

CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN FORÓIGE



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INTRODUCTION

This Code of Good Practice is for all adult volunteers, leaders, mentors, facilitators, staff and external resource people working in any Foróige setting, programme or activity with young people. For the rest of this document they are referred to as "Foróige adults".

THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT IS TO:

- Create a safe setting for young people in which their dignity is respected and they can grow into confident, caring and creative people.
- Recommend good practice that promotes the wellbeing of young people and protects them from abuse of any kind.
- Affirm Foróige adults in their positive role in relation to young people.
- Raise the awareness of Foróige adults regarding situations that could give rise to allegations or suspicions of abuse and so reduce the risk of this occurring.



THIS CODE OF PRACTICE IS FOR USE IN:

- Foróige Volunteer led services including all Clubs and Cafés
- Mentoring environments such as BBBS and NFTE
- Foróige operated Services and Projects
- Any other way in which adults interact with young people in Foróige

As this Code of Good Practice plays a significant role in the safeguarding and protection of young people in Foróige it should be read in conjunction with '**Protecting Young People**'² and Foróige's **Child Safeguarding Statement**³. There are a range of other Foróige and youth sector documents on good practice such as, Foróige Guidelines on Undertaking Overnight stays, Guidelines for Undertaking a Day Trip, Big Brother Big Sister Guidelines and the National Quality Standards for Volunteer Led Youth Groups.

The Board of Foróige believes that the safeguarding, welfare and protection from harm of children and young people is of paramount importance in everything Foróige does.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Board of Foróige that our staff and adult volunteers take all reasonable care to ensure that all children and young people involved in our clubs, groups, projects, services and programmes are protected from harm and abuse of any kind. Our commitment to safeguarding and protecting children and young people in Foróige is grounded in our philosophy which outlines the importance of children and young people being treated with respect, listened to and having their views taken into consideration.

Services and Projects, in this context, are to be interpreted as any staff or volunteer led youth activity in Foróige.

²Foróige's "Protecting Young People – with versions for staff and volunteers, enables voluntary adult leaders and staff to deal effectively with matters relating to child protection and welfare concerns that they may encounter in their roles.

³Read it on our website <https://www.foroige.ie/about/foroiges-child-safeguarding-statement>

OUR PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE

The code of good practice includes the following principles:

1. There is a recommended ratio of suitable adult leaders/staff to groups of young people
2. A code of behaviour based on respect is agreed by all involved
3. Foróige adults understand and practice their role correctly
4. Education programmes operate in accordance with Foróige's philosophy
5. Responses to discipline aim to facilitate learning and development
6. Physical contact must be appropriate and in the interest of the young person.
7. Inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour is avoided at all times
8. One to one work will be conducted in an open manner following the correct procedures
9. Potential risks to young people's safety or welfare are identified and mitigated

1. RECOMMENDED RATIO OF FORÓIGE ADULTS TO GROUPS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

What follows are minimum ratios of adults to young people in particular settings. Adults should use their judgement to ensure the actual ratio meets the needs of the group, as safety and other specific circumstances may require that these ratios are considerably lower.

- In large groups the ratio is 1:10 with a minimum of 2 adults always present.
- In the Cork Summer Schemes it is 1: 5 with a minimum of three adults present. Foróige adults involved in these schemes must follow the "Guidelines for Summer Schemes"
- In Foróige Juniors the ratio is 1: 8 with a minimum of three adults present.
- For day trips and events away from the normal premises the ratio should be at least 1:8 even with older young people. There should be at least 3 adults present.



- For trips away involving overnight stays away from home the ratio should be 1:5 with a minimum of three voluntary adult leaders or staff. Any variations from this needs to be agreed with Foróige management.

See also Guidelines for day trips, and Overnight Stays in Ireland and trips overnight abroad.

In a single sex group it is recommended that one Foróige adult, at least, is of the same sex as the participants. In a mixed group there should be sufficient male and female Foróige adults to reflect the ratio of male and female participants.

