Services sometimes employ a whole range of great people to work with children. The Child Protection laws apply to all adults working Education and Care services, whatever their position, role or responsibility.

All staff, whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep young people safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm. This duty is in part exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between staff and children.

**This means that adults should:**

1. Always act, and be seen to act, in the child’s best interests.
2. Understand their responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role.
3. Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation or conduct.

**Issues to discuss with staff to ensure you maintain child safe practices**

- **Professional judgement** – make good judgements about their behaviour in order to safeguard children.
- **Position of trust** – should not abuse their power or trust.
- **Child protection policies** – read and be aware of these and other service policies.
- **Professional code of conduct** – sign that they agree to abide by this at all times.
- **Mandatory reporter** – all staff are mandatory reporters and therefore legally required to report child abuse. Staff may need to have this clearly explained.
- **Confidentiality** – treat all information in a discreet and confidential manner.
- **Behaviour** – not behave in a manner, which would lead to any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children.
- **Dress and appearance** – in a way that promotes a positive professional image.

- **Infatuations** – sometimes this happens and the staff member should report any indications of this happening.
- **Social contact** – staff should not seek to establish social contact with children outside of their professional duties and if it occurs make the Co-ordinator/Director aware.
- **Physical contact** – there are times when this is appropriate. It should be in response to a child’s needs at the time, their age and development.
- **Children in distress** – sometimes children needs comfort and reassurance – consider the ways in which this is offered.
- **Behaviour management** – never use force as a form of punishment
- **Sexual contact** – any sexual behaviour by a member of staff towards a child is inappropriate and illegal.
- **One-on-one situations** – if working in a single staff model – conduct a risk assessment, in other situations ensure when possible there is visual access by other staff.
- **Transporting children** – try to avoid using your own vehicle and being on your own with children – adhere to all road safety legislation.
- **Use of technology** – make aware of service policy especially in relation to social media.
- **Personal care** – children should be encouraged to be as independent as possible and undertake as much of their own care as possible
- **WWCC** – Make sure are complete and references followed up for new staff.

**Useful websites**