


Guidance for schools and colleges on safer working practices



'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People'. Updated from an original document produced by a DCSF network of Advisors, department for Children, Schools and Families, last updated January 2009. Protected by © Crown copyright 2013.

This guidance is based upon an original IRSC document – *'Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Adults in Education Settings'*, commissioned by DfES (now known as Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Corporate Author-Department for Education.

Introduction

All adults who work or volunteer with children are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority, manage risk, use resources and safeguard children and young people.

Whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity, these adults have a duty to keep children and young people safe and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. Children and young people have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people. Failure to do so may be regarded as neglect.

Legislation Guidance

- The Children Act 1989
- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (local authorities, governing bodies of maintained schools and institutions in the further education sector)
- Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2010
- Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Board Procedures.

Links

<http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/index.html>

<http://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>

So, what should adults and employers do?

Duty of care

- You must understand the responsibilities which are part of your employment, 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 your motivation and intentions.
- Take responsibility for your own actions and behaviour.
- Employers should ensure that appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are adopted, implemented and monitored.
- Ensure that codes of conduct and 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 there are effective recording systems in place which confirm discussions, decisions and the outcomes of any actions taken.
- 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.

Conduct/responsibility/dress and behaviour

You must **not**:

- behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question your 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.

Social contact

- You must have no secret social contact with children and young people or their parents.
- Consider the appropriateness of the social contact according to your role and nature of your work.
- Always approve any planned social contact with children or parents with senior colleagues.
- Advise senior management of any social contact you have with a child or a parent with whom you 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 your own professional standing.
- Be aware that the sending of personal communication such as greetings cards should always be recorded and/or discussed with your line manager.
- Understand that some communications may be called into question and need to be justified.

Physical contact

- 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 will be open to scrutiny.
- Do not indulge in 'horseplay'.
- Always encourage children, where possible, to undertake self-care tasks independently.
- Understand that physical contact in some circumstances can be easily misinterpreted.

Trips and outings

- Always have another adult present in out-of-workplace activities, unless otherwise agreed with a senior manager.
- Undertake risk assessments in line with the organisation's policy where applicable.
- Have parental consent to the activity.
- Ensure that your behaviour remains professional at all times.
- Never share beds with a child, children or young people.
- Do not share bedrooms unless it involves a dormitory situation and the arrangements have been previously discussed with a senior manager, parents, children and young people.

One-to-one situations

- Ensure that when lone working is an integral part of your role, full and appropriate risk assessments have been conducted and agreed.
- Avoid meetings with a child or young person in a remote or secluded area.
- Always inform other colleagues and/or parents or carers about contacts beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by.
- Avoid use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible. Such signs may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy.
- 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.

Photography and videos

- Avoid making images in one-to-one situations or which show a single child with no surrounding context.
- Only use equipment provided or authorised by the organisation.
- Parental permission to be sought where appropriate.

Whistle blowing

- Ensure that appropriate whistle-blowing policies are in place.
- Ensure that there are clear procedures for dealing with allegations against staff which are in-line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board's procedures.
- Report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concerns regardless of source.

Sharing concerns and recording incidents

- You should be familiar with your school's system for recording concerns.
- Schools should have an effective, transparent and accessible system for recording and managing concerns raised by any individual in the workplace.

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Use of technology

- If you use social media make sure details are not shared with children and young people.
 - Privacy settings must be set at a maximum.
 - You should not use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to a child or young person.
 - You should not give your personal contact details to children or young people, including your mobile telephone number and details of any blogs or personal websites.
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Useful Contacts

Call Derbyshire: **01629 533190**

Out of hours: **01629 533190**

Police (non-emergencies): **101**

NHS: **111**

LADO: **01629 531940**

Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Board
Website: **www.derbyshirescb.org.uk**

If in doubt, please contact your Child Protection Officer within School or the DSCB Child Protection Manager for Schools, Debbie Peacock (**01629 531079**)



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