



Belong To LGBTQ+
Youth Ireland

Residentials and Day Trips Policy

Belong To LGBTQ+ Youth Ireland

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Revision History

Revision	Date of Release	Purpose
V1.0	December 2023	
V1.1	May 2025	Review and update

OUR MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

Our Mission

Our mission is to empower LGBTQ+ young people, through youth work, education, changing attitudes, and research.

Our Vision

Our vision is a society where LGBTQ+ young people are equal, safe, and thriving.

Our Values

Welcoming

We are mindful of people's wellbeing and strive for our spaces and interactions to be joyful and fun while ensuring they are safe and respectful.

Trustworthy

We are transparent in our work, how we operate and in our governance.

Rooted in experience

We work as equals with LGBTQ+ young people. What we say and do is informed by their lives, experience, and the challenges they face.

Courageous

We challenge and speak out about the causes and effects of prejudice, discrimination, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia on LGBTQ+ young people and what must change.

Inclusive and diverse

We seek to create a sense of belonging and to reflect and include the diversity of LGBTQ+ young people and are mindful of intersectionality. We work in community and solidarity for human rights and social justice.

Strategic We make deliberate choices about where we focus our work and energy to make maximum impact on where we lead and where we partner with others.

DECLARATION OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Name of organisation: Belong To

We provide the following services/activities to LGBTQ+ young people age 10yrs – 23yrs old:

- Youth Groups (face to face and digital)
- Peer led campaign and Peer leadership opportunities (national/international)
- Fun activities (summer program, art, theatre, Pride, residentials etc)
- Information and Signposting to relevant services (email/phone/text)
- Research, policy, and consultation opportunities
- Counselling and Psychotherapy
- Media and training opportunities

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.

RESIDENTIAL/DAY TRIP POLICY AND PROCEDURES

OUTLINE:

Residential and Day Trips should be pre-planned and organised to a high degree of care and preparation. Staff and Volunteers should always remember their key roles and responsibilities during Residential and Day Trips and abide by the Code of Good Youth Work Practice.

The welfare of all young people in our youth service is of paramount importance. Belong To has a clear Child Safeguarding Policy. This document is written in the context of Belong To Youth Services policies and procedures.

Procedures

Before you go – The Planning Stage

- Plans should be drawn up in consultation with the young people and relevant staff. The needs of all young people should be addressed to provide all young people with a quality experience by addressing the provision of equality and inclusion, medical conditions, dietary conditions and any further additional supports required.
- Parent/Guardian consent must be obtained in writing, outlining the details of the Residential / Day Trip for young people under 18.
- A Risk Assessment must be completed by the youth worker and engage young people in this process where necessary (Including - being misgendered when passing through airports, for international residentials must be discussed with young people). The risk assessment should be signed off by the Director of Programmes and Operations.
- International Residentials: Youth Workers must discuss with young people and plan, for the possibility of different youth work practices (Erasmus Projects), within risk assessment.
- A Residential / Day Trip in case of emergency (ICE)/Consent Form must be completed and taken on the residential/day trip. A copy of this must also be emailed to your manager/s who will be 'On Call' and available to support you in the event of an emergency (e.g. making calls to parents/guardians). Please note that for any young person under the age of 18, a consent form from their parent/guardian must be completed to attend.
- In relation to residential trips it is best practice to talk to parents/guardians prior to going to discuss all aspects of the proposed residential (see accommodation for examples why).
- All parents/ guardians must sign a letter for young people who are under 18 participating in international residentials stating that they have permission to attend and are under the supervision of Belong To for the residential.
- A group agreement/contract, specifically designed for a Residential trip should be discussed, outlined and agreed with all young people participating.
- A leader/youth worker to young person ratio:- A ratio of one leader/youth worker to eight young people should be adhered to and there should be a minimum of two leaders/youth workers at all times. For Residential trips an additional staff/volunteer should go on the trip in case of emergencies.

- It is best practice where possible to have a staff/volunteer gender balance with mixed gender groups.
- On Residential trips staff should consider the sleeping arrangements for all participants (see accommodation section).
- Staff should have a contingency plan and budget for emergencies.

Youth Worker

Allocated time for working at residential with young people:

- Travel Time to and from residential with LGBTQ+ young people, recorded as work time.
- Time spent engaging within activities with young people at residential, recorded as work time.
- Time spent asleep is not recorded as work time (if awoken by young people, this time is recorded as work)
- Time Spent on breaks is not recorded as work time.
- At least 2 Belong To staff members must travel on any residential with young people, and the youth worker must plan to take breaks, in turns with other volunteers or staff member. Employment legislation, re: work hours must be adhered to.

Insurance

- It is essential that the trip and all activities are covered by Belong To Insurance.
- Travel Insurance for international residential must be requested/recorded with Belong To Insurer.
- All participants attending a residential in Europe should have a European Health Insurance Card while on the residential. Youth Workers can support young people in applying for these cards, and ensure they have them while travelling.

Transport

- When booking flights for international residential the youth worker, must obtain passport information from young people. GDPR guidelines apply here when storing/destroying this information.
- Transport should be fully accessible for people with disabilities if required.

- Private vehicles booked: should be equipped with a First Aid Kit and a fire extinguisher and staff should be familiar with how to use them.
- Seatbelts must be worn **at all times** on minibuses, coaches and taxi's.
- If a private bus is utilised to access residential accommodation, alternative access to transport in case of emergency (e.g. local taxi, public transport etc) should be identified within risk assessment.
- Public Transport: If an incident of Hate Crime takes place accessing public transport with LGBTQ+ young people, the youth work must, report it to Gardai and line management. Check In with young person, follow up with young person and parent/legal guardian.
- All parents/ guardians of young people aged 10-13 are required to drop and collect young people from the meeting point decided by the youth workers and highlighted within the consent form. An alternative adult over 18 can collect a young person once written consent by email is provided by the parent/guardian.

