

Code of conduct for staff and volunteers

Oakenhoof volunteers and sessional staff involved in providing folk arts activity in groups which include families with children and young people are expected to:

- Ensure the safety of all children and young people by providing effective supervision, proper planning of sessions and the use of safe methods
- Consider the wellbeing and safety of participants before any practise or performance. For us, this means that we will risk assess all general activities and undertake additional risk assessments for anything that falls outside of general practises and dance outs. When we're dancing out at large or crowded events, we will have additional risk mitigations in place that will be pre-agreed with the children and young people.
- Encourage and guide participants to accept responsibility for their own performance and behaviour. For us, this means that we will check with our children and young people that they are learning and having fun, remind them that they have choices about what activities they want to do and can opt in and out of anything.
- Treat all children and young people fairly and ensure they feel valued by involving them in preparing for safety and welfare aspects of practises and performance.
- Encourage all children and young people not to discriminate on the grounds of religious beliefs, race, gender, social classes, sexual orientation or ability. This means we will keep an eye out for any early signs of this and support the children or young people concerned to identify the behaviour, understand the implications of it and to take action.
- Not allow any dangerous play, bullying or inappropriate behaviour. For us this means that we will involve young people and children in addressing any issues.
- Appreciate their efforts and not put them under any pressure regarding competitions or performances. When they put pressure on themselves, support them in dealing with that in a healthy way.
- Be positive, approachable and offer praise to promote the principles of Oakenhoof at every opportunity.
- Not let any allegations of abuse or poor practice go unchallenged or unrecorded. Incidents and accidents to be recorded and parents will be informed on any rare occasion when a parent is not present, or has been present but unaware of an incident. Any incidents or concerns will be discussed at regular Safeguarding meetings to which trustees, members and wherever appropriate, Children and Young people will attend.
- Administer minor first aid in the presence of others, making this explicitly certain, in circumstances where any clothing has to be removed (by a parent or an adult, preferably, of the same gender). Have access to a phone in case of the need to contact emergency services
- Ensure that children and young people's rights and responsibilities are enforced
- Establish and address any additional needs of any participants, e.g disabilities; health conditions. For us this means both adapting steps and dances to enable people to participate and also taking account of some emotional or mental health needs in activities,

Informed by:

- NSPCC guidelines / template Code of Conduct [online] 2013
- Guidance for safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people, Government Office for the English Regions (2009)

particularly with reference to the impact of stress on people who have anxiety or other mental health issues.

- Not abuse any participants physically, emotionally or sexually; not spending excessive amounts of time alone with children or young people unless there are exceptional circumstances that warrant this. For us this means most activities take place in a family setting, with the exception of the youth group; on some practise days they learn (with additional supervision) in another room.
- Maintain confidentiality about sensitive information
- Respect and listen to / value the opinions of young people and children
- Take time to explain relevant techniques so that they are clearly understood, offer learning in a variety of ways so that all learning styles can benefit
- Develop an appropriate working relationship with participants based on mutual trust and respect. For us this means working towards honest and “adult” type interactions, negotiations and plans, taking account of the need, first for safety and wellbeing and second, for fun and positive impact.
- Hold appropriate qualifications (a degree in performing arts and / or a teaching qualification) and insurance. For us this means that learning and practise is delivered or supervised by qualified performing arts or teaching practitioners and that we are covered under folk dance insurance.

Volunteers and sessional staff have the right to:

- Access ongoing training and information on all aspects of volunteering with Oakenhoof
- Support in the reporting of suspected poor practice, inappropriate behaviour or abuse
- Fair and equitable treatment by the organisation
- Be protected from abuse by children or young people, other members and parents
- Not to be left vulnerable when working with children or young people

Any minor misdemeanours and general misbehaviour will be dealt with immediately and reported verbally to the right person (normally the named safeguarding lead). Serious or persistent breach of the code will result in disciplinary action and could lead to dismissal from the organisation / removal of membership. These incidents will be reported to the trustees who, in turn will report this to the relevant authorities at the earliest opportunity.

Dismissals can be appealed by the volunteer or sessional worker with final decisions taken by the organisation committee or referred to the trustees.

Reviewed 5th June 2016

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