



St Thomas's Community Network

Safeguarding Children: Child Protection Policy

This policy has been updated in the light of the DfES publication: Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education 2007.

St Thomas's Community Network has a legal and moral responsibility to provide a duty of care for children, and implement procedures to safeguard their well-being and protect them from abuse.

All references to child and/or children in this document applies equally to young people. The policy is applicable to all on and off-site activities undertaken by children and young people in our care. The policy will be subject to periodic consultation, review and updating by the St Thomas's Community Network Board of Directors and Trustees.

Definitions

The Children Act, 2004 defines a child as being up to the age of 18 years old. Extensions of this exist for children who have special needs and for those in local authority care settings.

Documents

St Thomas's Network Safeguarding and Child Protection policy draws upon the principles of 'Every Child Matters', duties imposed by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and the guidance contained in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused', the current DfES Circular (0027/2004) and Safeguarding children; The second joint Chief Inspectors' Report on Arrangements to Safeguard Children (2005)

St Thomas's Network staff

All staff and volunteers are responsible for keeping our children and young people safe from harm, such as illness, abuse or injury and will have completed a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure form before they start work. All staff managing a programme or project where children and young people are present will have attended a Level 2 Safeguarding and Child Protection training Course. Others working at the Network will attend the half day awareness-raising session as part of an on-going programme of staff CPD.

Named Persons:

Janet Hilken – Chief Executive

Samantha Hawkins – Childcare Manager

Trevor Campbell – Community Links Officer and E2E Co-ordinator

Bernadette Guest – Lead Tutor Link to Learning

Aim:

To define the practice and procedures for employees and volunteers, in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It is aimed at protecting both the child and the member of staff.

Objectives:

- To ensure that all employees and volunteers working with children are carefully selected, understand and accept responsibility for the safety of those individuals in their care.
- To ensure that the child's welfare is of paramount importance when undertaking any activities.
- To respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and to ensure confidential information is restricted to the appropriate individuals within St Thomas's Community Network and appropriate external agencies.

Recruitment:

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable individuals are prevented from having any involvement with St Thomas's Community Network.

Employee/volunteer recruitment procedures will include a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure (CRB), at the appropriate level, for all personnel with access to children and should always include self-declaration and the use of references. This will include all members of the management (Trustees) committee. All prospective employees/volunteers should be 'interviewed', for volunteers this need not be a formal interview. We will ensure that all employees/volunteers have appropriate qualifications and training.

Should any concerns arise following a CRB Disclosure then this will be passed onto the Chief Executive of St Thomas's Community Network. The Dudley Safeguarding Children Board will be contacted for information and guidance. Any Disclosure that causes concern will be assessed to establish the level of risk the subject poses to children, other service users, colleagues, the general public and/or our organisation. A number of questions will be asked:

- Does the offence relate directly to work with children?
- What is the seriousness of the offence[s] and the circumstances surrounding it?
- How long is it since the offence was committed?
- Does the subject have a pattern of offending?
- Has the subject's situation changed since the offence occurred?
- What is the subject's explanation of the offence?
- Did the subject declare the offence prior to the Disclosure?

If all these questions are not answered satisfactorily then the prospective employee/volunteer will not be allowed to join the organisation.

All new employees/volunteers will go through a probation and induction process, including relevant training. Ongoing training and supervision will ensure all employees/volunteers are adequately supported.

Any concerns about an employee/volunteer should be passed on to the Chief Executive of the Network in the first instance and thereafter the Trustees.

Creating a Safe and Caring Environment:

- Risk Assessment should be undertaken prior to any offsite visits or new types of activities.
- Employees/volunteers working with children should be appropriately trained and qualified to ensure the safe provision of services, use of equipment, activities undertaken, etc.
- Employees/volunteers working with children should carefully plan activity sessions with the care and safety of children as their main concern including the use of activities at an appropriate age/ability level.
- Wherever possible we will encourage an 'open environment' e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and discouraging the keeping of secrets. This especially includes employees/volunteers should be alone with a child at any time. When this is unavoidable, it should be done with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of the organisation and/or the children's parents/carers.
- Employees/volunteers must treat all children/young people with respect.
- Employees/volunteers must not make racist, sexist or any other remarks which upset or humiliate
- Employees/volunteers must take care to avoid showing any favouritism.
- It is the responsibility of employees/volunteers to prevent the abuse of younger or weaker children by older or stronger children through bullying, cruelty or any other forms of humiliation.
- Arrangements for parents/carers dropping off and collecting children from activities/trips need to be clearly stated and agreed by parents/carers, children and employees/volunteers.

