

# Safeguarding and child protection policy

## 1. The purpose and scope of this policy statement

At Wild One's we recognise our responsibilities for child protection and strive to achieve an environment where children feel secure, supported and valued.

We recognise that some children are the victims of neglect and/or physical, sexual or emotional abuse. Staff and volunteers at Wild Ones, by virtue of their day-to-day contact with and knowledge of the children in their care, are well placed to identify such abuse and to offer support to children in need.

All child protection concerns and referrals will be handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which support the needs of the child.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children and young people who receive Wild One's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services
- to provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Wild Ones, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers.

## 2. Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from [nspcc.org.uk/childprotection](http://nspcc.org.uk/childprotection)

## 3. Supporting documents

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents:

- managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- recording concerns and information sharing
- child protection records retention and storage
- code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- behaviour policy for children and young people
- photography and sharing images guidance
- online safety
- anti-bullying
- managing complaints
- whistleblowing
- health and safety
- induction, training, supervision and support

#### 4. Wild Ones believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

#### 5. Wild Ones recognise that:

- the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse.

#### 6. Wild Ones will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people, a deputy and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
- recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- recording and storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance [more information about this is available from the Information Commissioner's Office: [ico.org.uk/fororganisations](http://ico.org.uk/fororganisations)]
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions
- making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

## 7. The designated Safeguarding Lead:

- Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Louise Regan. She has lead responsibility and management oversight and accountability for child protection and, with other leaders, will be responsible for coordinating all child protection activity
- will lead regular case monitoring reviews of vulnerable children. These reviews must be evidenced by minutes and recorded in case files.
- will decide what steps should be taken and should advise the relevant leader when there are concerns about a child
- has received the appropriate official training, which will be undertaken every two years, and obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses.
- ensures the Safeguarding policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role and responsibility the school has in this.
- understands the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as Early Help Assessments.
- is able to keep detailed, accurate and secure written records of all concerns and referrals.
- has a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a Child Protection Case Conference and a Child Protection Review Conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- is alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs/disability and young carers.
- encourages a culture of listening to children among all staff.
- acts as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and, when deciding whether to make a referral, liaise with the appropriate agencies.
- refers all cases of suspected or alleged abuse or harm by a member of the school staff, colleague or volunteer known to work with children to the local authority children's social care and the LA Designated Officer (LADO)
- ensures the school's Safeguarding policy is reviewed annually, and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, working with the governing body regarding this.
- ensures that safeguarding issues are regularly discussed at staff meetings.

## 8. Safer recruitment

The safe recruitment of staff is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children at our Forest School. Wild Ones is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care. As an employer, we expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

- Wild Ones ensure the safeguarding and protection of all children and young people through the implementation of robust safer recruitment practices
- We identify the suitability of applicants of paid or volunteer roles to work with children and young people by vetting them through the DBS service and studying their previous roles and references. We will reject applicants who we deem as unsuitable
- We verify applicant's identity and academic or vocational qualifications
- We respond to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process
- We respond to concerns about the suitability of employees and volunteers once they have begun their role
- We ensure all new staff and volunteers participate in an induction which includes child protection
- We ensure the candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job

## 9. Safer Working Practice

All staff and volunteers are expected to follow the Wild Ones staff Code of Conduct policy

- Staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child.
- Adults working with individual children to do so in view of other adults.
- If staff anticipate being in a situation that could be open to misinterpretation they should alert a senior manager in advance and inform the child's parent or carer.
- Staff are not expected to be involved with toileting, unless the child has an additional need that has been brought to their attention by the parent/guardian and a strategy agreed in writing.
- We recognise that physical touch between adults and children in relation to the activity being provided is acceptable in public places.

## 10. Recognising Abuse

To ensure that our children are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone, or leaving knives or matches within reach of an unattended toddler.

There are four categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

### 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 (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy, but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

### Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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 for meeting 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 serious bullying, 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 maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

### Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child 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 and 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

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 mental and/or physical health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing or shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment; failing

to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate 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.

(Definitions taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children)

## Bullying

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress.

All incidences of bullying should be reported and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

## Indicators of abuse and what you might see

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated person.

It is the responsibility of all staff members, volunteers and contractors to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been harmed or abused.

A child who is being harmed, abused and/or neglected may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- frequently miss school or arrive late
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their school work
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed. It is very important that all staff, volunteers and/or contractors report all concerns even if there is no 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk.

## 11. Taking action

For staff and volunteers to be able to identify and respond appropriately to possible abuse and/or neglect, they must at all times follow the four stages below:

1. Be alert
2. Question behaviours
3. Ask for help
4. Refer

It may not always be appropriate to go through all four stages sequentially, if a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, the DSL must refer to police or social care without delay, so it is important staff share any concerns in a timely manner to ensure children are safe.

Staff members working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.

When worried about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child and report any concerns to the DSL.

Staff concerns about a child / young person's wellbeing, is likely to be based on:

- Something the child/young person/parent has told them
- Something they have noticed about the child's behaviour, health, or appearance
- Something another professional said or did

Even if staff believe their concern is minor, it is always their responsibility to share concerns no matter how small. The DSL may have more information that, together with what staff have shared, represents a more serious worry about a child. It is never up to a staff member to make their decision alone on how to respond to concerns.

## Contact details

### **Nominated child protection lead**

Name: Louise Regan

Email: [info@bovingtonwildones.co.uk](mailto:info@bovingtonwildones.co.uk)

Phone: 07564081234

### **Deputy child protection lead**

Name: Gemma Miller

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Children's Advice and Duty Service (ChAD): **01305 228558**