

Child Protection Policy

(Working with children and vulnerable adults)



Introduction

Ingenia Education carries out activities which bring our employees, volunteers and contracted tutors into regular unsupervised contact with children and/or vulnerable adults. This includes providing tutoring and educational services in the students' home and elsewhere. Ingenia Education takes its responsibilities to safeguard and protect the interests of all young children very seriously.

This policy is non-contractual but indicates the way in which Ingenia Education intends to deal with such matters.

Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and contracted tutors whose duties bring them into contact with children and/or vulnerable adults.

Aims of this policy

This policy aims to create and maintain the safest possible environment for the children and vulnerable adults with whom we deal, as well as for our employees, volunteers and contracted tutors, and all reasonable steps will be taken to prevent all parties from harm.

Legal considerations

There is a considerable body of legislation designed to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected and it is important to understand that everyone is responsible for their safety. The main acts include:

- the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (VBS)
- Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Business Regulations 2003
- Protection of Children Act 1999/Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
- Care Standards Act 2000
- The Police Act 1997
- The Children (Protection from Offenders) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 1997
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HASAWA)

Definitions:

A "child" is anyone under the age of 18.

A "vulnerable adult" is a person aged 18 years or over who is:

- in residential accommodation provided in connection with care or nursing or receiving care or nursing at home
- receiving health care
- in lawful custody or under the supervision of a probation officer
- receiving a welfare service of a prescribed description or direct payments from a social services authority
- receiving services, or taking part in activities, aimed at people with disabilities or special needs because of his/her age or state of health.

It may be a person who is unable to take care of him/herself, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation. He/she may be elderly or frail, have learning disabilities, suffer from mental illness, have a physical disability, be a substance misuser, be homeless or in an abusive relationship.

Criminal records

Those who are involved in work situations where they have sustained or prolonged unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders legislation. This means that prospective employees, self-employed contractors and volunteers must declare all criminal convictions, however long ago; and these will be taken into account when deciding on their suitability for working with children or vulnerable adults. No-one will be permitted to undertake a role which involves regular unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults without a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

However, a criminal record may not prevent a person from working for Ingenia Education in any other capacity: if that person is then asked to undertake tasks which will bring him/her into unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults, such as work experience placements, any record must be declared to an Ingenia Education Director who will take appropriate advice where necessary and will decide whether this task should be allocated to another employee, volunteer or contracted tutor.

Planning and supervision

All activities or assignments involving children or vulnerable adults should be planned in advance to ensure they take into account the age range and ability of the participants. Employees, volunteers and contracted tutors supervising assignments involving children/vulnerable adults should be competent to do so. Supervision should take account of the age, gender, nature of the activity and any special needs of the individuals. Where appropriate, a risk assessment will be undertaken and documented.

All employees, volunteers and contracted tutors should avoid working alone with a child or vulnerable adult wherever possible. If it is not avoidable they should plan their work so that at least one other adult is present at any time. If possible, the worker should also move to a workstation where he/she and the child/vulnerable adult can both be seen by other colleagues or other adult and/or the door should be left open.

This guidance applies also to transport in vehicles - workers must not offer to transport a child or vulnerable adult anywhere unless accompanied by a further person or as part of a formal arrangement.

Physical contact

On no account should any employees, volunteers and contracted tutors have any physical contact with a child or vulnerable adult unless it is to prevent accident or injury to themselves or anyone else (eg to prevent a fall), or in the case of medical assistance being needed (eg to administer first aid), or to provide nursing or other general care, in which case the prior consent of the affected person should be requested where possible. Where appropriate, consent from parents or those with parental or caring responsibility should be obtained.

If a child/vulnerable adult is hurt or distressed, the employee, volunteer or contracted tutor should do his/her best to comfort or reassure the affected person without compromising his/her dignity or doing anything to discredit the person's own behaviour.

Communication

When an employee, volunteer or contracted tutor is in direct contact with students (for example via email or other electronic communication) it is vital that the parent or guardian is included in all correspondence. Tutors should have no direct contact with students that parents or guardians are not party to.

Communication with children/vulnerable adults is vital in establishing relationships built on trust. Those working with children or vulnerable adults should listen to what they are saying and respond appropriately. Children and vulnerable adults are entitled to the same respect as any employees, volunteers and contracted tutors. It should also be made clear to them what standards of behaviour and mutual respect are expected from them.