Roles and Responsibilities of employees/volunteers:

- Safety of participants and employees/volunteers is of prime consideration at all times.
- All accidents involving anyone should be recorded in the organisation's accident book immediately or as soon as practicably possible.
- Employees/volunteers are responsible for familiarising themselves with building/facility safety issues, such as, fire procedures, location of emergency exits, location of emergency telephones and first aid equipment.
- Employees/volunteers are responsible for reporting suspected cases of child abuse to the appropriate individuals and/or agencies.
- Employees/volunteers will be expected to keep an attendance register for all organised sessions.
- Appropriate employees/volunteers should have access to any parent consent/emergency consent forms for all children taking part in any activities [this information should be confidential].
- Employees/volunteers should ensure that their activities start and end on time.
- Employees/volunteers are expected to promote, demonstrate and incorporate the values of fair play, trust and ethics throughout their activities.

- Employees/volunteer should ensure that they are adequately insured, to protect against claims of negligence, through their organisation or their own personal insurance if acting as a self employed agent.

Enrolment/Admission Procedures

A register of names, addresses, next of kin and contact addresses and telephone numbers for emergencies will be kept, for all activities involving children and young people at the Network.

Parents/carers, and where appropriate older children, will be given a copy of a written statement which specifies the action which will be taken in the event of a child becoming ill or being injured and which indicates that any information which suggests that a child has been abused will be passed on to the Dudley Safeguarding Children Board Children's Social Care Team and/or the police.

Designated Person

The Chief Executive of the Network is the main designated named person. Other named people appear on page 1 of this document. In the event of any concerns regarding a child then the designated person or appropriate named person, will be informed at the earliest available opportunity. If necessary the designated person will inform the relevant Children's Social Care Team without delay and the management committee (Trustees). The designated person will also ensure that the Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures are kept up to date and reviewed.

Named Person:

Children and parents/carers will have a 'named person' to whom they may report any worries or concerns. This person will normally be the designated person. If the designated named person is not available then the most appropriate alternate named person may be contacted.

Responding to Signs of Abuse:

It is not the responsibility of employees/volunteers to deal with suspected abuse but it is their responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate person. It is important that all employees/volunteers should be aware of their responsibilities if child abuse is suspected.

If a child reveals that they are being abused:

- Reassure the child, tell them that they are right to tell you (do not promise to keep it a secret as it is your responsibility to inform others).
- Stay calm – ensure the child is safe and feels safe.
- Accept what you have been told. (This should not be seen as believing or disbelieving what you have been told)
- Reassure the child and stress that they are not to blame.
- Tell the child that you will offer support but you will have to pass the information on.
- Do not question the child and/or rush into details that may be inappropriate.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- Do not approach or contact the alleged abuser(s).

- Complete the Incident Record Form as soon as possible after the event detailing what you and the child discussed.
- Inform the Network Chief Executive or most appropriate other named person. If this is not possible contact the chair or an appropriate member of the management committee (Trustees). If the matter is urgent and none of the above can be contacted, then contact Dudley Safeguarding Children Board Children's Social Care Team or the police.
- Concerns would normally be shared with parents/carers as soon as possible. However, there could be circumstances when this could put the child at greater risk or there may be concerns that parents/carers will not respond appropriately.

Types of Abuse:

Neglect:

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, which is likely to result in damage to the child's health and/or development. Neglect in recreational or social activities might occur if employees/volunteers fail to ensure that children, in their care, are safely protected or are exposed to undue risk of injury, cold, excessive heat, etc.

Sexual Abuse:

Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child is the involvement of children in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent, that violate social taboos of family roles and as such are illegal. Recreational and social situations may involve physical contact (e.g. supporting and guiding children) and could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Abusive situations occur if adults misuse their power over children in order to meet their own sexual needs.

