



Section B Plan of action

This section will help you develop your plan to keep the children in your group safe.

When writing your procedures, use the sections below as headings and then write your own responses underneath them.

The procedures should, at a minimum, include:

Purpose and aim of the procedures.

Do they apply to everyone in the group? For example, they should include all those in contact with children, even if it isn't their main job to look after them – like the caretaker, for example.

A description of the different categories of abuse.

These are physical, emotional, sexual abuse, and neglect. There is further information in relation to this in Section C of this guidance.

How to recognise the signs of abuse.

Give brief examples of the signs and indicators which might give cause for concern. You can find these in Section C of this guidance and further information can be obtained by completing the Educare Child Protection Awareness programme online.

How to respond to signs or suspicions of abuse.

Include details of who should tell whom, what the named person will do, and the actions to take, including contact numbers. It should be clear who staff, parents and children should talk to if they are worried.

How to respond to allegations of abuse against a member of staff, other worker or volunteer.

Explain who should tell whom, and what action to take, including contact numbers.

How to respond to a child telling you about abuse.

Include what to do and say, how to respond to allegations of abuse against someone not working in the group. This may be a parent or carer, another child, school teacher or anybody else.

How information will be recorded.

Include how information should be recorded and by whom, timescales for passing it on, and where it should be stored confidentially.

Confidentiality policy.

The legal principle that the "welfare of the child is paramount" means that taking action to safeguard the child is most important. Privacy and confidentiality should be respected, but if doing this leaves a child at risk of harm, the child's safety has to come first. So, legally, it is fine to share information if someone is worried about the safety of a child. When a concern or worry is raised, not everyone needs to know about it. This respects the child's, family's and/or staff's rights to privacy. So only people who need to know should be told about it. Otherwise there might be gossip and rumours or other people may be genuinely concerned. It is fine to say that a concern has been raised and it is being dealt with following the group's procedures.

It is not child protection but I am still concerned?

Sometimes concerns about a child may not be about abuse. You may be concerned that a child or family need some help in making sure all of a child's needs are met or to address a particular problem. Examples of this might be where a child is suffering because of poverty, getting into trouble in the community, or has a disability and needs extra help. In these instances you can get them help by using the Common Assessment Framework. See Section 8 for more information.

It is appropriate for your procedures to make reference to this.

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Step 6 – A code of behaviour for everyone

It is a good idea to think about how you expect everyone to behave in your organisation. This includes staff, volunteers, parents and the children themselves.

It is important that a code of behaviour reflects the child-centred principles of the group. It should be made known to all children, young people and workers and, where possible, it should be prominently displayed, perhaps a poster. Children should be given every opportunity to learn that no one has the right to do anything to them that makes them feel uncomfortable. They should be taught and encouraged not to put up with any behaviour from adults or children, within the organisation or through internet contact, such as chat rooms, which makes them feel threatened.

A code of behaviour and good practice should include positive statements about:

- listening to children
- valuing and respecting children as individuals
- involving children in decision-making as appropriate
- encouraging and praising children
- bullying.

It should also have a very clear statement on bullying in all forms so that everyone is clear what bullying is and that the organisation takes a zero tolerance approach to it. Some groups also choose to have a separate policy on bullying which gives clear direction about dealing with incidents of bullying.

It can be really productive to include children and young people in the writing of the code. This can help develop a clearer understanding of the reasons why the code is important, ensure their views are heard and provides the element of "shared ownership". They are much more likely to stick to the code if they helped write it.



Everyone involved with your group, including staff, volunteers, children and young people, should have guidelines on what behaviour is expected and what is not acceptable.

See Section C (pages 42 and 46) for sample codes of behaviour and counter-bullying policy.

It should also have a very clear statement on bullying in all forms so that everyone is clear what bullying is and that the organisation takes a zero tolerance approach to it.



Step 7 – Employing the right people

You may feel you know people very well in your group or community. You might think no one you know could hurt a child, but sadly this is not always true. If you rely on trust alone, you may be fooled by someone determined to harm a child in your group.

Whatever activities the group or project provides for children, you will want to make sure that you have the best people for the job. Selecting an unsuitable person can have grave consequences for the children themselves, and for your group and its reputation.

Some people who harm children appear very trustworthy and may hold important positions in the community. You should not take anything on trust or make assumptions based on someone's job or position.

Here are some tips to help you recruit safely. These apply to recruiting both paid and unpaid people.

Define the role

Consider the tasks and skills necessary for the job and what kind of person is most suited to the job.

Selection criteria

Decide how the person should behave with children and what attitudes you want to see.

Develop a list of essential and desirable qualifications, skills and experience and select against this.

Recruitment publicity

Circulate all vacancies widely, for example, by putting them on notice boards in shops or the local library.

Written application form

This should include personal details, past and current work/volunteering experience.

Written declaration

Ask for a statement in writing that they have no past convictions, cautions or bind-overs (legal restrictions on their behaviour, actions or movements and no pending cases that might affect their suitability to work with children).

Identification

Ask for photographic documentation to confirm identity, such as a passport or driving licence, and a gas or electric bill that contains their address.

Qualifications

Ask to see the documents.

Interview

Preferably at least two representatives from the group should meet with an applicant to discuss information contained in their form, and to explore their attitudes towards working with children. This also provides an opportunity to discuss your child protection policy and to ensure that the applicant has the ability and commitment to meet the standards required.

Talk about their application including:

- areas you want to explore in more detail
- gaps in employment history
- vague statements or unfamiliar qualifications
- frequent changes of employment
- what their motives are for wanting to work with children.

It is helpful to use methods other than an interview to test suitability and help with decision-making, such as an exercise, role play or presentation.

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References

Ask for written references from at least two people who are not family members and ideally, who have first-hand knowledge of the applicant's experience of work or contact with children. If there are doubts, follow up with a telephone call.

Sometimes young people who have taken part in activities are encouraged to become volunteers. The same principles should apply regarding their suitability to work with children.

Some of these steps may seem complicated, or hard to put in place. But it is essential that you try to follow these recommendations as far as possible and at all times.

EduCare provides a distance learning programme called *Safer recruitment and selection*. This consists of five modules covering preparing to recruit, selecting the right people, vetting checks and maintaining vigilance. For further information go to www.safenetwork.org.uk

Independent Safeguarding Authority

Under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) was established to make decisions on who should be barred from working with children and/or vulnerable adults (C/VA). The new Vetting and Barring Scheme will be phased in during 2010.

All people who are deemed as suitable to work with C/VA will become ISA-registered following the necessary checks by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). If they have relevant cautions, convictions or there is other information which the ISA judges to make them unsuitable to work with vulnerable people they will be placed on a Barred List – there will be criteria for people working with children and criteria for people working with vulnerable adults. The individual concerned will be informed if this is the case and will have a right of appeal.

Employers and volunteer organisations who deal with children and/or vulnerable adults always need to check a person's ISA status before employing them or using them as volunteers. You cannot take their word that they are registered and neither can you allow them to start work – even

supervised – before you know the outcome of the check. It is your organisation's responsibility to check a potential employee or volunteer's status. If an applicant is not ISA-registered they have either not applied or are on an ISA Barred List.

