Guidance on code of conduct whilst working or volunteering with children, young people or vulnerable adults

This code of conduct aims to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults attending activities in the College from any risk of harm or abuse by those working or volunteering with them.

Staff, students and volunteers participating in College events and activities should adhere to the guidance. It is also useful for staff, students and volunteers in preventing placing themselves at risk of an allegation being made against them.

This code provides a general College context. Individual departments may have more detailed guidance specific to their area of work and will issue this separately to staff, students and volunteers involved in activities in that area.

Aim of the code of conduct

- To deter anyone who may pose a risk to a child, young person or vulnerable adult from applying to work or volunteer at Imperial College.
- To raise awareness of keeping children, young people and vulnerable adults safe.
- To provide guidance for everyone about acceptable and unacceptable behaviours with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- To help staff students and volunteers understand the boundaries of appropriate and acceptable behaviour around children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- To identify where staff, volunteers and students may need safeguarding training.

Guidance for creating a positive and safe working environment

Staff, students and volunteers should:

- Demonstrate exemplary behaviour at all times
- Treat everyone with fairness and respect, giving due regard to cultural differences
- Ensure the welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult is your first priority.
- Respect each child’s, young person’s or vulnerable adult’s dignity, right to privacy and to be protected from harm
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance and be aware that any physical contact could be misinterpreted
- If any form of physical contact is required due to the nature of the activity, this should be done where others can see and the reason should be explained to the child, young person or vulnerable adult
- Be cautious if discussing sensitive issues with children, young people or vulnerable adults, perhaps ask another person to be present
- Whilst giving feedback, this should be constructive rather than negative
- Challenge any inappropriate behaviour by staff, students or volunteers and peers of the child, young person or vulnerable adult
- Report any concerns, allegations or suspicions to the Local Safeguarding Officer.
- Participate in training to support your work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Act on any concerns raised by a child, young person or vulnerable adult in line with the Guidelines for staff on how to respond to allegations or suspicions of abuse or harm (Annex A)
- Ensure a risk assessment has been conducted for activities and events which identifies a key contact to whom any concerns should be addressed promptly and/or that you have a copy
Staff, students or volunteers should not:

- Spend excessive time alone with children, young people or vulnerable adults away from others
- Discuss your personal life
- Give out your personal contact details (personal phone or mobile number, email or home address) unless there is a proven operational justification for doing so
- Become ‘friends’ on social networking sites, as this carries significant risks, and should be confined wherever possible to professional interactions
- Take children or vulnerable adults to your home or other inappropriate location
- Leave groups of children or young people unsupervised
- Allow a child, young person or vulnerable adult to use inappropriate language without challenging it
- Do things of a personal nature that children, young people or vulnerable adults can do for themselves (If they have a disability any tasks should be undertaken with the full understanding and consent of the parent or guardian and, where possible, the child or young person themselves)
- Allow allegations made by a child, young person or vulnerable adult to be ignored/not acted upon
- Engage in rough/boisterous physical or sexually provocative games
- Make (sexually) suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact or touching
- Reduce a child, young person or vulnerable adult to tears or use any other inappropriate strategies as a form of control
- Take photographs, videos or other images of a child, young person or vulnerable adult without the express permission and informed written consent of their parents or guardians (You should familiarise yourself with Annex D and the College’s Information Security Policy)