Physical Abuse:

Actual or likely physical injury to a child or failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a child e.g. hitting, burning, shaking, etc. In recreational activities this might occur where the nature and intensity of activities exceeds the capacity or ability of the child or where drugs are used to enhance performance.

Emotional Abuse:

The persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection of a child resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child. It can involve coldness or hostility towards a child, conveying to children that they are worthless or inadequate, causing a child to feel frightened or in danger, etc. Emotional abuse in recreational or social activities might also include situations where parents, employees/volunteers subject children to constant criticism, sarcasm, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations.

Indicators of Abuse:

The signs summarised below do not necessarily mean that a child is being abused. Similarly there may not be any signs; you may just feel something is wrong. If you are worried report it to the Chief Executive of the Network. It is not

your responsibility to decide if it is abuse but it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it by reporting.

Signs of Physical Abuse:

- Unexplained injuries or burns
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Untreated injuries
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Bald patches
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Arms and legs covered in hot weather
- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Running away

Signs of Neglect:

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciated
- Frequent lateness or non attendance at school
- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendencies
- Low self esteem
- Neurotic behaviour
- No social relationships
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging

Signs of Emotional abuse:

- Physical, mental and/or emotional development slows down
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviour eg thumb sucking, hair twisting, etc.
- Self mutilation
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Substance misuse
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging

Signs of Sexual Abuse:

- Lack of trust in adults and/or fear of a particular individual[s]
- Over familiarity with adults or provocative behaviour
- Withdrawal and introversion/problems with peer relationships
- Running away from home/sudden behaviour changes eg falling standards, truancy, etc.
- Low self esteem
- Stealing
- Substance misuse
- Displaying sexual knowledge beyond age group
- Involvement in prostitution
- Over-sexed behaviour
- Sleeplessness, nightmares, fear of the dark
- Bruises, scratches, bite marks
- Depression, suicide attempts
- Anorexia nervosa/eating disorder or a change in eating habits
- Pregnancy, particularly when reluctant to name the father
- Recurring urinary tract problems/vaginal infections

Employees/volunteers should never:

- Engage in rough physical activities, even when playing.
- Engage in sexually proactive activities.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child.
- Let a child's allegation go either unchallenged and/or unrecorded.
- Do things of a personal nature for a child. If you do have to do things of a personal nature for a child e.g. take to the toilet, support, lift, etc particularly if they are very young or a child with additional needs, then you should obtain the full consent of their parents and permission from your line manager or person in charge. In an emergency situation, which requires this type of help, parents and your line manager, should be fully informed as soon, as is practicable.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Undertake any tasks involving children for which they feel inadequately trained or have concerns about.

