

# BDCPS SAFEGUARDING POLICY<sup>i</sup>

## PURPOSE

BDCPS is committed to working with young people, parents, staff and the community to ensure the safety and protection of the young people in our care and to work towards giving them the very best start in life.

## RESPONSIBILITY

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of BDCPS. **Anyone working with young people has a duty of care to ensure they are kept safe from harm, abuse or injury.**

## AIMS

Our aims are to:

- create an environment in our settings which is safe and secure for all young people;
- value, respect, and listen to all children and young people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, giving them the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- enable young people **are empowered through support to make their own decisions and choices and** have the self-confidence and the vocabulary or alternative communication methods to resist inappropriate approaches;
- encourage young people to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults;
- encourage young people to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
- support young people to have positive self-image recognising that this has an impact on their wellbeing.
- work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all our young people.

In order to fulfil these aims:

- Our staff will receive training in safeguarding young people with the senior staff receiving refresher training every three years. All staff will receive an annual update on any changes to legislation, policy and procedure.
- We follow the guidelines and policy practice laid down by the Local Safeguarding Board.

- We have a copy of Working Together to Safeguard Young people 2018 available.
- We will take proportionate steps and the least intrusive actions whilst we maintain our duty to act.
- We will work in partnership with other agencies to prevent and detect abuse.
- All members of staff will know the settings' procedures for recording and reporting safeguarding incidents or concerns.  
To report a concern or to get advice:
  - **NSPCC Helpline 0800 800 5000**
  - **Bedford Borough Council: 01234 718700**
  - **Central Bedfordshire Council: 0300 300 8585**
  - **Out of office hours : 0300 300 8123 (For all local authority areas)**
 If a child is in immediate danger or we cannot contact the local authority out of hours team we will contact the police.

#### STAFFING AND VOLUNTEERING

- BDCPS have a nominated person who coordinates safeguarding young people issues, ensuring training and support is in place for all staff, best practice is adhered to throughout the organisation's operations, advises on any changes to policy and/or practice and will coordinate reporting of any safeguarding concerns. This person is their Safeguarding Lead (**name: Rose McHugh**).
- The officers will nominate a trustee to take leadership responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements. This includes ensuring that staff have sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. (**name: Susannah Lee**)
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of young people. This will be achieved through the assessment of the needs of each individual young person.
- All staff are informed of their duty to maintain the well-being of young people in their care.
- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out Enhanced DBS checks and take-up references before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.

- A person who is barred from working with young people or vulnerable adults will be breaking the law if they work or volunteer, or try to work or volunteer with those groups.
- BDCPS will not employ anyone who has not received satisfactory checks i.e. references and DBS clearance as if we knowingly employ someone who is barred to work with those groups we will also be breaking the law.
- No member of staff in contact with the young people works unsupervised.
- Physical contact should be appropriate to the situation and be age appropriate.
- All staff undertake mandatory basic awareness in safeguarding training.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised persons gain access to the young people.

#### DISCIPLINARY ACTION

As soon as any member of the management team has a concern or has a concern reported to them with regard to the suitability of a member to work with young people they will immediately report this to the Safeguarding Officer. The Safeguarding Officer will contact the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for advice within 1 day. Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the setting or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). If BDCPS dismiss or remove a member of staff or a volunteer because they have harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or we would have done so if they had not left, we must tell the DBS. This will be done by the Safeguarding Officer/Services Manager within 1 day.

Whilst the allegation is being investigated BDCPS will provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation and provide them with a named contact if they are suspended. It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a member of staff is dealt with very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and, at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation. BDCPs will comply with any requirements of an investigation in a timely manner. If the member of staff resigns the investigation will continue.

All allegations should be investigated as a priority to avoid any delay. Target timescales are shown below: the time taken to investigate and resolve

individual cases depends on a variety of factors including the nature, seriousness and complexity of the allegation, but these targets should be achieved in all but truly exceptional cases. It is expected that 80 per cent of cases should be resolved within one month, 90 per cent within three months, and all but the most exceptional cases should be completed within 12 months. 246. For those cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious, they should be resolved within one week. If the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the BDCPS will instigate appropriate action within three working days. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, the hearing should be held within 15 working days. Where it has been deemed appropriate to suspend the person, written confirmation will be given within one working day, providing as much detail as appropriate for the reasons for the suspension.