It is the individual applicant's responsibility to apply to register with the ISA – they can do this through their employer if currently working, through a prospective employer or directly to the ISA if they are a volunteer. People will only need to apply once even if they move jobs or have more than one role, eg volunteering or being a trustee with a group while undertaking paid work in another area. There is an application fee for paid workers but not volunteers. The application form will include both ISA and CRB, either or both can be applied for. For ISA registration the CRB disclosure will be enhanced.

Some of these steps may seem complicated, or hard to put in place. But it is essential that you try to follow these recommendations as far as possible and at all times.

As an organisation, there is no charge for you to check a prospective employee or volunteer's status. It is also expected that you will provide any relevant information discovered about a current or previous employee or volunteer which would mean they should not be working with C/VA, to the ISA so they can review and update the Barred Lists. Once you have registered your interest in an individual as their employer, you will automatically be contacted should their status change – that is, if new information leads to an ISA decision to bar them.

Organisations and groups will have different duties and responsibilities depending on whether the work done by workers and/or volunteers is defined as "regulated activity" or "controlled activity".

Regulated activity

is work that barred individuals cannot do as it involves close contact with C/VA. It includes:

- any activity of a specified nature which involves contact with C/VA frequently, intensively and/or overnight
- any activity allowing contact with C/VA that is in a specified place frequently or intensively
- fostering and childcare
- any activity that involves people in certain defined positions of responsibility.

Controlled activity

is work that barred individuals can engage in if there are appropriate safeguards in place. It includes:

- frequent or intensive support work in general health settings, the NHS and further education settings
- people working for specified organisations with frequent access to sensitive records about C/VA
- support work in adult social care settings.

Organisations will have to update their safeguarding policies to take these arrangements into account or ensure that they are included if writing policies for the first time. This is vital because of the new legal obligations which could result in criminal charges if they are breached.

The changes are being phased in so it is important that you have up-to-date information on what is expected of you as an employer. For this and further details about duties and responsibilities, the application process, fees and other FAQs please visit www.isa-gov.org.uk or phone 0300 123 1111.

You can also find more information at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/independentsafeguardingauthority

Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)

This gives employers and voluntary groups access to information about criminal records and other relevant information about people they intend to appoint in paid or unpaid posts who will be working with children and young people under 18. For some organisations that are regulated by OFSTED, there is a statutory requirement to carry out CRB re-checks on a regular basis. This means they will still have to get CRB disclosures separately from ISA registration application process.

Access to the Bureau's services is available to all groups working with children, either directly as registered bodies, or through umbrella groups. It is likely that community-based organisations will have to go through an umbrella body to access checks. It is recommended that you seek information directly from the CRB (www.crb.gov.uk or 0870 909 0811) to meet the specific needs of your group.

You will need to consider the lower age limit to check volunteers. Checks can be done on children aged 10 years or over as this is when they become criminally responsible. However, individuals need to provide different forms of identification so it is unlikely you will be able to carry out a check on volunteers below the age of 16 years. You will also need to consider new employees from abroad and whether checks are likely to be obtained. If checks are not available then you must put other safeguards in place, for example, extra supervision, requesting references and ensuring a very robust selection process. Checks will need to be repeated periodically - once every three years is currently good practice.

If you are taking your first steps in safeguarding children in your group, it is recommended that you apply for CRB checks on all existing staff who have contact with children on a regular basis including volunteers, trustees, committee members and yourself. When you have selected an applicant, ensure that they obtain the appropriate criminal record certificate (ECRC) from the Criminal Records Bureau. For Northern Ireland, please check with the POC Service, POC stands for "protection of children" and was created by the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order (POCVA). For Scotland, check with Disclosure Scotland.

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Step 8 – Other topics on keeping children safe

Listed below are some topics which may or may not apply to your group. They are listed here because children affected by these areas might be more vulnerable to harm or abuse. They can be difficult to deal with, and you should always seek further information and guidance when dealing with them. Local authorities will have procedures for dealing with these areas so you should always seek advice. You can find more information and signposts to resources at: www.safenetwerk.org.uk

Abuse of trust

Staff and volunteers will have different kinds of contact with the children and young people because of their role within a group. This contact leads to what is known as a "relationship of trust". This describes relationships where an adult (18 years or older) has power or authority in a child's life (under 18 years) and may have a key influence on their future, by the nature of their role within an organisation.

A person aged 18 or over is also said to be in a position of trust in relation to a younger person if they care for, advise, train or have sole charge of them in the community on a one-to-one basis because of a court order.

This power or influence might be abused to persuade and encourage or intimidate a child or young person into certain behaviours or activities. All staff must recognise the responsibility they have to ensure they do not abuse their positions of trust. The Sexual Offences Act (2003) re-enacts and extends the abuse of position of trust offences set out in the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act (2000)⁹. Young people aged between 16 and 18 can legally consent to some types of sexual activity. However, in some areas of law they are still classified as children (The Children Act, 1989¹⁰). Chronological age does not necessarily reflect maturity and emotional development. Therefore, young adults may still be vulnerable to abuse.

Bullying

Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time from one person to another who finds it difficult to defend him or herself. It can mean verbal threats or intimidation and may be carried out using mobile phones or through chatrooms on the internet.

Usually the bully is in a position of power or has physical strength over the other, but not always. The impact of bullying on a child's physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing is often underestimated.

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Research published in 2000 and 2002 stated that 31 per cent of children experienced bullying by their peers; 25 per cent of children who were bullied reported long-term harmful effects into adulthood⁸; and children abused or neglected by their parents or carers were more likely to experience bullying (eg 70 per cent of sexually abused children and 60 per cent of physically abused children reported bullying⁹).

Other research indicates the concern that children have about bullying and the fact that over 30 per cent of children did not tell anyone that they were being bullied.¹⁰ One study showed that 35 per cent of boys and 26 per cent of girls admitted to having bullied other children.¹¹ Research published in 2005 stated that 20 per cent of children had experienced bullying or threats via email, internet chatroom or text message.¹²

It is essential that organisations include bullying in the code of behaviour document and consider expanding this into a specific counter bullying policy. It can be particularly useful to include children and young people in the writing of these documents and share them with parents, carers and any other visitors to the organisation.

EduCare provides a distance learning programme called *Preventing bullying behaviour*. This consists of four modules covering introduction to bullying behaviour, recognising bullying behaviour, your personal responsibilities and preventing bullying behaviour. For information about this programme go to www.safenetwork.org.uk

For further details of resources, a sample counter-bullying policy and information about organisations that provide advice on tackling bullying see Section C (pages 46 and 49).

Deaf and disabled children and abuse

Research and evidence suggests that deaf and disabled children are more likely to be abused than non-disabled children. People often make assumptions, such as:

- nobody would be so cruel or would find a deaf or disabled child sexually attractive
- disabled children are less likely to become victims of abuse
- it doesn't affect disabled children so badly
- disabled children are more likely to make false allegations
- if it has happened, it's best to leave well alone
- it's impossible to protect disabled children.

These statements are completely wrong.

Deaf and disabled children are particularly vulnerable to abuse because they are:

- not offered the same protection as non-disabled children



- often treated as different, and less likely to receive adequate sex education or information about their own bodies
- generally more isolated, both physically and socially and also from mainstream facilities and services
- less likely to have people who they can communicate with³³
- dependent on others for their most important needs, such as feeding, taking medication or their intimate care needs.

