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NOAH'S ARK CHILDREN'S VENTURE CHILD PROTECTION

It is important that everyone working with and responsible for groups of children, young people and adults using the Centre should read this booklet on each occasion that they visit the Centre as it is constantly being updated.

1. Child Protection Policy Statement

The Noah's Ark Children's Venture (NACV) is a registered charity (no. 1061676) and a company limited by guarantee (reg. no. 03325597).

Its core activity is the provision of facilities for recreation and other leisure time occupation for children and others resident in the London Borough of Lewisham and elsewhere.

The Board of Trustees acknowledge it has a responsibility for the safety of children visiting the centre or otherwise under its temporary care. It also acknowledges that good child protection policies and procedures are of benefit to everyone involved with the Board's work, including staff, as they can help protect them from erroneous or malicious allegations.

The Board is committed to practices which protect children from harm. All staff have unsupervised access to or contact with children are required to

- recognise and accept their responsibilities
- develop awareness of the issues which can cause children harm
- report concerns following the procedure below

The Board will endeavour to safeguard children by

- a) adopting child protection procedures and a code of practice for all who work on behalf of the organisation;
- b) reporting concerns to the authorities;
- c) following carefully procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers;
- d) providing effective management for staff and volunteers through support and training.

The Board is also committed to reviewing its Child Protection Policy and Code of Practice at regular intervals.

It is the Board's policy that:

- All paid staff, volunteers and members of the board accept responsibility for the welfare of children who come into contact with the Board in connection with its tasks and functions, and that they will report any concerns about a child or somebody else's behaviour, using the procedures laid down.
- There are designated child protection person(s) within the Board who will take action following any expression of concern and the lines of responsibility in respect of child protection are clear.
- Designated child protection person(s) know how to make appropriate referrals to child protection agencies.

- All those who are involved with children on behalf of the Board should adhere to the Code of Practice in relation to children.
 - Information relating to any allegation or disclosure will be clearly recorded as soon as possible, and there is a procedure setting out who should record information and the time-scales for passing it on.
 - The Children Act 1987 states that the ‘welfare of the child is paramount’. This means that consideration of confidentiality which might apply to other situations should not be allowed to over-ride the right of children to be protected from harm. However, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned when an allegation has been made and is being investigated.
 - The Board’s policy on duty of care to children will be referred to or included in recruitment, training and policy materials where appropriate, and the policies are openly and widely available to staff and actively promoted within the organisation.
 - A culture of mutual respect between children and those who represent the Board in all its activities will be encouraged, with adults modelling good practise in this context.
 - All staff and volunteers and anyone in paid or unpaid work on behalf of the Board with unsupervised access to children will be checked appropriately.
 - It is part of the Board’s acceptance of its responsibility of duty of care towards children that anybody who encounters child protection concerns in the context of their work on behalf of the Board will be supported when they report their concerns in good faith.
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2. Code of Practice

NACV expects that all staff, which for these purposes includes anybody in paid or unpaid work on its behalf, will be aware of this Code of Practice and adhere to its principles in their approach to all children.

- Do not make suggestions or inappropriate remarks to or about a child, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted.
- It is important not to deter children from making a ‘disclosure’ of abuse through fear of not being believed, and to listen to what they have to say. If this gives rise to a child protection concern it is important to follow the Board’s procedure for reporting such concerns, and not to attempt to investigate the concern yourself.
- Remember that those who abuse children can be of any age (even other children), gender, ethnic background or class, and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions and people to prevent appropriate action taking place.

- Good practice includes valuing and respecting children as individuals, and the adult modelling of appropriate conduct – which will always exclude bullying, shouting, racism, sectarianism or sexism.
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3. Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Child Protection Person (DCPP)

NACV has appointed a designated child protection person who is responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children. This person is Peter West, a member of the Board of Trustees of Noah's Ark Children's Venture and he can be contacted on 07714 755797 or via the centre on 01367 850356.

Other useful telephone numbers are:

Gloucestershire Social Services Children & Families Helpline - 01452 426 565
Gloucestershire Police Child Protection Team – in the first instance to report on 08450 901234 and subsequent calls on 01242 261112

The role of the designated person(s) is to:

- Know which outside child protection agency to contact in the event of a child protection concern coming to the notice of the Associated Board.
 - Provide information and advice on child protection within the Board.
 - Ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing under confidential cover.
 - Liaise with local social services and other agencies as appropriate.
 - Keep relevant people within the Board informed about any action taken and any further action required; for example, disciplinary action against a member of staff.
 - Ensure that a proper record is kept of any referral and action taken, and that this is kept safely and in confidence.
 - Advise the Board of child protection training needs.
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4. Procedure for Reporting Concerns

Staff could have their suspicion or concern raised in a number of ways, the most likely of which are:

- The conduct of a member of the Board's staff.
- A child 'disclosing' abuse.
- Bruising or evidence of physical hurt; which may or may not be accompanied by;
- Unusual behaviour by a child.

If a member of staff has such concerns they should be reported to the Designated Child Protection Person (DCPP).

Concerns about a specific child should be reported immediately by telephone to the DCPP and confirmed in writing within 24 hours using the form available from the DCPP. Delay could prejudice the welfare of a child. If the concerns relate to the conduct of a member of staff these should be reported by phone to the DCPP at the earliest opportunity.

The DCPP will consider the report and either refer this immediately to the authorities, or, after taking appropriate advice (which may include discussing the circumstances on a confidential basis with the NSPCC), decide not to refer the concerns to the authorities but keep a full record of the concerns.

5. Recruitment and Selection Procedures

Appropriate recruitment and selection procedures for staff in the context of child protection have been adopted by the Board and include the following.

- A clear definition of any role so that the most suitable appointee can be identified.
- Identification of key selection procedure.
- A wide circulation of vacancies to ensure equal opportunities.
- Confirmation of the identity of the applicant including personal details obtained either through using an application form where appropriate, or through other means.
- Requirement of a declaration of previous convictions and submission to formal check, together with the issue of the Child Protection Policy for those candidates whose work will bring them into contact with children or who will have a management responsibility in relation to those whose work does bring them into such contact.
- A clear guarantee that disclosed information will be treated in confidence and not used against applicants unfairly, including adherence to the Criminal Records Bureau code of practice.
- Documentary evidence of qualifications.
- Use of several selection techniques to maximise the chance of safe recruitment, e.g. interview, references, checks.
- At least one representative from the Board meeting personally with every applicant, and an exploration of their attitudes towards working with children.
- Written references.

6. Responding Appropriately to a Child Making an Allegation of Abuse

- Stay calm.
 - Listen carefully to what is said.
 - Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
 - Tell the child that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
 - Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace.
 - Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
 - Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
 - Tell them what you will do next, and with whom the information will be shared.
 - Record in writing what was said, using the child's own words as soon as possible – note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.
 - It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies, following a referral from the designated child protection person in the organisation.
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7. Definitions of Abuse

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may be the result of a deliberate act, but could also be caused through the omission or failure to act to protect.

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 making a child feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. 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, or consents to, what is happening. It may involve physical contact, including rape or oral sex, or non-penetrative acts such as fondling. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males

and/or females, and by other young people. It also includes non-contact activities such as involving children in watching or taking part in the making of pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in 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 failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or failing to ensure that a child gets appropriate medical care or treatment.