2. A CODE OF BEHAVIOUR BASED ON RESPECT THAT IS AGREED BY ALL INVOLVED

Volunteers/staff and young people should agree a code of behaviour for the group/individual work that promotes dignity and protects emotional and physical well-being. This code outlines both positive behaviours to be practiced and unacceptable behaviours. In a group situation it should be written up on a chart and observed by all. Some non-negotiable rules based on Foróige policies also need to be included (for example in relation to drugs/alcohol). Foróige has a Charter of Rights which can be used to underpin this. See appendix 3.

Separate age appropriate codes of behaviour need to be developed for particular events such as trips away to include:

- Limits and conditions to use of mobile phones and social media.
- Consequences of possession or use of alcohol or drugs.

- If appropriate, members need to know that sexual activity at Foróige events, regardless of gender or orientation, is not permitted.
- Being on time for buses and activities.
- Responsibility for one's own bags and possessions.

3. FORÓIGE ADULTS UNDERSTAND AND PRACTICE THEIR ROLE CORRECTLY

Foróige adults should fully understand their roles and have a clear understanding of the nature of the relationship between themselves and young people. Their role is that of guide, mentor and facilitator of learning.

They can be significant adults in the life of a young person and have a very positive influence on their development by providing:

- a positive role model
- positive leadership and
- Opportunities for development.

The practice of this role involves affirming young people and encouraging them to reach their potential. This includes:

- Involving young people in decision making regarding their club/group/match.
- Listening attentively to what young people have to say.
- Praising members for their achievements and qualities.
- Encouraging young people to develop their talents and interests.
- Challenging negative perceptions and behaviour in a supportive manner.
- Challenging young people to treat each other with respect
- Ensuring each young person has equality of opportunity.
- Avoiding discrimination on grounds of religion, gender, family status, age, disability, race, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community.

Mutual respect, trust, honesty and openness are fundamental to a healthy relationship between Foróige adults and young people. This is a unique relationship, whereby adults and young people voluntarily come together to learn and to share values.

4. EDUCATION PROGRAMMES OPERATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH FORÓIGE'S PHILOSOPHY

Foróige education programmes are designed to empower young people and facilitate their development. Programmes should therefore be operated in such a way that young people:

- Decide and plan activities under the guidance of adults.
- Discuss issues and contribute ideas.
- Take responsibility for activities and behaviour.
- Discover and develop new talents.
- Evaluate activities to see what they learned and achieved.

Foróige adults should also:

- Work in a way that ensures the positive and healthy development of young people.
- Ensure that content and materials of a sensitive nature are appropriate to the age and maturity of the young people involved and contributes to their development.
- Avoid using content and materials that are not conducive to the positive development such as issues of violence or subversion.
- Seek the permission of parents/guardians where matters being dealt with are of a sensitive nature, e.g. health or sexuality.
- Use language that is appropriate to the age and ability of the young people.
- Put in place a sign in/sign out system for participants to record attendance, dates, times and venues at any particular club/event/session.
- All such records should be stored in a safe place and in line with Foróige's data protection policy, available on the staff and volunteer portal.

5. RESPONSES TO DISCIPLINE THAT AIM TO FACILITATE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

When dealing with a disruptive young person it is important to try to help the young person to learn from the situation and to take charge of and change their own behaviour. It is recommended that where possible more than one Foróige adult be present.

Training is available on this issue of responding to disruptive behaviour, please refer to your Manager, Project Worker or RYO. Although every situation is unique, the following are some general guidelines on how to respond appropriately:



DO

- ▶ Talk to the young person on their own, in a visible location and with knowledge of others.
- ▶ Be aware of your own feelings.
- ▶ If you are angry, walk away and say you will deal with it later.
- ▶ Breathe deeply and calm yourself.
- ▶ Ask the young person what is going on with them.
- ▶ Listen attentively to what the young person says.
- ▶ Acknowledge the young person's feelings and point of view.
- ▶ Describe specifically their behaviour and state your response.
- ▶ Explain consequences of disruptive behaviour.
- ▶ Praise and encourage the young person in some way if possible.
- ▶ Discuss alternative responses and help the young person to try them out.
- ▶ Consult with parents if necessary.