If you work with disabled children you should obtain additional information and if possible, training on how to keep disabled children safe. Local safeguarding children's boards provide advice and support which includes local knowledge and resources which your group can access. The Government has guidance called *Aim Higher for Disabled Children* which can be accessed at www.everychildmatters.org.uk/ahdc. Deaf and disabled children have the same right to be protected from abuse as all children so your policies need to ensure they aim for this outcome.

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Domestic violence

Domestic violence is any violent or abusive behaviour used by one person to control or dominate another with whom they have or have had a relationship. This abuse can be physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial. The violence can be actual or threatened. Other terms and definitions are sometimes used, for example "domestic abuse". Men are usually the perpetrators of domestic violence but in a minority of cases women are the abusers. Violence occurs within heterosexual, lesbian and gay relationships.¹⁴

Many people think that domestic violence affects only adults, yet in nine out of 10 cases, children are present in the same or next room while violence is going on.¹⁵

The Children Act 1989 was amended by the Adoption and Children Act 2002 to recognise the risks posed to children's safety and wellbeing by domestic violence.

In half of the cases of violence between adults, there is violence against children too.¹⁶ In extreme cases, domestic violence can lead to the death of a parent. Research in 2003 showed that more than 40 per cent of women killed in England and Wales were killed by a current or former partner or lover.¹⁷ Public inquiries into child deaths in recent years have shown that the men responsible for the death of children have a history of violence towards their female partners.¹⁸

Many survivors' lives are damaged by domestic violence. Children are acutely aware of tension in the adult world, particularly tension which leads to violence. They may suffer emotional and psychological damage. The very young may suffer physical signs of distress such as bedwetting, stomachaches and disturbed sleeps. Older children can become withdrawn or exhibit problematic behaviour such as misusing alcohol or drugs. Children may feel they are to blame for what is happening. Some young people run away from home and other may attempt suicide.¹⁹

If you think a child or young person is affected by domestic violence you should report the concerns, as you would any other threat to the child's safety or wellbeing, within child protection procedures.

Further advice and information about domestic violence and support options is available at www.womensaid.org.uk and www.refuge.org.uk. Information linked to resources is also in Section C (page 49) and at www.safenetwork.org.uk

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a collective term for procedures that remove part or all of the external female genitalia for cultural or other non-medical reasons. Female genital mutilation is a criminal offence in the UK. The Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003)²⁰ makes it an offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to carry out FGM abroad, or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal (HM Government 2006)²¹.



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Forced marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage without the full consent of both parties and where pressure or threats are a factor. The Government's Forced Marriage Unit has produced guidelines on how to identify and support young people threatened by forced marriage. If there are concerns that a child, male or female, is in danger of a forced marriage, local agencies and professional workers should contact the Forced Marriage Unit where experienced case workers will be able to offer support and guidance. Visit www.fco.gov.uk or call 020 7008 0230 for more information.

Homophobia

Homophobia is the fear of homosexuality and/or hostility towards gay people. It is often expressed openly, and sometimes violently. Research carried out in 1996 by the gay rights group, Stonewall, showed that gay people experience more extreme homophobia as young people than as adults. The research found that as young people, 90 per cent of those who took part had been called names, and nearly 50 per cent had been violently attacked. In areas of England, homophobic bullying in schools has now reached the point where young people being bullied have special homework clubs.

Research released in 2007 found that 65 per cent of gay, lesbian and bisexual pupils had experienced direct bullying in schools with 30 per cent reporting that adults in schools were responsible for the homophobia. Only 23 per cent of young gay people had been told that homophobic bullying is wrong in school.²²

Young people may be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (where someone doesn't feel comfortable with the gender they were given at birth), or transsexual (where someone wishes to change gender). They may face discrimination and prejudice because of their sexual orientation. They may be harmed through physical assault or endangered by threats of violence, including sexual violence. Many police authorities now have protocols for dealing with homophobic crime. If you are concerned about a young person facing these issues, you should seek advice and support through the police or other organisations.

Some young people find themselves excluded from home if they are lesbian or gay. This, coupled with an unsupportive school environment, can lead to complete social exclusion. The young person may find themselves in care, or even homeless. Health care practitioners can play a crucial role in supporting and informing such young people, and this positive relationship can change the way in which they relate to the health sector in the future. Visit: www.stonewall.org.uk for more information.

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Honour crimes

These can include physical assaults, abduction and murder, which are carried out in the name of family honour. These acts are illegal and are an offence under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act²³ (2004). More information can be found in: *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, HM Government 2006²⁴.



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Internet abuse, abusive images of children and mobile phones

Abusive images of children, or child pornography, are defined as any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities, or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for sexual purposes. The internet and other information communication technologies mean that children nowadays may be more vulnerable to abuse. Digital and phone cameras have made it possible for images of children to be distributed without their knowledge. Children may also be at risk of coming into contact with people who want to harm them through their use of internet chat rooms, instant messaging and text messaging.

For further advice and information go to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre at www.ceop.gov.uk which provides information for parents, children and professionals. They have produced another website www.thinkuknow.co.uk that provides a range of safety tips and advice on using social networking sites, chat rooms and mobile phones, plus information on grooming.

Peer sexual abuse

Children and young people can be sexually abused by others, whether they are the same age, younger or older. Whilst it is important to recognise that children do engage in sexual play and experimenting, this is usually age appropriate. If you are worried that a child may be sexually harming another, always seek advice.

Physical chastisement

Parents in the UK are currently allowed to use "reasonable chastisement" when punishing their children. This is explained in law by Section 58 of the Children Act (2004)²⁵, which is in force in England and Wales. Parents still have the right to "reasonably punish" their child using mild forms of physical punishment. However, changes to the Crown Prosecution Service Charging Standard, brought into effect at the same time, mean that hitting a child hard enough to leave visible bruising, grazes, scratches, minor swellings or cuts, now constitutes the criminal offence of actual bodily harm. This carries a maximum sentence of up to five years in prison.

Nobody else can legally physically chastise a child, even if the parent has given their permission. Anybody else using physical force to punish or discipline a child may be accused of physical abuse and is committing a criminal offence. This includes; slapping, smacking, tapping, punching, hitting with any object (including shoes, rulers and cooking utensils) twisting ears, pinching, causing pain and discomfort by making children sit or stand in uncomfortable positions or for long periods and burning with matches or incense sticks.

There are many different views about physical chastisement, but it is widely accepted that hurting children is not the best way to teach them right from wrong. There are other ways to discipline children that are much more effective. See Section C (page 34) for more information.

Possession, witchcraft and other spiritual or religious beliefs that can cause harm to children

Most cultural practices, traditions and faiths provide protection to children and help keep them safe. Sometimes, however, the interpretation of beliefs and rituals can cause harm to children.

High profile cases such as Victoria Climbié and child B have highlighted that some families believe strongly that adults and children may be possessed by evil spirits which can bring bad luck on a family.

This belief is often described as "kindoki" a Lingala term meaning witchcraft, which comes from a mixture of evangelical Christianity and traditional African spiritual beliefs. Some of the most vulnerable and in particular disabled children may suffer cruelty when their disability or impairment is believed to be linked to sinful behaviour, which may have occurred in a previous life. This practice is not unique to people from Africa, other communities or individuals may also abuse children through ritualistic practices and ceremonies, which can be harmful and even lead to death.