Accommodation

- Staff should ensure that the accommodation complies with Health and Safety regulations, is accessible, is of a suitable standard and is appropriate for the group and programme.
- Staff should ensure that staff/volunteers and any participants over 18 years have separate sleeping arrangements to all young people under the age of 18.
- There should be a well-defined way for young people to raise their needs and worries before and during, as well as accessible ways for them to report any concerns. If there is a complaint regarding a Residential or Day trip please see our complaints policy and procedures.
- Where young people are sharing a room/sleeping space, there are many inclusive and equally efficient ways to divide sleeping arrangements. The most efficient way to conduct this task is by speaking with all young people concerned and establishing how they feel and what they would be comfortable with. Consideration should be given so there are well-thought-out options for transgender/non-binary young people to have safe and appropriate spaces to sleep.

Where possible for groups under 18, young people by age group will be separated – 10-12 years old, 13–15-year-olds, 16 – 17-year-olds. This creates an extra layer of safety concerning safeguarding practices.

- The youth worker on duty will choose to arrange the sleeping situation; the priority must be the physical and emotional safety and well-being of every

young person. Adaptations: The youth worker on duty may wish or need to add in further age splits based on the dynamics of the group.

- Where residentials occur for young people under 18, an information session and/or meeting must be conducted with parents/ guardians to provide an overview of the programme/ logistics/ rules of the trip.
- If, for any reason, a young person under 18 is required to leave the residential the following rules must apply:

If a young person leaves a residential before 9pm, a parent/ guardian must confirm that they have consent to leave and get public transport.

If a young person leaves a residential hosted in Dublin after 9pm, a parent/guardian must collect them, if this is not possible consent should be provided by parent/guardian for a member of staff to organise a taxi for them to go home.

If a young person leaves a residential outside of Dublin after 9pm, a parent/ guardian must collect them from the venue or consent be provided to another family member to do so.

Harm Reduction

- No alcohol or illegal drug substances should be consumed by staff or young people during a residential trip in Ireland or outside of Ireland.
- If a young person is found with alcohol in their possession, an incident report is to be completed and their parents' guardians are to be informed. Alcohol/ drugs will be removed from the young person and disposed of.
- The Gardaí should be contacted if controlled drugs are being supplied in the premises.
- A risk assessment will be completed for each individual trip.
- Staff should familiarise themselves with all child safeguarding/ health and safety procedures and have access to DLP contact information in case of emergencies.
- Depending on individual circumstances sending the young person home, escorting them home immediately or contacting their parent/guardian may not be an option given the location and distance from home. It may be necessary to send young people home depending on the context, Individual cases should be discussed with the Director of Youth Services before making a decision.
- The law regarding alcohol & drugs and drug use will differ from country to country and the relevant information should be supplied to and studied by workers/volunteers/leaders responsible for a trip/exchange before the event occurs.

- This information should also be supplied and explained in detail to the young people involved in any planning or orientation meeting which takes place in advance of the residential/exchange.
- No sexual activity is permitted by any member of staff or young person attending a residential.
- A specific procedure for dealing with a possible incident should be agreed in advance between those leading the event, young people, and parents.

Medication/First Aid and Emergency Procedures

Medication/First Aid:

- It is essential that at least one staff member/volunteer with first aid training be part of the group and that this individual be always present.
- Staff/Volunteers should ensure that they bring a fully stocked first aid kit and that they possess any relevant medical information about the young people (e.g. allergies, medication regimes etc).
- In the event that staff/volunteers are in managing a young person's medication and have to administer medication in an emergency, this must be recorded on an incident report form and parents/guardians need to be informed.

Emergency Procedures:

- Staff should always carry a work mobile phone with the battery fully charged in case of emergencies and identify local landline if there is no mobile phone coverage.
- Emergency contact numbers for the parents/guardians of participants should be available to staff/volunteers at all times.
- Have clear emergency /exit plan to include 24/7 contact details for emergency services.
- Identify closest Doctor, Hospital, Fire Station, Emergency services, and Garda Station.

Interagency Approach

- When hosting a residential policy with other organisations within Ireland and abroad, it will be the responsibility of the organisation to safeguard young people in their organisation. Belong To will not take the responsibility of ensuring the safeguarding and security of young people from different services.
- It is the responsibility of the partnership to complete an overall group risk assessment together and discuss the rules and responsibilities of staff

members and young people. It is important to all partners will be in consensus regarding safeguarding policies and procedures for the duration of the residential.

- The following questions should be considered when working with external agencies:
- Does the other group/s have a child protection policy and whose policy will be followed for the duration of the joint working?
- Who is the named designated person from each group, what are their roles and responsibilities (e.g. in relation to reporting) and how will they liaise with each other?
- Have the leaders from the other group/s been recruited and trained in line with good practice?
- Whose code of behaviour (for both adults and young people) will be followed, or will an amended code be developed?
- In relation to other relevant policies and procedures such as health and safety, anti-bullying, substance misuse, complaints etc., whose policy will be followed, or will procedures be amended for the duration of the joint working?
- How will general information be shared between the groups, e.g. will there be a central contact person in each group?
- Will check-in meetings be held at relevant intervals?

(NYCI, 2021)