

4. Charity Policies

Introduction

The under noted policies in section 4 **do not** form part of your contract of employment, but will serve as guidelines on how you can expect the Charity to deal with certain issues.

Code of Conduct for working with children and young people: promoting good practice and a safeguarding culture

The following are a guide to helping create a safe and protective culture for young people, staff and volunteers. For full guidance in relation to child protection procedures please refer to the EYS Child Protection Policy.

Practice to be encouraged:

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity
- Involve young people in the decisions that affect them
- Always work in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with young people (e.g. not sharing tents, shower facilities or having an inappropriate or intimate relationship)
- When organising events and meetings for children and young people, or their attendance at events/meetings, the following information/documentation should be requested by EYS staff in relation to each child or young person attending the event/meeting:
 - A Consent Form for all events or specific activities;
 - Contact details for the family/guardians, including emergency contact numbers;
 - Information relating to any special issues, needs or requirements (e.g. medical, health, diet, language assistance)
 - Use a reporting form to keep a clear note of any incidents or concerns
 - If physical contact is necessary (e.g. in an emergency), tell the young person clearly what you are doing and why, seek their permission and give choices where possible. If possible, have another worker present.
- Every activity, event or session should be risk assessed to maintain the safety of young people

Practice to be avoided:

- Workers should not give lifts in their car to individual children or young people or travel alone with young people. Where not doing this would compromise EYS Health and Safety Policy (e.g. leaving a young person alone at a venue) you should attempt to phone the parent/guardian of the young person to confirm what you will be doing. You should also ask the young person to sit in the back seat.
- Workers should not take young people to their home or that of another worker
- Workers should avoid situations where they are alone with young people. Where a private meeting with a lone child/young person is unavoidable it should be held in an open place in view of others or in a room visible to those outside and where a colleague has agreed to visually monitor the meeting. If a young person participates in a review of their involvement in a programme as a result of disruptive or unacceptable behaviour, it is advisable that this review is witnessed by a second staff member/volunteer
- Workers should not use their own 'personal' electronic communications (e.g. mobile phones, social networking sites) for contacting young people, unless agreed by the management committee.
Unacceptable practice:
 - Invading the privacy of children and young people when they are toileting or showering, changing or dressing.
 - Inappropriate physical or sexually provocative games
 - Sharing sleeping accommodation with an individual child or young person
 - Making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person even in fun
 - Inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form
 - Scape-goating or ridiculing a child or young person

- Allowing inappropriate, foul, sexualised or discriminatory language to remain unchallenged
- Any form of physical punishment
- Illegal use of drugs
- Use of alcohol during an event
- Bullying of any form, including name calling or constant criticism
- 'Picking on' a young person because of their family background, manner of dress or physical characteristic
- Racism or sectarianism of any form
- Favouritism and exclusion - all young people should be equally supported and encouraged
- Abusive language or gestures

If any of the following occur, you must report it to the line manager:

- A young person is hurt
- He/she seems distressed in any manner
- A young person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- A young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done
- An allegation is made about you or a colleague

Child Protection Policy and Procedure

This document does not form part of a contract of employment and may be changed from time to time in line with current best practice and statutory requirements. You will be consulted and advised of any changes as far in advance as possible of the change being made, unless the change is required by statute.

Members of staff have an important role to play in creating a positive and safe environment where children are concerned. The organisation further recognises its responsibility to protect children; to recognise the possible signs of abuse or neglect; and if there is cause for disquiet, to report any issues to the manager who has agreed to act as monitor for child protection issues.

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and members of the Board.

Aims:

The main aims of this policy are to:

Set out the expectations of staff, volunteers and members of the Board in relation to Child Protection issues

- Define Child Abuse – to include bullying
- Ensure that children have the right to be protected from abuse and harm at all times and in all situations.
- Ensure that all staff are aware that Child Protection is the responsibility of every adult who has involvement with children
- Provide information on the ways in which abuse or neglect may present in the child

Provide advice on Disclosure Scotland vetting procedures

Responsibility for developing and maintaining a child-safe environment rests with everyone at some level.