Step 1 Check it out

Use the exercises and check list to see what your group has or hasn't got in place.

Step 2 Who is taking the lead?

Decide on which person should complete basic child protection awareness training.

Step 3 Getting support

It is important that everyone agrees the reasons for developing safeguards and understands why. Use the DVD to help your trustees or management committee, or parents and children to discuss the issues.

Step 4 Writing a policy statement

Why your group needs a policy statement, and what needs to be included in it.

Step 5 Writing procedures

Why your group needs procedures and what needs to be included in them.

Step 6 A code of behaviour for everyone

How everyone is expected to behave in your group.

Step 7 Employing the right people

Different things your group can do to check adults are safe to work with children.

Step 8 Other topics about keeping children safe

Looks at the other issues that might come up when keeping children safe.

Step 9 Making it all work

What needs to be done to make sure your group's safeguards work.

Children can be involved in this stage by using Kidscheck.

Private fostering

Private fostering is when the care of a child under the age of 16 (or 18 years if they are disabled) is arranged with someone other than a parent or close relative for 28 days or more.

Children who are privately fostered include:

- children sent from abroad to stay with another family
- asylum-seeking and refugee children
- teenagers who have broken ties with their parents and are staying with friends or non-relatives
- language students living with host families.

Local authorities have legal duties to oversee private fostering arrangements so seek advice from children's social care.

Prostitution

Children can be seriously harmed by being involved in prostitution or other forms of commercial sexual exploitation. The vast majority of children do not voluntarily enter prostitution. They are forced or tempted into it, or are desperate. Prostitution exposes children to abuse and assault and may threaten their lives. It deprives them of their childhood, self-esteem and opportunities for good health, education and training. Children in prostitution should be treated as victims of abuse and have their needs carefully assessed (Department of Health, 2000)²⁵.

For further information on the subject go to www.ecpat.org.uk – an organisation which stands for End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes.

Racism

Children and young people from black and minority ethnic groups may experience racism. The extent and impact this has on a child's wellbeing will vary depending on many circumstances. Racism significantly damages children's chances of fulfilling their potential; indeed research suggests that the effects of racism on a child's emotional, physical and psychological development may be profound. Consequently, a child subjected to any form of racism is more likely to develop a negative

self-image and low self-esteem. The role of anyone working with children or providing activities for them is to ensure the protection of children who maybe vulnerable to racist bullying and racial abuse.

In addition it is helpful to be aware that:

- black and minority ethnic children are more likely to experience bullying than their white counterparts
- white children may witness racial bullying as bystanders
- the most common expression of racism is through racist name-calling, which research shows is often viewed by adults as trivial
- some limited research evidence shows that racial bullying frequently involves the use of violence.

It is essential that all those who work with children have a good understanding of how racism can harm children and an ability to recognise and deal with it.

Training and awareness of this should be part of a group's programme of care for children or young people using their services. Policies or procedures should make it clear that expressions of racism are unacceptable.

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Sex and young people

If you work with young people then it is likely that they will have issues about relationships and awareness of sexual activity. A child under 13 years is not legally capable of consenting to sexual activity. Sexual activity with a child under 16 years is also an offence. However it is recognised that some young people between 13-16 years are involved in consensual sexual relationships. There are many resources that can help your group manage the issues and help young people keep themselves safe. They will also help you understand when young people can and do consent to sexual relationships appropriately.

Trafficking

This involves the exploitation of children through force, threats and deception. A child's human rights are abused through debt bondage, deprivation of liberty and lack of control over one's labour. It includes the movement of people within and across borders. Children have been trafficked into the UK for domestic service, benefit fraud and to be sexually exploited and abused.

To find out more information about child trafficking in the UK, go to www.safenet.org.uk to find useful links.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children

These are children under the age of 18 years who are seeking asylum, but not living with their parents, relatives or guardians in the UK. Local authorities have a duty of care to ensure that the welfare of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children is met.

Contact your local agencies for advice and support. To find out more information, go to www.safenet.org.uk to find useful links.

Some young people, even if they are 18 or over, can still be vulnerable.



Vulnerable young adults

Some young people, even if they are 18-years-old or over, can still be vulnerable. This may be due to disability, mental illness, drug or alcohol habits, or other personal circumstances within their family.

If you have a concern about a young person over 18-years-old, you should still take action. The principles of the safeguards described in this guide should still apply. You can seek guidance from adult social services or the police if you are concerned about a vulnerable adult (see Department of Health, (2000) for more information).²⁷

Working alone with children

Wherever possible, it is best practice to ensure that there is another adult nearby, within sight and hearing, when working with children. However this might not always be possible or appropriate. There are other safeguards you can put in place by making sure that:

- someone else always knows the time and place when you are alone with a child
- the child, parent/carer and person in charge know the reasons for the contact and agree for it to take place
- the child and worker know what to do in an emergency, how to contact the parent/carer and/or another worker
- the child is given permission to stop the lone contact and knows how to complain or to get help.

Step 9 – Making it all work

Induction

When staff, volunteers, parents/carers or children first join your group, let them know that you take the care and safety of children seriously and have safeguards in place. You can do this as you explain who's who, how things are done and about health and safety rules.

Training

All workers should be given the opportunity to learn about child protection and keeping children safe. This might be through a training event, a staff briefing, meeting or reading documents.

Support

Talking to workers about their work, and checking if everything is OK gives them an opportunity to discuss any concerns they have about children. It also enables discussion about their work, any issues that are difficult or that the worker might need some help with. Everyone needs to know about the safeguards you have put in place, and the trustees, management committee (or others) need to know that the procedures and guidance are being followed correctly.

Keeping policy and procedures up-to-date

It is important to regularly look at your policy and procedures to make sure the information is still relevant and up-to-date. You should set timescales to review them, for example, every two years.

There may have been changes in your group, such as the types of activities, the age of children, or local contact details. Changes in law may also mean you need to update the details.


You also need to check that the procedures are working properly. Ask yourself:

- does everyone know what to do if they have worries about a child? How can you be sure?
- is everyone happy with the procedures?
- have the procedures been used and did they work well?
- could the procedures be better?

You might want to get a working group together again or ask other local agencies to help, as described in Step 3 (page 18).

Don't forget to get children's views on how well your safeguards are working as well. You can use Kidscheck to do this. Follow the guidance in Section C and Kidscheck publications (page 48).

Everyone needs to know about the safeguards you have put in place, and the trustees, management committee (or others) need to know that the procedures and guidance are being followed correctly.



Section C Resources

Information, resources and publications

The majority of child abuse can be prevented. For this reason it is very important that everybody who works with children in any way puts safeguards in place.

It will make a difference.



1. Frequently asked questions

What sort of settings can the guide be used in?

The guide can be used with a wide range of groups and organisations – small to large, voluntary to funded. It could help small groups who are starting to look at safeguarding issues for the first time or support larger groups to review policies and procedures they have in place already. Some groups may want to use the guide with new staff or volunteers or get some ideas about including children, young people and parents in the process.

You can see more examples of how the guide can be used and has been used in the past by going to www.safenetwork.org.uk

Do we have to use official words in the policy and procedures?

It is important to be clear about what the policy statement means and the message it needs to get across. But you can use words and phrases that will mean the most to your group or community.