The following definitions will be used when determining the outcome of allegation investigations:

- Substantiated: there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation;
- Malicious: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive;
- False: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;
- Unsubstantiated: there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence;
- Unfounded: to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made

## TRAINING

All of our senior staff receive training on issues around safeguarding young people. We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and so that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals. We ensure that all staff are aware of the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting. They will receive a handbook detailing our code of conduct and an induction to the role. They will be given regular updates on policies and procedures during briefing sessions. They will also have the opportunity to attend relevant training when offered by the local authority.

## ACTIVITY PLANNING

- BDCPS create within the setting a culture of value and respect for all individuals regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is appropriate for the ages and stages of our young people.
- We introduce key elements of safeguarding young people into our activity planning so that young people can develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe. (e.g. Stranger Danger, Road Safety)
- Children and young people can speak to an independent person outside of BDCPS through making contact with either of the following:
  - Childline on 0800 1111
  - NSPCC helpline: 0800 328 0904

## COMPLAINTS

- BDCPS ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteer action within the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We have a procedure on allegations made against a member of staff
- We will get advice from,
  - **Bedford Borough Council: 01234 718700**
  - **Central Bedfordshire Council: 0300 300 8585**
  - **Out of office hours : 0300 300 8123 (For all local authority areas)**  
(if a child is in immediate danger or we cannot contact the local authority out of hours team we will contact the police)

when we receive an allegation made about a member of staff, in line with our, and their procedures. ?

- BDCPS follow all the disclosure and recording procedures when investigating an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child as if it were an allegation of abuse by any other person.

### If we suspect abuse

- BDCPS acknowledge that abuse of young people can take different forms - physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.
- When young people are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect, this may be demonstrated through changes in their behaviour, or in their play. If we observe such changes in behaviour occur, or where young people's play gives cause for concern, the setting? will investigate.

- BDCPS allow investigation to be carried out with sensitivity. Staff in the setting take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to young people or ask questions of young people.
- Where a young person shows signs and symptoms of 'failure to thrive' or neglect, we make appropriate referrals. We seek parent's permissions before making a referral unless by seeking this permission we put a young person at risk.
- BDCPS work co-operatively with the parent unless this is inconsistent with the need to ensure the young person's safety.

#### DISCLOSURES MADE TO OUR STAFF

1. Staff members will treat the matter seriously and reassure the young person. Reacting to what a young person tells them with belief, making it clear they will have to tell others. They will listen and observe the young person, not probe.
2. They will tell the Safeguarding Officer what they observed/overheard/what the young person said. They will NOT discuss this in front of anybody else.
3. Every aspect of the concern will be recorded. It is essential that these records are kept confidential.
4. We will try to ensure that the information recorded is objective and factual and does not contain assumptions, interpretations or personal comments.

#### RECORDING AND REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE AND DISCLOSURES

Staff make a record of:

- The young person's name; address, date of birth;
- The date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
- An objective record of the observation or disclosure;
- The exact words spoken by the young person;
- The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time;
- The names of any other person present at the time.

These records are signed and dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

The member of staff will discuss the incident with the Safeguarding Officer who will decide who should be notified. If a young person's safety is at risk the appropriate safeguarding team will be contacted immediately.

➤ **Bedford Borough Council: 01234 718700**

➤ **Central Bedfordshire Council: 0300 300 8585**

➤ **Out of office hours : 0300 300 8123 (For all local authority areas)**

If a child is in immediate danger or we cannot contact the local authority out of hours team we will contact the police.

We will take advice from them regarding information then given to parents.

In a case where a young person is not in immediate danger we try to discuss the matter with parents before making any referrals. However it is the welfare of the young person that is paramount and this is at the forefront of all our actions. We are aware that many young people have suffered because of lack of communication between agencies. We shall therefore use our professional judgement in sharing information and maintaining the principles of the GDPR with the agencies that 'need to know', being open and honest with parents and young people as to why we feel we need to share the information.

Full records of conversations will be maintained when any referrals or discussions are held with any other agencies or with parents prior to a referral. These records will include dates and times of the conversation, whom we speak to, and the advice we were given.

