

Code of conduct for staff and volunteers

General guidelines

- Safety of participants and employees/volunteers is always of prime consideration. All accidents involving anyone should be recorded as practicably possible. Employees/volunteers are responsible for familiarising themselves with building/venue safety issues, such as, fire procedures, location of emergency exits, location of emergency telephones and first aid equipment.
- Risk assessment should be undertaken prior to any offsite visits or new types of activities.
- Employees/volunteers working with children should feel qualified to ensure the safe provision of services, use of equipment, activities undertaken, etc.
- Employees/volunteers working with children should carefully plan activity sessions with the care and safety of children as their main concern including the use of activities at an appropriate age/ability level.
- Employees/volunteers should ensure that their activities start and end on time. Employees/volunteers are expected to promote, demonstrate and incorporate the values of fair play, trust and ethics throughout their activities.
- Wherever possible, we will encourage an 'open environment' e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and discouraging the keeping of secrets. This especially includes employees/volunteers should be alone with a child at any time. When this is unavoidable, it should be done with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of the organisation and/or the children's parents/carers.
- Employees/volunteers must treat all children/young people with respect.
- Employees/volunteers must not make racist, sexist or any other remarks which upset or humiliate.
- Employees/volunteers must take care to avoid showing any favouritism.
- Employees/volunteers should avoid smoking in front of people we work with.
- It is the responsibility of employees/volunteers to prevent the abuse of younger or weaker children by older or stronger children through bullying, cruelty or any other forms of humiliation.
- Arrangements for parents'/carers' dropping off and collecting children from activities/trips need to be clearly stated and agreed by parents/carers, children and employees/volunteers.

- Employees/volunteers are responsible for reporting suspected cases of child abuse to the appropriate individuals and/or agencies.
- Employees/volunteers will be expected to keep an attendance register for all organised sessions.
- Employees/volunteers will have access to any parent consent and emergency consent forms for all children taking part in activities they lead (this information is confidential).
- External employees/volunteers should be adequately insured, to protect against claims of negligence, through their organisation or their own personal insurance if acting as a self-employed agent.

Working with young people

Additionally, MRF and its agents work with young people. It is our aim to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all young people and to support the volunteers in providing a safe, caring environment. Volunteers will work under the direct supervision of an established staff member.

Youth volunteers should set examples of appropriate behaviour, as young people learn by example. Volunteers should avoid using sarcasm, direct criticism, labelling and unnecessary competition or comparison.

- Good behaviour should be positively encouraged.
- Volunteers should not physically punish any young person.
- Volunteers should not stand in the way of or force any child to consume food or drink.
- Volunteers should not humiliate or frighten any young person.
- Volunteers should avoid situations in which they put themselves or the young person at risk. This includes being alone with a young person unnecessarily.
- Volunteers should always respect a young person's striving and be sensitive to their feelings.

Employees/volunteers should **never**:

- engage in rough physical activities, even when playing;
- engage in sexually proactive activities (e.g. allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form; make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child);
- allow children use inappropriate language;
- let a child's allegation go unanswered; each allegation must be recorded;



- do things of a personal nature for a child. If you do have to do things of a personal nature for a child e.g. take them to the toilet, support, lift, etc., particularly if they are very young or a child with additional needs, then ensure MRF has the full consent of their parents or obtain permission from the person you are answerable to. In an emergency which requires this type of help, parents and your line manager should be fully informed as soon as practicable.
- reduce a child to tears as a form of control;
- engage children in tasks for which they feel inadequately trained or feel apprehensive about.