Those working with children/vulnerable adults should behave appropriately, ensure that language is moderated in their presence and should refrain from adult jokes or comments which are clearly unsuitable. Workers should also note that what may be acceptable language to their friends may not be regarded as such by those of an older generation.

Behaviour and abuse

We should all aim to promote an environment of trust and understanding. Those working with children/vulnerable adults should not tolerate unsuitable behaviour but should try to ensure good working relationships.

All employees, volunteers and contracted tutors at Ingenia Education have a strict duty never to subject any child/vulnerable adult to any form of harm or abuse. This means that it is unacceptable, for example, to treat a child/vulnerable adult in any of the following ways:

- to cause distress by shouting or calling them derogatory names
- to slap
- to hold them in such a way that it causes pain, or to shake them
- to physically restrain them except to protect them from harming themselves or others
- to take part in horseplay or rough games
- to allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind
- to do things of a personal nature for the person that they can do for themselves (this includes changing clothing, or going to the toilet with them unless another adult is present)
- to allow or engage in sexually suggestive behaviour within a person's sight or hearing, or make suggestive remarks to or within earshot
- to give or show anything which could be construed as pornographic
- to seek or agree to meet them anywhere outside of the normal workplace without the full prior knowledge and agreement of the parent, guardian or carer.
- to engage with them online in an unacceptable manner.

Suspicious of abuse

Any employee, volunteer or contracted tutor who witnesses or suspects abusive behaviour towards a child/vulnerable adult should record the details and report it to an Ingenia Education Director. It is NOT the individual's responsibility to investigate his/her suspicions - this requires expertise he/she is not expected to have.

Any allegations of abuse made against anyone working for Ingenia Education will be thoroughly investigated and dealt with through our disciplinary procedure for employees. Serious breaches may lead to dismissal (for employees) or termination of any agreement (for volunteers and contracted tutors).

An Ingenia Education Director will appropriately record an allegation or reported incident. He/she will be responsible for contacting the statutory child protection agency or the police if necessary.

Safety

The safety of the people with whom we work is paramount and we are committed to providing a safe environment within which to work. Those working with children/vulnerable adults should ensure all appropriate risk assessments and security checks have been carried out prior to any assignment.

If transporting children/vulnerable adults, the transport should be checked to ensure it is roadworthy and adequate for the purpose. Any equipment used must be safe and only used for the

purpose for which it is intended. Users should be adequately trained. Appropriate insurance should be up to date and adequate to cover such assignments.

Confidentiality

All personal information regarding children/vulnerable adults is highly confidential and should only be shared with appropriate people on a need to know basis. Information will be stored with Ingenia Education, with access limited to employees, volunteers and contracted tutors who are required to access it to fulfil their duties and will only be kept for as long as is needed.

Anyone who is likely to have access to confidential material regarding children or vulnerable adults, or any of the bodies on behalf of whom Ingenia Education is working, may be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement. The requirement for confidentiality is emphasised.

Contact outside of work

Contact should not be made with any of the children/vulnerable adults with whom we are working for any reason unrelated to the particular work. In particular, our employees, volunteers and contracted tutors are required to maintain our reputation for integrity and responsibility in dealing with such people, and should not enter into any social or other non-work related arrangements with them.

Gifts and inducements

On no account should anyone from Ingenia Education give a child/vulnerable adult a gift or buy refreshments etc. which could be in any way considered as a bribe or inducement to enter into a relationship with the Ingenia Education person or give rise to any false allegations of improper conduct against the individual.

Communicating this policy and concerns

All employees, volunteers and contracted tutors at Ingenia Education will be made aware of this policy and a copy will be available via the Ingenia Education website.

Furthermore, a copy of this policy will be made available to all relevant bodies with whom we work and will be made available to parents and carers of children/vulnerable adults with whom we plan to work.

Any concerns about the assignment or people involved should be addressed with an Ingenia Education Director.

Breach of this policy

Failure to follow the guidelines in this policy is considered a serious offence and will be investigated thoroughly and dealt with through our disciplinary procedure for employees. Serious breaches may lead to dismissal (for employees) and termination of any agreement (for volunteers and contracted tutors).

Implementation, monitoring and review of this policy

Tim Swards has overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy, which will be reviewed on a regular basis following its implementation (at least annually) and additionally whenever there are relevant changes in legislation or to our working practices.

Any queries or comments about this policy should be addressed to Tim Swards. In Tim's absence queries should be directed to Andy Brierley.

