

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PROTECTION POLICY (INCLUDING PROCEDURES AND CODE OF BEHAVIOUR)

OVERVIEW

Whilst this policy influences the recruiting and informs the attitudes of those employed by DCA on a permanent, casual or voluntary basis, the actions taken in its implementation will depend on whether when working on a project involving children and young people, DCA is the lead organisation or, is working within the framework of another organisation's protection procedures.

POLICY STATEMENT

DCA recognises that when working with children and young people, it is their welfare and safety that is paramount and that specific measures are to be taken to safeguard them from any harm.

Before commencing work with children and young people, DCA staff or volunteers will be required to produce evidence of having satisfied the criminal record checks currently prescribed. However if continuation of a service would be affected whilst the criminal record checks are being undertaken then they may start work as long as they are supervised.

All DCA staff and volunteers will be required to subscribe to a code of behaviour and practice designed to safeguard children and young people from harm, and to follow published procedures in reporting allegations of abuse.

Any participant under the age of 18 must seek written permission from a parent/guardian to attend an activity organised by DCA unless it is an open, drop in event.

POLICY REVIEW

The Designated Person will review the policy once a year and any significant changes will be reported to the Board of Trustees.

IMPLEMENTATION

All DCA staff will be made aware of this policy and must agree to apply it in practice. The policy is deemed to be incorporated in the contract of employment and it is a condition of service with DCA, that the staff and volunteers understand and operate the policy fully. All staff and volunteers will be given a copy of this policy; a copy will be available in all DCA offices and will be freely available to other groups involved in any events or meeting held by DCA for children and young people; a children friendly version outlining the policy will also be made available. Staff and volunteers who will come into contact on a frequent basis with children and young people will:

- Read and refer to the document, "What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused – Summary" issued by the Department of Health. Copies are available on their website, or from the Central Services Manager.
- Attend appropriate training (such as Child Protection) and will be offered to other staff and volunteers if interested.

- Have regular discussions within supervision sessions about their practice and implementation of the policy

DEFINITIONS

Children and Young People are the terms applied to people under the age of 18.

Physical Abuse is causing physical injury, or failing to prevent physical injury or suffering. It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a carer or parent feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child or young person they are looking after.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child or young person, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It can include threats, verbal attacks, shouting and rejecting behaviour. It may involve conveying to children and young people that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate, or valued in so far as they meet the needs of another person. All abuse is likely to have an emotional abuse element

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet the basic physical and/or psychological needs of a child or young person. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, or leaving a child or young person alone and unsupervised. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to basic emotional needs.

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or young person 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 and young people to behave in a sexually inappropriate way.

Independent Person is the term for someone nominated to be available for a child or young person to consult if they have concerns about being exploited or abused. When working within the framework of another organisation, DCA staff must find out the name and contact details of the Independent Person.

Designated Person is the term for the person in an organisation responsible for dealing with concerns or allegations of abuse.

DESIGNATED PERSON

At DCA the Designated Person is:

Steve Place, Community Development Manager

Their responsibilities are:

- To be familiar with the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Area Child Protection Committees' Procedures
- To be familiar with any child protection procedures produced by DCA
- To obtain training on child protection and their responsibilities
- To have responsibility for child protection and child welfare issues in DCA and keep DCA appropriately informed
- To liaise with Social Services and other agencies regarding the child protection and welfare issues of children and young people within DCA
- To hold information and contact details on child abuse and child protection procedures, consultation, referral and support services available

- To be available to offer advice and information within DCA on child protection and welfare issues – making it clear how they can be contacted
- To ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the organisation, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome
- To be able to offer information regarding counselling services (or other) available if required by staff, volunteer or child
- To advise DCA of child protection training needs.

PROCEDURES

Inappropriate Advances Children and young people can sometimes make suggestive approaches to an adult. Sometimes inappropriate physical contact can happen quite accidentally. It is vital that the adult takes responsibility to:

- Inform the child or young person that their language or behaviour is unacceptable.
- Inform the Designated Person about the incident
- Record the incident in case accusations are made later.
- Consult with the Designated Person in deciding what actions should be taken to help the child or young person, and prevent a re-occurrence.

Dealing with Concerns or Allegations.

If you suspect a child is being abused:

- Immediately inform the Designated Person.
- Record the facts as you know them and give a copy to the Designated Person.
- Ensure the child or young person has access to an Independent Person.
- Ensure that no aspect of DCA's activities could cause further concern.

If a child or young person discloses to you abuse by someone else:

- Ask the child or young person to speak without interruption, receiving what is said.
- Attempt to alleviate feeling of guilt and isolation, whilst passing no judgement.
- Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you must pass on the information given.
- Offer the child or young person the opportunity to talk to someone else (e.g. Childline, Social Services)
- Then take the steps, as above in suspecting a child is being abused.

If you receive an allegation about an adult or about yourself:

- Immediately tell the Designated Person
- Record the facts as you know them and give a copy to the Designated Person.
- Try to ensure that no one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise.

You must refer. You must not investigate

Facts to be recorded when a disclosure or allegation of abuse is made:

1. Date and time of the incident or disclosure
2. Name of the child or young person and parent or carers details.
3. Child's or young person's address and relevant telephone numbers.
4. What is said to have happened or what was seen and heard.
5. When did it occur? Who else, if anyone, was there?
6. What evidence of abuse can be recorded? (See Definitions)
7. Who was involved in the incident, and in what way?
8. What was said by those involved?
9. If the child or young person was able to say what happened, how did they describe it?
10. Were the parents or carers informed? If so by whom and when?

Allegations against Staff

When there is an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has caused harm or may have caused harm to a child, this shall be referred to the social services department with a request for an investigation under the child protection procedures. The Chief Executive will be informed immediately, and this should be confirmed in writing.

Whilst allegations are being investigated any person against whom an allegation has been made, should not have any unsupervised contact with children and young people. In more serious cases suspension may be necessary.

During the process of investigation all persons concerned may need support and appropriate support will be made available by DCA.

CODE OF APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Do treat everyone with respect

Do provide a good example that others will follow

Do plan activities which always involve more than one person being present, or at least within sight or hearing of others.

Do respect a child or young person's right to personal privacy.

Do encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes and behaviours they do not like.

Do remember that someone else might misinterpret your action. No matter how well intentioned.

Do recognise that caution is required when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse.

Do not leave children and young people in unsupervised charge of activities involving other children and young people.

Do not permit abusive peer activities such as initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying.

Do not generally play physical contact games with children and young people unless you plan them carefully and be aware of how others may see them as inappropriate.

Do not have any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others.

Do not jump to conclusions about others without checking the facts.

Do not allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour such as tantrums or crushes.

Do not exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.

Do not show favouritism to any individual.

Do not make suggestive remarks or gestures in the presence of children and young people.

Do not smoke or swear in the presence of children and young people.

Do not invite children or young people to your home alone or give them your personal contact details.

Do not rely on just your good name to protect you.

Do not conduct or plan activities outside DCA's agreed terms of reference.

To be reviewed 2007