

## **NOAH'S ARK CHILDREN'S VENTURE** **CHILD PROTECTION**

### **1. Child Protection Policy Statement**

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 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.

The Board is committed to practice that protects all children from harm. All staff having access to or contact with children are required to

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

The Board believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

The Board recognise that:

- \* the welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- \* all children regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- \* working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare

The purpose of the policy is:

- \* To provide protection for the children and young people who receive NACV's services, including the children of adult members or users.
- \* To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers, including senior managers and Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of NACV.

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- \* valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- \* adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- \* recruiting staff and volunteers safely ensuring all necessary checks are made
- \* sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- \* sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- \* providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies including those relating to Recruitment, Health and Safety, and Equal Opportunities

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

## **2. Code of Practice**

NACV expects that all staff will be aware of this Code of Practice and adhere to its principles in their approach to all children.

Staff must

- \* treat all children and young people with respect
- \* provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow
- \* ensure that whenever possible there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others
- \* respect a young person's right to personal privacy/encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- \* remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
- \* be aware that although routine physical contact with a child or young person, particularly in relation to reassurance and comforting distressed individuals is acceptable, discretion is required
- \* recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people

- \* operate within NACV's principles and guidance and any specific procedures
- \* challenge unacceptable behaviour and report allegations/suspensions of abuse.

Staff must not:

- \* have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people
- \* allow themselves to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour/make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people
- \* jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- \* either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- \* show favouritism to any individual
- \* rely on your good name or that of the organisation to protect you
- \* believe "it could never happen to me"
- \* take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach.

### **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 Joanne Wylie, a member of the Board of Trustees of Noah's Ark Children's Venture and she can be contacted on 07530 617909 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 and responsibility of the designated person is to:

#### Role

- \* Establish contact with the senior member of social services staff responsible for child protection in the NACV's catchment area. This should be a first step before an incident occurs
- \* provide information and advice on child protection within the NACV

- \* ensure that the organisation's child protection policy and procedures are implemented and followed and particularly to inform social services/health board of relevant concerns about individual children
- \* be aware of the Local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC/ LSCB) and be familiar with local procedures
- \* ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, under confidential cover as quickly as possible (eg, within a working day)
- \* liaise with children's service authorities and other agencies, as appropriate
- \* keep relevant people within NACV, particularly the Chair and Centre Manager, informed of any action taken and any further action required, for example, disciplinary action against a member/s of staff
- \* ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the organisation, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome
- \* advise NACV staff of child protection training needs
- \* deal with the aftermath of an incident in the organization

### Responsibility

The designated person is responsible for acting as a source of advice on child protection matters, for co-coordinating action within NACV and for liaising with health, children's services and other agencies about suspected or actual cases of child abuse.

### **4. Procedure for Reporting Concerns**

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

- 4.1 The conduct of another adult or young person.
- 4.2 A child or young person 'disclosing' abuse.
- 4.3 Bruising or evidence of physical hurt; which may or may not be accompanied by;
- 4.4 Unusual behaviour by a child or young person.

If a member of NACV 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 any member of staff these should be reported by phone to the DCPP at the earliest opportunity. The DCPP will then 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. Responding Appropriately to a Child Making an Allegation of Abuse**

- 5.1 Stay calm.
- 5.2 Listen carefully to what is said.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 Tell the child that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
- 5.5 Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace.
- 5.6 Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- 5.7 Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- 5.8 Tell them what you will do next, and with whom the information will be shared.
- 5.9 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.
- 5.10 Contact the designated person
- 5.11 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 NACV designated child protection person.

## **6. Definitions of abuse**

What are abuse and neglect?

### **1 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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

### **2 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 insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations

being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. 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.

### **3 Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) 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. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.

### **4 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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of adequate care-takers, 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.

It is accepted that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse, and that some children are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any one time. These four definitions do not minimise other forms of maltreatment.

### **5 Photography policy**

NACV staff will sometimes use the images of users of the Centre, including images of children and young people, to publicise and promote our work. In so doing NACV staff will

- \* Avoid using children's names (first name or surname) in photograph captions
- \* Request that group leaders inform NACV staff on arrival if a child or young person in their care does not have consent or does not wish to be photographed/videoed.

- \* Only use images of children in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.

This policy is based on the advice and information outlined in the NSPCC Training and Consultancy guide 'Firstcheck' second edition 2006.

**Agreed Date March 2012**

***Review Date March 2014***