

Knucklas and District Community Centre

Preamble

Child protection is a process not a policy. It is an ongoing process throughout the lifetime of any organisation working with young people.

To fulfil its obligations to young people the organisation will:

- recruit paid and volunteer staff appropriately
- undertake appropriate CRB checks
- train appropriately
- induct appropriately
- ensure that paid and volunteer staff understand the child protection policy, and their responsibilities within it
- ensure that all paid and volunteer staff understand confidentiality issues in respect to child protection, and that they explain to any young person they work with what that means for them
- ensure that paid and volunteer staff understand current legislation and good practice in relation to the rights of young people
- constantly update the policy and practice of the organisation in respect to child protection
- ensure that all staff are aware of appropriate referral agencies and have contact information that is regularly checked and updated
- maintain appropriate working relationships with statutory youth service providers, Social Services and Police Child Protection personnel
- ensure that all venues young people use have clear and accessible information about who they can talk to
- the management committee will seek appropriate training for all members, new committee members will receive child protection training as part of their induction

Knucklas & District Community Centre

Child Protection Policy

This policy operates for the protection of children and young people under 18 years. Knucklas and District Community Centre (the organisation) is committed to ensuring that all those associated with the organisation have positive and enjoyable experiences. Consequently, we are committed to ensuring that all young people who take part in our activities are kept free from harm. We will ensure that:

- everyone is treated with respect
- activities take place in a safe and secure environment
- adults who work with young people undergo enhanced level Criminal Records Bureau checks
- opportunities exist for young people, parents or primary carers to talk to us about any concerns they have
- young people, parents or primary carers feel comfortable and confident to discuss attitudes and behaviours they do not like
- adults associated with the organisation will take appropriate action when young people, parents or primary carers express concern about abuse
- no adult is left alone with individual young people

What is child abuse?

Child abuse means harming a child. There is evidence to suggest that its occurrence can be significantly reduced by: learning more about the problem, giving young people self-protection strategies, knowing how to listen to young people and by knowing what action to take when disclosures of child abuse are made.

There are four types of child abuse:

Physical abuse:

The intentional, non-accidental use of force on the part of a parent, primary carer, care-giver or other adult that aims to hurt, injure or destroy that child.

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 conveying to the child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Sexual abuse:

The involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children or adolescents in sexual activity. This may be activity they do not truly comprehend, are unable to give informed consent to or a violation of normal family roles.

Neglect:

When chronic inattention is given to the child by their parents, primary carers or caregivers in the areas of medical, educational, stimulative, environmental, material, nutritional, physical or emotional needs.

Possible signs of child abuse:

Paid and voluntary staff associated with the organisation will look out for the following possible signs that a child is being abused. However, it is understood that not all young people exhibiting these signs will necessarily be experiencing abuse. Caution, sensitivity and common sense will help staff to decide precisely how to respond to these signs. [There will always be a need to tell a colleague or trustee what you have noticed and what your action was, and for that to be recorded]

If a young person:

- becomes withdrawn or isolated;
- becomes aggressive;
- starts to seek attention;
- becomes afraid of particular people;
- develops chronic medical problems such as stomach pains or headaches;
- acts in sexually inappropriate ways towards adults or peers;
- develops eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia;
- fails to thrive;
- is often hungry;
- has regular accidents;
- has poor personal hygiene;
- is regularly tired;
- is reluctant to go home;
- wears inappropriate clothing;
- develops poor social relationships;
- exhibits inappropriate emotional responses;
- exhibits dramatic changes in mood or behaviour;
- engages in drug or alcohol misuse;
- runs away from home or other places;
- feels depressed;
- has bumps, bruises, wounds or especially burns;
- has unconvincing explanations for such injuries;
- talks of a friend who is being abused;

we will take steps to establish whether the young person is experiencing abuse.

If abuse is suspected paid or volunteer staff will:

ensure that a Trustee of the organisation is informed of the issue or situation

ensure that the allegation or suspicion is taken seriously and that is reported and recorded.

ensure that the appropriate agencies are advised accordingly, (e.g. Social Services, Police, Area Child Protection Committee, NSPCC, Childline).

Details of trustees are displayed notice board in the Community Centre.

Advice about initial disclosures by young people

Paid and volunteer staff **will**:

- listen to the young person carefully
- accept what the young person is telling them
- inform the young person about the confidentiality rules around child protection in language they understand
- reassure the young person that they have done a good thing telling a responsible adult what is happening to them
- reassure the young person that it is right to talk
- not blame the young person for the abuse experienced
- inform the young person what support they can give, and ensure they know where they can find further support
- inform the young person what they will do
- thank the young person for confiding
- report and record the situation
- contact Social Services or the Police if it is felt that the young person is likely to be at risk if they return home

Paid and volunteer staff will **not**:

- promise confidentiality
- be judgemental
- show emotions or reactions to what they are being told, such as anger, disbelief or disgust
- ask direct questions
- suggest that the effects are in any way minimal
- become unnecessarily involved
- be dramatic or critical
- confront the young person with the abuser(s)
- chastise the young person for not confiding earlier
- encourage the young person to forget about what has happened to them

When recording disclosures by young people, or suspicions that abuse is occurring, paid and volunteer staff will try to provide the following information:

- name age and address of the young person
- whether these concerns yours or someone else's
- brief description of the episode that has prompted the report: date, time and specific episode
- physical or behavioural signs that prompted a report
- if anyone has spoken to the young person and who that was and what was said
- name(s) of abuser(s)
- any places mentioned that are significant
- any special circumstances (any disability or factors in the young person's living arrangements)
- any person or agency consulted
- any referral made

If the alleged abuser is not associated with the organisation, Social Services will be notified immediately and action taken on their advice. the decision whether to notify the young person's parents or primary carers will be made in consultation with Social Services and with due regard to the legal rights of the young person.

If allegation of abuse are made against a service user by a young person or their parent or primary carer, Social Services will be notified immediately and action taken on their advice. It is likely to be necessary to exclude the young person accused of abuse from the service unless an enquiry can establish that the allegation was unfounded.

If the alleged abuser is associated with the organisation, Social Services will be notified immediately and action taken on their advice. If there are genuine grounds for concern, the worker will be notified of the allegation and suspended from duties immediately, and will not be permitted any access to young people until an enquiry establishes that it is safe for them to do so. Other paid and volunteer staff will be advised that they should not discuss with the accused worker any aspect of the alleged incident(s) nor the enquiry that follows disclosure, because that action may affect the outcome of the enquiry.

It may be advisable to involve the Police from any early stage, advice will be sought in the first consultation with Social Services.

Policy review:

Paid and volunteer staff will meet monthly to discuss the child protection practice of the organisation, and the policy. This will be an opportunity to identify any general issues around child protection practice and policy that need attention, and any changes to relevant legislation or examples of good practice.

This policy was first adopted on the 17th day of December 2007

This policy was adopted on the 26th day of November 2012

Officers responsible for ensuring that the Child Protection Policy is practiced by all paid and volunteer staff:

name

name

name

name