

Cancer Fund for Children works to the five guiding principles of the Children (NI) Order 1995

- We believe the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration informing all our work.
- We believe that children should be kept informed of what support and services are available to them and encouraged to participate in all decisions about their future.
- Children should be safe and be protected through effective intervention if they are in danger.
- We believe parents have parental responsibility for their children even when their children are temporarily in our care, and we ask parents to participate when decisions are being made about their children's care and safety.
- We believe that parents with children in need should be supported in bringing up their children and any support that we offer should be provided in partnership with parents.

Throughout this document, when reference is made to a child or to children, it is assumed that young people up to the age of 18 are included.

Code of behaviour for staff and volunteers

Cancer Fund for Children believes it is important to listen to children and to value and respect them as individuals. We are concerned that children should be involved in our decision-making processes, as appropriate, and we strongly support the view that children should be encouraged and praised in all their pursuits and activities.

We also believe that it is important for the protection of all concerned that staff, volunteers, children and young people have guidelines on what is expected and what is not accepted, with respect to their behaviour. These are as follows:

- Staff and volunteers should not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children, away from others.
- One-to-one contact with children is recognised as an important element of our work; however, meetings with individual children or young people should take place as openly as possible, in public places, at home with a parent close by or in a high-visibility environment.
- If privacy is needed, the door should be left open and other staff or volunteers informed of the meeting.
- Staff and volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with children and young people.

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- Where possible, both male and female staff/volunteers should be available during residential and other activities
- On occasions when physical contact is unavoidable, such as providing comfort and reassurance for a distressed child, or physical support, for example, in contact sports, such contact should only take place with the consent of the child or young person and in response to their needs.
- Transporting or travelling with individual children/young people in a staff members car is an important element within the work of the services team. When this is done, it should be with the full knowledge and consent of the parent/guardians.
- Staff and volunteers should not meet with children outside organised activities, unless it is with the knowledge and consent of parents and a person at a management level within the organisation.
- Leaders, who are involved in relationships with other leaders, or older members, should ensure that their personal relationships do not affect their leadership role within the organisation.

Staff and volunteers should never:

- Engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horseplay.
- Allow children, members of staff or volunteers to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a child or other adult even in fun.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go without being addressed or recorded.
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves.

Working with children and young people through residential or off-site groupwork

Cancer Fund for Children have taken the following best practice guidance from the NSPCC regarding recommended adult to child ratios. This guidance is mirrored in most statutory and non-statutory/uniformed youth providers across Ireland the UK.

Recommended adult to child ratios

There is no specific guidance about supervision ratios for organisations that are not in the education or early years sectors. We've put together some best practice guidance to help other organisation's work out how many adults are needed to supervise children safely.

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We recommend having at least two adults present when working with or supervising children and young people. We recommend the following adult to child ratios as the minimum numbers to help keep children safe:

0 - 2 years - one adult to three children

2 - 3 years - one adult to four children

4 - 8 years - one adult to six children

9 - 12 years - one adult to eight children

13 - 18 years - one adult to ten children

There may be times where these ratios need to be increased for specific reasons, needs of individuals within the group, etc. This will be agreed in advance with your line manager.

Sharing Information about Child Protection and Good Practice

Cancer Fund for Children believes that good communication is vital to safeguarding children and provides assurance that should individuals have concerns, they will be listened to and taken seriously. Cancer Fund for Children accepts its responsibility to ensure that information is available to, and exchanged between, all those involved within the organisation and its activities. Cancer Fund for Children acknowledges that some information is confidential and will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

Cancer Fund for Children understands that when sharing information, it is important to be sensitive to the level of understanding and maturity, as well as to the level of responsibility of the people with whom we are sharing.

Cancer Fund for Children believes that although parents are responsible for their children's Welfare 'at all times', we accept our duty to ensure that when placed in our care, their children's well-being and safety becomes our prime concern.

To support this, Cancer Fund for Children undertakes to:

- Publicise information about our activities including our child protection policy.
- Issue parents with a copy of this information along with any guidelines.

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- Ensure that staff and volunteers are equipped to deal with emergencies and child protection issues.
- Encourage staff and volunteers to pass concerns to the Community Services Manager/ Residential Services Manager.
- Provide other appropriate bodies, such as funders, with a copy of our Child Protection Policy and Procedures as appropriate.

In the event of concerns or complaints, immediate contact should be made with the Community Services Manager/Residential Services Manager.

Reporting Concerns

Cancer Fund for Children accepts that protecting children from harm requires maximum co-operation between children, their families, communities and professionals.

Whilst we accept that the identification and confirmation of alleged and actual abuse should be left to the appropriate professionals, concerns of staff and volunteers should initially be dealt with through our own procedures.

Procedures:

- The Community Services Manager/Residential Services Manager is designated as having final responsibility for dealing with concerns and complaints.
- All concerns and complaints should be reported to the Community Services Manager/ Residential Services Manager, in strictest confidence, without delay.
- A clear record of concerns or incidents, including an accurate note of what was said, or what happened, when and where it occurred, who was present and any action taken as a result, will be retained safely and confidentially by the Director of Services.

In the case of a child disclosing abuse:

- The child will be listened to rather than directly questioned.
- The child will be offered reassurance without making promises, and what the child says will be taken seriously.
- A child who is freely recalling significant events will not be interrupted.
- Those listening to the child will not overact but explain what has to be done and who has to be told.

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- The child will not be questioned or interrogated.
- The discussion will be recorded accurately, as soon as possible after the event, even if it is information that is not fully understood.
- The Community Services Manager/Residential Services Manager is to be contacted immediately; he/she may then discuss the concern/suspicion with Social Services, and, if appropriate, make a direct referral. In the event of a Community Services Manager/ Residential Services Manager not being available, a contact list of Cancer Fund for Children's Designated Safeguarding Officers [DSO's] is also available to all staff/volunteers and DSO's can be contacted to discuss concerns and agree action going forward.
- In the event that the Community Services Manager/Residential Services Manager is not available, nor DSO's or it is inappropriate to approach them, direct contact may be made with Social Services
- Records of discussions or actions must be taken within 24 hours.

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