



YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CONNEXIONS

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Safeguarding Children Guidelines

1. Introduction

We aim to safeguard the welfare of children participating in **Youth & Community Connections** activities. In order to give children protection from potential and actual abuse it is important that all concerned have a basic understanding of the issues involved and that procedures are in place that are understandable and easy to implement by anyone providing a service to children at **Youth & Community Connections**.

Youth & Community Connections is committed to creating a surrounding that enables children to learn, develop and express themselves in a safe, understanding and encouraging environment. Parents trust us to look after their children, to care for them, to give encouragement and to keep them safe. We need to ensure that we honour their trust.

2. Background

Child abuse is a difficult issue and presents challenges to all that provide services for Children and many people feel uncomfortable with the subject. It is not easily recognisable, and individuals often fear reading too much into a situation. Many children experience minor accidents causing injuries, but there may be occasions where you are concerned over the nature and frequency of injury. This document contains information on some of the signs that may give cause for concern.

3. What Is Child Abuse

Do not ever think that you could never be placed in the position of reporting child abuse.

The generic term 'child abuse' is used to describe various ways in which children are harmed or mistreated. There are many different ways in which children can be harmed. All with a common factor that the child feels undervalued and worthless.

Abuse can happen anywhere, but research indicates that the perpetrators of such abuse. are likely to be known and trusted by the child.

4. Types of Abuse

- Physical Abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

- Emotional Abuse

The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve:

- **Telling a child, they are worthless, unloved or inadequate**
- **Valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person**
- **Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child**
- **Overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning**
- **A child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another**
- **Serious bullying**
- **Causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger**
- **Exploitation or corruption of a child**
- **Neglect**

Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development. Neglect may occur:

- **During pregnancy as a result of substance abuse**
- **Failure to provide adequate food and clothing**
- **Failing to provide shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment**
- **Failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger**
- **Failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate Caregivers)**
- **Failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment**
- **Discriminatory Abuse**

Discriminatory Abuse includes racist, religious and sexist abuse, plus abuse based on a Person's disability

5. Effects and Indications of Abuse

The effects of child abuse can be devastating, especially if children are left unprotected. Or do not have the support to cope with that abuse.

Indications that a child may be being abused include:

- **Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries**
- **An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent**
- **The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him or her**
- **Someone else (child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another Child**
- **Unexplained changes in behaviour or emotions such as becoming very quiet, Withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper**
- **Inappropriate sexual awareness**

- **Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour, sexually explicit talk inappropriate to the Child's age**
- **Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would Normally be expected**
- **Difficulty in making friends**
- **Uncharacteristic eating disorders, depression and suicide attempts**
- **The child may become withdrawn, introverted and depressed and have low self Esteem and lack of confidence**

6. What Should You Do If You Suspect Abuse Is Taking Place?

If any member of an organisation is concerned that abuse may occur or has occurred, they must refer the matter immediately to the Safeguarding Children Champion who will decide whether or not to report the matter further. If it is felt that further investigation is necessary in order to protect the child, the matter must be referred to Social Care. Professionals can contact Social Care for advice regarding concerns without giving personal details.

In the event of referral to Social Care, copies of all relevant correspondence, notes of dialogue, diagrams of any injury witnessed must be passed to the coordinator for filing. It is very important that any concerns on a child's safety are logged.

Safeguarding Children Procedure

- There will be a named person for safeguarding children who will be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the safeguarding of children.
- All staff and volunteers will be carefully selected and vetted to try to ensure they do not pose a risk to children. Those staff and volunteers having contact with children will be checked through the Criminal Records Bureau at the appropriate level.
- All staff and volunteers will receive information and basic training in safe conduct and what to do if they have concerns about a child. This will include information on recognising where there are concerns about a child, where to get advice and what to do if no one seems to have taken their concerns seriously.
- We will endeavour to make this organisation a safe and caring place for children to be by having a code of conduct for all staff, volunteers, and users. This will be given to all staff, volunteers and users and they will be expected to comply with it.
- Any information given to users about activities of the organisation will include information about the Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure. Parents and Carers of any children using supervised activities for children will be given specific information about the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.