Who has to agree what goes into the policy?

It is important that everyone can understand the policy, and that it means something to them. Some groups involve a small number of people who represent the different parts of their organisation. In a youth club this might include a youth leader, a management committee member, a parent/carer and a young person. This group might write the policy and then see what other people think. The leaders, trustees, management committee or head of a group have to agree and approve the final policy.

Can we just copy someone else's procedures?

There is nothing wrong with looking at other people's procedures, but don't just copy them. They may not be quite right for how you work, your activities, or your children. It is important to really think through how the policy and procedures will work for your group.

Section C Resources

We don't trust children's social care or the police so will not tell them if we are worried about a child.

Sometimes groups do not trust children's social care or the police, and try to sort out concerns themselves. People may have had bad experiences with authorities and think that they make things worse. This is why training and awareness, and links with your local agencies, such as children's social care and the police, are important for building respectful relationships.

It can be dangerous if groups try to sort out worries without telling official agencies. For example: Mikey was 11 years old. He came into the group one day with bruises over his face. Mikey said his dad had done it because he had been cheeky. The group leader knew Mikey's dad so called him to try and sort it out. Mikey's dad said he had been a bit stressed lately. The group didn't speak to any child protection agencies. Mikey went home and was beaten again by his dad for "getting him into trouble". Mikey's mum had to take him to hospital where he needed 20 stitches to his face.

If a person has a clear CRB disclosure or is ISA-registered (eg not on a Barred List), does this mean they will not be a risk to children?

Not necessarily. A clear CRB disclosure or not being on a Barred List means that the authorities do not have any past or current record of offences or concerns about that person, at the point of responding to the request. But it might be that the individual has hurt children but never been caught. This is why it is important to undertake the other actions in recruiting safely and to develop the other recommended safeguards.

How can I spot an abuser?

There is no way to identify someone who will hurt children. People who pose a threat of sexual abuse to children can be skilled at making sure no one knows. There are warning signs, however.

Look out for someone who:

- pays an unusual amount of attention to a child or groups of children, and provides presents, money, or favours
- seeks out vulnerable children, for example, disabled children
- tries to spend time alone with a single child or particular group of children on a regular basis
- takes a child or small group of children to places where the group doesn't usually meet or have activities, such as at their home
- is vague about where they have worked or when they were employed
- avoids co-working or supervision of his or her work
- encourages secretiveness about his or her activities with children
- talks or behaves inappropriately towards children.

If you do have any concerns about somebody's behaviour, you need to pass these on to the relevant person or organisation who will investigate them appropriately. There have been a number of cases where people have taken unlawful "direct action" and individuals have been wrongly accused, injured and killed. Always report concerns.

Sometimes groups do not trust children's social care or the police, and try to sort out concerns themselves.

2. Child protection – the basics

It is vital for all paid staff and volunteers who are involved in groups or projects that work with children and young people to have a basic understanding of child protection issues. Your safeguarding procedures should have sections in them with descriptions of the different categories of abuse and how to recognise the signs of abuse.

Different categories of abuse

The term child abuse is used to describe a range of ways that people harm children. They can be inflicted on a child or knowingly not prevented. In many cases, children are subjected to a combination of forms of abuse. There are four main categories of abuse

Physical abuse

is violence causing injury or occurring regularly throughout childhood.

This takes place when an adult:

- physically hurts or injures a child by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, biting or attempting to drown or suffocate them
- harms a child by giving them alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison
- fails to prevent physical injury or suffering.

Not all injuries will be physical abuse. An adult or older child may cause an injury accidentally but what matters is whether the child was knowingly put at risk.

Sexual abuse

occurs when someone exploits their power, authority or position and uses a child to sexually gratify their own needs.

It can take a number of forms including:

- enticing or forcing a child to engage in fondling, masturbation, oral, anal or vaginal intercourse
- making a child observe inappropriate sexual behaviour
- showing a child pornographic material or engaging them in inappropriate discussion about sexual matters.

Emotional abuse

is persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection that has, or is likely to have, a serious effect on the child's development.

It includes the following:

- persistently withholding love and affection
- constantly shouting at, threatening or demeaning the child
- persistently being over protective to the extent that the child is denied opportunities to develop
- racial, homophobic or other forms of harassment that undermine a child's self-esteem and prevent the child developing a positive self image.

Emotional abuse can be harder to classify and evidence that physical and sexual abuse.

Neglect

can occur when children do not have, for example, adequate food, health care or education.

They could suffer neglect when:

- any of their basic needs are not being met
- they are left unsupervised in situations which represent possible dangers, whether at home or elsewhere
- they are left alone when it is inappropriate for their physical or emotional development.

The effects of child abuse are wide-ranging and profound. They vary according to the type of abuse and how long it has been endured but can include:

- behavioural problems
- educational problems
- mental health problems
- relationship difficulties
- drug and alcohol problems
- suicide and other self-harm
- in extreme cases, death following abuse.

Section C Resources

Recognising child abuse

Even experienced child protection professionals do not always find it easy to recognise signs of abuse but it is important for you to have some sort of idea about some of the signs to look out for when you are concerned about a child. It is useful to look at two areas – physical signs and behavioural signs.

Physical abuse

Most children get cuts and bruises during their day-to-day activities, which makes it hard to spot when these may not be accidental.

Physical signs to look out for include:

- injuries which a child cannot explain, or explains unconvincingly
- injuries which have not been treated or treated inadequately
- injuries on parts of the body where accidental injury is unlikely (eg cheeks, chest or thighs)
- bruising which reflects hand or finger marks
- cigarette burns or human bite marks
- broken bones (particularly in children under the age of two)
- scalds, especially those with upward splash marks where hot water has been deliberately thrown over the child, or "tide marks" – rings on the child's arms, legs or body where they have been made to sit or stand in very hot water.

Behavioural signs to look out for include:

- reluctance to have their parents/carers contacted
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- running away or showing fear of going home
- flinching when approached or touched
- reluctance to get undressed for sporting or other activities where changing into other clothes is normal
- covering arms and legs when this is not usually done

- depression or moods which are out of character with the child's general behaviour
- unnatural compliance with parents or carers.

Sexual abuse

Both boys and girls can be victims of sexual abuse, it can happen at any age and it can happen to any child (including those with disabilities). Several factors make it difficult to identify including the fact it is likely to happen in private and abusers may go to great lengths to prevent discovery.

Physical signs to look out for include:

- pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal areas
- any sexually transmitted disease
- recurrent genital discharge or urinary tract infections without apparent cause
- stomach pains or discomfort when the child is walking or sitting down.

Behavioural signs to look out for include:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour
- apparent fear of someone
- running away from home
- nightmares or bed-wetting
- self-harm, self-mutilation or attempts at suicide
- abuse of drugs or other substances
- eating problems such as anorexia or bulimia
- sexualised behaviour or knowledge in young children
- sexual drawings or language
- possession of unexplained amounts of money
- taking a parental role at home and functioning beyond their age level

- not being allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- alluding to secrets which they cannot reveal
- telling other children or adults about the abuse
- reluctance to get undressed for sporting or other activities where changing into other clothes is normal.

Emotional abuse

This is also hard to identify with certainty. Some children are by nature shy but this does not mean they are being abused. Experiencing physical or sexual abuse will mean it is likely there are elements of emotional abuse present.

