Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

**SAFEGUARDING POLICY** Safeguarding is what we do to prevent harm, while Child Protection is the way in which we respond to harm.

It is the responsibility of Home Ed-Venturers to ensure the safety and welfare of children whilst in our care. We are committed to ensuring good practice, so that the risks to children are minimised.

All staff are well informed, with relevant safeguarding knowledge, qualifications or training to ensure they can promote the safeguarding of children and identify the signs of abuse. We follow the procedures outlined by the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership (KBSP), specifically the Keeping Children Safe (KCS) procedures. This website gives full information on the signs and symptoms of abuse and how to respond.

**DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE** The 1989 Children Act recognises four categories of abuse:

**Physical Abuse** - actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent/carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child.

**Sexual Abuse** - actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The child may be dependent or developmentally immature.

Sexual abuse also includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or in the production of sexual images.

**Emotional Abuse** - severe or persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection likely to cause adverse effects on the emotional and behavioural development of a child. It may involve seeing

or hearing the ill-treatment of another. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of

maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Neglect** - the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, or

the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, resulting in the significant

impairment of a child’s health or development, including failure to thrive.

**HISTORICAL ABUSE** There may be occasions when a child will disclose abuse (either sexual, physical, emotional or neglect) which occurred in the past. This information needs to be treated in exactly the same way as a disclosure of current child abuse. The reason for this is that the abuser may still represent a risk to children now.

**FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)** Female circumcision is illegal in the UK and it is an offence to take UK nationals abroad to aid, abet or carry out FGM. All agencies have a statutory responsibility to safeguard children from being abused through FGM. If staff are concerned that a girl is at risk of FGM this is a child protection issue and must be documented and reported to First Response and/or the police.

Some warning signs that MAY indicate a girl is at risk of FGM include:

● Parents requesting an extended leave from the groups on top of school holidays

● If a girl comes from a country that has high prevalence of FGM

● Mother and other siblings have already undergone FGM

● Child may indicate that they are going for a special event

● For more information on this topic, see the online South West Child Protection

Procedures or contact the NSPCC. Contact details in the appendix.

**THE PREVENT DUTY** This is a safeguarding responsibility to protect children/teenagers from being radicalised into a criminal act of violence, or from being affected by the radicalisation of those around them (Prevent Duty Guidance, 2015).

There isn’t a single way of identifying an individual who is being radicalised. Causes of concern could be; someone who is viewing extreme, violent propaganda online or expressing extremist views which may lead to an act of terrorism. We will be alert to changes in children’s behaviour or circumstances which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection.

If we observe any concerning behaviour, we will inform both First Response: 0117 9036444 and the local Police Prevent Team: 0117 9455539.

**PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE** Recognising abuse is one of the first steps in protecting children and young people. There could be signs or behaviour that make you feel concerned. All staff should be alert to the following types of behaviour in the children:

● Becoming excessively aggressive, withdrawn or clingy

● Seeming to be keeping a secret

● Significant changes in child’s behaviour

● Deterioration in child’s well-being

● Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect

● Unreasonable fear of certain people or places

● Acting out in an inappropriate way perhaps with adults, other children, toys or objects

● Children’s comments which give cause for concern, e.g. inconsistent explanations of bruising, injuries or burns

● Sexually explicit language or actions

● Staff should be equally vigilant regarding signs relating to disabled children and not automatically assume that any of the above relates to their impairment.

Not all concerns about children or young people relate to abuse, there may well be other explanations. It is important to keep an open mind and consider what we know about the child

and their circumstances. If we are worried, it is not our responsibility to investigate and decide if it is abuse. It is our responsibility to act on our concerns and do something about it.

**CONFIDENTIALITY AND APPROPRIATE DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION** Confidentiality is crucial to all of our relationships, but the welfare of the child is paramount. The law does not allow anyone to keep concerns relating to abuse to themselves. Therefore, confidentiality may not be maintained if the withholding of information will harm the welfare of the child.

All information that has been collected on any child will be kept locked and secure and access

will be limited to the appropriate staff.

In the event of an investigation, it is essential that no information on child protection concerns

relating to a child are disclosed inappropriately. Any such leaks could have serious consequences for both the child concerned and any investigation. If uncertain about what information may be shared, we will take advice or refer to the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership information- www.bristolsafeguarding.org.

Whilst parents/carers have the right to see any records kept on their child, this might not always be appropriate and we will not put the child or ourselves at risk. It is important that only those who need to know, actually know, to avoid rumour and gossip that could affect the child, parent/carer and the group.

**THE USE OF MOBILE PHONES AND CAMERAS** Home Ed-Venturers is aware of the risks associated with the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting. We also recognise the benefits of such technology for documenting or research purposes. To manage the risks appropriately we follow these procedures:

● Home Ed-Venturers staff will limit the use of mobile phones to research purposes relevant to the session and for communicating with parents/carers or staff in another area, when necessary.

