act courteously, conscientiously, reasonably and in good faith at all times having regard to their responsibilities, the interests of the setting and the welfare of other staff and students. Confidentiality is an issue of grave importance when working within our setting.

Working with children in our setting is a privilege and carries with it many important responsibilities

Staff have an obligation to the setting and the children in it to:

- a) Be present at work as required and to be absent from the workplace only with proper authorisation from the Manager.
- b) Carry out their duties in an efficient and competent manner, and maintain high standards of performance.
- c) Take direction from the room leader/manager in the first instance
- d) Respect the privacy of individuals within the setting and use confidential information only for the purposes for which it was intended.
- e) Any conversations with parents about children in the setting should be between the parent and the room leader/manager or principal.
- f) Treat all members of the setting staff with respect and report any misconduct to the manager/principal.
- g) Dress appropriately and use appropriate language at all times in the setting.
- h) Do not enter into any written correspondence with parents unless authorisation has been given by the Manager/ principal. All written correspondents should be checked by the room leader/supervisor before being sent to parents.

Introduction

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

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Private Meetings with Children

- a. Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual children. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open.
- b. Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place.
- c. Where possible another child or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the setting should take active measures to facilitate this.

Physical Contact with Children

- a. As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with the children.
- b. It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch children only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- c. Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.
- d. Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- f. Staff who have to administer first-aid to a child should ensure

wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. *However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.*

g. Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the child, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.

h. Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to his/her supervisor.

Relationships and Attitudes

Staff should ensure that their relationships with children are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the child, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation.

Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought.

Conclusion

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.