Physical signs to look out for include:

- a failure to grow or thrive (particularly if the child thrives when away from home)
- sudden speech disorders
- delayed development, either physical or emotional.

Behavioural signs to look out for include:

- compulsive nervous behaviour such as hair twisting or rocking
- an unwillingness or inability to play
- an excessive fear of making mistakes
- self-harm or mutilation
- reluctance to have parents/carers contacted
- an excessively high regard or level of admiration towards others, especially adults
- an excessive lack of confidence
- an excessive need for approval, attention and affection
- an inability to cope with praise.

Neglect

This is a very difficult form of abuse to recognise and is sometimes seen as less serious than other forms, but its effects can be very damaging.

Physical signs to look out for include:

- being constantly hungry and sometimes stealing food from others
- being in an unkempt state, frequently dirty or smelly
- loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- being dressed inappropriately for the weather conditions
- untreated medical conditions – not being taken for medical treatment for illnesses or injuries.

Behavioural signs to look out for include:

- being tired all the time
- frequently missing school or being late
- failing to keep hospital or medical appointments
- having few friends
- being left alone or unsupervised on a regular basis
- compulsive stealing or scavenging of food.

It can take a great deal of courage for a child to talk to an adult about what is happening and it can sometimes be hard for an adult to listen or recognise what is going on. It is important that workers and volunteers respond in an appropriate way and training or briefings should be given to everyone. It is vital that everyone who works with children is equipped to recognise signs of abuse at the earliest opportunity so that harm can be stopped and the damage can start to be repaired.

This information has been adapted from the *EduCare Child Protection Awareness Programme* (modules one and two). Further information and the opportunity to complete the four distance learning modules with the programme are available through www.safenet.org.uk This would be particularly useful for the named person to undertake.

There is also information for parents/carers about the signs of abuse in some of the booklets and leaflets included in this toolkit – these could also be useful for workers and volunteers.

Section C Resources

3. Common Assessment Framework

Your group may be asked to contribute to an assessment of a child, within the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). This is a shared assessment tool to be used across all children's services in England. It aims to help early identification of need and promote coordinated service provision.

It consists of:

- a simple pre-assessment checklist to help decide who will most benefit from a common assessment
- a three-step process – prepare, discuss, deliver – for completing the assessment
- a standard form to record (and if appropriate share) findings from the assessment.

There are four main reasons to undertake common assessments:

1. To give practitioners a holistic tool to identify a child's needs before they reach crisis point.
2. To ensure important needs aren't overlooked and reduce the scale of assessments some children have.
3. To provide a common structure to record and facilitate information sharing between practitioners.
4. To provide evidence to support requests to involve other agencies, reducing unnecessary referrals and enable specialist services to focus their resources where they are most needed.

The assessment process encourages practitioners to consider the needs of the child or young person in three main areas or domains:

1. **Development of child, baby or young person** which includes their health; emotional and social development; behavioural development; identity; family and social relationships self-care and independence skills; and learning.
2. **Parents and carers** which includes basic care, ensuring safety and protection; emotional warmth and stability; and guidance, boundaries and stimulation.

3. **Family and environmental factors** which includes family history, functioning and well-being; wider family; housing, employment and financial considerations; and social/community factors and resources.

CAF is for children and young people who require additional support to achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes (being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, achieving economic wellbeing) so most children will not need a common assessment. It does not replace a child protection assessment – if a child is at risk of harm the local safeguarding children board procedures need to be followed immediately.

A common assessment can be done at any time and is designed for use when:

- there is concern about how well a child (or unborn baby) or young person is progressing
- their needs are unclear or broader than a service can address on its own
- a common assessment would help identify the needs and provide the basis for getting other services involved.

Potential benefits of the CAF are:

- quicker service provision as a result of more appropriate specialist referrals
- better service provision due to CAF looking at the whole child and all their needs
- less repetition and duplication for the children and families due to sharing of information (with consent)
- better understanding and more effective communication amongst practitioners due to promotion of common language
- timesaving for practitioners who can build on existing CAF information rather than gather it themselves.

Organisations working with children and young people need to ensure that their staff are aware of the CAF. Depending on the type and size of organisation, it would be good if somebody is trained in completing the common assessment. At a minimum, they should know how to arrange for one to be done.

4. Sample policy statement

(taken from *Firstcheck*, NSPCC 2006³⁸)

(Group name) _____ believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

The purpose of the policy is:

- to provide protection for the children and young people who receive (Groups name's) _____ services, including the children of adult members or users
- to provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of (Group name) _____.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

5. Sample codes of behaviour

(These have been adapted from policies developed by Leonard Cheshire Disability media project and NSPCC consultancy services)

Code of Conduct For children and young people 1(a)

Introduction

This code has been developed in order to provide children and young people with advice on the behaviour that is expected of them when attending and using the facilities of the _____ Project.

This code of conduct has been shaped by the views of children and young people.

Purpose

To ensure children and young people are treated fairly by all adults working with them at the _____ Project.

Basic Principles

This code of behaviour for children and young people is intended to:

- identify acceptable behaviour for children and young people
- promote self respect and self control
- raise children and young peoples' self esteem and self confidence
- encourage individual responsibility for behaviour and outline the consequences of poor behaviour
- encourage children and young people to recognise and respect the rights of others
- encourage cooperation at all times in all situations
- promote the values of honesty, fairness and respect

- anticipate and resolve any conflict that may arise
- ensure that children and young people are aware of the point that sanctions will be put into place.

Do's

Children and young people are expected to:

- cooperate with each other
- be friendly
- listen to each other
- be helpful
- follow the rules (code of conduct, equipment use etc.)
- have good manners
- join in
- respect each others differences
- treat staff and volunteers with respect
- report concerns and worries to _____.

Don'ts

Children and young people shouldn't:

- pick on or make fun of each other
- stare at others
- yell and or shout at others
- be abusive
- use equipment to be abusive (eg, mobile phones to send nasty messages, photos without permission, nasty emails).

The Do's and Don'ts should be printed off and be made visible at all times.

Code of Conduct For children and young people 1(b)

Breach of Code of Conduct

This code of conduct is only useful if it forms part of a process for signposting children and young people into appropriate support. It is the responsibility of _____ to ensure that all children and young people attending the _____ Project are informed of this code of conduct and to confirm with them that they have seen, understand and agree to follow it. Children and young people must also be made aware of the consequences should they breach the code.

Traffic light system

Should a child or young person breach the code of conduct the most appropriate sanction for a minor or first time breach will be to remind them about the code of conduct and ask them to comply with it.



This is the green light warning

Children and young people will be given the opportunity to reflect, enabling them to plan a positive response, with support from either staff or mentors.

Having followed the above step, should the child or young person continue to exhibit inappropriate behaviour, they should be referred to the identified and appropriate member of staff who will give them a formal warning.



This is the yellow light warning

Supportive interventions may need to be identified at this stage. This action should also be recorded in the discipline book and parents/carers informed.

Any further persistent inappropriate behaviour will result in a more serious sanction being imposed (eg restriction/suspension from the project facilities).



This is the red light warning

Again supportive interventions may need to be identified at this stage. This action should also be recorded in the discipline book and parents/carers informed.

