

Oarsome Chance – Child Protection Policy

This document is the Child Protection Policy for Oarsome Chance which will be followed by all members of the organisation and followed and promoted by all workers, volunteers, agents and those in the position of leadership within the organisation.

The purpose of this policy is to make sure that the actions of any adult in the context of the work carried out by the organisation are transparent and safeguard and promote the welfare of all young people.

If any parent or young person/child has any concerns about the conduct of any member of the organisation, this should be raised in the first instance with Gill Heron – Designated Safeguard Lead

Principles

- The welfare of a child or young person will always be paramount.
- The rights/wishes and feelings of children, young people and their families will be respected and listened to.
- Those people in positions of responsibility within the organisation will work in accordance with the interests of children and young people and follow the policy outlined below.
- Those people in positions of responsibility within the organisation will ensure that the same opportunities are available to everyone and that all differences between individuals will be treated with respect.

Introduction

Oarsome Chance recognises its prime responsibility is to promote and safeguard the welfare of its children. Children have a right to feel secure and cannot learn effectively unless they do so. Parents, carers and other people can harm children either by direct acts, failure to provide proper care or both. Children may suffer neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse or a combination of such types of abuse.

All children have a right to be protected from abuse.

The aim of our procedures will be, once abuse is suspected, to minimise damage to the child and promote recovery. Whilst the school will work openly with parents as far as possible, the school reserves the right to contact Social Care or the Police, without notifying parents.

Our policy applies to all staff, volunteer workers and governors working in the school. There are three main elements to our policy:

Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.

Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.

Supporting students who have been abused in accordance with his / her agreed child protection plan.

We recognise that because of their day to day contact with children, OC staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. OC will therefore:

Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to. Ensure children know that there are adults in the organisation whom they can approach if they are worried.

Include opportunities for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

What OC will do to follow procedures set out by Local Safeguarding Children's Boards and Guidance issued by Department for Education (DFE).

Specifically, OC will:

Follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCB) and the Local Authority (LA) and take account of guidance issued by the DFE to:

- Ensure that the Board of Trustees understand their responsibilities.
- Ensure we have a DSL for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
- Ensure every member of staff, volunteer and trustee knows the name of the DSL responsible for child protection and their role.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the DSL responsible for child protection.
- Ensure that every member of staff, volunteer and trustee receives appropriate levels of training to fulfil their child protection responsibilities effectively and to accord with the requirements with 'Safeguarding Children & Safer Recruitment in Education' guidance
- Ensure that parents understand the responsibility placed on OC and its staff, volunteers and trustees staff for child protection by setting out its obligations and by providing information for parents
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and cooperate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences.
- Ensure written records are kept securely and separately from the main student file and in locked locations.

Policy

1.Immediate Action to Ensure Safety

Immediate action may be necessary at any stage in involvement with children and families.

IN ALL CASES, IT IS VITAL TO TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IS NEEDED TO SAFEGUARD THE CHILD/REN i.e.:

If emergency medical attention is required, this can be secured by calling an ambulance (dial 999) or taking a child to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department.

If a child is in immediate danger the police should be contacted (dial 999) as they alone have the power to remove a child immediately if protection is necessary, via Police Protection Order.

2. Recognition of Abuse or Neglect

Abuse or neglect of a child is caused by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting: by those known to them or more rarely by a stranger.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as, fabricated illness by proxy or Munchausen Syndrome by proxy.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is 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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (eg rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. This may include non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or

carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Note: A child may be subjected to a combination of different kinds of abuse. It is also possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening from everyone.

Individuals within the organisation need to be alert to the potential abuse of children both within their families and also from other sources including abuse by members of that organisation.

The organisation should know how to recognise and act upon indicators of abuse or potential abuse involving children. There is an expected responsibility for all members of the organisation to respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child in accordance with these procedures.

It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns. However, you must not discuss your concerns with parents/carers in the following circumstances:

- where sexual abuse is suspected
- where organised or multiple abuse is suspected
- where fictitious illness by proxy (also known as Munchausen Syndrome by proxy) is suspected
- where contacting parents/carers would place a child, yourself or others at immediate risk.

