23. Child Protection Policy

A child is considered to be abused, or at risk of abuse, when basic needs are not met by avoidable acts of either commission or omission: in other words there is a recognition that abuse is not necessarily a physical act but can occur through omitting to act. Abuse can also involve exposing children to activities that are, in themselves, abusive (this can include pornography, grooming etc.)

The four main types of abuse; Physical, Emotional, Sexual and Neglect.

Definition of Abuse

Introduction

All organisations that make provision for children and young people must ensure that:

• The welfare of the child is paramount.

• All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.

• All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

• All staff (paid/unpaid) working with children have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

PYP is committed to practice that protects children from harm. Staff and volunteers who work for PYP will recognise and accept our responsibilities to develop the awareness of the issues that may cause young people harm.

We, as an organisation, should equip staff with the necessary information and knowledge to give young people the support, guidance and help needed.

Policy Statement

PYP has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in PYP from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of any young people who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. PYP will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in PYP through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by PYP.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

Policy Aims

The aim of the PYP Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

• Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of PYP.

• Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

As an organisation PYP will endeavour to safeguard young people by: -

• Adopting Child Protection Policies and Guidelines through a code of behaviour for all staff paid or volunteers.

• Providing adequate up to date training around child protection issues.

• Ensuring that DBS checks are in place for all staff and volunteers.

• Ensuring all staff are aware of the Child Protection Procedures and Policies.

• Appointing designated people to enable any concerns to be reported in accordance with Policies and Procedures.

• Reviewing Policies and Good Practice Guidelines on a regular basis.

Child Protection Officer

PYP has appointed a Child Protection Officer who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this Policy. PYP's Child Protection Officer is Sarah Hughes —CEO As first point of contact any Child Protection issue should be reported to your immediate Line Manager.

Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers

PYP recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Pre-selection checks must include the following:

• All volunteers/staff should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record

• Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed.

• Evidence of identity (passport or driving license with photo).

• All new PYP staff and volunteers are subject to enhanced police check clearance carried out between PYP and the DBS. All staff will be subject to renewal of police checks at least

once every three years or immediately if their work is altered to include face to face work with children.

• All staff, whether paid or voluntary, will undergo an interview conducted by at least two panel members

• Panel members will assess applicants and seek explanations for:

• Gaps in employment history, a number of house moves, changes in name etc.

• DBS checks are only as good as the day they are received; therefore, PYP staff will endeavour to work in pairs and to good practice guidelines.

• All staff will be subject to a satisfactory probationary period.

• Interview panels may request verification of qualifications and work placements.

Rehabilitation of Offenders

All applicants are subject to enhanced disclosures, whilst there are a number of situations preventing applicants from working with children PYP's CPO will review individuals circumstances and may, on occasion, and without precedent employ former offenders providing they are not on the sex offenders register, have a schedule one conviction or subject to license or court orders preventing them from working with children.

Induction

All employees and volunteers should receive an induction, during which:

• The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.

• Child Protection Procedures should be explained and training needs identified.

Training

All staff are to receive safeguarding training prior to working with any child/ young person. Training is refreshed annually, or earlier if requested by staff/line manager.

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

• Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is not likely to result in allegations being made.

• Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.

• Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.

• Work safely and effectively with children. Reporting an incident

• All staff will adhere to the following guidelines:

• All incidents of direct disclosure must immediately be reported to your immediate Line Manager.

• All incidents of concern where there is a significant suspicion abuse must be reported directly to your immediate Line Manager.

• All incidents of concern where there is reasonable doubt as to a child's well-being must be reported to your immediate Line Manager.

• Incidents must be recorded, signed and dated using the Safeguarding Young Persons Incident Form by the person reporting the incident. Information must be counter signed by the Line Manager to indicate that the concern has been expressed and received by the Line Manager.

• The line manager is to report all concerns to PYP's CPO Sarah Hughes: Email Sarah@priorityouth.co.uk

• The CPO will take all reasonable steps to report the concern/incident directly to Social Services careline (0151 233 3700) and ask to be updated on any developments.