Section C Resources

Code of Conduct

For adults working with children and young people 1(a)

Introduction

This section outlines the behaviour expected of _____ Project staff, volunteers, peer leaders and staff from other organisations who engage with children and young people through the _____ Project and its activities.

[This code of conduct has also been informed by views of children and young people.]

Purpose

This code has been developed to provide advice which will not only help to protect children, but will also help identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse being made against individuals.

Following this good practice code will also help to protect the _____ Project by reducing the possibility of anyone using their role within the organisation to gain access to children in order to abuse them.

When working with children and young people for the _____ Project all staff and volunteers are considered to be acting in a position of trust. It is therefore important that staff, volunteers, peer leaders are aware that they may be seen as role models by children and must act in an appropriate manner at all times and follow the code of conduct.

All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code to _____

Staff who breach this code of conduct may be subject to _____ Project disciplinary procedures.

Any breach of this code involving a volunteer or member of staff from another agency may result in them being asked to leave the project. Serious breaches of this code may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the Police or Children's Services Department

When working with children and young people it is important to:

- always follow the _____ (organisation name) child protection policy
- listen to and respect children at all times
- always avoid favouritism
- treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice
- value and take children's contributions seriously
- always ensure equipment is used appropriately and for the purpose it was designed for
- ensure any contact with children and young people is appropriate and in relation to the work of the project
- always ensure language is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory
- follow the ICT safety policy and report any breaches
- actively involve children and young people in planning activities wherever possible
- provide examples of good conduct you wish others to follow
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse.

Code of Conduct

For adults working with children and young people 1(b)

You must not:

- patronise or treat children and young people as if they are silly
- allow allegations to go unreported
- develop inappropriate relationships such as contact with children and young people that is not a part of the work of the project and agreed with the manager or leader. Sexual relationships between any adult member of staff or volunteer and a child or young person using the project services represent a serious breach of trust and are not permissible in any circumstances
- let children and young people have your personal contact details (mobile number or address)
- use sarcasm or insensitive comments to children and young people
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- make inappropriate promises to children and young people, particularly in relation to confidentiality.

The role of parents and carers

The _____ Project welcomes and encourages parental involvement. Parents and carers are regarded as valuable partners in promoting positive behaviour and will be involved as appropriate. In the event of their child becoming the subject of behaviour sanctions, parents / carers will be informed and involved.

Issues of equality and individual needs will be addressed and supported in line with _____ Project's Equality and Diversity policy.

On the left are only sample policies and you should add points to them or change them to suit your organisation. Some other points for workers to consider are:

Adults must:

- ensure that, whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy/encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- operate within the organisation's (faith's) principles and guidance and any specific procedures.

Adults must not:

- make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people
- jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- rely on your good name or that of the organisation (faith or charity) to protect you
- believe "it could never happen to me"
- take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach.

6. Sample counter-bullying policy

(Developed and adapted using Kidscape anti-bullying policy for schools 2005)

Statement of intent

_____ is committed to creating an atmosphere within _____ activities/services for children and young people that explicitly acknowledges that any bullying is unacceptable. All workers/staff/volunteers must have measures in place to prevent and/or respond to observed or reported bullying.

Where adult to child bullying is suspected, observed or reported it must be managed as a concern about an adult's behaviour within safeguarding procedures.

This Policy statement has been agreed by the Trustees/management committee of _____ and is mandatory for all activities/services supporting children.

This Policy operates in conjunction with:

Group/organisation _____ standards

And the following organisation/group policies: (for example)

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Code of conduct
- Complaints
- Health and Safety

Guidelines

Definition: Bullying is deliberate, offensive, intimidating, malicious, abusive or insulting behaviour which makes the individual feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable.

Bullying can be:

- emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (eg, taking another's belongings, threatening gestures, abusive notes or graffiti)

- physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- homophobic – because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- discriminatory – about disability, gender, age or other differences
- verbal – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- cyber – all areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse
- mobile – threats by text messaging and calls
- misuse of associated technology ie, camera and video facilities.

Why is it important to respond to bullying?

Bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, cause them significant harm (including self-harm).

Staff will encourage children to reduce incidences of the above behaviours by:

- role modelling acceptable behaviour
- teaching appropriate methods of communication
- offering motivation for the individual to work with others
- building tolerance of group situations
- offering rewards for appropriate behaviour
- developing appropriate assertiveness skills

- ensuring each child is aware of the complaints procedure and how to access support
- having adults or peer mentors who are someone to turn to, and can be trusted to take action
- considering environmental or programme changes.

Any child who has been subjected to bullying-type behaviour will be supported, and staff will undertake a risk assessment to ensure that the victim, other children and the perpetrator are kept safe.

Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to staff.
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff.
3. In serious cases parents/carers should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.

Outcomes

- 1) The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place.
- 2) In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion from the group will be considered.
- 3) If possible, the young people will be reconciled.

- 4) After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Prevention

We will use these methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- writing a set of group rules
- signing a behaviour contract
- writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a group
- making up role-plays
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters.

Signs and symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs.

Monitoring and review

The _____ manager is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the Policy and Guidelines via staff observations and feedback and consultation with children and their parents/legal guardians and colleagues.

This policy will be reviewed on _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Section B Plan of action

Step 1 – Check it out

Exercise A – Getting a picture of your group

For some groups, children may not be the main focus of the activity. For example, the main focus might be arts, music, drama, worship, or managing an illness or disability. Your group may be for adults, which also provides activities for children, like a summer school or weekend club. You may already be doing many positive things which keep children safe. So it's helpful to think through:

- what contact your group has with children
- what you're doing right – good practice
- what you're not doing right – gaps and risks.

Use these points as headings and write down your ideas.

Exercise B - Mapping your contact with children

Think about the main activities or services that your group provides for children, and the other ways in which it comes into contact with them.

It might be helpful to draw a diagram showing the different ways that children have contact with your group. Write down what they are (for example, face-to-face, every day, once a week, occasionally or rarely, via email or internet) and the different activities they relate to.

Also think about the children's:

- age
- disability
- gender
- religion
- ethnic background.

Using this example below as a guide you can make sure your safeguards are developed to meet the needs of your group.



For some groups, children may not be the main focus of the activity.

Exercise C – What you do well

Community groups are usually very committed to protecting children. There are likely to be many things that you already do that keep them safe. They may not be obviously linked to child protection or written down formally, but if you have an example of good practice use it and share it. Think about the strengths of your group and write them down.

Your headings could cover:

- the way children are cared for and valued
- understanding of children's specific needs (eg age, ability, etc)
- communication with all children and asking them what they think
- the contact/involvement of the local community
- the staff's commitment and attitude to children
- the way the group is managed
- existing policies and procedures
- staff training
- how staff are recruited.

You could add more as you think of them.

As you develop your safeguards, remember to include all the good things you do. Make sure you take account of children for whom English is not a first language or who use different communication methods, such as Braille or sign language.

Exercise D – All round checklist

Here is a checklist of the main safeguards to have in place. You may have other essential safeguards specific to your group or activity. You can add them in the spaces on the next page. Think about the safeguarding issues that might come up because of the types of children you have contact with, or the types of activities they are involved in.



For example:

- deaf or disabled children
- activities involving changing clothes, for example dance costumes
- one-to-one contact
- competitive activities where there is an opportunity for favoritism.

