

Code of Conduct for LGBTQ+ Young People/Adults

Belong To LGBTQ+ Youth Ireland, is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of LGBTQ+ young people and adults that access Belong To Services.

Belong To believes that it is important that young people, staff, volunteers, students, board directors and all other relevant people show respect and understanding for the safety and welfare of others at all times.

This code of conduct has been developed bearing in mind good practices in the charity sector, and our strong desire to ensure that young people and adults who participate and avail of our services receive the best possible care, attention, and protection that we can afford them. It is important that this code is not viewed in isolation, and that it is part of a suite of policies and practices which we have put in place to ensure young people and adults, as well as staff, board directors, volunteers, students, donors and others that interact with us, are treated with respect. Other relevant documents include, but are not limited to, Belong To's:

- Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Welfare Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Code of Conduct for Staff, Volunteers, Board Directors and Students
- Health and Safety Policy
- Vetting Policy
- Organisation Risk Register
- Staff Handbook
- Ethical Fundraising Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Residential Policy
- One to one Working Policy

Where there is a violation of the Code of Conduct, Belong To has the right to take any actions it thinks are necessary to protect those in our care and the service's integrity. If there is an allegation of abuse by one young person against another young person, Belong To will follow strict procedures as outlined in our Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Welfare Policy.

This Code of Conduct is kept under regular review, and is updated at least every two years.

Declaration of Guiding Principles

We provide the following services and activities to LGBTQ+ young people aged 14yrs – 23yrs old:

- Peer Support Groups (face-to-face and digital)
- Peer-led campaign and Peer leadership opportunities (national/international)
- Seasonal activities
- Specialised Programme based work.
- Information and Signposting to relevant services (email/phone/text)
- Research, policy, and consultation opportunities
- Counselling Service with Pieta.
- Media and training opportunities
- One to one support.

We believe the following:

1. Our priority to ensure the welfare and safety of every child, young person and vulnerable young adult who attends our service is paramount.
2. Our guiding principles and procedures to safeguard children and young people reflect national policy and legislation and we will review our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures every two years.
3. All children, young people and vulnerable young adults have an equal right to attend a service that respects them as individuals and encourages them to reach their potential, regardless of their background.
4. We are committed to upholding the rights of every child, young person and vulnerable young adult who attends our service, including the rights to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to and heard.
5. Our guiding principles apply to everyone in our organisation.
6. Workers/volunteers must conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of our organisation.

Belong To is committed to:

- Providing a welcoming, inclusive, supportive, safe and fun space for young people and those who work/volunteer with us.
- Conducting our work with integrity, honesty, openness, and respect
- Promoting human rights, social justice, solidarity, and intersectional equality
- Collaboration and youth participation with those we represent.

- Being a learning organisation, committing to the development of staff & volunteers' professional competencies, to critically analyse the youth landscape and learn from good practice both at a national and European level.
- Adhere to policies and procedures developed by Belong To, in line with national policy and legislation.
- Ensuring a youth-centred approach when making decisions affecting young people in the service.

As a participant within Belong To Youth Service you are expected to adhere to the following Code of Conduct:

- Show respect to each other, volunteers and staff.
- Be friendly and particularly welcoming to new members.
- Engage fairly and trustworthily in the service (no stealing, no targeting young people, staff or volunteers with inappropriate behaviour).
- No violent or aggressive behaviour.
- Adhere to 'Group Rules'.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, ability, race, cultural or class background or religious beliefs.
- Refrain from bullying including using technologies like TikTok, SnapChat, Insta or texting.
- Don't get involved in inappropriate peer pressure, push others into something they do not want to do.
- Respect each other's personal boundaries (report to staff if you feel personal boundaries are not been respected).
- If engaged within 'Equal Partnership' process, respect the guidelines and values.

LGBTQ+ Young People have the right to:

- Feel safe and happy in Belong To Services, Peer Groups, Peer Leader Campaigns, programmes, seasonal programmes and other areas of Belong To Services (Media, Conferences, Trainings, Internal/External Committee Representations and Residential Trips).
- Be listened to.
- Be respected and treated fairly.
- Privacy and Confidentiality (Unless Child Safeguarding/Child Protection concern arises, or staff deem the young person/adult to be a risk to themselves or others).

- If Child Protection/Safeguarding concern arises, the young person has the right to be consulted and informed throughout the entire process.
- Be referred to external professional mental and sexual health services (Pieta House, GMHS, JigSaw, BodyWhys)
- Be referred to internal professional programs/services (In the Know, Peer Support Groups and Drugs/Alcohol Support).
- Be protected from any form of abuse (physical, mental, sexual or verbal) from participants within Belong To.
- Participate on an equal basis, appropriate to ability.
- Ask for help by a member of the Youth Work Team/ volunteer or other staff member of Belong To.
- Have any concerns taken seriously.
- Have the right to voluntarily participate in the activities/ programmes offered by Belong To.
- To be informed about Belong To's complaint procedure.

Our code of Conduct is kept under review every 2 years:

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| Code of Conduct For LGBTQI+ Young People and Adults | Reviewed | March 2018 |
| Code of Conduct For LGBTQI+ Young People and Adults | Reviewed | September 2022 |
| Code of Conduct for LGBTQ+ Young People and Adults | Reviewed | February 2024 |