DO NOT

- ▶ Use sarcasm or hurtful remarks.
- ▶ Use bad language.
- ▶ Verbally or physically abuse the young person.

RECORDING AN INCIDENT:

Foróige guidelines also require that serious instances of disruptive behaviour, which necessitate the intervention of a Foróige adult, be documented and kept on file. Appendix I is a sample template that can be adapted to suit a club/mentor or project and the particular incident. This report should be available to Foróige management and where necessary, in confidence, to other voluntary adult leaders and staff involved with the particular group or individual.

The written report should describe:

- a) The programme/activity running at the time.
- b) What happened.
- c) Who was involved.
- d) Where and when it happened.
- e) What was said, if significant.
- f) Any injury to person(s) or property.
- g) How the situation was resolved and what the voluntary adult leader/mentor or staff person did to bring about its resolution.
- h) Any follow-up or consequences to the situation.

If you have any queries regarding this procedure contact your Youth Officer/other staff person or Line Manager.

6. PHYSICAL CONTACT MUST BE APPROPRIATE AND IN THE INTEREST OF THE YOUNG PERSON

As part of a normal healthy relationship between a Foróige adult and a young person, socially acceptable physical contact will occur from time to time. This will include a handshake, a pat on the back, an affirmation, a comforting arm on the shoulder in times of distress, etc. These contacts should be made with integrity and respect for the young person, and in response to their needs. Inappropriate physical contact with the young people must be avoided at all times. Any discomfort or resistance on the part of the young person should be respected.

The most informal physical gestures e.g. putting a hand on a shoulder or arm, could be misconstrued by a young person or an observer, especially if they are continually repeated with the same young person.

There are particular conditions within which appropriate physical contact should properly take place. They include, when in a group situation:

- In open view
- With at least one other adult present
- With other young people present
- When the young person is clearly informed of the process to be followed and freely gives their permission e.g. administering first aid.

Foróige adults should use their discretion and good judgement with regard to necessary physical contact in some activities including swimming, coaching, sports, games etc. Particular care should be taken in the following situations:

- One to One meetings such as individual work and BBBS matches.
- Comforting a distressed young person.
- Administering first aid.
- Intervening in a physical fight between young people.

Physical force should not be used, except in circumstances where such force is the only means of protecting a child, young person or adult from injury.

7. INAPPROPRIATE AND UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR IS AVOIDED AT ALL TIMES

Foróige adults need to be aware of situations where young people are more vulnerable to abuse and where allegations of child abuse are more likely to occur. This is a matter of using common sense and of being open, as distinct from being secretive, in their dealings with young people (See Particular Situations of Risk on p9.)

Where a Foróige adult has a concern about the nature of a particular relationship involving himself/herself or another Foróige adult with a young person, he/she should discuss it with a staff person or a Manager and take appropriate steps as necessary.

Any form of physical, emotional or sexual abuse of young people by another young person or adult is totally unacceptable.



It is also unacceptable to:

- Embarrass or humiliate a young person by the use of sarcastic or hurtful remarks about the young person or his/her family.
- Use bad language.
- Threaten violence against a young person.
- Verbally abuse a young person in order to bully or intimidate him/her.
- Physically punish a young person.
- To tell jokes of an inappropriate nature or make comments of a sexual nature.
- To use electronic media to carry out any of the above.
- Use images of young people in Foróige on personal social media sites.
- Have a sexual or intimate relationship with a young person, or to sexually harass a young person.

DEALING WITH VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

Foróige adults will take appropriate measures to prevent, avoid and calm potentially violent situations. When a violent situation does arise involving young people, Foróige adults must immediately seek appropriate assistance e.g. other staff or volunteers, their managers, security or the Gardaí.