This guide may not have all the resources to develop safeguards for specific areas you identify, but it will provide you with signposts and other references that will help.

There are likely to be many things that you already do that keep them safe.

Section B Plan of action

All round checklist

| Does your group have? | Yes | No | Action needed and when? |
|---|-----|----|-------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A child protection policy and a procedure for what to do if there are concerns about a child's welfare. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A named person for dealing with concerns or allegations of abuse and step-by-step guidance on what action to take. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A rigorous recruitment and selection process for paid staff and volunteers who work with children. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A written code of behaviour which outlines good practice when working with children. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A training plan and regular opportunities for all those in contact with children to learn about child protection and about health and safety. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A whistle-blowing policy. This is an open and well-publicised way for adults and young people to voice any concerns about abusive or unethical behaviour. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information for young people and for parents or carers about the child protection policy and where to go for help. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A protective culture that puts children's interests first – children must feel confident that if they have concerns someone will listen and take them seriously. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guidance on taking children away on trips and on internet use: new technology safety, guidance on use of photographs, video, digital equipment and websites, including chatrooms. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policies on bullying and on health and safety. You will need processes for dealing with complaints and for taking disciplinary action where necessary. | | | |
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Step 2 – Who is going to take the lead?

There are two important roles in safeguarding children:

1. Leading in the development of safeguards, for example, by using this guide.
2. Being the named person.

One person could undertake both of these roles in your group or it could be shared. This is fine but the most important thing is that someone takes on the responsibilities. If you can identify a deputy to cover absences, this is even better. This section will help you decide who will take the lead and make sure safeguards are put in place.

A named person

It is good practice for all groups, however small, to identify at least one person to be responsible for dealing with concerns or worries about children. Everyone in the group should know who this is and how to contact them. In many smaller groups this person is often the leader, manager or officer-in-charge.

The named person's role is to:

- receive and record information from anyone who has concerns
- assess the information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information when they need to
- consult initially with a statutory child protection agency, such as the local children's social care teams (previously called social services and education departments), or the NSPCC Helpline 0800 800 5000, to talk about any doubts
- make a formal referral to a statutory child protection agency or the police.

It is not the named person's responsibility to decide whether a child has been abused or not.

This is the task of children's social care who have the legal responsibility, or of the NSPCC, which also has powers to help with child protection concerns. It is, however, everybody's responsibility to ensure that concerns are shared and appropriate action is taken.

The named person should know who is responsible by law for child protection in their area.

This means they should be in contact with:

- the local children's social care team
- police
- education and health authorities.

They should also know about the role of the local safeguarding children board (LSCB), and the existence of local child protection procedures.

The named person needs to know the relevant contact numbers and addresses of the statutory agencies in their area. If concerns arise, for example, when away on a trip, you should make contact with local agencies, whose details will be in the phone directory. Children's social care have an out-of-hours duty team who can be contacted at any time.

The named person should know what their responsibilities are, and have a basic awareness of child protection. They need to complete child protection awareness training, and read important documents. A useful starting place will be to complete the EduCare Child Protection Awareness programme online. The named person will also find information and support at www.safenetwork.org.uk



Section B Plan of action

Step 3 – Getting support

Thinking about putting safeguards in place can seem like a huge task. So this guidance breaks it down into steps that can be taken one by one. You may run your group by yourself, or with other volunteers who are all pressed for time. But, as with any task, it helps to get the right people involved. If you are in a large group, make sure you talk to representatives from every section, as child protection procedures affect everyone.

Depending on their size, some organisations may form a working group. It will meet to discuss what needs to be done, or to read and comment on draft documents.

The working group might include:

- trustees or the management committee
- leaders
- people in direct care of children
- employers
- people responsible for the building's health and safety
- people responsible for organising events, outings or residential trips.

There may be people in your group who know about child protection through their job or experience. If they can become involved it will be a great help. There are also other local people you could ask to help.

They might include:

- the local authority children's social care department (previously social services and education departments)
- the local safeguarding children board (LSCB)
- other named child protection professionals in education, health or the police
- a grant-making body you work with
- your local CVS or VCS organisation
- local NSPCC teams or Safe Network www.safenetwork.org.uk

They may not always be able to help, but the important thing is to keep asking. There are other resources, books, and guidance that can help as well. See Section C (page 18) and www.safenetwork.org.uk for more information.

There may be people in your group who know about child protection through their job or experience. If they can become involved it will be a great help.



Step 4 – Writing a policy statement

A policy statement makes it clear to staff, parents and children what the group thinks about safeguarding, and what it will do to keep children safe. This section tells you what the purpose of a policy statement is and what should be in it.

A policy statement sets out:

- what the group wishes to say about keeping children safe
- why the group is taking these steps
- how, in broad terms, the group is going to meet this responsibility
- who it applies and relates to eg, all staff and volunteers, children up to 18 years old
- how the group will put the policy into action and how it links to other relevant policies and procedures eg, taking photographs and videos, internet use, recruitment.

It should be no longer than one or two sides of A4 paper.

The policy statement should also:

- identify the group, its purpose and function
- recognise the needs of children from minority ethnic groups and disabled children and the barriers they may face, especially around communication
- briefly state the main law and guidance that supports the policy.

Your group will also need an action plan that states how you will ensure that everyone, including children, is aware of and understands your safeguards. This needs to explain how you will tell everyone about the safeguards, including disabled people and people who use different languages. There is a sample policy statement in Section C (page 41).



Your group will also need an action plan that states how you will ensure that everyone, including children, is aware of and understands your safeguards.

Section B Plan of action

Step 5 – Writing procedures

A child protection procedure is a set of detailed guidelines that tells everyone what to do if they are concerned about a child. It is very important to have clear instructions to ensure that there is a speedy and effective response for dealing with concerns about a child or young person.

Think about the ways in which worries may be raised, as this will help the procedures to work well.

For instance:

- a child may tell you about something that has upset or harmed them, or that has happened to another child
- someone else might report that a child has told them, or that they strongly believe, that a child has been or is being harmed in some way
- a child might show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation
- a child's behaviour may suggest he or she is being abused
- the behaviour or attitude of one of the workers towards a child worries you or makes you feel uncomfortable in some way
- you witness worrying behaviour from one child to another.

All children have the right to be protected.

Children who have a disability or come from a different ethnic or cultural group can easily become victims of discrimination and prejudice. Any discrimination is harmful to a child's wellbeing, and may mean that they don't obtain the services they need to keep them safe.

Your group needs to make sure that all children have the same protection. In trying to get help for children you will work with other professionals who might make the wrong assumptions because of prejudice or ignorance.

You and your staff know the children you work with and must make sure any discrimination is challenged so that disabled children or children from different ethnic or cultural groups find the services they need.

Our understanding about the impact of bullying on children increases each year and it is vital that groups have clear guidelines about bullying, the consequences of bullying and support available to those involved. There are times when bullying can reach the threshold where children are being abused or at risk of being abused. It is the group's responsibility to act appropriately to ensure this is dealt with effectively.

You will need to have the procedures written in different languages for anyone whose preferred language is not English, or in other formats for disabled people, for example Braille or large text.

It is very important to have clear instructions to ensure that there is a speedy and effective response for dealing with concerns about a child or young person.

