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SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The safety and security of young people accessing The Archway Youth Project (AYP) is our utmost priority.

We aim to create a safe environment where learners feel safe, secure, valued, listened to, and are taken seriously at all times.

This safeguarding policy is designed to help all staff regardless of their role within the organisation, parents, volunteers, visitors, and trainees achieve the best practice and maintain the highest standards to ensure the safety and security of learners at the AYP.

What is abuse?

All lists of 'signs' and 'symptoms' of child abuse should be treated with caution. At times there will be straightforward explanations for injuries or behaviour. What is paramount is that project workers (all staff) share their concerns with the designated officer for child protection, and in their absence, their project manager, and in the light of what is known about the child and family/carers and with those professionals with the responsibility of investigating abuse.

AYP therefore recognises that children brought up in 'high criticism, low warmth' households are particularly vulnerable

Definitions of child abuse

Physical abuse: a parent (or somebody caring for a child) physically hurts, injures, or kills a child; this can involve hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, and biting. It also involves giving a child poisonous substances, inappropriate drugs and alcohol, and attempted suffocation or drowning. It includes the use of excessive force when carrying out tasks like feeding or nappy changing.

Emotional abuse: where children are harmed by constant lack of love and affection, or by threats, verbal attacks, taunting, or shouting.

Sexual abuse: where someone seeks sexual gratification by using children (girls or boys). This maybe having sexual intercourse (including buggery), engaging with the child in fondling,



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masturbation or oral sex, and includes encouraging children to watch sexually explicit behaviour or pornographic material, including videos.

Neglect: where parents (or other carer) fail to meet the basic essential needs of children, like adequate food, clothes, warmth, and medical care. Leaving young children alone and unsupervised is another example of neglect. Refusing or failing to give adequate love and affection is a case of emotional neglect.

When to be concerned

Members of staff should be concerned if a learner:

- Has any injury which is not typical of the bumps and scraps normally associated with children's activities;
- Regularly has unexplained injuries;
- Frequently has injuries even when apparently reasonable explanations are given;
- Offers confused or conflicting explanations about how injuries were sustained; Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, which usually explicit and/or inappropriate to his or her age; discloses an experience in which he or she may have been significantly harmed.

Roles and Responsibilities

The designated child protection officer(s) are Mark Riches and Neil Waugh

The role of the AYP child protection officer(s) is to:

- Ensure that the London safeguarding board committee procedures are followed in the organisation.
- Ensure that members of staff are aware of these procedures.
- Ensure that appropriate training and support is provided to members staff.
- Maintain effective working relationships with other agencies and services.
- Decide whether to take further action and about specific concerns e.g. refer to social services.
- Liaise with social services teams over suspected cases of child abuse.
- Ensure that accurate records relating to individual children are kept in a secure place and marked 'strictly confidential'.
- Ensure that the project effectively monitors children who have been identified as at risk;
- Provide guidance to parents, children and staff about obtaining suitable support.



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AYP Procedures

- Project staff and volunteers should raise any 'observed' concerns of abuse outlined above to the (designated child protection officer(s))
- The member of staff must record information regarding the concerns on the same day within the hour. The recording must be clear, precise, and a true factual account of the observations.
- The designated AYP child protection officer will decide whether the concerns should be referred to social services department (safeguarding children board). If the decision to make a referral to the safeguarding board, this will be done after discussions with the parents/carer.
- If the referral is made to the safeguarding board (social services) the designated AYP child protection officer will ensure that a written report of the concerns is sent to the social worker dealing with the case within 48 hours. Particular attention will be paid to the attendance and development of any child who has been identified as at risk, or who has been placed on the child protection register.
- If a learner is referred to the project with a child protection plan, the designated AYP child protection officer will inform the social worker responsible for the case. Conversely, when the learner finishes his placement with the organisation, those involved in the child protection plan will be informed.

Dealing with disclosure

If a trainee directly discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief;
- Accept what is being said;
- Allow the child to speak freely;
- Reassure the child, but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep;
- Not promise confidentiality;
- Reassure the learner that what has happened is **NOT** his/her fault;
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell;
- Listen, **DO NOT** ask direct questions;
- Not criticise the perpetrator;
- **NOT INVESTIGATE FURTHER**
- Explain that the information would be passed on to the child protection officer;



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Record keeping

When a learner has made a disclosure, the member of staff should use the **CPIF** book to:

- Make some brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation;
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child;
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or other injury, if necessary;
- Record statements and observations, rather than interpretation assumptions.

The AYP child protection officer will place a colour sticker on the Learners' referral file to indicate there has been a child protection concern:

Blue sticker: Referral to safeguarding panel (social services).

Green sticker – trainee being monitored, no referral made yet.

Dealing with a disclosure from a child is likely to be a stressful experience. The member of staff concerned should consider seeking support for her/himself and discuss this with the designated AYP child protection officer.

Note: Do not destroy any original notes in case they are needed in court.

The Centre will have a red book to record and monitor concerns project staff or volunteers have about a trainee. This should be kept confidential and all staff should know where the book is kept and how to access it.

