



Code for Adults Working with Children & Young People

This behaviour code outlines the conduct expected of staff, freelancers and volunteers from Mentoring Plus, and staff from other organisations who engage with children and young people through Mentoring Plus and its activities.

It has been informed by the views of children and young people.

Purpose

Following this code is intended to help protect children from potential abuse and inappropriate behaviour from adults. It will also help staff, freelancers and volunteers to maintain the standard of behaviour expected of them and will reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse being made against them.

Upholding this code of behaviour

All members of staff, freelancers and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code to the CEO or Trustee responsible for Child Safeguarding under the whistle-blowing procedure or, if necessary, under child protection procedures.

Staff, freelancers and volunteers who breach this code of behaviour may be subject to Mentoring Plus' disciplinary procedures. Any breach of the code involving a volunteer or member of staff from another agency may result in them being asked to leave Mentoring Plus.

Serious breaches may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the police, the local authority children's social care department and/or the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The role of staff and volunteers

When working with children and young people for Mentoring Plus all staff, freelancers and volunteers are acting in a position of trust. It is important that staff, freelancers and volunteers are aware that they may be seen as role models by children and young people, and must act in an appropriate manner at all times.

When working with children and young people, it is important to:

- operate within Mentoring Plus' principles and guidance and any specific procedures;
- follow the Mentoring Plus child protection policy, safer working policy, online communications policy and procedures at all times, and report any breaches;
- listen to and respect children at all times;
- avoid favouritism;

- treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination;
- value and take children's contributions seriously, actively involving children and young people in planning activities wherever possible;
- ensure any contact with children and young people is appropriate and in relation to the work of the project;
- always ensure language is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory;
- follow the online communications policy and report any breaches;
- always ensure equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose;
- provide examples of good conduct you wish children and young people to follow;
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspensions of abuse;
- follow the lone working policy when meeting a young person for mentoring sessions;
- during residential activities separate sleeping accommodation for males and females must be used;
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy;
- encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like;
- recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people.

You must not:

- patronise or treat children and young people as if they are silly;
- allow allegations to go unreported;
- develop inappropriate relationships such as contact with children and young people that is not a part of the work of Mentoring Plus or agreed with the manager or leader;
- conduct a sexual relationship with a child or young person or indulge in any form of sexual contact with a child or young person. Any such behaviour between an adult member of staff or volunteer and a child or young person using the services of Mentoring Plus represents a serious breach of trust on the part of the staff member or volunteer. It is not acceptable under any circumstances and will be reported;
- let children and young people have unnecessary personal contact details (e.g. address or personal e-mail);
- make belittling, undermining, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people;
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive;

- make inappropriate promises to children and young people, particularly in relation to confidentiality;
- jump to conclusions about others without checking facts;
- either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues;
- do anything which might undermine Mentoring Plus' good reputation for providing a safe environment;
- hesitate to share concerns on any of these matters with the appropriate representative;
- rely on your reputation or that of the organisation to protect you.

The role of parents and carers

Mentoring Plus welcomes and encourages parental involvement. Parents and carers are regarded as valuable partners in promoting positive behaviour and will be involved as appropriate.

In the event of their child becoming the subject of behaviour sanctions, parents/carers will be informed and involved.

Last Reviewed: September 2024

Next Review: September 2025