

# Code of Conduct for working with children and adults at risk

December 2020

## Purpose and scope of this Code of Conduct

This code of practice outlines the expectations and behaviour required of all Stonewall Staff and aims to:

- protect children and adults at risk who engage with Stonewall activity
- help everyone to understand and maintain appropriate standards of behaviour
- protect against the possibility of allegations of abuse or misconduct being made against staff
- identify acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- encourage cooperation, honesty, fairness and respect
- create an environment where your self-esteem, self-respect and self-confidence will grow
- encourage the recognition and respect of the rights of others
- encourage the recognition of the accessibility needs of others
- encourage staff to take responsibility for their own behaviour
- help to keep all who work for and engage with Stonewall safe online and offline

It is important that those who work with Stonewall are aware that they may be seen as role models by children and adults at risk therefore must behave in an appropriate manner at all times by adhering to Stonewall's code of Conduct.

## You must:

- Respect and celebrate difference. Encourage a non-discriminatory environment
- Treat all children and adults respectfully, with warmth and empathy, and listen to their wishes and feelings
- Behave in a calm, positive, supportive and encouraging way with children and adults at risk
- Ensure that dangerous or otherwise unacceptable behaviour, including bullying by children or adults at risk is challenged and addressed.
- Report on any safeguarding suspicions, concerns, allegations or disclosures made by a child or adults at risk including poor practice or inappropriate behaviour including 'grooming'
- Ensure the relationship with a child (including their family) that you have met through Stonewall remains professional at all times. The aim should never be to develop the relationship into a friendship or intimate relationship.
- Avoid 1-2-1 time alone with a child or adult at risk where possible. Plan activities that involve more than one other adult being present or within sight of others. If a child or adult at risk specifically asks for or needs some private time with you, ensure other Stonewall Staff know where you and the child or adult at risk are.
- Respect a child's and adult at risk's right to personal privacy but never agree to keep any information relating to the harm of a child confidential.
- Risk assess any new activities for children and adults at risk
- Be aware that children and adults at risk can develop infatuations (crushes) towards adults. If this is happening, you should tell your line manager and event Safeguarding Officer where applicable, then respond to the situation in a way that maintains the dignity of all concerned.

- Discourage physical contact. If a child or adult at risk needs physical comfort than this is done in a way that is both age appropriate and respectful of their personal space (such as a sideways hug), with their permission and in the presence of someone else.
- Make sure that a parent/carer or other Stonewall adult is present if you need to administer First Aid that involves the removal of clothing. This does not apply in a life threatening situation.
- Avoid shouting at children or adults whenever possible. Raised voices should only be used as an alert to prevent an incident or accident.
- Ensure that the adult to child ratio are in line with NSPCC recommendations. Alert the Safeguarding Officer for the event if this is not the case.
- Read, understand and comply with Stonewall's safeguarding policies and procedures.

### **You must not:**

- Discriminate against anyone on the grounds of gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, race, age or ability. This includes using homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or language.
- Conduct a sexual relationship with a child or indulge in any form of sexual contact with a child regardless of the age of consent. This could constitute a breach of a position of trust and is never acceptable even if the child is aged 16 years or above and can legally consent to a sexual relationship in the UK<sup>1</sup>. Any such behaviour will result in disciplinary action.
- Engage in or allow any sexually provocative games involving or observed by children or adults at risk, whether based on talking or touching.
- Show favouritism or gossip about children or adults at risk.
- Swear or make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children or adults at risk
- Ask a child or adult at risk questions which may be construed as sensitive without first consulting with a member of staff responsible for the child or adult at risk.
- Let any allegations of abuse or poor practice go unchallenged or unreported.
- Maintain confidentiality about sensitive information to safeguard a child or adults at risk.
- Work under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Smoke, vape or drink alcohol in front of children.
- Give or receive gifts and/or substances such as drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, and e-cigarettes from or to a child or their family.
- Give out personal contact details (personal phone or mobile number, email or home address)
- Become 'friends' on social networking sites other than through recognised Stonewall channels for undertaking recognised Stonewall activity.
- Arrange to meet a child or adults at risk outside of your work context where the purpose is one of friendship or an intimate relationship.
- Use any type of physical punishment in order to discipline.
- Do things of a personal nature that the child or adults at risk can do for themselves.
- Steal, or condone someone else's stealing, regardless of the value the stolen item.
- Photograph or film children without the consent of a legal guardian. This includes your mobile phone.
- Show any audio and/or visual material (such as, videos, photos, films, computer or games etc.) that has inappropriate content for children.
- Rely on your reputation, position or Stonewall to protect you.
- Investigate any allegation of abuse yourself – instead please report in line with Stonewall's [Overarching Safeguarding Policy](#).

---

<sup>1</sup> The Sexual Offences Act (2003) makes it a criminal offence for a person to engage in any kind of sexual activity with a person under 18 where the adult is in a position of trust. This applies even if they do not work together directly.

## In residential settings, you must not:

- Share a room overnight with a child or adult at risk or invite a child or adult at risk into **your** room
- Go into a child's, or adult at risk's room unless it is absolutely necessary (where this is deemed necessary, two Stonewall adults must enter)

## In digital settings, you:

- Must share the joining information and passwords with anyone else, don't take photos or screenshots of the online event.
- Must respect the online space as a safe space, use appropriate trigger warnings on content notes when introducing topics that could create trauma.
- Must work from a private space so that the children or adult at risk participating in the digital activity cannot be seen or heard by those outside of Stonewall.
- Must not leave any identifying markers in the background including anything with your name on it, address or pictures.

<b>Date Approved</b>	16/12/20
<b>Next Review</b>	16/12/21
<b>Approving Body</b>	Trustee Board
<b>Lead Staff Member</b>	Designated Safeguarding Lead
<b>Lead Trustee (where relevant)</b>	Safeguarding Lead Trustee