• ALL information will be dealt with in the strictest confidence and will remain the sole knowledge of the CPO and those reporting any incidents/concerns. (SEE BELOW FLOW CHART — REFER TO QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE)

Institutionalised Reporting — External Organisations

In the event of Institutionalised Disclosure/Suspicion within an external environment, PYP staff must report any incidence or suspicions directly to the CPO. Under no circumstances must they alert the person to the fact that a complaint/disclosure/allegation or suspicion has been made against them or their colleagues.

Institutionalised Reporting — within PYP

In cases of Institutionalised Disclosure/Suspicion within PYP any person reporting the incident must report directly to PYP's Board of directors and safeguarding lead John Cain . Under no circumstances must any staff be alerted to the fact that a complaint / allegation/suspicion has been made against them or their colleagues.

Internal Enquiries and Suspension

PYP Child Protection Officer will make a decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries PYP will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases PYP must reach a

decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true.

The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse

• Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of help lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.

• Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

Allegations of Previous Abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, PYP should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to child abuse is automatically excluded from working with children.

Good Practice Guidelines

The definition of child abuse can be broken down in the following: -

Neglect

Parents are responsible for giving love, care and protection and for providing adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical care, supervision and protection, education and social and moral guidance.

If aspects of these are missing it is likely that a child is being neglected.

Neglect is often difficult to detect, as it is usually a slow, ongoing process.

Indicators of neglect might be:

• A child who is underweight for their age

• Cold mottled skin or poor skin condition

• Swollen limbs or sores which are slow to heal

• Diarrhoea (due to poor/inappropriate diet, irregular meals and tension)

• Abnormal voracious appetite

• Patchy hair or bald spots

NB: This is not exhaustive or exclusive.

Physical Abuse

Most children suffer accidents from time to time, which result in physical injury. When faced with an injured child the worker must decide whether the accident is of accidental origin or not.

Some injuries may seem insignificant in themselves but repeated injuries, even of a minor nature, may be symptomatic of child abuse and if no action is taken the child may be injured more seriously.

Physical injuries of children can take many forms, including; bruises, fractures, scalds/burns, weal's, scars, brain injuries, eye injuries, internal injuries, poisoning, bites, grip marks.

Common sites for accidental injuries are: forehead, crown, bony spine, elbow, hip, knee and shin.

Sexual Abuse

The nature of sexual abuse covers a broad spectrum from caressing to intercourse.

Sometimes there are physical signs and symptoms which may indicate sexual abuse, including:

• Injury to the genitals or anal area, e.g. tearing or bruising

• Infection or abnormal discharge in the genital, anal or oral area

• Pregnancy (real or imagined)

• Sometimes there are behavioural signs or symptoms which may indicate sexual abuse, including:

• Sexualised behaviour

• Sexualised drawing or play

• Sudden decline in school performance

• Regression i.e. soiling or wetting

• Low self esteem

• Psychosomatic disorders

• Suicidal acts or threats

• Sexual victimisation of others

• Promiscuity or promiscuous behaviour

• Eating disorders

• Sleep disturbance or nightmares

• Depression

• Running away

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can exist on its own. Emotionally abused children find their needs met with indifference, hostility or an inconsistent manner.

Abuse may include: verbal hostility, ridicule, sarcasm, shaming, belittling, threatening, tantalising.

It may go on to cruel treatment, e.g.: locking children in their bedrooms or cupboards; making unrealistic domestic demands of them; withholding basic needs such as food, warmth, clothing, as punishment.

These conditions may lead to physical, emotional and intellectual delay or stunting.

Young people may require protection as a result of their own action. These may include:

• Inappropriate use of computers

• Ill-judged relationships

• Inappropriate social behaviour such as bullying

• Misuse of drugs or alcohol

• Sexually explicit language or behaviour

• Eating disorders

• Self-harming

• Running away

Safeguarding Children & Risk Assessment

The following guidelines are used to attempt to minimise abuse within the workplace. They are not in specific order and are neither exclusive nor exhaustive.

