

**Code of Good Youth Work
Practice for Volunteers**

Good practice contributes towards raising the standards of youth work through the creation of a healthy and safe environment for young people.

Volunteers should be open and welcoming towards young people and should respect their rights and dignity.

* Buildings and facilities used for youth activities must be suitable, safe and secure.
* The use of alcohol or drugs is not permitted during youth work activities (prescribed medication is not necessarily included in this). Volunteers who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol (or deemed to be so) are not permitted to supervise youth work activities and should be asked to leave the youth work premises.
* All volunteers must be carefully selected and be Garda vetted. Training in Child Protection must be completed. Other training opportunities should be availed of.
* Make sure that adequate and appropriate supervision is in place before organising youth work activities. There must be a ratio of one adult to every eight young people (with a minimum of two adults for any activity). There should be adequate and gender based supervision of all activities.
* Parental consent must be obtained from parent/guardian before organising activities for young people and enquire for special medical information and dietary requirements.
* Consent must also be obtained if contacting young people via mobile phones/computers.
* Consent must also be obtained when taking photographs /videos of the young people.
* Keep a record of the names, addresses and contact numbers of the parents/guardians of the young people.
* A record should be kept of young people and leaders present at every activity.
* An Accident and Incident Book must be available at all activities.
* A record of income and expenditure must be kept and available upon request from Crosscare staff.
* All activities organised for young people must have adequate insurance cover. Public Liability Insurance is available from Crosscare.
* Give equal time and attention to all young people.
* Maintain appropriate boundaries when dealing with young people. Respect the physical integrity of young people; this should not preclude normal expressions of warmth or friendliness provided that they are acceptable to all parties concerned.
* Volunteers should be sensitive to the potential risk to personal safety and of false allegation, which may arise if requested to meet alone with a young person in a room. Where it is feasible they should consider leaving the door slightly ajar and informing another colleague that they are alone in the room with the individual in question. A written record of the meeting must be recorded and kept in a secure place.
* Casual visits to homes of young people should be avoided by volunteers. Do not visit a young person’s home on your own. All visits to homes of young people should have a clear purpose.
* Casual visits by young people to volunteer’s homes should be discouraged.
* Volunteers should never have meetings with individual young people when they are on their own in a building.
* Comments and jokes of a racial or sexual nature are inappropriate and are to be avoided.
* Follow an agreed Code of Discipline when dealing with disruptive behaviour. Corporal punishment of young people is not permitted in any circumstances.
* Particular care must be taken when planning residential trips away. Leaders should not sleep in dormitories with young people. If however, this happens, a written record must be kept . Care must also be taken to ensure that the privacy of young people is respected in places, such as, swimming pools, showers, toilets and changing rooms.
* Do not give lifts in cars to individual young people. In the event of an emergency, where it is necessary to make a journey alone with a young person, a record of this should be made and the young person’s parent or guardian must be informed.
* The use of modern social media such as Facebook, Twitter, the internet, mobile phones and similar devices should be monitored to prevent bullying and other inappropriate behaviour.
* All volunteers must agree to comply with this Code of Good Youth Work Practice.

**For further information please contact**

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