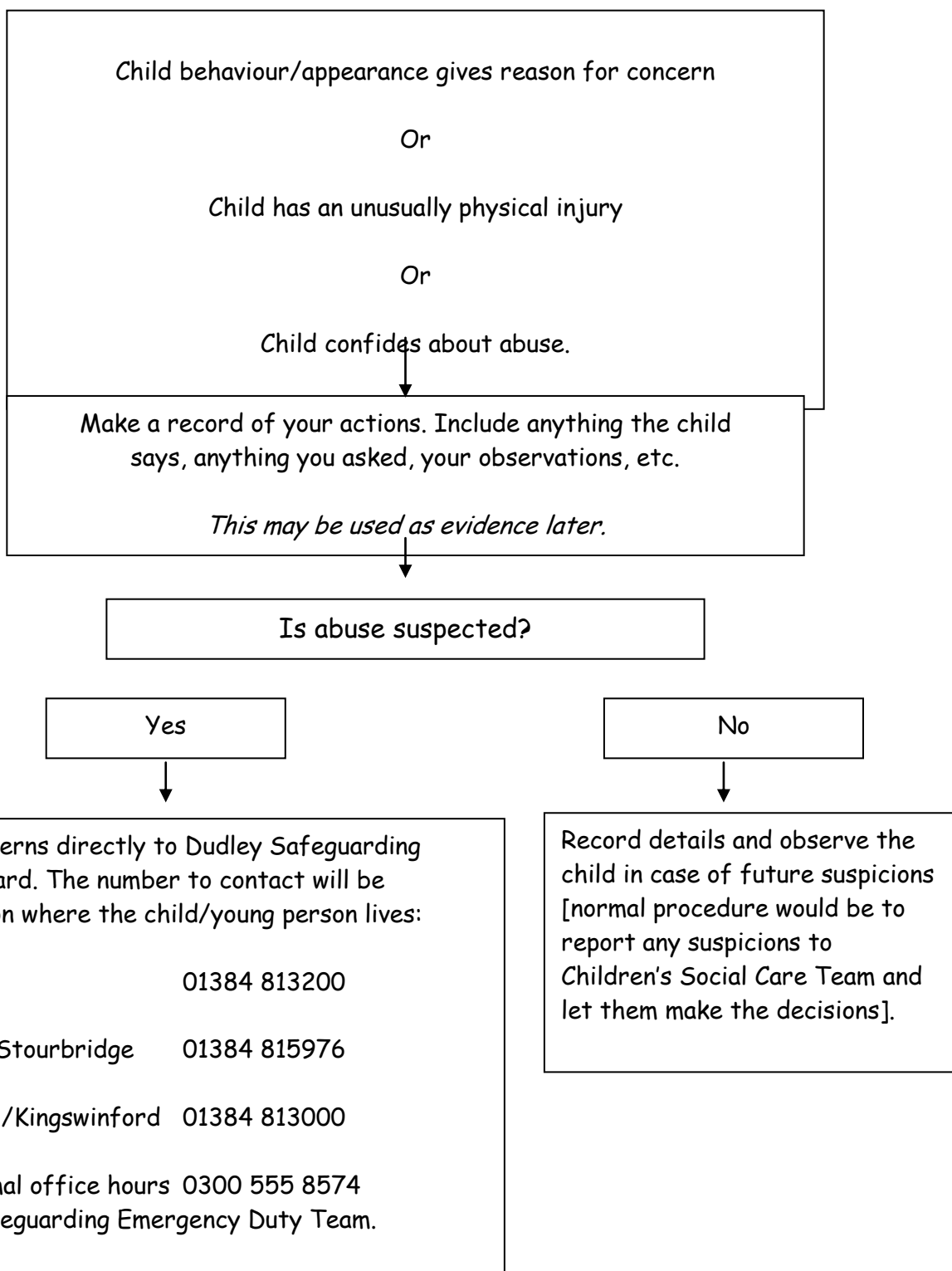
Photography, video, etc:

Formal permission from parent/carers should be obtained before taking photographs, videos, etc.

Adult to child ratio:

It is recommended that there is a minimum of two employees/volunteers with legal responsibility present at all times for children under eight years old. In youth work practices the ratio of legally responsible adults to children tends to be 1:8 regardless of age, other guidance suggests 1:10 for older children.

Reporting procedure for suspected cases of child abuse



Dudley Safeguarding Children Board
c/o 6 St. James's Road, Dudley, DY1 3JL
Visit our website to see the full procedures:
<http://safeguardingchildren.dudley.gov.uk/>

Incident Record Form

Your Name:
Your Position:
Child's Name:
Child's Address:
Parents/carer names and address (if different from above)
Child's date of birth:
Date and time of any incident or action prompting concerns;
Your observations:
What the child said and what you said: <i>(Remember do not lead the child – record actual details. Continue on separate sheet/s if necessary.)</i>
Action taken so far:

Children's Social Care Team

Contact details [name, etc]:

Information given:

Details of advice received:

Any other external agencies contacted (*contact details, date and time, information given and advice received*)

Have the parents been informed that contact is going to be made with Children's Social Care Team?

Yes No

NB: parents should always be informed unless to do so could place the child at risk of further harm, please seek advice of this point from the duty social worker if you are uncertain.

Signature:

Print Name:

Date

Please remember to maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis – do not discuss this incident with anyone other than your manager or those who need to know. Please take advice on this point from your manager if you are uncertain.

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I confirm that I have read the policy, understand my responsibilities and confirm that I will adhere to the objectives and guidance.

Name _____

Position _____

Organisation _____

Signed _____

Date _____