The organisation will ensure that this policy is communicated to all staff, volunteers and members of the Board and that the policy and procedures are adhered to by all staff, volunteers and members of the Board

Appropriate guidance and support will be provided to members of staff who report child care concerns, confidential records will be maintained in relation to any allegations and the effectiveness of the response in relation to these allegations and communication links maintained with the local Child Protection Committee/Agency at all times

Line Managers have a duty to:

- Understand, explain and promote the policy to their staff

- Encourage staff to raise any concerns they have regarding bullying and/or other forms of child abuse
- Be responsive and supportive to any employee who so raises a concern

Employees have a duty to:

- Familiarise themselves with this policy and procedures
- Raise any concerns they have relating to bullying or child abuse at the earliest opportunity
- Advise their line manager immediately if they are under suspicion or accused of any conduct which may affect their suitability to work with children

Definitions

Child protection

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 states that each child has the right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

It also states that children should have the right to express their views on any issues or decisions affecting them.

Bullying

- Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.
- Bullying is an unacceptable form of behaviour through which a child/ young person or groups feel threatened, abused or undermined by another individual or group.
- Bullying is behaviour that can be defined as a repeated attack of a physical, psychological, social or verbal nature by those who are able to exert influence over others.
- Bullying can take many forms. It may include physical aggression, intimidation, threatening, extorting, pressurising, name-calling or teasing.
- Less obvious examples such as ignoring or excluding someone are also regarded as bullying and their possible effects should not be minimised.
- Bullying can cause stress and can affect a child's health.

Child abuse

The formal definition of Child Abuse is:

'Children may be in need of protection where their basic needs are not being met, in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development, and they will be at risk through avoidable acts of commission or *omission on the part of their parent(s), sibling(s) or other relative(s), or a carer (i.e. the person(s) while not a parent who has actual custody of the child).'

[Reference; Scottish office (1998) 'Protecting Children: A Shared Responsibility'].

*nb. This means children at risk through either something a person has done to them OR something a person is failing to do for them.

This is a very open definition which encourages us to be open minded and to think about what child abuse is. For those working in the field of Child Protection the definition gets broken down further into Categories of Abuse, namely:

- Physical Injury
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Physical Neglect
- Non-organic Failure to Thrive

Physical Injury

Actual or attempted physical injury to a child, including the administration of toxic substances, where there is knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Sexual Abuse

Any child may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person(s), by design or neglect, exploits the child, directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other

forms of gratification of that person or any other person(s) including organised networks. This definition holds, whether or not there has been genital contact and whether or not the child is said to have initiated, or consented to, the behaviour.

Non Organic Failure to Thrive

Children who significantly fail to reach normal growth and development milestones (i.e. physical growth, weight, motor, social and intellectual development) where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated and a diagnosis of non-organic failure to thrive has been established.

Emotional Abuse

Failure to provide for the child's basic emotional needs, such as to have a severe effect on the behaviour and development of the child.

Physical Neglect

This occurs when a child's essential needs are not met and this is likely to cause impairment to physical health and development. Such needs include food, clothing, cleanliness, shelter and warmth. A lack of appropriate care, including deprivation of access to health care, may result in persistent or severe exposure, through negligence, to circumstances which endanger the child.

[Reference: 'Scottish Office (1998) Protecting Children: A Shared Responsibility'].

Recognition of Abuse

- Possible indicators of physical injury are bruises, particularly bruises of a regular shape which may indicate the use of an implement such as a strap, or the marks of a hand, lacerations, bite marks or burns
- Possible indicators of physical neglect are inadequate clothing, poor growth, poor hunger, poor hygiene
- Possible indicators of emotional abuse are excessive dependence, attention seeking, and self-harming
- Possible indicators of sexual abuse are physical signs such as bruises, scratches or bite marks to thighs or genital areas; or behaviours such as precocity, withdrawal or inappropriate sexual behaviour

Note:

Such symptoms may be due to a variety of other causes such as bereavement, domestic violence or changes in family circumstances. However, they may be due to child abuse.