7. Designated Safeguarding Children Champion

- This organisation will have a dedicated person to take responsibility for Safeguarding Children matters.
 - They will be selected by consultation with the Youth and Community Connexions Management Team, identifying experience and relevant training in relation to child protection issues and safeguarding children.
 - Because of their key role in keeping children safe enhanced level CRB checks will be undertaken, and 2 references taken up.

8. Their role is to;

- Ensure the organisation's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures are followed.
- Ensure they know how to make contact with social care and police staff responsible for dealing with safeguarding children concerns both during and after office hours.
- Report any concerns to social care or the police. (N.B. Urgent concerns should be reported immediately by those aware of them even if the designated person is not available, and it is the role of the Safeguarding Champion to ensure all staff and volunteers know how to do this.)
- Act as a source of advice on all safeguarding children matters and seek further advice and guidance from Bedfordshire LSCB as needed.
- Ensure that a record is kept of any concerns about a child or adult and of any conversation or referrals to statutory agencies.
- Ensure that any such record is kept safely and securely.

Youths & Community Connections will undertake to offer all staff relevant and appropriate training in regard to Safeguarding Children (Child Protection) issues in order to support the process outlined this policy and the staff Code of Conduct (see next section) and any relevant guidance.

All NYCC staff will be given a copy of the Safeguarding Children (Child Protection) Policy, Code of Conduct and guidance notes within their initial induction. All staff is responsible for reading this information and clarifying any points they do not understand or feel unable to carry out.

Such discussions should take place with the named person for Safeguarding Children or Line Manager as appropriate. NYCC will undertake to provide ongoing and appropriate Safeguarding Children (Child Protection) training for all Northside staff as part of the regular staff training schedule. This will be undertaken alongside staff training in other key areas of NYCC.

Detailed Code of Behaviour for All Staff and Volunteers

Always remember that while you are caring for other people's children you are in a Position of trust and your responsibilities to them and the organisation must be uppermost in your mind at all times.

Do Not:

- Use any kind of physical punishment or chastisement such as smacking or hitting
- Smoke in front of any child
- Use non-prescribed drugs or be under the influence of alcohol
- Behave in a way that frightens or demeans any child
- Use any racist, sexist, discriminatory or offensive language
- Invite a child to your home or arrange to see them outside the set activity times
- Engage in any sexual activity (this would include using sexualised language) with a child you meet through your duties or start a personal relationship with them, this would be an abuse of trust
- Engage in rough or physical games, including horseplay
- Let allegations a child makes go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon

- Rely upon good nature to protect you or believe “it could never happen to me”
- Give children presents or personal items
- (Exceptions to this could be a custom such as: buying children a small birthday token or leaving present, help to a family in need such as equipment to enable them to participate in an activity.

Both types of gifts should come from the organisation and from a professional capacity and be agreed with the Named Person for Safeguarding Children and the child’s parent/carer. Similarly, do not accept gifts yourself other than small

Do:

- **Exercise caution about being alone with a child. In situations where this is unavoidable, ensure another worker or volunteer knows what you are doing and where you are.**
- **All staff, volunteers, trustees and young leaders over the age of 18 we need to do an enhanced DBS check.**
- **Ensure that any physical contact is open and initiated by the child’s needs, e.g. for a hug when upset or help with toileting. Always prompt children to carry out personal care themselves and if they cannot manage ask if they would like help**
- **Talk explicitly to children about their right to be kept safe from harm**
- **Listen to children and take every opportunity to raise their self-esteem**
- **Work as a team with your co-workers/volunteers. Agree with them what behaviour you expect from children and be consistent in enforcing it**
 - **Remember that if you have to speak to a child about their behaviour, you are challenging ‘what they did’, not ‘who they are’**
 - **Make sure you have read the Safeguarding Children Procedure and Policy and that you feel confident that you know how to recognise when a child may be suffering harm, how to handle any disclosure and how to report any concerns**
 - **Seek advice and support from your colleagues and your designated Champion for Safeguarding Children**
 - **Be clear with anyone disclosing any matter that could concern the safety and well-being of a child that you cannot guarantee to keep this information to yourself**
- **Seek opportunities for training**
- **Where possible encourage parents to take responsibility for their own children**
 - **Make sure you are aware of your organisation’s Confidentiality Policy and Bedfordshire LSCB Information Sharing Protocol.**

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

Our Safeguarding/Welfare Officer

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