What to do if children talk to you about abuse or neglect

It is recognised that a child may seek you out to share information about abuse or neglect, or talk spontaneously individually or in groups when you are present. In these situations, you must:

- Listen carefully to the child. **DO NOT** directly question the child.
- Give the child time and attention.
- Allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed as evidence.
- Use the child's own words where possible.
- Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
- Reassure the child that you are glad they have told you; they have not done anything wrong; what you are going to do next.
- Explain that you will need to get help to keep the child safe.
- Do NOT ask the child to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.

Things you should **NOT** do:

- Jump to conclusions.
- Try to get the child to 'disclose'
- Ask for lots of details about the alleged event(s);
- Speculate or accuse anybody yourself.
- Make promises you can't keep, such as total confidentiality.
- Pre-empt or prejudice an investigation by leading the child with closed questions.

Questioning Skills = Open Questions

- Tell Me
- Where
- Who
- Describe How
- What
- When
- Talk

Avoid using 'Why'? This can confuse a child and leads to feelings of guilt.

3. Consulting about your concern

The purpose of consultation is to discuss your concerns in relation to a child and decide what action is necessary.

You may become concerned about a child who has not spoken to you, because of your observations of, or information about that child. It is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused or respond to a child wanting to talk to you. This practice can help clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action.

If you are concerned about a child you must share your concerns. Initially you should talk to one of the people designated as responsible for child protection within your organisation.

At Oarsome Chance these are:

Designated Safety Lead (DSL): Gill Heron 07828 791884 gill@oarsomechance.org

Principal: John Gillard 07973 838858. johng@oarsomechance.org

If one of those people is implicated in the concerns you should discuss your concerns with a trustee of the board.

You should consult externally with your local Social Services Department in the following circumstances:

- when you remain unsure after internal consultation as to whether child protection concerns exist
- when there is disagreement as to whether child protection concerns exist
- when you are unable to consult promptly or at all with your designated internal contact for child protection
- when the concerns relate to any member of the organising committee.

Consultation is not the same as making a referral but should enable a decision to be made as to whether a referral to Social Services or the Police should progress.

4. Making a referral

A referral involves giving Social Services or the Police information about concerns relating to an individual or family in order that enquiries can be undertaken by the appropriate agency followed by any necessary action.

In certain cases, the level of concern will lead straight to a referral without external consultation being necessary.

Parents/carers should be informed if a referral is being made except in the circumstances outlined in Policy point 2.

However, inability to inform parents for any reason should not prevent a referral being made. It would then become a joint decision with Social Services about how and when the parents should be approached and by whom.

IF YOUR CONCERN IS ABOUT ABUSE OR RISK OF ABUSE FROM SOMEONE NOT KNOWN TO THE CHILD OR CHILD'S FAMILY, YOU SHOULD MAKE A TELEPHONE REFERRAL DIRECTLY TO THE POLICE AND CONSULT WITH THE PARENTS.

If your concern is about abuse or risk of abuse from a family member or someone known to the children, you should make a telephone referral to your local Social Services Office.

Information required

Be prepared to give as much of the following information as possible (in emergency situations all of this information may not be available). Unavailability of some information should not stop you making a referral.

- Your name, telephone number, position and request the same of the person to whom you are speaking.
- Full name and address, telephone number of family, date of birth of child and siblings.
- Gender, ethnicity, first language, any special needs.
- Names, dates of birth and relationship of household members and any significant others.
- The names of professionals' known to be involved with the child/family eg: GP, Health Visitor, School.
- The nature of the concern; and foundation for them.
- An opinion on whether the child may need urgent action to make them safe.
- Your view of what appears to be the needs of the child and family.
- Whether the consent of a parent with parental responsibility has been given to the referral being made.

Action to be taken following the referral

- Ensure that you keep an accurate record of your concern(s) made at the time.
- Put your concerns in writing to Social Services following the referral (within 48 hours).
- Accurately record the action agreed or that no further action is to be taken and the reasons for this decision.

5. Confidentiality

The organisation should ensure that any records made in relation to a referral should be kept confidentially and in a secure place.

Information in relation to child protection concerns should be shared on a “need to know” basis. However, the sharing of information is vital to child protection and, therefore, the issue of confidentiality is secondary to a child’s need for protection.

If in doubt, consult.

