

## **STEM Ambassador – Safeguarding**

Safeguarding is ensuring that children are protected from maltreatment; preventing impairment of young people's health and development, ensuring they grow up with the provision of safe and effective care, and taking any action required to ensure they have the best outcomes.

This means doing everything in the best interests of young people. Anyone who works with or volunteers with children has a duty of care to keep them safe.

Safeguarding is important both online and during face-to-face engagements as a STEM Ambassador. Safeguarding is the teacher or activity organisers' responsibility. If you have any safeguarding concerns prior to your activity, please discuss with the activity organiser beforehand.

## **Maintaining professional boundaries**

STEM Ambassadors are in a unique position of influence and are expected to always uphold the values of the STEM Ambassador programme. Maintaining professional boundaries is crucial when undertaking volunteer activities to avoid situations or behaviour which may constitute poor practice. Being aware of professional boundary conducts reduces the risks of allegations and helps keep young people safe from harm.

STEM Ambassadors must never:

- Spend time alone, including online, with young people away from others, take young people on car journeys or undertake any home visits
- Make inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with young people
- Develop relationships with young people which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place young people at risk of abuse
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Condone or participate in, behaviour of a young person which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade a young people or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- Photograph, audio record or film young people via any medium without adequate authorisation
- Share personal contact details, including social media, with a young person
- Promise absolute confidentiality to young people as you have a responsible for reporting anything you hear that may either put young people or others at risk

This is not an exhaustive list. It's important to regularly think about how your own beliefs and values might affect your interactions with young people.

If at any point you feel uncomfortable about a situation or want advice, please inform the activity organiser or contact your local STEM Ambassador hub.

## **Safeguarding responsibilities**

Your role within safeguarding as a STEM Ambassador is to understand the essentials of safeguarding. You are not responsible to investigate, make judgements or provide a response on safeguarding matters. It is simply your responsibility to report safeguarding concerns if there is a cause for concern.

### Recognise possible abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of harm; each can involve inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. The categories of child abuse are physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect; defined as 'a failure to provide a child under one's care with their basic needs'

### React appropriately

Telling someone about abuse can be a challenging process for someone. If a young person makes a disclosure to you, it is important to:

- Take everything that is said seriously
- Listen carefully, keeping calm. Do not interrupt, but actively listen.
- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing by telling you
- Explain you will need to tell someone, but only those who need to be told

It is important to not:

- Panic
- Make any promises of secrets
- Ignore what you have been told
- Ask probing questions
- Assume anything or elaborate in your notes

It can be difficult to hear a disclosure, there are services available to talk to in confidence once you have passed on any information or concerns.

### Next Steps

You should pass on the information to the safeguarding lead in the school or youth and community group you are working with, they will decide if further action is required and tell you what they will do, as appropriate.

You should speak to the safeguarding lead on the day. As a STEM Ambassador you will also need to inform your local Hub as soon as possible, who will then report to STEM Learning's Safeguarding Officer.

### What to Record

After speaking to the safeguarding lead, you must note what you have seen and heard, and your following actions. The sooner you write your notes, the more information you are likely to remember accurately. Any recording information should only be shared with the safeguarding lead.

In your notes, remember to include, details of who the young person was, when it happened and what was said and what your next steps were, including who you reported it to.