



GOOD PRACTICE IN THE CARE OF CHILDREN/VULNERABLE ADULTS*

Promoting good practice can reduce the possibility of potentially abusive situations and help protect volunteers. The following are examples of care which should be taken when volunteering on a PHAB Camp.

- Always be publicly open when working with children/vulnerable adults. Avoid situations where a volunteer and an individual child/vulnerable adult are working completely unobserved. For example, if assistance is required when toileting, two volunteers should be present.
- If any form of physical manual support is required, there should always be two volunteers present. When handling the child/vulnerable adult who is constantly moving greater care is required, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions. Some parents/guardians are being increasingly sensitive about physical manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.

As a general rule it makes sense for volunteers not to:

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children/vulnerable adults.
- Take children/vulnerable adults alone on car journeys, however short. Sometimes it is required, but you will need parental consent.
- Take children/vulnerable adults to your home where they will be alone with you.

If cases arise where situations are unavoidable they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of the Camp leader or the child's parents/guardians. You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a room with a child alone unless agreed by the Camp leader and parent/guardian.
- Allow, or engage in any form of, inappropriate touching.
- Allow children/vulnerable adults to use inappropriate language.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child/vulnerable adult, even in fun.
- Allow allegations made by a child/vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.

- Do things of a personal nature for children/vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves.

It will be necessary for volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children/vulnerable adults. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the child/vulnerable adult involved. There is a need to be responsive to the child/vulnerable adult's reactions – if a child is fully dependent upon you, talk with him/her about what you are doing, and give choices where possible.

If you accidentally hurt a child/vulnerable adult and he/she seems:

- distressed in any manner,
- appears to be sexually aroused by your actions,
- or misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done,

report any such incident as soon as possible to the Camp leader and make a brief written note of it. Parents/guardians or carers should be informed of the incident.

All children/vulnerable adults have a right to be safe and be treated with dignity and respect. False allegations of abuse are rare but the following basic guidelines will help safeguard children/vulnerable adults and volunteers.

It is **not** the responsibility of volunteers on a PHAB Camp to decide if child/vulnerable adult abuse is occurring, but it **is** their responsibility to act on any concerns. If you suspect abuse, or you are in any doubt at all, please speak to the Camp leader on an experienced volunteer immediately.

** Our Definition of a vulnerable adult is: - Any person aged 18 or over who is in need of support by reason of a learning difficulty, mental illness or other disability, and who is unable to take care of themselves against harm.*