If it is felt that there is no alternative and the Foróige adult is comfortable doing so, and there is a serious risk of harm to a young person; adults may intervene in a violent situation – however, this is discouraged unless it is genuinely felt that there is a serious risk of harm to a young person.

In intervening in a violent situation Foróige adults must consider if there are adequate numbers to ensure the staff person or volunteer will not be at serious risk. Where force is unavoidable, only reasonable force may be used to restrain a violent person. Foróige adults concerned for their safety should remove themselves from the immediate situation and immediately contact other staff or volunteers on duty, their manager, and /or Garda as appropriate. All threats of violence must also be reported immediately to the appropriate staff person or manager.

8. ONE TO ONE MENTORING/INDIVIDUAL WORK PRACTICE'S WILL BE CONDUCTED IN AN OPEN MANNER FOLLOWING THE CORRECT PROCEDURES

There can be great value to a young person from a relationship with a supportive adult, and this is facilitated in Foróige through BBBS, one to one individual work and other means where there is training support and supervision to support this developmental relationship.

(BBBS mentors should follow the additional guidelines provided by Foróige as part of their training as mentors)

INDIVIDUAL WORK PROGRAMMES

Individual work programmes are defined as planned one to one work between a staff member or volunteer and an identified young person for a specific purpose over a specific period of time to achieve agreed outcomes.

Individual work should be carried out with a young person when:

- The benefit/appropriateness to the young person is greater than that of having them participate in a group programme.
- A young person, parent or appropriate professional requests a one to one programme for a young person to address a specific issue, i.e. separation, personal development, crisis situation arises, etc and Foróige considers this to be appropriate.
- It is identified that a young person needs additional support about a topic/ issue.
- A young person will not attend a group programme but will engage on a one to one level.
- It is the best way to get to know a young person.
- It is the best way to enable the young person to develop skills and confidence to participate in a group setting.
- Please refer to Foróige Individual Work Guidelines and also refer to Foróige's Child Protection Guidelines regarding any issues that arise during individual work that are of a child protection nature.

9. RISK ASSESSMENTS: TO IDENTIFY AND MITIGATE RISKS TO YOUNG PEOPLE'S SAFETY AND WELLBEING.

Conducting a risk assessment as part of programme planning (especially for once off or unusual events, or activities outside of the normal premises) should enable Foróige adults to ensure that situations and activities where young people or leaders could be faced with danger are identified and risk assessed accordingly and appropriate controls are implemented. *See example in Appendix 2.*

There are five steps to a risk assessment. These should be done in writing and kept.

- Identifying Hazards – anything that might cause harm. A risk is the chance, high or low, that someone will be harmed by the hazard e.g. dangerous currents at a beach.
- Identifying people who might be harmed and how. E.g. in the example above, members being pulled under the surface by the current.
- Analysing risk to see how likely are the hazards to occur and how serious is the level of danger with each.
- Implementing a plan to mitigate the risks.
- Reviewing to ensure it remains relevant and up to date.



PARTICULAR SITUATIONS OF RISK/CONCERN

Foróige adults need to be aware of situations and environments where a young person may be at particular risk and where they need to act with special care and consideration. Here are some examples and the corresponding good practice that is required. Inappropriate practice in these situations could leave Foróige adults open to suspicions or allegations of child abuse.

1. MEETINGS WITH INDIVIDUAL YOUNG PEOPLE OR A SMALL GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Where possible:

- Such meetings / programmes should be conducted in a room with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room / area where other people are nearby;
- Foróige adults should advise another adult that such a meeting is taking place, and the reason for it. A record should be kept of participants present, dates, times and content of such meetings/programmes in the project files or club/project log book (see Appendix I). Others in the building could be encouraged to drop in occasionally;
- Foróige adults are strongly advised to avoid meetings with individual young people where they are on their own in a building;
- Meetings with young people should take place at an appropriate, planned time with consent from parents;

2. TRANSPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

Foróige adults are discouraged from being alone in their car with a young person. However on occasion and in some roles it is necessary to travel in a car with a young person and it is recommended to have the young person travel in the back. In the event of it being necessary to travel alone with a young person in a car this should be recorded and it is best practice that you communicate this with parents and get their consent in advance.