• Ensure children have a safe place to talk or report an incident

• Ensure all children's concerns are taken seriously and reported in the correct manner.

• Ensure staff work in pairs whenever possible, but certainly do not encourage one-to-one work as the 'norm'.

• Place your child protection policy in a place where it can be seen by children and offer children an opportunity to sit with you if they have any questions.

• Wherever possible do not work in an enclosed or unobserved area.

• Ensure all staff are familiar with Child Protection procedures and offer appropriate training whenever possible.

• Ensure there is a named person who will deal with any Child Protection enquiries.

• Find the contact name of your local Child Protection Officer in Social Services and make contact with them.

• Follow usual and appropriate Health & Safety and Risk Assessment Guidelines (personal care, first aid etc.).

• It is deemed as good practice to have two adults of the same gender as the child when children are being changed, washed or using the toilets.

• NEVER attempt to physically harm a child nor use any demeaning putative measures to deal with specific behaviours.

• Ensure all staff are vetted, police checked, references taken up etc. and probationary periods are set in place.

• Ensure supervision can be used as a means to address any concerns and to involve 'whistle-blowing'.

• Ensure staff and children are not placed in any vulnerable positions and follow DFES guidance on staff/child ratios:

1:6 under eights (increasing if under 5's)

1:10/15 eight to eleven years

1:15/20 over elevens however due care must be given to specific children who may require a higher ratio of support.

• Do not transport children alone; always ensure there is an escort.

• Do not physically push or harm children.

• Do not use any putative measures when working with children.

Trips Out/Holidays

Ensure:

• You have parental consent forms from ALL children, which are clearly signed and dated by the parent/carer.

• You have undertaken a risk assessment at the place you are visiting.

• Parent/carer know which staff are responsible for children.

• First-aider present.

• All specific requirements of the child are detailed and held by a responsible adult

(Medication, allergies etc.).

• Parental consent forms are received to enable staff to administer medication.

• Adequate transport provision — are seat belts fitted.

• You are correctly insured.

• You have an emergency contact number at ALL times.

• All equipment has been checked.

• You have an agreed 'lost' procedure (for children and staff).

• All staff have the phone number of the organisation.

• All know who the nominated person in charge is.

• Staff are clear about their responsibilities.

• Children are aware of their responsibilities and understand the boundaries.

• Always retain a list of children's details at all times.

• Don't take children home early unless you are sure their parent/carer will be there to take care of them.

• Use of the Internet

• Place the computer where everyone can use it and where others can see it.

• Supervise its usage.

• Talk to children about the types of sites they can and can't use.

• Ensure that children are aware that chat sites can be extremely dangerous.

• Ensure children do not give out their personal details over the net.

• Ensure children NEVER arrange face-to-face meetings either alone or with a friend.

• Encourage children to report to you if they come across anything, which they feel is abusive or offensive.

• Introduce allocated time limits for children to spend on the net.

• Block out access to certain sites.

The Child Protection Policy and guidelines will operate within the framework of the following PYP policies and procedures

Health and Safety

• Policy and Procedures

• Training for all staff

• First Aid training

• Annual Review

Risk Assessment

• Policy and Procedures

• Training for all staff

• Lines of accountability

• Recording & Reporting systems

• Annual Review

• Risk Assessment process based on Child Protection issues

Staff Identification

• To be worn by all members of staff

• Should be current

Signing In/Out Book

• To be completed for all visitors; to include name, time and reason for visit

Guidelines on how to deal with direct disclosure

• Stay calm

• Do not react to the disclosure, it is human nature to want to 'criticise' the abuser, but remember this could be the child's father, mother or other family member, who in all likelihood, the child still either loves or has a close relationship with. By responding in a negative manner you could actually add additional discomfort or uncomfortable feelings to the child.

• Do not tell the child you can keep this information secret, you cannot attempt to solve this situation alone, but you can find someone who can help.

