

# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

<b>Purpose:</b>	<b>To inform Discovery Initiative Association staff, members, facilitators and Volunteers of their responsibilities when working with children and vulnerable adults</b>
<b>Applies to:</b>	<b>Discovery Initiative staff, Members, Facilitators and volunteers including who work with children and vulnerable adults</b>
<b>Date of Approval:</b>	<b>01 March 2010</b>
<b>Proposed Date of Review:</b>	<b>01 March 2011</b>

## Background

1 In recent years there has been increasing concern about the safety and welfare of both children and young adults. Youth Clubs have traditionally considered the welfare of under-18s as part of their Duty of Care obligations. There are a number of statutory and other provisions relating to child safeguarding that could be applied to Discovery Initiative. In preparing this document, the Board of Trustees of Discovery Initiative have take into account the following:

- The Education Act (2002) Section 175
- The Children Act (1989 and amendments)
- The Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard children 2006
- Safeguarding of the Vulnerable Adult guidance 2006
- Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adult Schemes

- 3 ***The Children Act 1989 states the legal definition of a child is “a person under the age of 18”.***
- ***Section 115(4) of the Police Act 1997 states that a person can be considered to be vulnerable if they are “substantially dependent upon others in performing basic physical***

***functions, or his ability to communicate with those providing services, or to communicate with others, is severely impaired, and, as a result, he would be incapable of protecting himself from assault or other physical abuse, or there is a potential danger that his will or moral well-being may be subverted or overpowered”.***

- 2 As a consequence Discovery Initiative has taken the view that in the interests of good practice there should be a clear policy and associated practices to guide work/activities with under-18s and vulnerable adults.

## **Principles**

- 4 Discovery Initiative believes that children/young people have rights as individuals and should be treated with dignity and respect. This Youth Club will strive to provide a safe environment for any young people (under 18) in its care while they are at the Discovery Initiative Youth Club, visiting the Youth Club or participating in Youth Club activities.
- 6 This policy and procedures are based on the following principles:
- The welfare of young people and vulnerable adults is of primary concern
  - All young people and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identify have the right to safeguarding from abuse
  - It is everyone’s responsibility to report any concerns about abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, and the responsibility of the Social Services Department and the Police to conduct, where appropriate a joint investigation
  - All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
  - All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

## **Definition of Abuse**

- 7 Abuse is any behaviour towards a person that deliberately or unknowingly causes harm, endangers life or violates their rights.

Abuse may be:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Psychological – repeatedly being made to feel unhappy, humiliated, afraid or devalued by others
- Financial or material – stealing or denying access to money or possessions
- Neglect
- Discriminatory – abuse motivated by discriminatory attitudes towards race, religion, gender, disability or cultural background

## **Responsibility**

- 8 All Youth Club staff, volunteers, facilitators and service users are required to take shared responsibility for the safeguarding and safety of any young people and vulnerable adults on site. They must be aware of and abide by the Youth Club's Code of Good Practice.
- 9 All Youth Club staff, volunteers, facilitators and service users are in a position of trust, in particular those staff, volunteers/facilitators who teach, support, and guide or in any way interact with the young people and vulnerable adults visiting the youth club.
- 10 The managerial responsibility for any programme or activity rests with the individual who is directing or organising the activity. This person is expected to:
- Ensure that the activity is planned, organised and delivered in accordance with the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy
  - Provide a 'safeguarding children' Safeguarding Statement
  - Arrange the checking, training, induction and guidance for all staff, volunteers and facilitators
  - Inform the Youth Clubs' Designated Safeguarding Officer and complete the appropriate documentation.
  - Complete a health and safety risk assessment.
- 11 The Club Coordinator has responsibility for the oversight of the Club's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy with delegated responsibility to relevant members of the Management Team.

- 12 The Youth Club expects all parents (either one of the young people or from the general public) who bring children onto campus to abide by the Youth Club's Policy on Accompanied Children in youth club Activities, all safety instructions issued by the Youth Club and the Youth Club Code of Conduct.

### **Responsibilities on the part of the Youth Club**

- 14 All Youth Club staff, volunteers, facilitators are in a position of trust, in particular those Club staff, volunteers, facilitator who teach, support, guide or in any way interact with students, children and vulnerable adults. It is incumbent all Club staff, volunteers, facilitators to be aware of this and to act accordingly at all times.
- 15 The Youth Club already has processes in place to check the suitability of some staff, volunteers and facilitators working directly with children and young people. Some staff, volunteers and facilitators across the some staff, volunteers and facilitators Youth Club will be in regular or significant occasional contact with under-18s or vulnerable adults in the course of their led activities or other work. The Youth Club is committed to ensuring that all such staff, volunteers and facilitators have satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) enhanced checks.
- 16 The Youth Club will additionally ensure that all external helpers, mentors, etc who are in regular or significant occasional contact with under-18s or vulnerable adults must have had a satisfactory enhanced CRB check undertaken by the Youth Club before allowing them to work with children or vulnerable adults.
- 17 A 'satisfactory' check is defined as having no criminal convictions (including cautions, reprimands and final warnings) relevant to the post.

All Youth Club staff, volunteers and facilitators or helpers still employed to look after children must report any subsequent criminal convictions to the Centre Coordinator. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action being taken.

## **Establishing a Caring Environment**

- 18 All Youth Club staff, volunteers and facilitators are responsible for making Discovery Initiative youth club and centre's a safe and caring environment for all including young people and vulnerable adults
- 19 A Caring Environment is one:
- in which the health, safety and welfare of young people has been assessed and catered for.
  - in which staff, volunteers and facilitators are alive to the possibility of abuse and take measures to prevent that possibility.
  - where there is a sound and known reporting system for any incident
  - where staff take reasonable and practical precautions to avoid any suspicions of abuse being brought against them.