#### INFORMING PARENTS

We will always aim to involve parents in any referrals, **where doing so does not put a child at any risk**, before they are made. However, if a suspicion of abuse is recorded, and the young person is considered at risk an immediate referral will be made to the Safeguarding Team Duty desk and we will take their advice on informing parents.

#### ALLEGATION MADE AGAINST MEMBER OF STAFF

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteer action within the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- If an allegation is made against an employee, both the Safeguarding Officer and the Chair of the Management Committee will be immediately informed.
- We notify the relevant LADO when we receive an allegation made about a member of staff, in line with our procedure.
- We follow all the disclosure and recording procedures when investigating an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a young person as if it were an allegation of abuse by any other person. When a young person makes an allegation of abuse by a member of staff, the person receiving the allegation must take it seriously and deal with it by informing either the Safeguarding Officer (providing the allegation is not

against that person) or the Chair of the Management Committee. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

- The Safeguarding Officer will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have been had they not resigned.

It is recognised that whilst Club staff are uniquely placed to detect signs and indicators of young person abuse, they are themselves particularly vulnerable to malicious or misplaced allegations made deliberately or innocently, arising from normal association with them within the setting. With this in mind they will abide strictly by our policy of maintaining a presence of at least audible level of two whilst working with any young person.

It is the responsibility of each member of staff to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to avoid being alone with young people.

Our actions relate to members of staff who is currently working with young people regardless of whether our setting is where the alleged abuse took place. Allegations against a member of staff who is no longer teaching will be referred to the police. Historical allegations of abuse will also be referred to the police.

### Peer on peer Abuse

All staff will recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. This will include within the staff team as many of our volunteers are under 18 years of age. Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”;

- recognition of the gendered nature of peer on peer abuse (i.e. that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators), but that all peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously; and
- the different forms peer on peer abuse can take, such as:
  - bullying (including cyberbullying);
  - physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
  - sexual violence and sexual harassment.
  - upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
  - sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)
  - initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

## SUPPORT TO FAMILIES

- The setting takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- The setting continues to welcome the young person and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation.
- Confidential records kept on a young person are shared with the young person's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the young person only if appropriate under the guidance of the Safeguarding team investigating the allegation. These will be kept in accordance with our GDPR policy.
- With the proviso that the care and safety of the young person is paramount, we do all in our power to support and work with the young person's family.

## VULNERABLE ADULTS PROTECTION POLICY<sup>1</sup>

BDCPS is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people who use our services are not abused and that working practices minimise the risk of such abuse. Our staff &/or volunteers &/or trustees have a duty to identify abuse and report it.

### Definition

Vulnerable adults are people who are over 18 years of age and are getting or may need help and services to live in the community. Vulnerable adults may be unable to take care of themselves and unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation by other people.

### Abuse can include:

- physical,
- financial,
- material,
- sexual,
- psychological,
- discriminatory,
- emotional abuse

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<sup>1</sup> Updated by Rose McHugh, Children's Services Manager  
Amended by Rose McHugh, Children's Services Manager  
Amended by Rose McHugh, Children's Services Manager

Date: June 2014  
Date: Nov 2017  
Date: Jun 2019

- neglect.

Abuse can take place in any setting, public or private, and can be perpetuated by anyone.

### **Rights & Responsibilities**

BDCPS will make the dignity, safety, and well-being of our service users a priority in our actions. Services provided should be appropriate to the individual including their communication needs, physical needs, mental abilities and each of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.)

### **Responsibilities of Trustees:**

- **To designate a trustee to take leadership responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements**
- To designate a Safeguarding Officer for the organisation and approve appropriate training for that person to undertake their duties in relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults who come into contact with BDCPS.
- To carry out Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks, as appropriate according to DBS guidelines, on staff that have access to or work with Vulnerable Adults
- Ensure rigorous recruitment and selection practice, and adhere to pre-appointment checking requirements e.g. references will always be taken up, DBS checks made.
- Have a clear, well publicised policy of zero tolerance of abuse in any format

### **Responsibilities of Safeguarding Officer (nominated by trustees and with delegated responsibility**

- To ensure staff are aware of vulnerable adult's need for protection
- To raise awareness amongst adults at risk who may be potential abusers of what constitutes abuse and why
- To ensure service users, visitors and relatives receive information about how to raise concerns if they suspect or experience abuse in all its forms including neglect
- To Enable staff and volunteers to recognise poor practice, or abuse and respond appropriately
- To notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected.