● If a member of staff needs to use their phone for personal use during a session, they will do so in the shelter, out of sight of children.

● Mobile phones will never be left unaccompanied.

● Permission from parents will be obtained to take photographs of their children in the woods.

● Staff may take photographs of the children (only if there is a parental permission in place) on their personal mobile phones and will forward them to Veronika at the end of the session, they will then delete them off their phone. Veronika will upload the photos onto an external drive and then delete them off her phone.

● It will be made clear to parents how we take and share photographs (eg. used on social media, shared with parents individually/on parental Whatsapp group, etc.)

**RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS** Home Ed-Venturers practises safe recruitment through the following procedures:

**STAFF**

● All new staff will go through an official application procedure; including a personal statement detailing relevant experience and qualifications, an interview process and DBS checks.

● All staff will hold a current and valid DBS check, to be renewed every 3 years, or be registered with the update service. Only people with suitable DBS checks will be employed by Home Ed-Venturers.

● All staff must declare all convictions/cautions incurred since the DBS check which may affect their suitability to work with children.

● All staff and volunteers must declare their disqualification status.

● All session Leaders must undertake Child Protection training every 3 years.

● All staff will maintain an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues and understand the procedures to be followed in the event of any concern being raised. Staff will be supported to discuss any issues concerning a child’s well-being.

Employers must also meet their responsibilities under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act

2006 which includes a duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service where a member of staff is dismissed (or would have been had the person not left the setting first) because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm.

**VOLUNTEERS** Home Ed-Venturers welcomes volunteers of all ages. If a volunteer is under the age of 18 then parental consent must be given and a booking form must be filled out. Volunteers will be asked to provide a suitable DBS check if they have one. However, this is not a prerequisite as they will be accompanied at all times and restricted in the types of activities they may support, for example: volunteers will never help children with toileting. Volunteers will be made aware that they are never to be alone with children and that they must try to avoid situations where this could happen.

**VISITORS** There may be occasional visitors to Home Ed-Venturers sessions such as; prospective families, for the purpose of training, skill-sharing or work experience. Any visits will be arranged in advance with Veronika, we will not accept visitors without prior agreement. The identity of any visitor will be established and children will not be left unsupervised with a visitor.

Any visitors present will be informed in advance that they must avoid situations where they may be left alone with children.

**CODE OF CONDUCT** All staff and volunteers within Home Ed-Venturers recognise that they need to conduct themselves in an appropriate way to ensure a safer environment for all. One of the ways of ensuring this is by following Home Ed-Venturers policies and procedures, including:

● Child Protection policy and procedure

● Safeguarding policy and procedure

● Use of mobile phones and cameras policy and procedure

● Safer recruitment policy and procedure

● Whistle-blowing policy and procedure

● Health and Safety policy and procedure

● First Aid policy and procedure

● Fire Safety procedure

● Risk assessments

● Behaviour Management policy and procedure

● Arrival & Departure policy and procedure

● Complaints policy and procedures

**RECOGNISING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR IN STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND OTHER ADULTS**

There is no guaranteed way to identify a person who will harm children. However, there are possible warning signs. These may include:

● Paying an excessive amount of attention to a child or groups of children, providing presents, money or having favourites

● Seeking out vulnerable children, e.g. disabled children

● Trying to spend time alone with a particular child or group of children on a regular basis

● Making inappropriate sexual comments

● Sharing inappropriate images

● Being vague about where they have worked or when they have been employed

● Encouraging secretiveness

There may be other sources of concern; this is not a conclusive list. If a member of staff is concerned about another staff member or volunteer’s behaviour, they need to pass this on to the DSL (Veronika).

**DISCLOSURES, RECORDING AND REPORTING** Appropriate steps will be taken where concerns arise regarding the safety of children. Incidents or concerns will be reported to the designated safeguarding person (Veronika).

We will ensure that disclosures are responded to sensitively and appropriately, in line with

current best practice. This means staff will:

● Take seriously any concerns raised by adults or children

● Take positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concerns

● Support children, staff or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns

● Act appropriately and effectively in instigating or co-operating with any subsequent process of investigation

● Listen to and take seriously the views and wishes of children

● Work in partnership with parents/carers and/or other professionals to ensure the protection of children

● Disclosures may happen directly or indirectly, and will be recorded on the same day by the adult who witnessed the disclosure. It must include the date and time of the disclosure, the child’s name, and the witness’s signature to state that the document is a true and accurate reflection of the disclosure.

● A direct disclosure means that a child has told a witness in person about an incident of

abuse. An indirect disclosure may occur when a child is overheard talking or seen through role-play or re‐enactment, acting in a way that suggests they may be the victim of abuse.

● Children will not be asked leading questions. We may ask open-ended questions like, “Is there anything else you would like to tell me?”. Adults should respond sympathetically and never in disbelief or shock. Adults should never promise to keep secrets– it is best to tell the child that you will need to share what they have told you, with other adults who can help to keep them safe, this may include their parents.

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Reviewed by: Veronika Simon