• Never tell a child you don't believe them (that is precisely what the abuser will have told them).

• Do not make the child tell anybody else at this stage.

• Do not question the child but DO clarify what they have said.

• Listen but not ask leading questions or probe for information.

• Do not assume the role of counsellor.

• Use simple language when explaining what will happen next.

• Document, sign and date ALL information EXACTLY as the child has reported it to you.

• Only use the words the child has used (if the child uses the word 'willy' for example, write that down and do not make any assumptions as to what it means).

• Inform your Line Manager or safe guarding officer of the incident, who will then inform social services.

• UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES must you approach the alleged abuser nor attempt to take matters into your own hands.

• Do not prevent the child from going home.

REMEMBER

You HAVE to report the incident.

Don't assume the child will be taken into care.

Don't make any personal judgements about the abuser.

Always maintain confidentiality and personal boundaries.

Institutionalised Disclosure

Report immediately to the CPO. Do not hesitate to report an incident just because you know the person and you think 'they would not do that'. The status of the person or your relationship with them must NOT make any bearing on you reporting the allegation.

Under no circumstances must you tell the accused that an allegation has been made against them. There is evidence to suggest that once an abuser is uncovered, they can encourage children to withdraw their allegations and cover their tracks.

Do NOT assume the child is lying.

Ensure the CPO informs you of proceedings: this will enable you to know that action HAS been taken and that the CPO and trustees are not also involved.

Ensure confidentiality at all times.

Guidelines on How to Deal with Suspicion of Abuse

If a suspicion is reported to you by any adult, team member or child: either about an adult or child

• Discuss with your line manager and the immediate members of staff team, following Confidentiality Policy at all times.

• If there is an acceptable explanation and no further cause for concern then record the information and keep in a locked file.

If concern continues:

• Observe what you see and hear.

• Record, date and sign your observations.

• Contact the CPO who will contact a designated lead in Children's Services and record these details.

• DO NOT contact the child or family, Children's Services will carry out any further investigation.

Guidelines on how to Deal with Known Abuse From a Third Party

If it is a child disclosing be aware they may have been exposed to the abuse themselves and may need monitoring or additional support.

If an adult discloses you can explain that you have to inform Social Services and then explain to them what will happen.

Inform your Line Manager / Child Protection Officer.

Document, sign and date information.

Guidelines on What to do if an Adult Discloses They are Abusing a Child

Explain that you cannot keep this confidential and try to stay calm.

Explain the process below.

Do not probe or ask any leading questions.

Contact your line manager immediately.

Do not tell anybody else (there could be others involved).

Sign, date and record all information.

Your line manager will then deal with the incident via the appropriate bodies.

To prevent institutionalised abuse ensure you have information regarding the process and that it is being dealt with.

Confidentiality

Staff must maintain the organisations policy on confidentiality at all time.

Incident Report

All organisations should supply staff with an incident report. This enables you to know that an allegation, suspicion or disclosure has been dealt with and that action has been taken. It should outline proceedings with them signed and dated.

What Happens Next

All those working with children will have a natural interest in what happens once a child has disclosed to you. The following procedure outlines the formal referral approach that will be taken by social services.

A code of good practice

It is the policy of PYP to safeguard the welfare of all young people using our services by protecting them from neglect and from physical, sexual and emotional harm. For all staff, trustees and volunteers involved in the work of PYP (aged 18 and over), this is essential information – keep it with you.

What happens if…? If you suspect abuse, a young person confides in you, or a complaint is made about any adult or about yourself, it is your duty to report the concern:

If a young person tells you about abuse by someone else:

1. Allow the young person to speak without interruption, accepting what is said

2. Offer immediate understanding and reassurance, while passing no judgement

3. Advise that you will try to offer support but that you must pass the information on

4. Immediately tell your line manager or the Safeguarding Officer

5. Write careful notes of what was said; use actual words wherever possible

6. Sign, date and pass your notes to the Safeguarding Officer

7. Ensure that no situation arises which could cause any further concern and always inform your line manager and the Safeguarding Officer of the action you have taken.

