



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY developed in conjunction with FAIR PLAY FOR CHILDREN

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Policy forms part of the Terms and Conditions of service, and applies to all activities of the Club where children and young people under 18 years of age are present, and to all working in such activities, whether as an employee, volunteer, management representative or otherwise.

2. OBJECTIVE

2.1 The Objective of the Club's Child Protection Policy is to contribute to the personal safety of all children using the facilities and resources of the Club, through actively promoting awareness, good practice and sound procedures.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Anna Raisin, club secretary is responsible overall for all aspects of child protection awareness and implementation of this policy. All legalities to go via Stephanie Thorne.

Jeanie Cavanagh is the **Responsible Officer (RO)** at Somerford Children's Centre's group

Karen Robinson at Boscombe Children's Centre

Octavia Morgan at Wimborne Children's Centre

Andrea Carroll at Stokewood Children's Centre

Susan Lee at Kingsleigh Children's Centre

3.2 The RO will be responsible to the Club for:

- a. ensuring that this policy is implemented throughout the Club's activities;
- b. ensuring all necessary child protection-related enquiries, procedures and investigations are carried out;
- c. reporting results of screening enquiries and for preserving "need to know" levels of confidentiality and access to secure records;
- d. ensuring secure and confidential records relating to child protection matters;
- e. liaison with children's centres' Club group leaders and management to ensure implementation of the policy by all staff and volunteers;
- f. liaison with social services at a formal and informal level on child protection matters, likewise with the police;
- g. the reporting of allegations and suspicion of abuse to the appropriate authorities;

- i. encouraging and promoting adequate induction and training relating to child protection matters for those involved in running daytime groups;
- j. ensuring that each activity carried out by the Club is sound in terms of child protection as regards personnel, practices, premises.
- k. checking all incident reports made by staff and volunteers, countersigning them, and making such reference to authority as is appropriate, after consultation with management at the children's centres and with Stephanie Thorne, our legal representative.

4. PERSONNEL - CHECKS

4.1 The Club's aim is to ensure as far as is possible that anyone, paid or voluntary, who seeks to work with children and young people through the Club's activities and who gains substantial access to them thereby (whether within activity hours and/or beyond) is as safe to do so in child protection terms as can be guaranteed.

4.2 At the interview stage, the RO shall give to all applicants, and get the applicants to give written confirmation of receipt a letter/notice stating the checks are required as a condition of working in Club activities with children and young people.

4.3 Therefore the RO will ensure that the following checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers whose work may create a situation of substantial access to children and young people:

- a. Criminal Records to Enhanced Level via a CRB Registered Body, plus a check against the Independent Safeguarding Authority List as appropriate and required;
- b. questionnaire to the local authority Social Services, and similarly to the local Ofsted Office for Registration and Inspection of day care services, seeking information relating to child protection concerns;
- c. the person's General Practitioner;
- d. personal referee, nominated by the applicant - a person who is not related to the applicant and who preferably knows of the applicant's character, trustworthiness, any previous experience of working with/looking after children and young people.

4.4 The forms and formats to be used shall be in the general form as attached, and the written consent of the successful applicant must be obtained to enable such enquiries to be made. No appointment may proceed unless such consent is given by the applicant.

4.5 No staff member or volunteer may start sessions unsupervised without the above enquiries being completed, but the CCM may, in consultation with the RO, authorise an applicant to commence supervised (on a one-to-one basis) work where it is absolutely clear there will be no problems arising from the checks and where these have been submitted and are taking unreasonably long periods to be returned.

4.6 At all times the onus is on the applicant/employee/volunteer to reveal any conviction, caution, bind-over, probation order, or pending prosecution, whether imposed prior to or within the period the applicant works on Club activities.

4.7 The applicant shall produce proof of identity, preferably passport or photographic, and of residence, which checks the RO shall note as having been undertaken in the applicant's records.

5. REPORTING OF ENQUIRY RESULTS

5.1 The RO will indicate to the CCM whether an applicant is suitable to work on Club activities, as revealed by the results of the checks above.

