



## **GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE**

- Ensure that a minimum of two leaders/helpers is always present. In groups/clubs of more than 20, there should be one additional leader/helper for every 10 (or part of 10) young people, maintaining the balance of gender.
- With activities away from the normal meeting place, the ratio should be appropriate to the age of the children or young people and the activity or venue.
- With under-8's, a ratio of leader/helpers to children of 1:6 is recommended and should be encouraged.
- Leaders/helpers of the same gender as the children/young people need to be present, especially with older children and young people.
- All volunteers should have completed the necessary personal details and declaration forms.
- Leaders/helpers need to think and act carefully to avoid situations that could lead to difficulties of embarrassment, accusations or temptations, for example:  
*One leader/helper and one young person being together "in private", whether that be in counselling or on a residential weekend, or driving someone home in a car.*
- Ensure leaders/helpers know what to do in the case of suspected or alleged abuse.
- Ensure there is an adequate insurance cover, especially for activities away from the normal meeting place.
- For any activities away from the normal meeting place, ensure that parents/guardians have signed a consent form.
- Keep a register of up-to-date information: name of children; address; telephone number and emergency contact number; special medications; doctor's name, address and telephone number and any necessary permissions to be able to act "in loco parentis" (unless parents are on the premises).
- Ensure that any premises are safe and well maintained.
- Ensure that there is a first aid kit and that it is checked frequently.
- Be aware of where the nearest telephone is for emergencies. The installation of a telephone, on the premises, is recommended.
- Know where the fire extinguishers and alarms are and also emergency exits.
- Ensure at least one of the leaders/helpers has had training in Emergency Aid.
- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity.



### Continued...

- Careful planning of activities always pays dividends, for example:
  - Leaders/helpers should clarify and agree objectives
  - Risks and safety factors should be considered
  - Children and young people with special needs should be identified and given further consideration
- Inexperienced leaders/helpers will benefit from clear guidance and supervision.
- Have a trial period of three months for all new leaders/helpers at the end of which, both parties review the situation.
- Leaders/helpers should not be alone for an undue length of time, with a child or young person, where their activity cannot be seen.
- In a counselling situation, where privacy and confidentiality are important, make sure that another adult knows the interview is taking place.
- Never invite a child or young person into your home alone. Invite a group or ensure that someone else is in the house. Make sure the parent/guardian knows where the young person is.
- Do not give lifts children or young people on their own (other than for short journeys). If they are alone, ask them to sit in the rear of the car.
- Guard against any inappropriate or intrusive form of touching.
- Never ridicule or reject a child or young person.
- Never make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person, even "in fun".
- Do not allow children or young people to involve you in excessive attention-seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature.
- Guard against the use of rough, physical or sexually proactive games.
- Be careful with your use of language, tone of voice and your body language.
- Ensure that another adult is present if, for example, a young child has soiled their underclothes and needs to be thoroughly washed.
- If you see another leader or helper acting in a way that might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or to your supervisor about your concerns. Leaders/helpers should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care that allows all leaders/helpers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.