If you have a concern about a young person's safety and well-being:

1. Immediately tell your line manager or Safeguarding Officer Sarah Hughes

2. Write careful notes of what you witnessed, heard or were told

3. Sign, date and pass your notes to the Safeguarding Officer

4. Ensure that no situation arises which could cause any further concern

If you receive a complaint or allegation about any adult or about yourself:

1. Immediately tell your line manager or Safeguarding Officer

2. Write careful notes of what you witnessed, heard or were told

3. Sign, date and pass your notes to the Safeguarding Officer

4. Try to ensure no-one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise

You must refer; you must not investigate. If in any doubt about policy or procedure please contact the Safeguarding Officer, CEO of Priority Youth Project Sarah Hughes on sarah@priorityyouth.co.uk

DO put this code into practice at all times

DO treat everyone with dignity and respect

DO set an example you would wish others to follow

DO treat all young people equally – show no favouritism

DO plan activities that involve more than one other person being present, or at least are within sight and hearing of others

DO follow the recommended adult/young people ratios for meetings and activities

DO respect a young person's right to personal privacy

DO avoid unacceptable situations within a relationship of trust e.g. a sexual relationship with a young person over the age of consent

DO have separate sleeping accommodation for young people, adults and young leaders working with a younger section

DO allow young people to talk about any concerns they may have

DO encourage others to challenge any attitudes or behaviours they do not like

DO avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour e.g. tantrums and crushes

DO ensure a no alcohol policy when young people are in your care – adults and young people

DO make everyone aware of UK Youth's child protection procedures – young people, parents/carers, young leaders and other helpers

DO remember this code even at sensitive moments e.g. when responding to bullying, bereavement or abuse

DO keep other staff informed of where you are and what you are doing

DO remember someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned

DO take any allegations or concerns of abuse seriously and refer immediately

DO NOT trivialise abuse

DO NOT form a relationship with a young person that is an abuse of trust

DO NOT permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, bullying

DO NOT engage in inappropriate behaviour or contact – physical, verbal, sexual4 DO NOT play physical contact games with young people

DO NOT make suggestive remarks or threats to a young person, even in fun DO NOT use inappropriate language – writing, phoning, email or internet

DO NOT let allegations, suspicions, or concerns about abuse go unreported

DO NOT just rely on your good name to protect you

Procedure

Full guidance can be sought from:

'What to do if you're worried a Child is Being Abused' booklet published by Department of Health

P0 BOX 777 London SE1 6XH Tel: 08702 555 455 Fax: 01623 724 524
Email:doh@prolog.uk.com

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Are you concerned about a case of child abuse?

When an incident occurs make a record of the incident

Complete Incident Report Form

Ensure that the young person is safe and receives any necessary medical attention

Report your concerns to your immediate Line Manager and Safeguarding lead for Priority Youth Project which is - Sarah Hughes – sarah@priorityouth.co.uk

If your Line Manager is not available, refer the matter straight to PYP Trustee and safeguarding lead John Cain Secretary of PYP

PYP CPO will proceed from here

If you are concerned about poor working practice

Complete an incident Report Form and submit it to your Line Manager

If the report relates to the CPO or your Line Manager, refer directly to the

Board of Directors Chair Mark Powell Mark Powell: Contact email:
pypmarkpowell@gmail.com

and Safe Guarding lead John Cain: Email - pypjohncain@gmail.com

If you are unable to follow the above Guide or if you are worried that a child has suffered harm, neglect or abuse or, you are worried that a child may be at risk if suffering harm should contact: CARELINE **0151 233 3700**

For further information please refer to Liverpool Safeguarding Children's Partnerships (LSCP) www. https://liverpoolscp.org.uk/scp

NSPCC Helpline If you're worried about a child/ young person Report a concern 08088005000 help@nspcc.org.uk If you are under 18: Childline 0800 1111

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