5.2 Where a Schedule One offence is indicated by the above process, the RO must rule an applicant unsuitable, and that person must not undertake any form of work or help with the Club. If such an attempt is made by a convicted Schedule One Offender or by any person prohibited under legislation from working with children and young people or from being in proximity to places where they may gather etc, the RO shall immediately inform Social Services and the Police.; likewise if any person is reported to the RO or the organization at any time as being banned from working with children as a result of a decision by ISA under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, they shall be suspended from employment immediately and their employment position considered and terminated.

6. PERSONNEL RECORDS

6.1 At the application stage, the RO shall maintain a confidential file on each applicant in which shall be kept:

a. notes for file - where the RO receives a phone call or other non written communication, the main points shall be recorded and filed with the applicant's records.

6.2 Anyone working with the Club has the right to inspect their own confidential records as at 6.1 above, and may do so on request to the RO who shall not withhold consent unreasonably and will do so within five working days. The RO may only withhold such agreement and access if to do so might jeopardise a Club or police or social services investigation relating to child protection matters or might lead to a child's welfare and safety being compromised. The RO need give no reason for such withholding of consent.

7. ACTIVITIES

7.1 Prior to any activity/ meeting being commenced, the RO shall ensure that adequate child protection procedures are in place.

7.2 All activities will be age appropriate and carried out in a safe manner.

7.3 In consultation with the children's centre manager (CCM), the RO shall ensure a site audit is undertaken to ascertain the layout of premises/site, helpers and supervision required to achieve adequate personal safety of children and young people. The audit shall be undertaken with a view to recognising any problems in terms of e.g. supervision of helpers, extended sites creating communications concerns etc. There may be a need to audit an existing site etc if, in the opinion of the RO and/or the CCM there have been significant changes since the last use of that site. This audit shall be recorded in written and diagrammatic form and a copy retained.

7.4 As a basic principle, each daytime group should be supervised by a group leader who has access to a first aider in the building and other adult support.

7.5 For their own protection, but mainly as good practice and good manners, helpers are advised that children should initiate physical contact with helpers - this will not apply e.g. where a child needs to be removed from a situation threatening its or others' safety.

7.6 All children attending a daytime group or social activity must have at least one of their parents/carers present with them at all times. No child will be allowed to attend a group without an accompanying adult.

7.7 All parents and carers will be notified that is their responsibility to supervise their children at all times and to report any health and safety or child protection concerns to the group leader immediately.

8. REPORTING OF CONCERNS

8.1 Those working on Club activities have a duty to ensure that any suspicion, incident, allegation or other manifestation relating to child protection is reported as provided below.

8.2 Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in any number of ways. This may be by what a child says, about itself or another child or children. It may be through interception of a written item, or through observation of activity or behaviour giving cause for concern. It may be through changes in behaviour or attitude. There may be physical, emotional pointers such as bruising, staining, inappropriate behaviour or knowledge. These and many other signs can be picked up by workers.

8.3 **All carers/parents must also notify the children's centre and group leader of any incidents which occur and record accidents in the centres log.**

8.3 IT IS VITAL FOR THE SUCCESSFUL OPERATION OF THIS POLICY THAT ALL INCIDENTS, OBSERVATIONS, HOWEVER INSIGNIFICANT-SEEMING, ARE LOGGED BY THE OBSERVER(S) IN THE APPROPRIATE ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORT BOOK/FORMS held at the relevant children's centre.

8.4 The observing worker, paid and voluntary, will make a verbal report to the group leader, and also will make a written report outlining in adequate detail what was heard, seen, reported, alleged etc. Verbatim quotes from a child are important, as is the retention of anything which gave cause for concern such as a drawing, painting, writing etc. The worker will sign and date the report. The group leader will countersign the report and at the end of the session and alert the CCM.

THE BASIC PRINCIPLE IS THAT THERE CANNOT BE TOO MUCH DETAIL OR DISCUSSION WHERE THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IS CONCERNED.

