

CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY YOUTH PROJECT

All Saints Youth Project

Creating a Safe Environment (Guidelines)

We wish to create an environment for young people that is both safe and comfortable. We wish to create an environment where young people are able to be involved with all aspects of the work.

These guidelines cover both paid staff and volunteers (both referred to a 'workers')

The Building

It is principally the duty of the PCC and the All Saints Community Development Company to ensure the following but it is the responsibility of us all to point out any problems etc.

The building should be warm, comfortable and well maintained with appropriate furniture and facilities.

There should be

- Pictures of current staff with their roles and names
- No smoking in any part of the building – signs will be clearly displayed throughout the building
- Access to information through the display of appropriate helpline numbers, agencies and posters
- Policies, guidelines and procedures clearly displayed
- Expectations on appropriate use of the building clearly displayed and all young people informed of these.
- Challenge to all unknown adults appearing on the premises
- Insurance certificate clearly displayed
- Fire/evacuation procedures and signs clearly displayed
- Clear access to the Accident Book
- Clear access to the first aid equipment
- Regular fire drills
- Risk Assessments
- Safety checks of equipment
- Ensuring the front door is bolted when appropriate for the safety of the people inside

Young People

- All new members should be introduced to all workers by name
- All expectations and boundaries should be clearly displayed, explained and reviewed with young people
- All young people can expect to be safe from physical and verbal abuse from workers and from other young people
- Any physical contact with a young person should be only on the young persons' terms and only within legal and professional boundaries
- All young people using the project can expect to be safe from oppressive and/or discriminatory comments/action/practice
- All young people with specific needs will receive appropriate support for their needs
- Bullying will not be tolerated whether young person to young person, worker to young person or worker to worker both on our premises and outside of our premises if brought to our attention.

Workers

- Any communications with parents involving issues about their child should only be done in consultation with the person in charge of the session (see parent's policy).
- All new workers and volunteers will be given appropriate information through their induction process to equip them in their role at All Saints Youth Project

- Workers should never be alone on the premises with a young person
- At the end of a session, workers should discuss the session sharing any incidents, problems, success and positive moments. These should be recorded appropriately in line with the Confidentiality and Child Protection policies
- All workers will be encouraged to undertake appropriate training
- Workers are expected to treat young people with respect
- If workers are concerned that a young person may be violent or under the influence of drink or drugs they should be vigilant and inform the worker in charge
- Any serious incidents or any accidents should be recorded and reported to the person responsible for that session
- Workers should not give money or presents to young people or solicit presents from young people
- If workers are given presents from young people or their parents then the worker in charge should be informed and, if appropriate, these should be shared amongst the team.
- You must not promise to keep secrets

Workers will be expected to work within professional boundaries and follow the organisations policies and procedures

- Workers should not give any personal details, including their address or phone number to young people, except in consultation with the worker in charge
- There should be no personal exchange of money between workers and young people
- No meetings outside the project between worker and young person must take place without consultation with the worker in charge
- There should be no inappropriate physical touching
- When working under the auspices of All Saints Youth Project workers are expected to treat each other in a professional manner whatever their personal relationship may be
- Workers cannot give young people lifts except under exceptional circumstances and with permission from line manager (see guidelines below).
- While at the project young people are under your care you therefore have a duty to intervene if the young person is likely to cause damage to themselves or damage to others (see Child Protection Policy and Behaviour Management Policy for further guidance).

Guideline for workers giving lifts to young people

The general rule is that workers should not give lifts to young people. This is to protect both the young person and the worker. However, sometimes the worker and young person need to travel somewhere as part of a work based process and occasionally if the worker can drive, it may be more practical for them to travel by car. If this is the case it may be possible for a worker to give a young person a lift so long as all the following conditions are met:

- The worker in charge has authorised it
- The young person has returned a signed parental consent form (except in emergencies when a phone call can be used as consent, this should be recorded in writing)
- The worker in charge has spoken directly to the parent/carer of the young person
- The worker can provide evidence that they have appropriate insurance and M.O.T., back seat and front seat, seat belts
- The worker in charge is aware of when and where the worker and young person are travelling to and from, and when and where they are returning to and how long it will take

- The worker in charge must contact both the young person and worker to ensure that they have returned safely and within the time frame

Public transport should always be used

Internet Use

- Firewalls, parental controls and any other appropriate software will be on all internet access and updated regularly.
- When young people are using the internet there will be an adult present in the room who will regularly check for unsuitable materials being viewed and close down such use. This would include items of a sexual and violent nature.
- Software will be age appropriate and not contain sex or violence. Any software brought to the project can only be used with permission of the worker in charge.
- Workers are not permitted to access the internet for their personal use.
- The worker in charge is responsible for checking which sites are visited on a monthly basis, and take appropriate action to prevent acceptable access.
- All access to chat rooms is forbidden, this includes MSN.
- Any workers accessing pornography will have committed gross misconduct.

Remember – young people are very clever at finding unsuitable sites.

E-Mail

- Workers are not permitted to receive or send personal e-mails on the Project address.
- Young people should only be contacted via the Project e-mail address.
- Workers are not permitted to disclose their personal e-mail address to young people.

Mobile phone

- Young people should only be contacted by the Project's landline number.
- If your own phone is used in an emergency your number should be withheld.
- On trips and residentials the Project's mobile phone should be used.
- Workers are not permitted to give their personal mobile numbers or their landline numbers to young people.

Photographs and Video

Photographs include those taken by cameras and mobile phones. Photographs and videos will only be taken and used with the consent of the young person.

- Any photographs and videos will only be used for monitoring, assessment, publicity and information purposes, fundraising and sharing of events. Young people and their parents should be informed of the use they will be put to.
 - Workers are not permitted to take personal photographs and videos, including mobile phones, of the young people. Workers are not permitted to take photographs and videos off the premises without permission from the worker in charge.
 - Workers are not permitted to give copies of photographs and videos to anyone else without permission of the worker in charge.
 - Photographs of individual children and young people should not be displayed on the notice boards or on the internet.
 - Everyone should be aware of the risks attached to the use of mobile phone photos and images and should be prepared to challenge if they feel these are being used inappropriately. (see Diocesan guidelines – God’s children our diocese 4.8 p.13)

Trips and residentials

- Consent forms and full details of the event must be given out prior to the event
- All consent forms for under 18’s must be completed and signed by a parent/guardian
- All consent forms for over 18’s (or those over 16 living away from home) must be completed by the young person
- Workers using a mini bus must comply with local Authority Guidelines
- Seat belts must be worn by workers and young people in all vehicles
- For mixed group there must be a male and female worker
- When undertaking trips and residentials guidelines set out by the Local Authority should be followed
- All specialist activities must be supervised by a qualified worker and where appropriate added insurance taken out
- Appropriate First Aid should be available
- There should be 1:10 workers to young person

Additional guidelines for mentors

- Always notify the Youth Office when a mentoring session is to take place, where you are going and the time you are expected back
- If going out stay in public places
- Always travel by public transport
- Never take a young person to your own home
- If a young person says that they ‘will tell’ i.e. make allegations against you, you must report it. Don’t allow yourself to be manipulated, so don’t ‘hide and hope’ that the allegation will just go away
- Try to avoid confrontations
- If you fear a young person may be violent, be extra vigilant. The young person’s contract states that any violence will be reported to the police
- If you suspect that they are drunk or have been taking drugs, send them away. Make contact with them again at a later date
- Record any accidents or incidents in the book, which is kept in the office