

Code of Conduct for staff, volunteers and sessional workers working with children and young people



This Code outlines the expectations of Rye Youth Zone CIC for those who work or volunteer with children and young people. Following this code will help to protect young people from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from adults. It will help them learn how safe adults behave around them - thus equipping them to better recognise if an adult is behaving unsafely around them, and to know that this behaviour is wrong. It will also help staff and volunteers maintain the standards of behaviour expected of them and will reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse being made against them.

Upholding the Code

RYZ members of staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code to the DSL or DDSL of RYZ. Staff and volunteers who breach this code of behaviour may be subject to disciplinary procedures or asked to leave their role. Serious breaches may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the police or the local authority children's social care department.

Responsibility of Staff and Volunteers

When working with young people for RYZ, all staff and volunteers are acting in a position of trust. It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware that they may be seen as role models by young people, and by their parents. They therefore must always act in an appropriate manner.

When working with children and young people, **IT IS IMPORTANT TO:**

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity.
- Ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful.
- Value the contribution of children and young people, and take their views seriously, actively involving them in planning activities wherever possible.
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy.
- While respecting the need for privacy and confidentiality try never to be alone with a young person. When appropriate to work one-to-one, do it within earshot and vision of other adults.
- Make meetings and activities safe for both you and young people in your care, using good management and careful planning
- Observe a sensible ratio of adults to young people.
- Check out any hazards on the site and record your observations.
- Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting, but make sure there are adults around.
- If any activity requires physical contact, ensure that the child and parents are aware of this and its nature beforehand.
- Administer any necessary First Aid with others around and only if qualified to do so.

- Obtain photo consent from parents or carers and from the child or young person, for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed.
- Record any concerning incidents and give the information to the DSL/DDSL or the relevant member of staff. Sign and date the record.
- Always share concerns about a child or the behaviour of another worker with the DSL/DDSL or the relevant member of staff.

When working with children and young people, YOU SHOULD NOT:

- Initiate physical contact. See the paragraph on physical contact below.
- Play rough physical games with young people or allow games with a potentially physical element (such as 'British Bulldog') to be played between young people without careful thought, planning, and prior notification of parents.
- Act, speak, or conduct yourself in a sexually provocative or suggestive way, either directly towards young people, or with other adults when you are with children, or engage in any sexual behaviour at all with young people. It is your responsibility to do everything you can do to avoid any hint of sexually inappropriate behaviour, language, or styles of relating with young people.
- Encourage young people to behave in sexually provocative or suggestive ways with each other.
- Touch a young person inappropriately or obtrusively.
- Invade a young person's privacy while washing or going to the toilet.
- Act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive.
- Use any form of physical punishment.
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child, group or adult.
- Permit abuse peer activities, e.g., Initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying.
- Show favouritism to any one young person or group.
- Allow a young person to involve you in excessive attention seeking, including that which is overtly physical or sexual in nature. It is always your responsibility to maintain appropriate boundaries in your work with young people.
- Give lifts to young people on their own or on your own.
- Smoke tobacco in the presence of young people.
- Drink alcohol when responsible for young people or offer to give or buy them alcohol.
- Share sleeping accommodation with young people.
- Invite a young person to your home alone.
- Arrange social occasions with young people (other than family members or close family friends) outside organised group occasions.
- Allow unknown adults access to young people. Visitors should always be accompanied by a RYZ member of staff or a RYZ volunteer.
- Allow strangers to give young people lifts.
- Exchange phone numbers with young people.
- Connect on social media with young people.

Physical contact and physical restraint

Staff and volunteers should not have unnecessary physical contact with any young person. There may, however, be occasions when physical contact is unavoidable or positively desirable or necessary for safety reasons, for example:

- a. providing reassurance for a distressed person;
- b. when teaching sports;
- c. giving direct assistance when fitting outdoor activity equipment, e.g. harness;
- d. administering first aid.

Wherever possible there should be an attempt to ask the young person to agree to such contact. Where appropriate, staff should explain their actions. This should be conducted openly and ideally with another member of staff or volunteer present. Staff should be aware of their positioning so that, where possible, others can clearly see the assistance being given. Staff and volunteers should avoid doing things of a personal nature that the person can do themselves.

In very rare circumstances, there may be a need to physically restrain a young person for their own or other's safety. For a small minority of young people or at certain times, physical intervention or restraint may be needed. However, physical restraint should be avoided as far as possible and should only be used if there are good reasons for believing that immediate action is necessary to prevent a young person causing significant injury to themselves or to others, or causing serious damage to property. Other techniques should be used before physical constraint is considered. It is important to be aware that use of restraint can pose risks to the safety of the child, to the safety of the adult applying it, and potentially to others who are present. RYZ staff receive training on physical restraint.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to any changes in legislation or guidelines.

Approved by Sophie Thorpe and Caroline Drummond (RYZ Directors)

Date 8th of January 2025

Last review: 8th of January 2025

Next review: 8th of January 2026