8.5 If there is a serious level of allegation or evidence of abuse which may endanger a child or children the CCM and RO will report this to the relevant authorities immediately.

9. FEEDBACK AND REPORTING

9.1 Workers will always wish to be assured that, having made a report, appropriate action has been taken. The RO and the CCM should always attempt to give such feedback from a reporting situation as is appropriate. The RO is entitled to ask what specific action has been taken so far, whether the police have been informed etc.

10. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST WORKERS OR THE CLUB

10.1 If a child or parent makes allegations to the Club against any person working for the Club, whether paid or unpaid, or a member of the management, the following procedure will come into force – incident reports will be made at all stages as appropriate:

a. The person receiving the complaint will contact the CCM who will at once contact the RO. On receipt of the complaint, the RO will contact Social Services to appraise them of the situation. Normally this will be by informal channels but if there is a criminal allegation, the contact will be formal to the duty social worker and also to the police.

10.2 The course of action to be taken from thereon will be decided by the nature of the allegation(s).

a If a criminal allegation e.g. of sexual abuse and impropriety is made, or physical assault, or inappropriate behaviour, the CCM will suspend the person from any activity in the Club under the heading of alleged Gross Misconduct. If it is warranted, this may be without pay, should the evidence appear strong enough to justify the matter. For example, a worker discovered in a situation of actual wrongful behaviour. The matter must then be reported immediately to the police and duty social

worker. The suspension will remain in force unless and until the police and/or social services confirm there was no substance to the report. An incident report will be made and treated as confidential.

b If there is no criminal allegation the RO will gather as much detail from available sources of information as possible, by way of investigation, but not including seeking to interview any child if there is a criminal allegation (which is a matter for the authorities). The RO should examine to see if there is any company report relating to a child protection matter concerning any involved child. This is most important. Where appropriate, the RO should consider whether suspension of the worker is advisable and recommend accordingly CCM. This may include a situation which, though non-criminal, could lead to a decision of gross misconduct.

c The RO will report to the CCM on the outcome of such an investigation and will recommend whether the circumstances constitute grounds either:

A. to treat the matter as a disciplinary issue, either as misconduct or gross misconduct, with associated rights of appeal

Or B. to dismiss the allegations as unfounded, or to make such other non-disciplinary recommendations as are appropriate. The CCM shall consider such recommendations and report to the next meeting of Club.

Or C. to consider whether a report should be made to the ISA under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 Where upon the CCM shall make such arrangements as are appropriate. The person against whom such non-criminal allegations are made should have opportunity to give an explanation or answer to any allegation at an interview conducted by the RO and the course of such an interview should be minuted by the CCM who should be present.

d. If legal proceedings result in the conviction of the person for a serious offence involving a child, the CCM shall consider any report or information from the police and /or social services and shall recommend to the RO the appropriate course of action up to and including instant dismissal. If the proceedings do not result in a conviction but there is evidence to suggest misconduct, the procedure in 10.2 b may be invoked.

h. Under no circumstances is any person suspended to re-enter Children's Centre premises or property or attend a session site whilst under suspension. This prohibition includes activities where there are no children/ young persons present.

11. INDUCTION AND TRAINING

11.1 The Club shall encourage adequate and appropriate induction and ongoing training and information to all employed staff and voluntary workers concerning child protection matters, which shall be the responsibility of the CCM to devise and implement, in consultation and liaison with the RO. All directors, employees and voluntary workers shall have this policy drawn to their attention on joining the Club and it shall be the duty of the CCM, in consultation with the RO, to ensure that such persons are fully aware of how and where to access the full policy statement, and that the CCM is the person through whom they should route queries concerning the policy.

12. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

12.1 The Management shall review this policy, its effectiveness and regarding its implementation every two years and the RO shall ensure with the CCM that the views of all workers, paid and voluntary, are sought and reflected in such a review process, and that any statutory authority input is sought as appropriate.