



## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Our Child Protection policy supports and reinforces existing legislation and government guidance (Children Act 1989 and “Working Together To Safeguard Children”) as well as UN conventions. It sets out some key principles to help fulfil our duty towards children and young adults with whom we have contact.

For the purpose of this policy, a child is legally deemed to be any child up to and including the age of eighteen. This policy also refers to young adults beyond the age of eighteen who are deemed to be vulnerable i.e. adults who may have mental health difficulties or have learning difficulties. For the purpose of this Policy a volunteer or employee who would be required to complete a “Disclosure”(1) is defined as someone who has sustained contact with a young person or vulnerable adult and who may be unsupervised when supporting a WEDG activity. Individuals who support “one off” activities working with pairs or small groups of young people and always in the presence of other adults will also be referred to as volunteers but will not be asked to complete a “Disclosure.” All volunteers and employees are asked to note and adhere to this Policy understanding that the school has the primary duty of care.

We believe that we all share some responsibility for promoting the welfare and protection of children and young adults and we have a duty to safeguard them from significant harm, as embodied in the Children Act 1989. This includes the physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect of all children and young adults with whom our organisation will have contact. We recognise that all children and young adults from all backgrounds are subject to possible abuse and neglect, by parents, carers, by a stranger, paid staff and volunteers in organisations and institutions, and other young people.

We will work within the Child Protection procedures of the LEA and we will undertake all reasonable steps to safeguard and avert preventable harm to children and young adults. We will take seriously any allegation of abuse and neglect and make a referral to the appropriate agency. Our partners in any project will be required to read and familiarise themselves with our Child Protection Policy providing evidence by signing and registering to this effect.

### Code of Practice

Volunteers and employees in collaboration with our partners in education will:

- Be very clear about professional boundaries with children and young adults by:-
  - ❖ avoiding all occasions where a single adult is in the company of a lone child or young adult particularly where there is little or no possibility of the activity being supervised or observed.
  - ❖ keeping to a minimum physical contact, which should only take place where there is a genuine reason in relation to the activity.
  - ❖ never using verbal interactions which are demeaning or belittling. Jokes should never be made at the expense of children or young adults. Extreme care should be taken so that what is said is not misconstrued and innuendo should be avoided.
  - ❖ sharing personal information appropriately

- ensure that children and young adults are encouraged to report any concerns in relation to contact with volunteers and employees to their teacher or another identified adult.
- inform the child that anything they disclose may have to be shared with others

## **Procedure**

Wherever anyone suspects child abuse, it is his or her duty to report the matter. Investigation is the responsibility and duty of the Local Authority and the Police Child Protection Team.

### ***What should a volunteer or employee do when they have suspicions about a parent or another professional, or when a child or young adult makes an allegation?***

Any suspicions, allegations or disclosures made by a child or young adult to a volunteer or employee about a parent or another professional should be reported to a senior member of the teaching staff (ideally the designated teacher for child protection). If there are concerns about the conduct of a WEDG volunteer or employee the school/college should liaise as a matter of urgency with Charlotte Tagart, Team Leader at WEDG.

Contact details: - address :- 98A Broad Street, Canterbury CT1 2LU

Tel. 01227 766552

Email [info@wedg.org.uk](mailto:info@wedg.org.uk)

### ***What is the best way of recording this information?***

It is advisable to make a written record of any allegation/disclosure by a child or young adult as soon as possible using the child's own words. (See Appendix 1). Make sure that the date, time, witnesses, and any other relevant details are included in this record.

### ***What happens after an allegation is reported?***

The designated teacher for child protection of a particular school/college or Charlotte Tagart, Team Leader of WEDG will consult with the Children and Families Duty Team. A Strategy Meeting will be held with a number of professionals, including the Police Child Protection Team, to consider the allegations, how any investigation should be carried out and what action should be taken. The meeting will also consider the possibility of malicious allegations, and, if appropriate, any support which may need to be offered to the alleged perpetrator.

The document "Working Together To Safeguard Children" (1999) identifies and defines four kinds of abuse: -

- **Physical Abuse**

This 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 who they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as fictitious illness by proxy or Munchausen syndrome by proxy.

- **Emotional Abuse**

This is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar 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 to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

- **Sexual Abuse**

This 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 or 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**

This is 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.

Disclosure is an information service provided by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) - an executive agency of the Home Office. It helps employers and volunteering organisations make informed decisions and so protect young people and vulnerable members of society.

A Disclosure is an impartial and confidential document that details an individual's criminal record and where appropriate, details of those who are banned from working with children. In response to a request from a "volunteer" the CRB will provide an up to date Disclosure. There are three different levels of checks, Enhanced, Standard and Basic. The type of Disclosure requested will depend on the role of the volunteer. Once a volunteer has applied for a Disclosure s/he will be sent a comprehensive guide on how to complete the application form. In completing the form s/he will be requested to provide proof of identity and these documents must be original.

### **References**

**The Children Act 1989**

*The Protection of Children Act 1999*

*Working Together To Safeguard Children (1999)*

*Department of Health, Home Office, DoEE*

*Safe from harm: A Code of Practice for Safeguarding The Welfare of Children in Voluntary Organisations in England and Wales (1993) (Home Office)*

*Child Protection Procedures for all professionals involved in child protection work 2001.*

Appendix 1

In the event of a complaint the following information should be collected: -

Name of child	School
Parent/carer name, address	Phone number
Child's address	Phone number
What is said to have happened or what was seen?	
When did it occur?	
Who else was there?	
What was said by those involved?	
Any actual evidence? E.g. bruising, bleeding changed behaviour	
Who has been told about it?	
Who was concerned?	
Was the child able to say what happened?	
Have the parents been advised?	
Any other information	