

Guidance to our partners on issues relating to Child Protection

To all our Supporters

Education Business Connections Limited (EBC), and the schools we support, are deeply indebted to the vital expertise you bring to our programmes. Support from people like yourself brings provides pupils with a real insight into both the world of work and the wider world. We value your support and exist only because of it.

These Guidelines are issued to ensure that you, the organisations you represent, EBC and pupils are not put at risk through failure to observe Child Protection issues. In addition to these Guidelines we would ask that, if you have any concerns or unanswered questions, you seek help from one of EBC's staff team.

Working alongside School Staff

EBC activities have all been designed to ensure continued presence of School Staff during their delivery, in addition to the presence of EBC staff. The only exception to this approach is our traditional Business Mentoring scheme and as an added safeguard we carry out CRB checks on Business Supporters before matching them with their mentees.

You should not be asked, or be expected, to carry out an activity without a member of School Staff nearby. Wherever possible we try to ensure that School Staff are, themselves, enjoying professional development opportunities in the activities you support. So, they will not necessarily be sitting alongside you as you support the activity with pupils. They will, however, be in the same room as yourself and if you have any issues in relation to Child Projection you should feel free to ask for guidance.

Working with Children

Some children can quickly form attachments to adults they meet. This is especially so when they are excited by new experiences such as taking part in an EBC activity, and when they meet new people such as our business and community supporters.

Without being discouraging to the children, you should discourage any physical contact from the children you work with such as hugging, stroking or prolonged/repetitive touching. For example if children attempt to become affectionate by either snuggling up close or trying to hug you, either move your chair away or gently, but firmly, remove their arms from you and refocus the youngster on their task. Ask for help immediately if you feel uncomfortable. EBC staff are always on hand.

Avoid discussions about inappropriate topics and materials – even if the youngster appears to instigate the discussions. For example many children of a relatively young age will be very familiar with nude models or the exploits of Big Brother's contestants, etc, and they will want to share their thoughts with you. Change the direction of the conversation immediately to something more suitable i.e. "Have you see the latest Harry Potter film?," "What sports do you like?"

Taking Photographs

Under no circumstances should our supporters take photographs of pupils without prior agreement from EBC and/or school staff. We have rigorous systems in place to protect children and require schools to secure parental permission for photographs to be taken for a range of promotional purposes, but strictly excluding the internet unless such images are incorporated in an uneditible file i.e. a PDF. As a supporter you will not be aware of which parent has agreed to his/her child being photographed and which one hasn't.

We appreciate that you may want to have photographs of the activities you have delivered, or the event you have supported, and will assist you gaining this material – within the restrictions we have imposed upon ourselves. If you wish to have a selection of photographs, please ask the EBC or school staff member before the event.

EBC will continue to take photographs at each event having obtained previously the relevant consents required and these may be made available for businesses to use for suitable publicity purposes in connection with the promotion of your involvement with our work in schools.

Personal Possessions

Please make sure your personal possessions (handbags, brief cases, etc) are securely out of sight. Again, ask for help from EBC or school staff if you require it. Please do not hand over personal possessions such as mobile phones, calculators, etc, to pupils.

Use of Language

Business supporters should be careful over the use of language when working with pupils. Many young people today swear or use obscenities. If this happens simply politely ask them not to do so and if the problem persists ask for help from either School or EBC staff. In turn please do not use either swear words or language of an explicit sexual nature when talking to pupils.

Discipline

Disciplining children is the responsibility of School staff. Under no circumstances must you physically discipline pupils. If you have a 'problem pupil' please ask for help immediately. He/she will be removed from your group by School staff who will then discipline the child according to their school policies.

Mobile Phones and Associated Photography

The latest camera technology (including mobile phones that allow people to take, store and send photographs instantly) could also present a possible risk under Child Protection guidelines. This guidance therefore is issued in addition to the earlier section 'Taking Photographs'.

We need to reiterate that at no time during an EBC event should you make use of any photographic equipment without first obtaining permission from a member of EBC staff managing the event. This includes showing images previously stored on cameras or mobile phones to pupils. This guidance reflects the latest practice on Child Protection and in no way detracts from the excellent work being done by you all.

Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) Checks

At present EBC only carries out CRB checks on its staff and our recruited business supporters who work on a one-to-one basis with pupils i.e. our Business Mentors. However the Impact of the Soham Inquiry is likely to lead to new policies and procedures in relation to people working with children. This may lead to a requirement for all people coming into contact with children and young people in school-type settings being required to undergo a CRB check. EBC is keeping a 'watching brief' on the situation and will, as always, comply with any statutory requirements.

Yours sincerely

Barbara McClennan

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