

Hooke Court in Malawi

Code of Conduct

Background

All adults who come into contact with children in their work have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare.

Everyone should be familiar with procedures and protocols for safeguarding children. Adults have a duty to report any child protection or welfare concerns to a designated member of staff or the local area advisor.

Guidance

This policy compliments the other child protection policies.

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
- Assist in setting clear expectations of behaviour and codes of practice
- Providing a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable
- Minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with pupils

Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.
- Adults working 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 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 guidance given to them
- Adults must be seen to be tolerant of all people, culture and ways of life. They must not expose children to radical and extreme points of view.

Guidance for Safer Working Practice

Duty of Care

- Adults working with children should understand the responsibilities which are part of their 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 – keeping them safe and protecting them from sexual, physical and emotional harm; treat them with respect and dignity
- Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour
- A culture of openness and support will be maintained
- Any concerns will be logged in the concerns folder

Confidentiality

- Confidential or personal information about a child or his/her own family should never be spoken about outside and the information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass the child.
- If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he / she should seek guidance from a trustee or the area education advisor. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the trustee or the area education advisor.

Making a Professional Judgement

- Staff are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children. These judgements should be recorded and shared with a trustee and with the area education advisor, particularly any actions which could be misinterpreted and recorded in the file.
- Staff should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate and safe and applied equitably

Power and Positions of Trust

- Staff should not use their position to gain access to information for their own or others' advantage, intimidate, bully humiliate, threaten, coerce to undermine children, or to attempt to radicalise them
- Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential

Propriety and Behaviour

- Volunteers and trustees 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
- Volunteers and trustees should not make, or encourage others to make unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or which might be interpreted as such
- Volunteers and trustees should be aware that behaviour in their personal lives may impact upon their work with children and therefore high standards of personal conduct are expected

Dress and Appearance

- Volunteers and trustees should wear clothing which is appropriate to their role and the work they undertake
- Clothing should be absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans and should not be considered discriminatory and culturally sensitive

Smoking, Drugs and Alcohol

- Volunteers and trustees must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children.
 - Volunteers and trustees must not continue to work with children directly if they are taking medication that affects their ability to work with children. They should seek medical advice on this.
- If anyone finds themselves in situations which may be misconstrued they are declared

Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

- All staff, volunteers and trustees should be aware of Hooke Court in Malawi's policy on giving and receiving gifts and if this happens in situations which may be misconstrued they are declared

Infatuations

- Reports and records should be made and stored in the file in the staff room of any incidents that suggest a child or young person may have developed an infatuation on a volunteer or trustee. Professional boundaries should be maintained at all times. Such situations should be dealt with sensitively and volunteers made aware as well as parents if appropriate

Communication with Children

- Volunteers should ensure that personal social networking sites are set at private and children are never listed as approved contacts. Similarly volunteers should never access or use social sites of children
- Volunteers should only communicate with children orally
- Volunteers should not become 'friends' on social networking sites with children that they have met through the programme

Physical Contact

- Staff, volunteers and trustees 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
- Staff, volunteers and trustees should never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent and always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny
- Children should be encouraged where possible to undertake self care tasks independently and work within H & S guidelines.
- Where children need help and support volunteers should give them the level they require, and report and record if they are in any way concerned it may be misconstrued. They should ensure they tell another volunteer prior to and after helping a child. If no other volunteer or trustee is present they should tell and note down Fiskani or Alford.

Other Activities that require Physical Contact

- Volunteers and trustees should treat children with dignity and avoid contact with intimate parts of the body

Behaviour Management

- Volunteers and trustees should never use force or physical intervention as a form of punishment and try to defuse situations before they escalate
- Volunteers and trustees should be mindful of factors which may impact upon a child or young person's behaviour e.g. bullying, abuse and take action where necessary

Use of Control and Physical Intervention

- Volunteers and trustees should always use minimum force for the shortest period necessary and record and report as soon as possible after the event any incident where physical intervention has been used. This report should be signed by all concerned including the child if appropriate and parents informed on the same day.
- Physical intervention should be avoided wherever possible and only used to prevent personal injury to the child, other children or an adult, to prevent serious damage to property or other exceptional circumstances. When intervention is used it should be undertaken in such a way that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned
- Scale and nature of physical intervention must be proportionate to the behaviour and nature of harm which may be caused

Children in Distress

- Comfort and reassurance of a distressed child should be done in an age appropriate way whilst maintaining clear professional boundaries
- Volunteers and trustees should be circumspect when offering reassurance in one to one situations but always record such actions
- Volunteers and trustees should never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent and record and report situations which may give rise to concern from either party

- Volunteers and trustees should not assume that all children seek physical comfort if they are distressed.

Transporting Children

- When staff, volunteers and trustees are transporting pupils they should ensure they are fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol or medicine which is likely to impair judgement and/or ability to drive

Photography and Videos

- Staff, volunteers and trustees should be able to justify images of their children in their possession and be clear about the purpose of the activity
- Avoid making images in one to one situations or which show a single child with no surrounding context
- Ensure the children are appropriately dressed and know why the photos are being taken
- Always ensure teacher consent is sought for the taking of photos and using them for promotional materials etc. children's names should not be put with photographs.

Whistle Blowing

- Staff, volunteers and trustees should report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern regardless of source as soon as their concern arises

Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents

- Staff, volunteers and trustees should be familiar with the method for recording concerns and should be responsible for recording any incident and passing on the information where they have concerns about any matter pertaining to the welfare of an individual in the workplace