No list of symptoms can be exhaustive. Also, alternative medical, psychological or social explanations may exist for the signs and symptoms described. In particular bruises to the legs are often accidental. Further guidance from the Scottish Executive explains how children rarely tell if they are being abused. However, there may be signs which make you concerned and may be an indication of a child being abused or neglected.

Child Protection Procedures

Child protection should not be treated in isolation – it will be necessary to take on board guidance given by the local Child Protection Committee/Agency and to address the recruitment and selection of volunteers and paid employees by doing the following:

Administrative procedures

1. We accept that it is our responsibility as an organisation/group to check that all adults with substantial access to children have been appropriately vetted (Appendix
2. We will ensure that every new volunteer or member of staff will complete an application form
3. We will make a request for previous addresses on volunteer/ job application forms
4. We will ask for the names of two referees who will be prepared to provide a written reference
5. We will interview all prospective volunteers and staff;
6. We will note at interview all previous experience of volunteers and staff in working with children;
7. We will carry out a probationary period for all volunteers and staff of at least 3 months.
8. We will hold a register of every child involved with the organisation/group including relevant medical details and have a contact name and number close to hand in case of emergencies

Behavioural Procedures

Every child, regardless of age, has at all times and in all situations a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice that results in a child being physically or psychologically damaged. In our

organisation if we have suspicions about a child's physical, sexual or emotional wellbeing, we will take action.

Volunteers and staff must, at all times:

1. Acknowledge the age group they work with
2. Where possible consider activities which involve more than one adult being present or at least within sight and hearing of others
3. Be aware that someone else might misinterpret actions even if they are well-intentioned
4. Provide time for children to talk to us
5. Encourage children to respect and care for others
6. Take action to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour;
7. Respect a child's right to personal privacy
8. Never trivialise or exaggerate child abuse issues;
9. Refrain from interrogating or questioning a child other than to clarify understanding. (If the matter is to be investigated further it will be so done by trained professionals).
10. Be honest - in that you may have to talk to someone else who can help (do not promise confidentiality)
11. Remain calm, no matter how difficult it is to listen to the child
12. Listen to the child - REALLY LISTEN - taking what they say seriously.
13. Record written details of disclosure or events using the organisation's incident/disclosure form.
14. Records should be signed and stored in a secure place.
15. Share concerns with the manager/committee member who has agreed to monitor child protection issues
16. Remember to REFER not INVESTIGATE any suspicions or allegations about abuse;
17. Only share concerns and seek support from those identified in the organisation's child protection policy.
18. If an allegation is made in relation to a volunteer or employee of the organization, a referral will be made to Disclosure Scotland.

If the situation is clearly an urgent case, the child is too frightened to go home or we have very serious doubts about the child's safety, we will contact Social Services or the Police immediately. If our concerns are more general about a child's welfare, then we will discuss these with our organisation's child protection monitor, who would then make a referral to any appropriate support services. It is important that all volunteers and staff communicate concerns accurately as described below:

- a. Upon suspicions being raised, or on the receipt of any information from a child, it is necessary to record what has been seen, heard or known of at the time the event occurs
- b. Share these concerns with the monitor for the organisation/group and agree action to be taken
- c. Always REFER never INVESTIGATE any suspicions or allegations about abuse

If we have concerns, we must act - it may be the final piece of the jigsaw that is needed to protect that child or we may prevent other children from being hurt.

Local contacts:

Children and Families Social Work Team 01896 662787

Out of Hours Social Work Emergency Duty Team 01896 752111

Public Protection 01896 664596 (Out of Hours)

Police Station: 101