

Friends Together



Out of School Club

## **Safeguarding Policy** **October 2015**

Friends Together Out of School Club is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children and young people to be cared in.

The club believes that it is always unacceptable for a child to experience abuse of any kind and we recognise our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children by a commitment to practice which protects them.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide protection for all children in our care
- Provide staff and volunteers with the 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, including managers, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Friends Together Out of School Club.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Mr John Donald (Head Teacher)

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children regardless of their age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse and have the right to freedom from abuse
- Working in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare
- All our staff and volunteers need to be carefully selected and accept responsibility for helping to prevent abuse of children in their care.

We endeavour to safeguard children by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Respond quickly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse or issues relating to child welfare
- Providing parents/carers and children with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have
- Ensuring that access to confidential information is stored and managed with National Guidance
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely and ensuring that all necessary checks are made
- Improving knowledge of children, parents/carers, staff and volunteers by sharing information about child protection and encouraging good practice
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- Providing effective management for all staff and volunteers through supervision, support and appropriate safeguarding training

## **Recognising Child Abuse**

A child is considered to be abused, or at risk of abuse by parents or carers when the child's basic needs are not being met either intentionally or non-intentionally. A child's basic needs include:

- Physical care and protection from harm
- Love and security
- Praise and recognition
- Intellectual stimulation and development

A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm.

There are four categories of abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse

- Neglect

**Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. This includes fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, harm to a child.

The signs and symptoms of physical abuse may include:

- Bruising – it is important to note that most children will collect cuts and bruises in their every day life usually on the bony parts of their body. An important indicator of physical abuse is where bruises or injuries are unexplained or the explanation does not fit the injury
- Multiple bruises in clusters
- Multiple bruises of uniform shape
- Bruises that carry the imprint of an implement used, hand marks or fingertips
- Although bruising is the most common injury in physical abuse, fatal non-accidental head injury and non-accidental fractures can occur without bruising

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child that may 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 insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Emotional abuse may also include developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed, causing the child to feel frightened and/or exploited.

The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- A failure to thrive or grow
- Sudden speech disorders
- Developmental delay either in terms of physical or emotional progress

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- Neurotic behaviours e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking, showing signs of withdrawal
- Being unable to play
- Fear of making mistakes
- Self harm
- Fear of parent/carer being approached regarding their behaviour

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact including

penetrative or non penetrative acts. They may include involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital/anal areas
- Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Stomach pain
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
- Sexual drawings or language
- Bedwetting
- Eating problems such as over eating or anorexia
- Self harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Saying they have a secret they cannot tell anyone about
- Substance or drug abuse
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- Unwilling or unable to make friendships (particularly in adolescence)
- Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults or peers
- Using inappropriate vocabulary which may include words of a sexual nature normally beyond their understanding

**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.

It may involve:

- Failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing
- Failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger
- Failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- Neglect of a child's basic emotional needs]
- Failure to ensure satisfactory education

The physical signs of neglect may include

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children

- Constantly dirty or smelly
- Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time
- Not requesting medical assistance and / or failing to attend appointments
- Having few friends
- Mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised

It is important to remember that many children and young people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring.

### **Record Keeping Procedure**

- Any member of staff who has concerns about the welfare of a child must share this information, without delay with the safeguarding lead
- Staff must make a brief accurate record of these concerns using the agreed proforma, recording any allegations that the child makes in the child's own words if possible
- These records must be stored securely and the information shared with staff only on a 'need to know basis'
- The child protection record must be transferred to the Safeguarding lead of the admitting school should the child change school

### **Confidentiality**

- We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential
- The Head teacher or Safeguarding lead will disclose any information about a child to other members of staff on a need to know basis only
- All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children
- All staff must be aware that they cannot make a promise to a child to keep secrets

### **Staff Support and Training**

The club is committed to ensuring that it meets its responsibilities in respect of safeguarding children through the provision of support and training to staff. Therefore the club will ensure that:

- All staff, students and volunteers are carefully recruited, have verified references and have full up to date Disclosure and Barring Service checks.
- All staff and volunteers are given a copy of the safeguarding policy during their induction, and have it's implications explained to them
- All staff and volunteers receive regular training and supervision in safeguarding issues and are provided with any relevant information and guidance
- All staff are aware of the main indicators of child abuse
- All staff are aware of their statutory requirements in respect of disclosure or discovery of child abuse and procedures of doing so. All students and volunteers are instructed to report the disclosure or discovery of abuse to the manager
- The club will take appropriate action in relation to the findings of any investigation into allegations of abuse, consistent with it's duties to protect the safety of children and up hold fair processes for staff, students and volunteers
- Any member of staff, a student or volunteer under investigation for the alleged abuse of a child, will be subject to the provisions of the Staff Disciplinary Policy

