

Safeguarding Children

Code of Behaviour (Conduct) for Interacting with Children/Young People at Science Blast



The purpose of a code of behaviour is to establish acceptable boundaries of behaviour and to clarify how to communicate/interact with children and young people in a way which respects their right to be listened to, valued, respected as individuals and treated fairly. While recognising that the primary responsibility for children rests with parents, guardians or supervising adults (e.g. teachers), the RDS is committed to safeguarding children and young people who participate in or visit projects and events organised by the Society. Breaches of the code of behaviour will be treated seriously. This code of behaviour will be displayed on the RDS website.

For the protection of all concerned, when interacting with children/young people, please be mindful of the following guidelines (this list is by no means exhaustive):

- always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the child at all times;
- always act within professional boundaries - ensure all contact with children is essential to the programme / project / activity you are working on.
- RDS staff must use RDS owned equipment when interacting with children, the use of personal phones or personal cameras is not permitted;
- you should not take or use photographs of children without prior written consent from a parent/guardian;
- never lose sight of the fact that you are with children - behave appropriately and use appropriate language at all times;
- do not verbally chastise a child in an aggressive manner, avoid shouting or using a harsh tone of voice;
- while physical contact is a valid way of comforting, reassuring and showing concern for children, it should only take place when it is acceptable to all persons concerned (generally, the consent of the child should be sought in relation to physical contact). It should only be in response to the needs of the child and should be appropriate to the age and the level of development of the child. There may be times in an emergency or a dangerous situation where there is unavoidable physical contact e.g. to prevent physical injury of the child/other children/visitors or staff/yourself or to prevent damage to valuable property);
- no child should ever be physically punished. The RDS will not tolerate the physical chastisement of children by a parent or accompanying adult;
- do not single out a particular child for unfair criticism, favouritism or ridicule;
- treat children and young persons with dignity, sensitivity and respect;
- remember they are children first, and contributors or participants second.

It is recommended that you:

- do not travel alone with children or young people (two adults, one of which must be female should accompany a child). If a child is lost or left unattended, you should approach the child, explain calmly to them who you are. He/she should be accompanied by the two adults to the designated lost children's area or the Gardai if they are on the premises. If there is no designated lost children's area or Gardai, the child should be accompanied to the organiser's office or customer service area. Contact with the parent should be attempted if the child knows the telephone number);
- do not attend to any intimate care of children, such as toileting. This is the responsibility of the accompanying parent, caregiver or supervisor (e.g. teacher);
- do not spend time with a child on his/her own. If you find yourself in a situation where you are alone with a child, ensure that you can be clearly observed or seen by others.

Ultimately, if you have any concerns about the welfare of a child or feel someone is behaving inappropriately around children, you have a duty to report your concern to the RDS Designated Liaison Person (Child Protection Officer) – Jill McMorro. Contact at safeguarding@rds.ie or on 087 2034 590. All reported concerns will be treated in confidence.

CONFIRMATION

I confirm I have read the RDS Code of Behaviour and agree to observe these guidelines when interacting with children and young persons at Science Blast.

Signature _____

Print Name _____

Date _____