The book must have a single record: name of learner, date of entry and the type of concern noted. The book must then be regularly inspected and monitored by the designated child protection officer(s)

Support / staff code of conduct

You have a professional responsibility to ensure that carrying out your duties you make every effort to minimise the possibility of an allegation being made against you.

Attitudes, demeanour and language, as well as behaviour, all require care and modesty when providing for a safe and secure environment: staff should therefore refrain from:

- Swearing, play fighting or encouraging conflicting situations
- Using homophobic language or signs
- Using derogatory sexist language



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- Using inappropriate sexual references
- Teasing or reference to difference in ability or gender

Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been or may be misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the child protection officer.

You should seek wherever possible to avoid situations where you are alone with any individual trainee, if this cannot be avoided you should ensure that meeting is conducted in a room with **visual access**, or by leaving the door open and in an area likely to be frequented by other people.

All employees in all circumstances must avoid the use of any unnecessary physical intervention as a part of their work with trainees. Physical contact, which may be misconstrued, by the learner, parent, or other casual observer should be avoided.

There may be occasions when a distressed learner needs comfort and reassurance, for example administering first aid, which may include physical comforting such as a carer would give. In such situations the trainee's permission should normally be sought before physical contact is made.

Staff joining the project should undergo a thorough induction, which includes safeguarding of young people policy and practice and undergo further training as required and relevant to their work.

Some staff are likely to come into physical contact with learner's from time to time, for example, when showing them how to use a piece of equipment or whilst checking a safety harness or riding equipment. Project staff should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted by the trainee.

Transporting Young People

Whenever possible, trainees should be transported by minibus and every minibus should have a minimum of two staff present (1 driver) and (1 passenger) to sit at the rear of the minibus to maintain and monitor trainee behaviour. All learners must wear a seat belt for the duration of the journey whether long or short.

When a member of staff is requested to assist a learner, for example following first aid, and has to accompany a trainee to hospital. The remaining member of staff should contact their project manager



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to note this. However if a large group is returning to base, a second project worker may be dispatched following a risk assessment, at the discretion of the project manager to accompany the group home.

If a personal vehicle is used to transport a learner, another member off staff should be present in the vehicle and the trainee be seated in the rear and must wear a seat belt. The worker must also have insurance, which allows the vehicle to be used in conjunction with their business. If transporting trainees is part of the projects delivery and is a regular occurrence a senior colleague should be informed and their approval given.

Educational visits / trips

Learners' conduct when on external visits can be different from that in the project, as staff and trainees may work closer together for longer periods of time and more social interaction may take place than normal training activities. Staff must act in accordance with the above guidelines and maintain the highest standards of safeguarding as they would at the project. They must also act with caution and discretion at all times.

Teaching materials

Project workers should avoid using any materials for example in life skills for personal or social education that could be misinterpreted. When using materials of a sensitive nature, they should be aware of the danger that use by the staff or trainee, might, after the event be open to criticism.

When using the Internet trainees should **not**:

- Be left unsupervised
- Be able to access sites of a pornographic nature or open to misinterpretation
- Be left to access chat rooms
- Be able to freely access sites promoting (racism, homophobia, political or religious extremism of any origin
- Be sending emails unless approved access is given

Project staff should enable young people to:

- Only access sites relevant to their training subject
- Personal development is relevant to their age and context of need (e.g. job search, FRANK drug education advise)



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- EV planning

Project staff should not use the Internet to access inappropriate materials for their personal use. Staff should not upload personal images or photos, which might be misconstrued.

Any accidents should be logged into the office dairy and noted and witnessed by colleagues present at the time. Any concerns about the misuse of the Internet MUST be brought to the attention of the senior manager or child protection officer.

Pastoral responsibilities

Learners may seek to involve you in discussions of a sensitive and intimate nature, were they are not an integral part of the on-going programme of work. All members of staff must keep a log of the date, time, duration and subject of discussions of a significant nature and alert a senior colleague.

Allegations involving project staff

If a child, parent, carer, makes a complaint of abuse against a member of staff, the person receiving the complaint must take it seriously and immediately inform the child protection officer(s)

Any member of staff who has reason to suspect that a trainee may have been abused by another member of staff; either at the project or any other location, must immediately inform the child protection officer(s)

A record of concerns must be made, including a note of anyone else that witnessed the incident or allegation.

The child protection officer(s) will not investigate the allegation itself, or take written or detailed statements, but he/she will assess whether it is necessary to refer to the local social services team in accordance with the safeguarding policy and procedures. In doing this, the AYP's child protection officer(s) may consult with the student's protection officer from the referring agency, or senior officer from social services and safeguarding board.

If the child protection officer decides that the allegation warrants further action through safeguarding child protection procedures, they will make a direct referral to the social services team.



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If the allegation constitutes a serious criminal offence, it will be necessary to contact social before informing the member of staff. If it is decided that it is not necessary to refer to social services, the child protection officer will consider if there needs to be an internal investigation.

Declarations

1. We declare that all members of staff in the Organisation who have direct contact with young people (Learners) are DBS checked comprehensively
2. All members of staff have requisite First Aid training and are competent to administer **Basic First Aid**, where necessary.

Date Reviewed: July 2023