

## Code of Conduct

### Our values

We are a values-led organisation. In particular, **we operate with integrity**. To the people we support and work with, we are a trusted source of information and learning. We weigh all of the evidence and operate with openness and transparency.

**We act with compassion** in pursuit of our goals. We care deeply, listen and take the best action for each unique circumstance. These two values determine why our code of conduct is so important.

### Meeting your responsibilities

Maintaining the trust and confidence of all those with whom MRF comes into contact is critical to MRF's success. That trust and confidence depends on MRF's reputation for acting ethically, with integrity and to the highest professional standards, in line with our values.

This Code of Conduct includes guidance on appropriate and expected standards of behaviour. It has been designed to give all who work with MRF (staff, volunteers, associates) the confidence to carry out their roles and to ensure that positive relationships are developed.

The Code applies to conduct in the professional role, but MRF expects everyone to also apply these good practice principles both during, after and in between work hours in both professional and personal lives. It should be noted that, should safeguarding concerns arise in relation to staff and others outside their professional roles (i.e. concerns regarding their behaviour that would constitute a breach of the Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct), MRF may consider follow up action, including possible disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

#### General examples:

- ✓ Do work considerately – respecting diversity, different roles and boundaries, and avoiding giving offence
- ✓ Do ensure that you maintain open, professional and respectful relationships with others and that staff relationships do not interfere with organisational interests. If they do, this may result in appropriate disciplinary action
- ✓ Do ensure that you are aware of any local political or religious sensitivities that may exist in a specific context and that you act appropriately, ensuring that personal activities are not seen as being the official position of MRF and that these in no way compromise the work and objectives of MRF
- ✓ Do adhere to MRF policies and procedures at all times
- ✓ Do follow MRF's fundraising principles
- × Don't condone, or participate in, behaviour towards anyone which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- × Don't hit or otherwise physically or emotionally assault or abuse anyone
- × Don't permit abusive peer activities (e.g. bullying): be aware of potential for peer abuse
- × Don't jump to conclusions about others without checking facts but do appropriately and confidentially raise concerns if you feel uncomfortable with a person or situation in your work
- × Don't make suggestive remarks or gestures, even in jest
- × Don't show favouritism to any individual (e.g. money, gifts, opportunities etc.)
- × Don't give or accept excessive gifts to/from work-related contacts that could be construed as a bribe

## Specific to Safeguarding

- ✓ Do report any concerns or incidents of alleged abuse or poor practice through the reporting procedures outlined in the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- ✓ Do allow children or vulnerable adults to talk about any concerns they may have. You may need to advise them that depending on what they tell you, you may have to share the information with others to ensure that they are given the correct support
- ✓ Do respect the right to personal privacy of a child or vulnerable person and respect confidentiality of sensitive information when possible
- ✓ Do refer to the provisions of the UK Sexual Offences Act 2003 which created a new criminal offence of abuse of "a position of trust". It should be remembered that inappropriate behaviour can also occur over the telephone, email, social media or internet. Social media, instant chat and other similar functions should not be used to interact with children or vulnerable adults wherever this can possibly be avoided
- ✓ Do make sure where possible that others can clearly observe you in a situation where you are alone with a child or vulnerable adult
- ✓ Do ensure access to a telephone for immediate contact to emergency services if required
- ✓ Do administer minor first aid only in the presence of others and where required refer more serious incidents to the assigned "first aider" unless a delay would be life-threatening
- ✓ Do follow recommended adult/child ratios for meetings and activities, taken from [NSPCC guidance](#) as set out in the [Risk assessment guidance document](#).
- ✓ Do obtain written consent (from parents/guardians where it is necessary) to take photographs or video images of children or vulnerable adults, before these images are taken. Please refer to MRF Data Protection Policies for photographs or video images for further details
- ✓ Do avoid, when working with a child or vulnerable person, travelling by car alone with them
- × Do not abuse positions of trust or rank, it is prohibited to have a sexual, physical or emotionally intimate relationship with beneficiaries of the charity's work, including anyone under 18 years of age or vulnerable adults over the age of consent, regardless of the age of consent in the current location. Mistaken belief in the age of the child is not a defence
- × Do ensure that separate sleeping accommodation is arranged when working with children or vulnerable adults (unless necessary, with written parental consent and previously agreed with line manager and Safeguarding Officer that this is for their safety)
- × Don't do things for children or vulnerable adults of an intimate, personal nature that they can do for themselves (for example bathing, dressing or toileting assistance)
- × Don't exchange money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour. This prohibition against exchange of money, goods or services for sex means you cannot engage the services of sex workers and doing so would constitute a breach of this Code of Conduct
- × Don't investigate yourself in suspected cases of abuse, violence or exploitation. Instead follow official reporting mechanisms as set out in the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and Whistleblowing Policy and allow trained individuals to carry out a full investigation

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list of examples. Staff, partners and other representatives should at all times avoid actions or behaviour which may allow behaviour to be misrepresented or that constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour and should ensure that a culture of openness exists wherein actual or potential breaches of this Code may be challenged.

In addition, MRF requires all of its staff who participate in International Programmes to read and act in accordance with the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief, which can be found here:

<https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-1067.pdf>

Signed .....

Name .....Date .....