

Appendix 9: MHF Code of Practice

The likelihood of abuse of children and vulnerable adults should be reduced if good practice is followed. This Code of Practice aims to protect the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, MHF Trustees, staff and volunteers.

All individuals (paid and voluntary) should adhere to the following principles and action in the course of all activity with the Muscle Help Foundation:

- Always put the welfare of the young person first.
- Treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity.
- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- If involved in a 1:1 situation, give some thought before the meeting to the venue and environment where the meeting will take place. Meet in an open, transparent space. If privacy is needed, make sure that the room/office has windows and is situated in a natural walkway. Always inform a colleague of your meeting.
- If MHF staff or volunteers are visitors to a family home or other setting, the meeting and the meeting place should be agreed with the host's relevant lead person (in most cases the parents or legal guardians of the young person).
- Make the experience of your engagement with the young person fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront, and deal positively and pro-actively with bullying, harassment or any other inappropriate behavior.
- Only use the mobile phone and electronic device supplied by the charity where possible
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with young people. Under the Sexual Offences Act (2003) it is against the law for a person in a position of trust to engage in a relationship with a young person. (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a young person).
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible, e.g. where young people need to be supervised, encourage parents/carers to take responsibility for their own child.
- If on community or another organisation's premises, liaise with the setting to understand and where appropriate follow their policy.

If there are any concerns regarding compliance with this Code of Practice, please inform the charity's Designated Safeguarding Lead at the earliest opportunity.

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