

## **Volunteer Behaviour Policy**

*Board Approval Date: 30 April 2013*

*Revision Date: 30 April 2019*

The way volunteers behave in their relationship with mentees affects the safety and development of the young person as well as their own sustainability in the role. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Christchurch aims to model healthy, positive and appropriate interactions between adults and young people at all times. Volunteers should also be mindful that they represent Big Brothers Big Sisters and, as such must always act in accordance with the aims, objectives and values of the organisation. A volunteer agreement will be signed by the volunteer at the start of their mentoring activity and every subsequent year. The agreement will require adherence to the Code of Conduct. Some actions and approaches can threaten the longevity and effectiveness of volunteers' mentoring. Match supervisors should take particular notice of the following behaviours of mentors and alert the volunteer to the dangers these actions pose:

- Rescuing behaviours – where volunteers become too involved in the life of the young person and their family, often in response to significant needs of the young person. Mentoring sessions should be no more than 4 hours a week unless permission is gained from the supervisor for longer sessions.
- Volunteers contravening any Big Brothers Big Sisters policy.
- Inconsistent contact with the young person. Weekly contact is recommended for the first year, reducing thereafter to a minimum of once a month. Where contact is less often or inconsistent, the volunteer must have supervisor permission or close the match.
- Inconsistent contact with the supervisor. Match Supervisors will contact volunteers as per the Match Supervision Policy. If volunteers do not respond for three months, the supervisor will close the match, giving the volunteer at least one week's notice of their intention to close the match.
- Mentoring in the volunteer's home leaves the volunteer vulnerable to allegations of inappropriate behaviour, especially when the volunteer is home alone with the young person. Volunteers are therefore encouraged to use public settings for their mentoring in order to protect themselves from such allegations.

If volunteers do not respond to their supervisor's concerns, the supervisor may suspend or close the match.

Volunteers who are observed displaying the following behaviours will be immediately suspended from mentoring, pending an investigation into the incident.

- Unwelcome physical contact, such as inappropriate touching, patting, pinching, punching, and physical assault or sexual contact of any kind.
- Unwelcome physical, verbal, visual, or behavioural mannerisms or conduct that denigrates, shows hostility, or aversion toward any individual especially toward a member(s) of the young person's family.
- Demeaning or exploitive behaviour of either a sexual or nonsexual nature, including threats of such behaviour.
- Display of demeaning, suggestive, or pornographic material.
- Sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect.
- Use of alcohol before or during match activities.
- Driving when disqualified or under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances.

### **Mentoring Activities**

A set of risk management analyses will be made available to volunteers for both regular activities and one off activities that carry more risk. Volunteers must consider the dangers involved in activities and where there is any doubt they should contact their supervisor. This is particularly important when undertaking activities that are generally perceived as dangerous such as:

- Use of firearms.
- Outdoor adventure pursuits including rock climbing, kayaking, tramping, boating.
- Transporting a child in a non-commercial aircraft.

### **Community Based Mentoring**

Where a match starts in the community based programme, no mentoring sessions may take place in either the mentor or child's home for the first three months. When a match transitions from school based to community based, it will be at the supervisor's discretion as to whether to enforce this rule as part of the transition process.

### **Overnight stays**

Overnight stays are not promoted as an everyday part of mentoring practice. This is because of the high perceived risk of allegation against the mentor. Mentors should be made aware of the risks associated with overnight stays and the process their Supervisor will follow when considering and supporting an overnight stay. However, overnight stays are permitted under the following conditions:

- Overnight stays will only be approved and supported after 12 months of the match.
- The mentor must request permission for an overnight stay from their Supervisor.
- Details of the planned activity, including where they will be staying, and a safety plan will be developed by the mentor and Supervisor and the Supervisor will ensure the parent/guardian is given this.
- Written parental/guardian permission is required for overnight stays.
- Overnight stays are prohibited for all solely school based matches.
- The maximum number of consecutive nights allowed for overnight stays is three.
- Following any overnight stays, the Supervisor may follow up with the child, parent and mentor regarding the stay in a transparent and timely manner.

Any non-compliance with service delivery requirements or unacceptable behaviour as specified but not limited to the above, will result in a warning and/or disciplinary action including suspension and/or termination from participation in the mentoring programme. The Programme Manager will lead this process.