## **Safe Caring**

- Every effort will be made to avoid or minimise time when members of staff, students or volunteers are left alone with a child. If staff are alone with a child, the door of the room should be kept open and another member of staff should be informed.
- If a child makes inappropriate physical contact with a member of staff, students or volunteer, this will be recorded fully in the Incident Record Book.
- Staff will never carry out a personal task for children that they can do for themselves. Where this is essential, staff will help a child whilst being accompanied by a colleague. Unless a child has a particular need, staff should not accompany children into the toilet. Staff are aware that this and other similar activities could be misconstrued.
- Staff will be mindful of how and where they touch children, given their age and emotional understanding. Unnecessary or potentially inappropriate physical contact will be avoided at all times.
- All allegations made by a child against a member of staff will be fully recorded, including any actions taken, in the Incident Record Book. In the event of there being a witness to an incident, they should sign the records to confirm this.

## **The Use of Photographic Images of Children by the Club**

Where it is appropriate to use images of children the club will:-

- Obtain the active consent of parents [see consent form]
- Specify how the material will be used
- Ensure that the names of young people are not printed with photographs which could identify individuals without parental consent
- Visits by newspaper employees to the club are planned in advance and a senior member of staff is aware that images are being taken and for what purpose
- Avoid making images in one to one situations
- Make parents and relatives of children aware that any photographs or video film they take at the club are likely to contain images of children who will not have given their permission to be filmed or photographed. Such images should not be circulated more widely than the family.

## **Dealing With Allegations**

The Club is committed to ensuring that it meets its responsibilities in respect of child protection by treating any allegation seriously and sensitively. The Club will not carry out any investigation itself into a suspected child abuse incident. On discovering an allegation of abuse, the Child Protection Officer will immediately refer the case to the local statutory child protection agencies. Further to this, the following principles will govern any suspected or reported case of abuse:

- Where actual or suspected abuse comes to the attention of staff, they will report this to the Manager and the Child Protection Officer at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Staff are encouraged and supported to trust their professional judgment and if they suspect abuse has, or is taking place, to report this.
- Full written records of all reported incidents will be produced and maintained. Information recorded will include full details of the alleged incident; details of all the parties involved; any evidence or explanations offered by interested parties; relevant dates, times and locations and any supporting information or evidence from members of staff. The Club will demonstrate great care in distinguishing between fact and opinion when recording suspected incidents of child abuse.
- The Manager and the Child Protection Officer will be responsible for ensuring that written records are dated, signed and kept confidentially.
- If an allegation of abuse is made against the Manager or the Child Protection Officer, the Registered Person will be informed as soon as possible.

They will then assume responsibility for the situation or delegate this role to a senior member of staff.

- Staff will ensure that all concerns and allegations are treated with sensitivity and confidentiality.
- Any children involved in alleged incidents will be comforted and reassured.

In circumstances where a child makes an allegation or a disclosure, the member of staff concerned will:

1. Listen fully to all the child has to say.
2. Make no observable judgement.
3. Ask open questions that encourage the child to speak in their own words.
4. Ensure the child is safe, comfortable and not left alone.
5. Make no promises that cannot be kept; such as promising not to tell anybody what they are being told.

Staff will be made aware of the Department of Health's booklet 'What to do if You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused?' (2003) and its recent guidance on 'Protecting Children from Harm'.

### **Referring Allegations to Child Protection Agencies**

If the Manager or the Child Protection Officer has reasonable grounds for believing that a child has been – or is in grave danger of being – subject to abuse, the following procedure will be activated:

- Contact will be made, at the earliest possible opportunity, with the local social services department.
- The Manager or the Child Protection Officer will communicate as much information about the allegation and related incidents as is consistent with advice given by social services and the police.
- At all times, the safety, protection and interests of children concerned will take precedence. The Manager and staff will work with and support parents/carers as far as they are legally able.

- The Club will assist the social services and the police, as far as it is able, during any investigation of abuse or neglect. This will include disclosing written and verbal information and evidence.
- OFSTED will be informed of any allegations of abuse against a member of staff, student or volunteer, or any abuse that is alleged to have taken place on the premises or during a visit or outing.