- To support and where possible secure the safety of individuals and ensure that all referrals to services have full information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability
- Provide the support that may be necessary to ensure adequate levels of understanding, and adequate skills to ensure that rights and responsibilities are recognised and asserted.
- Raise awareness of how staff and volunteers can use their routine and processes to enable people to acknowledge that they are at risk of abuse, and signpost them to effective support
- Raise the profile of adult protection in all relevant internal and interagency meetings
- Be a source of information to signpost any adult who is being abused to appropriate sources of advice and support
- Promote relevant advocacy and advisory services.

#### **Responsibilities of Staff &/or Volunteers**

- To be familiar with the vulnerable adult protection policy
- To take appropriate action in line with the policy
- To declare any existing or subsequent convictions.
- To empower individuals with knowledge and understanding so that they will be aware of what is appropriate or inappropriate behaviour towards them
- To raise the profile of adult protection in all relevant internal and interagency meetings
- To promote relevant advocacy and advisory services

#### **Support for those who report abuse**

All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they are staff &/or volunteers &/or service users &/or carers &/or members of the general public should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously
- Their comments will usually be treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared with the appropriate authorities if they or others are at risk.

#### **The Vulnerable Adult**

All adult protection work should aim to enable adults who experience abuse to retain as much control as possible over their own lives. The person who may be experiencing abuse should be given information, properly accessible to them, about the adult protection process.

### **The Vulnerable Adult has the right:**

- To be made aware of this policy.
- To have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously.
- To receive fair and respectful treatment throughout.
- To be involved in any process as appropriate.
- To receive information about the outcome.

### **Vulnerable Adults who Experience Abuse**

Those who have experienced abuse will be offered the choice and support to participate or otherwise have their views included, in all forums that are making decisions about their lives. They will be offered contact with independent organisations and advocacy services. Where communication aids, interpretation or personal assistance are necessary for a person to participate, BDCPS will assist the vulnerable person to source these. This will be overseen by BDCPS' designated Safeguarding Officer.

Where an individual does not have the mental capacity to decide how to protect him or herself from abuse, a Mental Capacity Advocate (or IMCA) will be sought to represent their interests during adult protection procedures. Where ongoing advocacy support is needed, an appropriately qualified professional should be nominated to act in the role of advocate.

Information will only be shared with the person's consent or where there is an overriding justification (for example, legal reasons to protect from harm a person without capacity) and on a need to know basis.

### **Confidentiality**

Any exchange of information must be in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the Human Rights Act 1998, and Caldicott Principles. Informed consent must be obtained, but if this is not possible and other adults are at risk, it may be necessary to override the requirement. It is inappropriate for BDCPS to give absolute confidentiality in cases where there are concerns about abuse, particularly when other people may be at risk or there is a legal duty to report criminal activity. BDCPS will not risk allowing a person to be abused by failure to share information necessary for their protection. The protection and well-being of those in our care is our highest priority.

This policy was reviewed at the committee meeting	
Held on (date)	

Signed on behalf of the Management	
Print name of signatory	
Role of signatory (e.g. chairperson etc.)	

<sup>i</sup> Written by	Rose McHugh, Activities Coordinator	Date April 2006
Rewritten by	Vanda Ursell, Deputy Coordinator	Date July 2007
Reviewed by	Rose McHugh, Activities Coordinator	Date July 2007
Reviewed by	Rose McHugh, Activities Coordinator	Date July 2009
Updated by	Rose McHugh, Activities Coordinator	Date Dec 2010
Update by	Rose McHugh, Activities Coordinator	Date Dec 2012
Reviewed by	Rose McHugh, Children's Services Manager	Date July 2013
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Updated by	Rose McHugh, Children's Services Manager	Date: Jan 2018
Reviewed by	Board of Trustees	Date: Jan 2018
Amended by	Rose McHugh, Children's Services Manager	Date: Jun 2019
Updated by	Rose McHugh, Children's Services Manager	Date: Aug 2020