



# Safeguarding Children Policy

**This policy has been updated in light of the COVID pandemic.**

## **Aim:**

Venture Kids is committed to building a ‘culture of safety’ in which the children in our care are protected from abuse and harm.

## **Procedure:**

- The Club will respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns regarding the safety of a child that may occur.
- The Club’s child protection procedures comply with all relevant legislation and with guidance issued by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland.
- The Club’s designated **Child Protection Officer (CPO)** at the Knock Site is **Siobhan McIlwaine**. The Club’s designated **Child Protection Officer (CPO)** at the Oakland Site is **Risa Rylander**.
- The **CPO** coordinates child protection issues and liaises with external agencies.

**As an Organisation that has contact with children or young people we must plan, construct and deliver services in a way that:**

- Upholds the rights of children to be safe, respected, and have their views considered, creating an environment where children are valued and encouraged.
- Recognise that harm is damaging to children and must not be tolerated.
- Identify the signs of harm and raises awareness of any specific risk of harm a child may be exposed to within their organisation.
- Reduce opportunities for harm to occur within our organisation.
- Have systems and processes in place for reporting concerns about a child’s welfare both internally and externally to a HSCT Gateway Service and/or the PSNI.

**In addition, we must have:**

- robust recruitment, selection and training procedures for staff and volunteers, including early induction in safeguarding training prior to contact with children.
- effective management of staff/volunteers, including effective support arrangements for staff who identify concerns from within the organisation.
- a code of behaviour for all staff, volunteers and service users.
- effective information sharing arrangements.

## **COVID Safeguarding:**

- In light of the COVID pandemic we are implementing additional safety measures to protect children, staff and visitors to the setting. Social distancing, play pods, arrival and departure of children, health and safety and illness and accident policies and risk assessments have been devised to ensure Venture Kids is a safe, secure and welcoming environment for all.

## Child abuse and neglect

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm.

**Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm.** Harm can be caused by:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation

**Physical Abuse** is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying - including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones - by a child's peers.

**Neglect** is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

**Exploitation** is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

## Signs of child abuse and neglect

Signs of possible abuse and neglect may include:

- significant changes in a child's behaviour
- deterioration in a child's general well-being
- unexplained bruising or marks
- comments made by a child which give cause for concern

- inappropriate behaviour displayed by a member of staff, or any other person. For example, inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their role, or inappropriate sharing of images.

### **If abuse is suspected or disclosed**

When a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff will:

- reassure the child that they were not to blame and were right to speak out
- listen to the child but not question them
- give reassurance that the staff member will take action
- record the incident as soon as possible (see Logging an incident below).

### **If a member of staff witnesses or suspects abuse**

- they will record the incident straightaway and approach the DCPO and discuss confidentially.

### **If a third party expresses concern that a child is being abused**

- we will encourage them to contact Social Services directly.
- If they will not do so, we will explain that the Club is obliged to and the incident will be logged accordingly.

### **Logging an incident**

All information about the suspected abuse or disclosure, will be recorded on the **Logging a concern** form as soon as possible after the event. The record should include:

- date of the disclosure, or the incident, or the observation causing concern
- date and time at which the record was made
- name and date of birth of the child involved
- a factual report of what happened. If recording a disclosure, you must use the child's own words
- name, signature and job title of the person making the record.

The record will be given to the Club's CPO who will decide on the appropriate course of action.

For concerns about **child abuse**, the CPO will contact Social Services Gateway Team. The CPO will follow up all referrals to Social Services in writing within 48 hours.

### **Allegations against staff**

If anyone makes an allegation of child abuse against a member of staff:

- The allegation will be recorded on an **Incident record** form. Any witnesses to the incident should sign and date the entry to confirm it.
- The allegation must be reported to the Local Gateway team and they will advise if other agencies (eg police) should be informed, and the Club will act upon their advice. Any telephone reports to Gateway will be followed up in writing within 48 hours.
- Following advice from Gateway, it may be necessary to suspend the member of staff pending full investigation of the allegation.
- If appropriate the Club will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

### **Promoting awareness among staff**

The Club promotes awareness of child abuse through its staff training. The Club ensures that:

- the designated CPO has relevant experience and receives appropriate training in safeguarding children.
- safe recruitment practices are followed for all new staff

- all staff have a copy of this Safeguarding Children policy, understand its contents and are vigilant to signs of abuse or neglect.
- all staff are aware of their statutory duties with regard to the disclosure or discovery of child abuse.
- all staff receive basic safeguarding training
- the Club's procedures are in line with the guidance in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)' and staff are familiar with the guidance in 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused (2015)'.

### **Use of mobile phones and cameras**

- Photographs will only be taken of children with their parents' permission.
- Only the club camera will be used to take photographs of children at the Club, except with the express permission of the manager.
- Neither staff nor children may use their mobile phones to take photographs at the Club.
- There is no CCTV available at the club.

### **Contact numbers**

**Gateway Team: 0289050 7000**

**Gateway Team out of hours contact: 0289504 9999**

**Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland: 02890690418**

**Police: 101 (non-emergency) or 999 (emergency)**

**NSPCC: 0800 800 500**

Reviewed by: Siobhan McIlwaine	Date: 9/7/20
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