Allegations against staff

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen.

A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some professionals do pose a serious risk to students and we must act on every allegation. Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not the default option and alternatives to suspension will always be considered. In some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected.

Allegations against staff should be reported to the DSL Gill Heron
Allegations against the DSL should be reported to the Principal John Gillard

Staff may also report their concerns directly to police or children’s social care if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DFE, 2019). Copy on OC Drive.

Staff, parents and trustees are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of anyone who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing, including content placed on social media sites.

Managing allegations against other students

These allegations are most likely to include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is also likely that incidents dealt with under this policy will involve older students and their behaviour towards younger students or those who are vulnerable.

As usual, important decisions should be made on a case by case basis, based on an assessment of the children’s best interests. Referral under safeguarding arrangements may be necessary, guided by an assessment of the extent to which a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Oarsome Chance – Summary of Child Protection Policy

“Do’s” and “Don’ts” of Working with Children

It is essential that all staff working in schools are conscious of how they should conduct themselves to minimise the risk of finding themselves as the subject of any child protection processes. The following is a summary of things to do and not to do when working with children.

DO:

- Read and follow OC’s child protection procedures
- Report to the DSL/Principal any concerns about child welfare/safety
- Report to the DSL/Principal any concerns about the conduct of other staff/volunteers/contractors Record in writing all relevant incidents (See Incident Report Form)
- Work in an open and transparent way
- Follow Conflict and de-escalation training.
- Discuss and report any incidents of concern or that might lead to concerns being raised about your conduct towards a child.
- Report to the DSL/Principal any incidents that suggest a student may be infatuated with you or taking an above normal interest in you.
- Dress appropriately for your role
- Only use e-mail contact with students via the school’s system Avoid unnecessary physical contact with children
- Ensure you understand the rules concerning physical restraint
- Where physical contact is essential for educational or safety reasons, gain student’s permission for that contact wherever possible.
- Allow children to change clothes with levels of respect and privacy appropriate to their age, gender, culture and circumstances.
- Use humour to defuse difficult situations
- Avoid working in one-to-one situations with children
- Avoid volunteering to house children overnight
- Ensure that areas of the curriculum that may involve sexually explicit information are taught in accordance with school policies
- Be careful about recording images of children and do this only when it is an approved educational activity.
- Contact your professional association if you are the subject of concerns or allegations of a child protection nature.
- Fully cooperate with any investigation into child protection issues in the school. Listen to students when they express concern (rumours) about staff which might appear to be just, and check facts v fiction.

DON’T:

- Take any action that would lead a reasonable person to question your motivation and/or intentions Misuse in any way your position of power and influence over children
- Use any confidential information about a child to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass a child Engage in activities out of OC activities that might compromise your position
- Establish or seek to establish social contact with students outside of OC hours
- Accept regular gifts from children

- Give personal gifts to children
- Communicate with students in inappropriate ways, including personal e-mails and mobile telephones.
- Pass your home address, phone number, e-mail address or other personal details to students/children.
- Make physical contact secretive
- Arrange to meet with students in closed rooms without senior staff being made aware of this in advance.
- Use physical punishment of any kind
- Confer special attention on one child unless this is part of an agreed plan or policy
- Transport students in your own vehicle without prior management approval
- Take, publish or share images of students or other children without their parents' permission.
- Access abuse images (sometimes referred to as child pornography) or other inappropriate material
- Abuse your position of trust with students
- Allow boundaries to be unsafe in more informal settings such as trips out, out of school activities etc.

Useful Telephone Numbers Key Personnel

- Designated Safety Lead - Gill Heron 07828 791884
- Principal - John Gillard: 07973 838858.
- Chairman of Trustees - Paul O Grady: 07976 689982

Hants Direct Professionals Line (for all referrals into social care)

- Hampshire Children Services - Children's Referral Team 0300 555 134
Out of hours 0300 555 1373
- Safeguarding Advisors / Local Authority Designated Officers LADO 01962 876364
Barbara Piddington (Eastern Area)
Mark Blackwell (Western area)
- Childline 0800 11 11
- NSPCC 0808 800 5000
- Samaritans 08457 90 90 90
- Police 101 or, in emergencies, 999
- CAMHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services 0300 304 0050