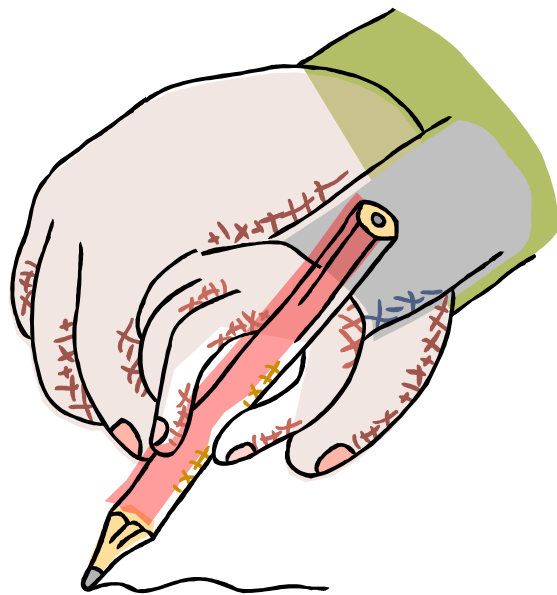


Guidance
for Non-Teaching
Staff Working in
Schools



Introduction

When tailoring this document to your school's particular needs it is important that you include the incident reporting arrangements particular to your school, detailing the names of the designated teacher and deputy designated teacher.

It is also important for non teaching staff to have a copy of, or access to, the following policies drawn up by the school plus any others you deem relevant to the work that they will be undertaking

- *Behaviour*
- *Child Protection*
- *Health and Safety*
- *Drugs Policy*

Originally, this document was intended as a resource applicable only to Assistants, whether Learning Support, Classroom, General or Supervisory Assistants. However, it has been suggested that the guidelines would be helpful to any non-teaching adults working within a school. Inevitably, there are some references which apply only to those supporting a child directly, for example, the paragraph referring to personal care. Nevertheless, the greater part of the advice will stand and be appropriate to all whose work brings them into contact with children in school.

Guidance for Non-teaching staff.

All those adults involved in the life of our school have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in our charge. The responsibility applies to all children but the younger the child or the greater the learning or physical difficulties the less likely they are to be able to recognize and respond appropriately to abuse or the inappropriate behaviour of a trusted adult. The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines to promote positive interaction between adult and pupil and to reduce, as far as is possible, any risk to the vulnerable pupil. It is expected that all adults who have the responsibility of care for children will be deeply conscious of the impact of their behaviour and demeanour.

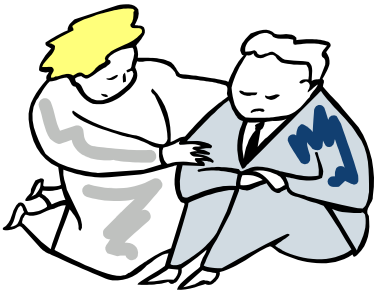


- *It is important that all children are treated with respect. In the promotion of the self esteem and appropriate self image of our pupils, the communication and interactive styles of adults are particularly important.*
- *This means that sarcasm, verbal bullying and repeated negative comments or actions are unacceptable. This is true even when the comments are not directed specifically at the child, but in their hearing. Note should always be taken of accompanying body language. It is not sufficient merely to "Talk the talk" but also to "Walk the walk".*
- *Sexual innuendoes, verbal or non-verbal in the presence of children are unacceptable, as are comments which may be construed as racist or sectarian.*
- *All adults should frequently reflect on their conduct in the presence of children and the messages that their behaviour may communicate.*

For example:

- *Dress should be appropriate to a professional person working with children. In some circumstances it may be necessary, in the interests of safety, to avoid wearing jewellery, for example chains, or wearing long hair loose.*
- *Whilst some children may seem to respond well to banter, remember that you may be putting yourself in a position in which your action or speech is open to misinterpretation.*

- Remember that in circumstances when it is inappropriate for children to chew gum, use their mobile phone or arrive late, your example is crucial.



➤ In providing a warm and accepting learning environment, physical reassurance may be involved; great discretion should be employed here:

- Appropriate comforting if a child is sick or distressed. If you are uncertain about this, consult with the designated teacher in your school.
 - Refer to the Department of Education guidelines if it becomes necessary to protect a child from harm to his or her own person or others.
 - Give personal care only as appropriate; do not engage in personal tasks for a pupil who is able to complete them independently. For such procedures, most particularly toileting, it is important that another adult is in the vicinity in a way which safeguards both you and your charge whilst respecting the dignity of the pupil. Some schools find it helpful at such times for staff to wear a hospital type overall in order to identify clearly the physical support role being provided.
 - Use great sensitivity to the child's reactions. Be aware that an inappropriate response from a child may indicate abuse elsewhere and must be discussed with the designated teacher.
 - All actions should be transparent and accounted for; if this is not possible and your actions are open to misinterpretation, report it at once to the designated teacher.
 - If possible, in the administration of First Aid, work in the company of another adult. However do not delay in giving assistance if another adult is not available.
 - It is vitally important that a child feels comfortable in sharing their concerns with a trusted adult; see below under "Discretion and confidentiality".
- If you have any concerns or have noticed any change of behaviour or demeanour in a child, you should report it immediately to the class teacher, or if not available, the designated teacher; do not act on your observations independently without further consultation with appropriate members of staff.

- *If, as an Assistant, your responsibility is to one child it may be important that you remain with that child during your working hours unless there are pressing reasons for you to be elsewhere. This will be informed by the requirement of the child's statement and Individual Education Plan.*
- *Both discretion and confidentiality are of vital importance. You may be in a privileged position with access to personal and possibly sensitive information. The children in your care should not be discussed outside the school or in the company of anyone except those people who are directly concerned with the welfare and education of those children. However, in the case of suspected abuse, disclosure of confidences to relevant professionals will be required. It is very important that you explain to a child who is sharing personal information with you that you cannot commit yourself to secrecy.*
- *Ensure that you are familiar with and follow the requirements of your school's Child Protection Policy.*
- *Meetings and conversations with parents relating to school issues should always be with the prior agreement of the teacher. If you encounter a parent outside school always ensure that you do not become engaged in talking about children or other members of staff, instead, take active steps to divert conversation away from the topic.*
- *Remember that you are part of a team. You have a right to be treated as such by other team members working for the good of the children in their care. If you do not communicate effectively or cooperate appropriately or if you are insensitive to the needs of others, whether children or staff, you are less likely to be treated as a valued member of that team.*