## **Child Safeguarding Procedures**

- 20 Where under-18s are concerned there are statutory responsibilities for any Youth Club to follow regarding the safety of young people.
- 21 The Discovery Initiative has a Designated Safeguarding Officer to be the lead person with regard to child safeguarding issues. The Designated Safeguarding Officer is The Centre Coordinator.
- 22 All Youth Club staff, volunteers and facilitators must contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer if they have any cause to believe any young person is involved in any activity in the Youth Club covered by this policy is in any way at risk. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will follow the relevant procedures.
- 23 Records will be kept of all such incidents and their outcomes and held by the Designated Safeguarding Officer in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- 24 All Youth Club staff, volunteers and facilitators should be aware that in accordance with statutory requirements where child safeguarding issues are involved, it is not possible to offer confidentiality to a person under 18 as any disclosures must be reported.

## **Vulnerable Adults**

- 25 Within the Youth Club context there are not the same statutory provisions which can be easily adopted with regard to vulnerable adults. However, the same principles apply, as above.
- 26 Where possible the Youth Club will identify vulnerable adults and ensure that there are appropriate support measures in place. This is most likely to be when the young person is being registered as a user through the admission process, or young person presents to, or is referred to, Center management and clearly has mental health difficulties or a disability that puts them into the legal definition of 'vulnerable'.
- 27 Any member of Youth Club staff, volunteer and facilitator across Discovery Initiative Youth Club with concerns regarding a young adult whom they believe or know to be vulnerable must contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

## **Role of the Youth Club's Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Officer**

- 28 The role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer is:
- To receive information about all events / activities for the young people or vulnerable adults, and plans that indicate how safeguarding will be covered.
  - To receive information from any staff, volunteers, facilitators, children, parents or carers who have child safeguarding concerns and record it.
  - Assess the information promptly and carefully, clarifying and obtaining more information about the matter as appropriate
  - Consult initially with a statutory child safeguarding agency to test out any doubts or uncertainty
  - Make a formal referral to a statutory child safeguarding agency or the police
  - Record statements from any member of staff, volunteer or facilitator who feels that a young person has indulged in inappropriate behaviour or made sexually suggestive comments or approaches.

## **Reporting and Monitoring Procedures**

- 29 All members of staff, volunteers and facilitators working closely with children have to be alert to possibilities of abuse and any concerns about the behaviour of any adult with respect to that child should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will decide what further action to take.
- 30 It is the duty of staff, facilitators and volunteers to inform only not to investigate – this is the role of the Police and Social Services.
- 31 If staff, facilitators and volunteers in the course of their work / volunteering at the Youth Club Centre, have a child safeguarding issue brought to their notice, this must be treated as a priority over all other work.
- 32 Guidance with regard to a specific incident may be obtained from the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- 33 An oral, and then written report should be provided to the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will keep a confidential record of any such incidents.

## **Allegations of abuse or inappropriate behaviour involving staff, volunteer and facilitator**

- 34 Allegations involving a member of staff, facilitator or volunteer and a person under-18 or a vulnerable adult should be reported to the Centre Coordinator and to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- 35 Consideration will be given as to whether the situation falls within the definition of abuse (see paragraph 7).

## **Training**

- 36 In accordance with good practice the Youth Club will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Officer, officers deputed to act on her behalf and other staff, facilitator or volunteer likely to be in regular contact with under-18s and vulnerable adults receive appropriate training. This will also include external helper in similar roles. The following topics must be covered:
  - a. Health and safety issues
  - b. Handling a disclosure
  - c. Reporting an allegation
  - d. Confidentiality
  - e. Code of Practice and Code of Conduct
- 37 The Youth Club will also provide information to raise awareness to ensure that all staff understands what to do if a young person or visitor covered by this policy discloses abuse or any other safeguarding issue.

### **Relationships with young people aged 16-18**

- 38 It should be noted that whilst a young person can consent to sexual activity once they reach the age of 16, the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000 makes it a criminal offence for a person to engage in any kind of sexual activity with a person under 18 where the adult is in a position of trust.

### **Media Relations**

- 39 For any youth club activity involving young people, parents or guardians must be given the opportunity to refuse permission for photographs, videos or other images to be made of their children and for the children to be interviewed by press, broadcasters or other media.

### **Health and Safety**

- 40 All users of University College Services must be made aware of Health and Safety requirements / policy and be prepared to abide by them.

### **Code of Practice for Staff**

- 41 All staff, Facilitators and Volunteers must be familiar with the Youth Clubs's Code of Practice for Staff.

### **Code of Conduct for Young People**

- 42 All staff must be familiar with the Youth Club's Code of Conduct
- 43 Parents/carers of children participating in the Youth Clubs activities must be made aware of the Code of Conduct

### **Data Safeguarding**

- 44 It should be noted that although technically a "child", consent is still required from young people in the same way as for an adult with regard to matters of data protection. All Staff, Facilitators and Volunteers must familiarize themselves with the data protection policy.



## **Review**

46 This policy and procedures will be regularly monitored and reviewed:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults or any changes within the Youth Club.
- Following any issues or concerns raised about the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults within the Youth Club
- In all other circumstances, at least annually.

## **Related Youth Club Policies**

- Admissions Policy
- Risk Assessment Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy
- Facilitators, Volunteers and staff policies relation to Conduct
- Data Protection
- Disclosure of a Disability
- Mental Health Policy
- Whistle blowing Policy
- Accompanied children in Youth Centre activities

**Signed by the Coordinator  
for Discovery Initiative**

– 01/03/2010