# Safer working practice for consulting children and young people

It is important that all adults working with children and young people understand that the nature of their work and the responsibilities related to it put them in a position of trust.

This guidance gives clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviour whilst consulting or undertaking research with children and young people.

## Underpinning principles

* The welfare of the child is paramount
* Adults should work and be seen to work in an open and transparent way
* It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people
* Adults who work with children and young people are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which could lead to any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
* The same professional standards should apply regardless of culture, disability, language, gender, racial origin, religious belief and or sexual identity

## Confidentiality

Adults may have access to confidential information; this information should be kept confidential at all times and only shared when it is in the best interests of the child to do so. Such information should not be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the child or young person concerned.

If an adult working with a child or young person is in any doubt about whether to share this information he/she should seek guidance from a manager or designated child protection officer. Any actions should follow the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough safeguarding policy.

## Power and positions of trust

All adults working with children and young people are in a position of trust. By virtue of the position of the adult, facilitating engagement puts them potentially in a position of power. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable children and young people. Adults have a responsibility ensure that the unequal balance of power is not used for personal gratification.

Adults should also maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential.

## Behaviour

All adults working with children and young people have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of the public in general and of all those with whom they work.

## Gifts, rewards and favouritism

The giving of gifts or rewards to children and young people should be agreed prior to any research or consultation and should be used for supporting positive behaviour and recognising the involvement or particular achievements. The giving of gifts should be part of an agreed plan, recorded and discussed with a manager, parent, carer and children.

Any gifts should be given openly and not based on favouritism. Adults need to be aware though that the giving of gifts can be misinterpreted by others and could be seen as either a bribe or to groom a young person.

Adults should have an open policy of involvement to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Methods should be always transparent and subject to scrutiny.

## Behaviour management

All children and young people have a right to be treated with respect and dignity even in those circumstances when they may display challenging behaviour.

Adults should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a child. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards children and young people is not acceptable in any situation.

