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**Human Resources**

# **Safeguarding Policy**

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## **1. Introduction and Purpose**

Safeguarding is a broad term which covers actions undertaken to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, protecting them from harm.

The policy sets out the expected behaviours and responsibilities in preventing and protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from physical, emotional, sexual or financial abuse and neglect whilst they are in the care of the Company staff.

The Company will in its operations ensure that the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults is prioritised. This is irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, nationality or country of origin.

This policy applies to all staff, sub-contractors and volunteers.

## **2. Employee Responsibilities**

- To follow the guidance outlined in this policy and to promote good practice.
- To make themselves aware of the designated safeguarding officer at their work establishment (school).
- To be aware of different types of abuse and to immediately report any concerns of abuse or poor practice to the line manager and the designated safeguarding officer.
- To keep professional boundaries and avoid personal relationships with children and vulnerable adults. This includes not being friends on social media networks, taking pictures or contacting child and vulnerable adults via personal phone or email account.
- Not to promise complete confidentiality if a child or vulnerable adult makes a disclosure and asks for the information to be kept secret. Member of staff should explain that they will need to report this to their line manager and designated safeguarding officer to keep the child or vulnerable adult safe.

## **3. Employer Responsibilities**

- To operate safe recruitment procedures and make sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff working with children or vulnerable adults.
- To promptly investigate any suspicions or allegations of abuse against members of staff.
- To provide appropriate safeguarding training for all members of staff working with children and vulnerable adults.
- To keep abreast with safeguarding developments and legislation and keep regular reviews of safeguarding policy.
- To work in partnerships with other agencies, schools and safeguarding team.
- To provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

#### **4. Recognising the Signs of Abuse**

Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly. Abuse may be a single act or repeated acts. It is important that all staff understand their responsibilities towards safeguarding and able to recognise the signs of abuse and neglect and what to do if they have a concern.

Children/adults with special educational needs and disabilities may face additional safeguarding challenges, where signs of abuse or neglect may be attributed to the person's disability. Staff who work with children and/or adults who have special educational needs will need to be extra vigilant when observing and reporting injuries and changes in behaviour or mood.

#### **5. Types of Abuse**

Neglect:

- Persistent failure to meet a child's or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, including medication, food or warmth, ignoring medical or physical care needs. This is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's or vulnerable adult's health or development.

Physical Abuse:

- Deliberate physical harm to children or vulnerable adults or any other form of harm which causes illness in a child or vulnerable person. This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning and scalding otherwise causing physical harm.

Sexual Abuse:

- Forcing or manipulating a child or vulnerable person to take part in sexual activities, inappropriate touching, indecent assault, exposure to pornographic material.

Sexual Exploitation:

- Child sexual exploitation occurs when a child or young person, or another person, receives "something" (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of the child/young person performing sexual activities, or another person performing sexual activities on the child/young person.

Emotional Abuse:

- Persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional wellbeing and/or development. May include bullying, belittling, name calling, threats of harm, intimidation, isolation.

#### **6. Disabled children**

When working with children with disabilities, employees need to be aware that additional possible indicators of abuse and/or neglect may also include:

- A bruise in a site that may not be of concern on an ambulant child such as the shin, maybe of concern on a non-mobile child

- Not getting enough help with feeding leading to malnourishment
- Poor toileting arrangements
- Lack of stimulation
- Unjustified and/or excessive use of restraint
- Rough handling, extreme behaviour modification such as deprivation of medication, food or clothing, disabling wheelchair batteries
- Unwillingness to try to learn a child's means of communication
- Ill-fitting equipment, for example, calipers.
- Misappropriation of a child's finances; or
- Inappropriate invasive procedures.

### **7. If a Child or Vulnerable Adult Tells you about the Abuse:**

- Stay calm.
- Do not communicate shock, anger or embarrassment.
- Reassure the child. Tell them you are pleased that they are speaking to you.
- Tell her/him that you believe them. Children very rarely lie about abuse; but s/he may have tried to tell others and not been heard or believed.
- Tell the child that it is not her/his fault.
- Encourage the child to talk but do not ask "leading questions" or press for information.
- Listen and remember.
- Check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you.
- Praise the child for telling you. Communicate that s/he has a right to be safe and protected.
- Do not tell the child that what s/he experienced is dirty, naughty or bad.
- It is inappropriate to make any comments about the alleged offender.
- Be aware that the child may retract what s/he has told you. It is essential to record in writing, all you have heard, though not necessarily at the time of disclosure.
- At the end of the conversation, tell the child again who you are going to tell and why that person or those people need to know.
- As soon as you can afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's own language. Include any questions you may have asked. Do not add any opinions or interpretations.
- If the disclosure relates to a physical injury do not photograph the injury but record in writing as much detail as possible.

### **8. Training**

All staff working with children or vulnerable adults will receive mandatory safeguarding awareness training and how to recognise symptoms of abuse. Refresher training will be provided on regular basis and updated in line with changes in the law.

## **9. Safer Recruitment**

The Company is committed to equality of opportunity for all job applicants and aims to select people for employment based on their skills, abilities, experience, knowledge and, where appropriate, qualifications and training.

The Company will comply with its legal obligations in relation to recruiting people to work with children or vulnerable adults.

Once the organisation selects a successful job applicant, the following pre-employment checks will be carried out:

- a. Two satisfactory references;
- b. Occupational Health pre-employment screening;
- c. DBS check (it will be renewed at least every 3 years);
- d. Identity and right to work in the UK;
- e. Evidence of qualifications applicable to the role.

Where the job applicant refuses to agree to a DBS application or a DBS check shows a disclosure, but the job applicant refuses to allow the organisation to see the DBS certificate, he/she will be treated as not having satisfactorily completed the DBS check.

No job applicant will be permitted to commence employment with the organisation until all specified conditions are satisfied.

### **Recruitment of Ex-Offenders**

If the post a person is applying for is exempt from the Rehabilitations of Offenders Act 1974 then all convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as 'spent', must be declared.

If the candidate is successful at interview, and the post he/she is applying for is exempt from the Rehabilitations of Offenders Act 1974 then we will require the candidate to obtain an Enhanced Certificate of Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and we administer this process. Where the person is currently employed by the Company and have obtained an Enhanced Disclosure with the Company for the relevant workforce within the last 3 years, it may not be necessary to apply for another Disclosure. All DBS checks will be renewed every 3 years.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar the person from working with the Company. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offence(s). The Company will ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offence(s) or other matter that might be relevant to the position. However, the protection of children or vulnerable adults will be the organisation's primary concern.

## **Interview**

The Company will ensure that anyone making appointment decisions has the necessary information, guidance and support to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of any offences.

If the candidate is invited for interview for a position working with, or with access to sensitive information relating to children, young people or vulnerable adults we shall assess issues in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, including:

- f. Motivation to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- g. Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children, young people vulnerable adult;
- h. The ability to deal with challenging behaviour;
- i. Attitude to the use of authority and maintaining discipline;
- j. Ability to understand, speak and write English to a standard sufficient to be able to communicate with clients and relevant to the duties of the role.

## **10. False Information**

Providing false information is an offence and could result in person's application being rejected or his/her dismissal from employment if the person is appointed. The matter may also be referred to the police.

## **11. Other Policies**

This policy is further supported by the following policies:

- a. Social Media Policy
- b. Recruitment and Selection Policy
- c. Equality Policy
- d. Procedure for Managing Disciplinary and Code of Conduct
- e. Whistleblowing Policy