In situations involving a number of young people where a bus is not organised by the club/project, parents should be informed that it is their responsibility to get young people to the event such as by driving them, arranging car-pooling etc.

3. RESIDENTIAL TRIPS AWAY⁴

Particular attention should be paid to the following points:

- All adults travelling away with young people should be carefully chosen and must have been Garda vetted through Foróige.
- Permission of parents/guardians should be obtained for all trips away.
- Do not use family hosting for accommodating young people.
- In a residential setting the ratio of Foróige adults to young people should be 1:5 with a minimum of three Foróige adults. (In the event of an emergency such as if a young person has to be taken to hospital, clearly it is an advantage to have a third Foróige adult).
- Boys and girls should not normally be accommodated in the same room, dormitory or tent.
- At a minimum, boys and girls should sleep in separate areas and everyone have a separate bed/sleeping bag, even if in the same hall or dormitory.

⁴Trips away should be planned using Foróige guidelines for day trips, trips away overnight, or Trips away

- In the event of the venue not providing appropriate night supervision, there should be one Foróige adult who remains awake through the night. Should the need arise, the designated adult will call upon other adults (male or female) as appropriate. Foróige adults should not go to bed and hand over to the designated night supervisors until they are satisfied that all the participants are in bed and settled.

4. SUPERVISION OF CHANGING ROOMS AND ACCOMMODATION

A

SUPERVISION OF CHANGING ROOMS

In changing rooms and washrooms, ensure that supervision is adequate but be mindful of the privacy of the young person.

- For supervision in dressing rooms it is preferable that adults would go in and out rather than remain in the room all the time. It is better to have more than one adult providing supervision and their focus should be on hurrying participants up, ensuring that all equipment is returned, that the dressing room is left tidy etc.
- Adults should avoid changing in the same rooms at the same times as young people, but if this can't be avoided, should exercise discretion.
- Adults should avoid being alone with young people in changing areas.
- Supervising adults should be of same gender as the young people

As other matter of good practice, before going on the activity tell participants:

- Not to carry unnecessary money with them.
- Not to wear jewellery or designer label clothing or footwear on trips.
- That if they give leaders valuables/money to mind when using changing rooms etc., we will keep a written record/photo of who owns what.
- That staff and volunteers will not be responsible for any jewellery or items of clothing that go missing.

B

SUPERVISION OF ACCOMMODATION

The general principle is that Foróige adults should always be respectful of the privacy and dignity of young people.

- Supervision of bedrooms and other accommodation should be carried out by Foróige adults of the appropriate gender.
- If a club or project does not have the required number of male and female adults to match the gender profile of the young people going away, the club or project should either recruit short term volunteers of the gender needed (who must be successfully Garda vetted through Foróige in advance of the trip away) or make other arrangements so that these guidelines can be implemented.
- Foróige adults should avoid situations where they are alone with young people in sleeping accommodation. When adults need to be in these settings, there should be two or more Foróige adults present where practicable. Young people's privacy should be respected. If a Foróige adult must be alone in a sleeping area with a young person, they must be of the same gender, and another adult should be informed of the situation.
- Foróige adults should not sleep in rooms/tents with young people. Where there is no other option, adults and young people should have separate areas in one large room/hall
- No sexual activity between young people is allowed regardless of gender or orientation. Adult to adult romantic or sexual behaviour should not be noticeable by young people.
- The adults' room/cubicle/tent should be off limits for young people.

- For transgender young people, we accommodate them as the gender they identify as. For those who are non-binary/ gender fluid/ gender non-conforming, a discussion should be had with them on their needs in advance with adults and we will seek to accommodate them as best we can. This includes toilet and changing arrangements.
- When selecting venues for trips away, due consideration should be given to the practicality of implementing these guidelines.

5. INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA⁵

Foróige has produced comprehensive guidelines called "Foróige Social Media Guidelines" to ensure the safety and protection of young people, staff and volunteers in their online engagements. Outlined below are some of the main points. However, it is important that you read and become familiar with the full guidelines which are available on the Foróige Staff and the Foróige Volunteer Portal.

Foróige adults:

- Must not link to young people they meet in Foróige through personal social network sites such as the leader's own Facebook page, Snapchat etc.
- Should ensure that young people in their care are supervised during their use of internet access.
- Should not engage in private messaging on social media with young people, unless this is agreed with parents and is known to other staff /volunteers and is about Foróige related matters only.
- Should consider any inappropriate social media activity by young people or with adults within or outside Foróige that they become aware of, under social media guidelines or child protection policy if necessary.
- Support young people to follow the social media guidelines, particularly regarding appropriate and inappropriate online comments and photographs taken and posted online.
- Obtain consent from young people before posting images of them on Foróige social media accounts.



WHAT TO DO IF AN ALLEGATION IS MADE

Follow the procedures as outlined in 'Protecting Young People, Guidelines for Foróige Volunteers regarding Child Protection and Welfare Concerns' or 'Protecting Young People, Guidelines for Foróige Staff regarding Child Protection and Welfare Concerns', as appropriate.

⁵See Foróige guidelines on social media available on the staff and volunteer portal

APPENDIX I

Template for Club/Café/Project Log Book Recording Incidents/One to One Meetings with a Young Person

Form to be completed for reporting incidents/meetings i.e. disruptive behaviour, administering first aid, fighting, an injury etc.

Copy Sent To (name):	_____
Title:	_____
(Regional Youth Officer, Foróige Manager, Project Worker, BBBS Caseworker)	
Date:	_____

Details of young person/people:

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Details Of Incident/Meeting:

Date: _____

Venue: _____

Time: _____

Activity: _____

Present: _____

Description/purpose of Incident/Meeting:

Follow-up, outcomes and further contact:

Details of Person(s) Reporting Incident/Meeting:

Name(s): _____

Address(es): _____

Telephone Number(s): _____

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 2

Risk assessment example

HAZARD IDENTIFIED: Football played on school multi-use games area

Risks to health and safety	People at risk and how	Measures to manage the risks effectively	Residual risk
Misuse of ball in play. E.g. kicking towards windows, leaders etc.	Volunteers, staff, young people, people at special risk, e.g. with back problems, pregnant, mobility problems.	Experienced staff supervising activity. Code of conduct in place. Good referee. People at high risk of injury do not play.	Low
Slips and Falls	Volunteers staff and young people are at risk of slipping sustaining strains and potentially fractures.	Experienced staff supervising activity. Inspection of facility before session begins. Everyone aware of the rules of the game	Low
Dangers of arguments.	Young people could be at risk of physical/verbal assault if games are not well controlled.	Experienced staff supervising activity. Good referee. Code of conduct in place with agreed consequences. Game stopped if necessary.	Low

(Now you try one here) HAZARD IDENTIFIED:

Risks to health and safety	People at risk and how	Measures to manage the risks effectively	Residual risk

APPENDIX 3

Foróige's Charter of Rights IN FORÓIGE ALL YOUNG PEOPLE WILL HAVE THE FOLLOWING RIGHTS

THE RIGHT TO
SELF EXPRESSION &
FREEDOM OF SPEECH

THE RIGHT TO
EQUAL
PARTICIPATION

THE RIGHT TO
KINDNESS & RESPECT

THE RIGHT TO
BE SAFE FROM ANY
TYPE OF BULLYING
& THREATS TO
WELLBEING

THE RIGHT TO
CONTRIBUTE AND TO
IMPROVE THE WORLD
IN SOME WAY

THE RIGHT TO
BE LISTENED TO &
HAVE YOUR VIEWS
CONSIDERED

THE RIGHT TO
DEVELOP YOUR
PERSONALITY,
INTERESTS & ABILITIES



