

St Albans Mencap

Charity number: 210073

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Staff Code of Conduct

This code outlines the expected behaviour and responsibilities of staff working with children and young adults with disabilities to ensure their safety, dignity, and well-being.

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1.0	Drafted April 2025

Staff Code of Conduct

Introduction

This code of conduct outlines the expected behaviour and responsibilities of staff working with children and young adults with disabilities. It aims to ensure the safety, dignity, and well-being of all individuals in our care, in compliance with NSPCC guidelines and England legislation.

General Principles

1. **Respect and Dignity:** Treat all children and young adults with respect and dignity, valuing their individuality and rights.
2. **Safety and Welfare:** Prioritise the safety and welfare of children and young adults at all times.
3. **Professional Boundaries:** Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid any behaviour that could be misinterpreted or lead to allegations of misconduct.

Responsibilities

1. **Safeguarding:** Adhere to safeguarding policies and procedures, including reporting any concerns about a child's welfare to the designated safeguarding lead.
2. **Confidentiality:** Respect the confidentiality of children and young adults, sharing information only with authorised personnel.
3. **Equality and Inclusion:** Promote equality and inclusion, ensuring that all children and young adults have access to opportunities and support tailored to their needs.

Behavioural Expectations

1. **Positive Interaction:** Engage positively with children and young adults, using appropriate language and behaviour.
 - **Example:** Use encouraging words and praise to build confidence and self-esteem.
 - **Example:** Listen actively and show genuine interest in their thoughts and feelings.
2. **Physical Contact:** Avoid unnecessary physical contact. Any required physical intervention should be conducted in line with training and organisational policies.
 - **Example:** Offer a handshake or high-five instead of a hug, unless the child initiates and is comfortable with it.
 - **Example:** Use touch only when necessary for care tasks, ensuring it is appropriate and respectful.
3. **Communication:** Communicate effectively and appropriately, considering the individual needs and preferences of each child and young adult.

- **Example:** Use clear and simple language, and check for understanding.
- **Example:** Adapt communication methods to suit the needs of children with speech or hearing impairments, such as using sign language or visual aids.

Professional Conduct

1. **Training and Development:** Participate in ongoing training and professional development to stay informed about best practices and legal requirements.
 - **Example:** Attend regular safeguarding training sessions and refreshers.
 - **Example:** Engage in workshops on disability awareness and inclusive practices.
2. **Accountability:** Take responsibility for your actions and decisions, seeking guidance when necessary.
 - **Example:** Admit mistakes and take steps to rectify them promptly.
 - **Example:** Seek advice from supervisors or colleagues when faced with challenging situations.
3. **Collaboration:** Work collaboratively with colleagues, families, and other professionals to provide comprehensive support to children and young adults.
 - **Example:** Share relevant information with team members to ensure consistent care.
 - **Example:** Involve parents and caregivers in planning and decision-making processes.

Compliance with Legislation

1. **SEND Code of Practice:** Follow the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice, ensuring that support is provided in line with statutory requirements.
2. **Children and Families Act 2014:** Adhere to the provisions of the Children and Families Act 2014, which outlines the duties of local authorities, health bodies, schools, and colleges in supporting children and young adults with disabilities.

Adherence to Other Policies

1. **Safeguarding Policy:** All staff must read and adhere to the organisation's safeguarding policy, which provides detailed guidelines on protecting children and young adults from harm.
2. **Equality and Diversity Policy:** Staff must comply with the equality and diversity policy, ensuring that all individuals are treated fairly and without discrimination.
3. **Health and Safety Policy:** Follow the health and safety policy to maintain a safe environment for children, young adults, and staff.

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Consequences of Breaching the Code

1. **Investigation:** Any breach of this code will be investigated in accordance with organisational policies.
2. **Disciplinary Action:** Breaches may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

This code of conduct will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains up-to-date with current legislation and best practices.