



APPENDIX A - CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR TRINITY PERSONNEL WORKING, LEARNING OR VOLUNTEERING WITH CHILDREN

Trinity employees, students and volunteers in contact with children should:

- Be familiar with and follow the University's policies on child protection, dignity and respect, mental health, and social networking and social media, and the role of the statutory agencies Tusla and An Garda Síochána with primary responsibility for child protection and welfare, and participate in related induction and training programmes provided within the unit/activity.
- Treat all children fairly and as individuals.
- Treat all children equally and with dignity, sensitivity and respect.
- Be inclusive of children with special needs.
- Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability).
- Listen carefully to what children say and want to say.⁵
- Involve children in decision-making where appropriate and encourage feedback.
- Respect each child's boundaries, personal space and privacy and help them to develop their own sense of rights as well as helping them to know what they can do if they feel there is a problem.
- Physical contact of a comforting and reassuring nature is a valid way of expressing concern and care for children, where such contact is acceptable and comfortable to all persons concerned. Physical contact should be open (never secretive or hidden), occur for a good reason and should be initiated by the young person.
- Be sensitive to the risks involved in participating in some contact sports and exercise - particular caution in areas such as swimming pools, showers, etc.
- Be visible to others when working with children whenever possible.⁶
- Be sensitive to the possibility of becoming over involved or spending a great deal of time with any one young person.⁷
- Prepare a child with whom you have worked over a period of time for the conclusion of the interaction.
- Use age-appropriate activities, teaching aids and materials.
- Set an example of appropriate behaviour (use of language, appropriate dress, etc.).

⁵ If dealing with a disclosure of child abuse, ask questions only for the purpose of clarification. Be supportive but do not ask leading questions or seek intimate details beyond those volunteered by the child. Detailed investigative interviews will, if necessary, be carried out by Tusla staff or members of An Garda Síochána.

⁶ It is recognised that Trinity staff may, on occasion, have to meet on their own with registered students under the age of 18 in order to respect the student's right to privacy and confidentiality.

⁷ Any concerns in this regard should be discussed with a supervisor or experienced colleague. Similarly, any long term 'helping' or 'support' relationships that arise in one's work, learning or volunteering situation should also be reviewed on a regular basis.



- Agree boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions with children and their organisation leaders/primary carers from the outset.
- Challenge and report inappropriate or potentially abusive behaviour. Seek assistance when required.
- Encourage children to report cases of bullying and bring complaints of bullying to the attention of the appropriate line manager, activity coordinator or University Child Protection Officer.
- Record and report any incidents, accidents or child protection concerns to the appropriate person.
- **Avoid** using sarcasm, discrimination, negative criticism, or labeling.⁸
- **Avoid** using language or behaviour of a sexual, suggestive or inappropriate nature in front of children.
- **Avoid** doing things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.
- **Avoid** being alone with a child where this is practicable. If necessary, consider leaving the door slightly ajar or informing another adult that you will be alone in the room with the individual in question.
- **Avoid** giving lifts to individual young people, especially for long car journeys.
- **Do not** single out a particular child for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule or unwelcome focus or attention.
- **Never** physically punish or verbally abuse a child or act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade.
- **Do not** exchange personal contact details with children unless this is required by the activity.⁹
- **Do not** add a child with whom you are working as a friend on Facebook or other social network medium.
- **Do not** take a child to your own home or room, especially where they will be alone with you.
- **Do not** allow or engage in suggestive remarks, gestures or touching of a kind which could be misunderstood.
- **Do not** provide children with alcohol, cigarettes or illegal drugs.
- **Do not** permit abusive youth peer activities such as bullying.
- **Do not** allow any physically rough or sexually provocative games, or inappropriate talking or touching, by anyone in any group for which you have responsibility.
- **Do not** trivialise or exaggerate child abuse issues.
- **Do not** believe a disclosure “could never happen to me”.

⁸ If you think that something you said may have caused offence or upset, then try to address it in a sensitive manner.

⁹ Should your work, volunteering or learning activity require the exchange of contact details, use only a mobile phone number or e-mail address and, except where the child is a registered student under the age of 18, obtain the written consent of the child’s primary carer.



- **Do not** 'do nothing' in relation to a child protection concern and if you consider that a child is at immediate risk, contact Tusla or the Gardaí immediately (24 hours per day) (see Appendix I for contact details).
- **Do not** under any circumstances attempt to deal with any problems alone. Never promise to keep a secret in relation to a child protection concern.