

Revealing, Recognising, Rewarding Positive Role Models

YOPEY – the Young People of the Year charity

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Thank you for volunteering to become a YOPEY Befriender. This single sheet is an introduction to the scheme you are joining. You can find more information on our website yopey.org. Read the stories on the home page about YOPEY Befriender and follow the links in the Latest Events box to various YOPEY Befriender schemes, near the top right of the home page. The Befriender section, in the menu at the top of the home page, has ideas for things you can do with your new friends and you can also find many more on our YOPEY pages on Facebook, our Twitter feed and pinterest page, and on the internet in general.

The care home in which we have placed you has a demanding job caring for its elderly residents. Please always respect the staff and follow their instructions. However staff should know you are a volunteer (as against someone on work experience) and therefore not ask you to do any tasks, such as moving a resident or their personal care. If they make this mistake, please correct them politely. If this disagreement persists, please go and see the manager. Most care home managers have an office near the entrance and an 'open door' policy.

Please always remember the elderly residents, particularly those with dementia, are losing the ability to do things for themselves, can be confused and forgetful. Dementia and other diseases will affect the way they behave. During the time you are a YOPEY Befriender you will almost certainly see or hear and possibly (but this is rare) be on the receiving end of some challenging behaviour. If you are affected in any way by such behaviour please discuss it in the first instance with the staff on duty or the manager. Most of the time they should be able to reassure you and you will be able to finish your visit understanding what has happened and not be upset by it. If you are still unhappy please email me tony@yopey.org and tell me what happened. If I cannot explain it and reassure you, I will investigate and report back to you. YOPEY will also inform your parents/guardians and school, if we feel this is appropriate.

Remember to be discreet about what you see, hear or happens at the care home and not share such material socially. Respect the elderly people's privacy. Do not use them as a source of gossip and do not put them on your social media unless you have their agreement. If they cannot give agreement – which applies to most people with dementia – seek the agreement of the care home and/or the resident's relatives.

If a resident gives you a gift, especially a valuable one such as jewellery, do not upset them by refusing to take it, but pass it discreetly to a member of staff at the earliest opportunity (and definitely before leaving the care home that day). Staff will return to the resident's possession.

After each visit please record your visit on the web app – yopeybefriender.org. Before you use this for the first time you will need to register on the site. Please input all the information requested and we will activate your account. Once your account is activated, submit each and every visit you make to the care home. The web app will issue you with badges and you will see where you are in terms of volunteering compared to other people from your school and to other YOPEY Befrienders up and down the country. I will be watching the comments on your visit to see if there is the potential for a story...

As a YOPEY Befriender you must be prepared to take part in publicity, photographs and filming etc. As well as the loneliness of elderly people another aim of YOPEY is to promote positive role models among the young to counteract the bad press we normally read about your generation. As a YOPEY Befriender you are a positive role model and we want to shout about you in the local media and further afield if we can.

After your first visit to the care home you will soon know whether or not YOPEY Befriender is for you. If you decide it is not for you please let us know immediately so we may be able to offer your place to someone else. It is not courteous to simply stop going. If you decide you like YOPEY Befriender we would like you to visit weekly for at least an hour until the date agreed, usually two Christmases after you started. Obviously you will not be able to go if you are sick, away on holiday or are sitting exams. But otherwise we do expect you to visit during school holidays as well as during term time.

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