

# Tweeddale Youth Action

## CODE of CONDUCT for working with children and young people

This Code of Conduct applies to all employed staff and volunteers of Tweeddale Youth Action. Its purpose is to create a safe and protective culture for young people, to enable their development and enjoyment, and to ensure consistent good practice by employed staff and volunteers.

This Code of Conduct describes the practical behaviour by employed staff and volunteers by which Tweeddale Youth Action's **Vision** and **Guiding Principles** are put into action.

It lists **Essential Practice, Practice to be encouraged, Practice to be avoided** and **Unacceptable Practice**, by employed staff and volunteers.

It is accompanied by a requirement for all employed staff and volunteers working as Youth Workers for Tweeddale Youth Action to sign a **DECLARATION** that they have read and understood this Code of Conduct.

### Vision

Tweeddale Youth Action's vision across Tweeddale is that young people have the opportunity and encouragement to grow into active citizens who will have a positive impact and endorse responsible ownership of the world around them.

Our vision is that this should be true and accessible for **all** young people – wherever they live, whatever their present circumstances, issues or behaviour.

### Guiding Principles

Our youth work across Tweeddale - linked, supported and provided by Tweeddale Youth Action - is underpinned by the following guiding principles:

- Empowerment of young people, supporting informed choices
- Self awareness of those working with young people, in order that young people themselves gain self awareness
- Equal opportunities for all young people, whilst valuing diversity
- Respect for young people's opinions, rights, interests and confidentiality
- Promotion of a broad world view for young people and from those who work with them
- Good citizenship as a model for interpersonal and community relationships
- Young person centred youth work where individual differences are valued and where the well-being of each young person is at the heart of practice

In support and provision of youth work, Tweeddale Youth Action will sustain and evaluate active practice that manifests as

- providing safe environments where all young people are listened to and fully engaged in decisions that affect their lives and the lives of those around them;
- creating opportunities in which young people are encouraged and enabled to identify and meet their own and others' needs, to expand their horizons, and to reach their full potential.

### **Essential practice:**

- At all times, employed staff and volunteers must work within the procedures of Tweeddale Youth Action Child Protection Policy.
- All children and young people are treated with respect and dignity
- Every activity, event or session will be risk assessed to maintain the safety of young people
- When organising events and meetings for children and young people, or their attendance at events/meetings, the following information/documentation will be requested by Tweeddale Youth Action staff or volunteers in relation to each child or young person attending the event/meeting:
  - A TYA Consent Form for all events or specific activities;
  - Contact details for each child or young person's parent/carer/family/guardian, including emergency contact numbers;
  - Information relating to any special issues, needs or requirements (e.g. medical, health, diet, language assistance).
- A TYA Reporting Form must be used to keep a record of any incidents or concerns, with date and note of those present.

If any of the following occurs, an employed worker or volunteer must report the incident (by phone or in person) to the TYA Manager, including making a written record as soon as possible after the incident on a TYA Reporting Form:

- A young person is hurt
- A young person seems distressed in any manner
- A young person appears to be sexually aroused by the action of an employed worker or volunteer (that is, by your actions or those of a colleague)
- A young person misunderstands or misinterprets something done by you or a colleague
- An allegation is made about you or a colleague

### **Practice to be encouraged:**

- Involve children and young people as much as possible in the decisions that affect them
- Work in an open environment, avoiding private and/or unobserved situations
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with children and young people (eg. not sharing tents, shower facilities or having an inappropriate or intimate relationship)
- If physical contact is necessary (e.g. in an emergency), tell the child or young person clearly what you are doing and why, seek their permission and give

choices where possible. If possible have another employed worker or volunteer present.

- When working with a mixed gender group of children and young people there should be employed staff and volunteers of both genders present to manage all activities

### **Practice to be avoided:**

- Employed workers and volunteers should not give lifts in their cars to individual children or young people or travel alone with children and young people. Where not doing this would compromise Tweeddale Youth Action Health and Safety Policy (eg. leaving a young person alone at a venue) you should attempt to contact the parent/guardian of the child/young person to confirm what will be done. The child/young person should be asked to sit in the back seat.
- Employed workers and volunteers should not take children or young people to their home or that of another employed worker or volunteer.
- Employed workers and volunteers should avoid situations where they are alone with young people. Where a private meeting with a lone child/young person is unavoidable it should be held in an open place in view of others or in a room visible to those outside and where a colleague has agreed to visually monitor the meeting. If a young person participates in a review of their involvement in a programme as a result of disruptive or unacceptable behaviour, it is advisable that this review is witnessed by a second employed worker/volunteer
- Employed workers and volunteers should not use their own 'personal' electronic communications (e.g. mobile phones, social networking sites) for contacting young people, unless agreed by the TYA Manager.

### **Unacceptable practice:**

- Invading the privacy of children and young people when they are toileting or showering, changing or dressing.
- Inappropriate physical or sexually provocative games
- Sharing sleeping accommodation with an individual child or young person
- Making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person even in fun
- Inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form
- Scape-goating or ridiculing a child or young person
- Allowing inappropriate, foul, sexualised or discriminatory language by a child or young person to remain unchallenged
- Any form of physical punishment
- Illegal use of drugs
- Use of alcohol during a TYA event
- Bullying of any form, including name calling or constant criticism
- 'Picking on' a child or young person because of their family background, manner of dress or physical characteristic
- Racism or sectarianism of any form

- Favouritism and exclusion – all young people should be equally supported and encouraged
- Abusive language or gestures

I have read and understood this document and agree to work within the TYA's code of conduct.

Signed.....

Print name.....

Date.....