

NOAH'S ARK CHILDREN'S VENTURE **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**



Safeguarding 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 to promote the welfare and protect from harm the children visiting the centre or otherwise under its temporary care. It also acknowledges that good safeguarding 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
- iv) have an enhanced DBS check

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:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- 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 safeguarding 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 safeguarding 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
- ensuring that no child or group of children are treated any less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs

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

This policy is reviewed, approved and endorsed by the board of trustees annually or when legislation changes.

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.

All staff must

- have relevant safeguarding training
- 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/suspicions 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.

Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

NACV has appointed a designated safeguarding officer who is responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children. This person is Mark Smyth (Business Lead & Secretary) he can be contacted via the centre on 01367 850356.

- In circumstances where there is a concern but the DSO is uncertain how to proceed he/she should contact the Children's Helpdesk on 01452 426565 and ask to speak to a social work practitioner. Out of office hours 01452 614194
- Local Authority (Glos.) Designated Officer (LADO) on 01452 426994 or 01452 583630
- Gloucestershire Police Child Protection Team – in the first instance to report on 08450 901234 and subsequent calls on 01242 261112
- The police at any time on 101
- The childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk

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.
- provide information and advice on child protection within the NACV

- ensure that the organisation's safeguarding 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 (e.g., 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 safeguarding 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.

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 Safeguarding Officer (DSO).

Concerns about a specific child should be reported immediately to the DSO and confirmed in writing within 24 hours using the form available from the DSO. 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 DSO at the earliest opportunity. The DSO 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.

Where the DSO is the subject of the allegation the reports should be made to Caroline Newton Chair of NACV Trustees.

Responding Appropriately to a Child Making an Allegation of Abuse

All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by trustees, staff and volunteers and responded to appropriately.

- 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 safeguarding agencies, following a referral from the NACV DSO.

Definitions of abuse

What are abuse and neglect?

a) 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.

b) 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.

c) 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.

d) 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.

e) 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.

eSafety

NACV have invested in a stringent filtering system that prevents any device, whether provided by NACV or a BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) accessing inappropriate content. The use of social media is regulated by user groups own procedures.

This policy is based on the advice and information outlined in the government inter-agency statutory guidance - [Working together to safeguard children 2013](#) which came into effect on 15 April 2013.

Child Protection Snippet

Name of Child: _____

School/Organisation: _____

Name of person reporting incident: _____

Job title of person reporting incident: _____

Date: _____

Please record full details of your concerns in the box below.

Signed: _____

Please give to: Mark Smyth
(NACV – Designated Child Protection Officer)