



Safeguarding Children Policy

Introduction

Off The Fence (OTF) takes seriously the welfare of all children and young people who are involved in OTF activities. OTF is committed to creating a culture of safeguarding, and safeguarding the individual rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

OTF recognises that effective safeguarding arrangements in every local area should be underpinned by 2 key principles:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part.
- need for a child-centred approach, for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

Who is a child?

A **child** is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 (updated 2019)* states:

"Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection."

Safeguarding & Child Protection

The term **safeguarding** covers vetting and safer recruitment, safer working practices, responding to concerns, working with partner agencies, dealing with allegations against those responsible for children and other matters that may be relevant. The term **child protection** is used for responding to concerns where it appears that a child may have been harmed or is likely to suffer significant harm.

Categories of Abuse

Child abuse has many forms. There are four identified categories of abuse described in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023*, from which the following definitions are taken. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education. (See paragraph 29 of KCSIE21).

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.

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, this includes verbal and non-verbal bullying.



Guidelines for the Implementation of the Policy

- OTF is committed to carefully selecting, supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children. All staff, paid and unpaid, working with children in a position that requires a vetting check will be subject to an enhanced check through The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and references to check on their suitability before their work with children can commence.
- All incidents should be reported to your manager (unless your manager is implicated, then contact one of the Designated Named Persons).
- Whilst working in school premises, the Schools and Youth Team staff and volunteers should work within the individual school's Safeguarding Policy, Health & Safety procedures and comply with any risk assessments.
- OTF will not investigate allegations of abuse or neglect of children itself, but refers them to the appropriate statutory agencies. OTF may need to make preliminary enquiries to establish the accuracy of information being passed to the statutory body.
- If a child comes to notice as having suffered abuse in the past, the appropriate authorities will be notified to ensure that the matter is on record.
- OTF recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures, which are designed to prevent and be alert to such abuse.
- OTF is committed to maintaining good links with the statutory child care authorities.
- OTF also has a Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy.
- OTF will respond without delay to every allegation, statement or disclosure made which suggests that a child has been, or may be harmed.
- OTF recognises that it is the responsibility of each one of its staff & volunteers, paid and unpaid, to prevent the physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect of young people and children and to report any abuse discovered and suspected within the guidelines set out in **Safeguarding Procedures**.
- All members of OTF's Schools Team have read and understood the guidelines in Part 1 of KCSIE2023
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1161273/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023_-_statutory_guidance_for_schools_and_colleges.pdf



OTF has appointed individuals who are responsible for dealing with any Child Protection concerns.

The Designated Named Persons for Child Protection within Off The Fence are:

Monica Harding

Work number 01273 933885

Paul Young

Work number 01273 933885

Mobile number 07843 356016

Emergency contact number 01273 416094

Lizzi Demetriou

01273 977980

Rebs du Preez (Trustee)

SGtrustee@offthefence.org.uk

Front Door for Families ([/www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/children-and-education/front-door-families/about-front-door-families](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/children-and-education/front-door-families/about-front-door-families))

Front Door for Families: FrontDoorforFamilies@brighton-hove.gov.uk

What to do if a child or adult discloses harm to you

- Stay calm, try not to show disbelief or shock and listen carefully.
- Reassure the child that they were right to tell you and take what they say seriously
- Do NOT ask leading questions, instead ask open questions e.g. can you tell me/explain/describe what happened/when did it happen/where did it happen etc.
- Be honest with the child so do not make promises you can't keep, especially regarding confidentiality.
- Explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk. If possible seek agreement that you will need to discuss situation with someone else and will do so on a 'need to know' basis.
- Report to your Manager (unless your manager is implicated, then contact one of the Designated Safeguarding Persons)
- All allegations/concerns should be recorded on an **Incident Alert Form**.

Don't:

- Stop someone who is freely recalling significant events; allow them to share whatever is important to them.
- Be judgemental.
- Contact the alleged abuser or tell them about any concerns raised.
- Discuss with anyone other than the person to whom you are reporting the matter.

Recording and managing confidential information

OTF is committed to maintaining confidentiality wherever possible and information around Safeguarding Children issues should be shared only with those who need to know.

All allegations/concerns should be recorded on an **Incident Alert Form**.



The information should be factual and not based on opinions, record what the person tells you, what you have seen and witnesses if appropriate. The information that is recorded will be kept secure and will comply with data protection.

Any completed Incident Alert Forms will be secured in a locked cabinet at Head Office. Access to this information will be restricted to the Designated Named Persons and the CEO.

Incident Alert forms can be found on the server under Master Documents>Safeguarding

Disseminating/Reviewing policy and procedures

This Safe Guarding Children Policy and Procedure will be clearly communicated to staff, trustees, volunteers and Interns. The Designated Named Persons will be responsible for ensuring that this is done. The Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures will be reviewed regularly by the Designated Named Persons in conjunction with the CEO. The Designated Named Persons will also ensure that any changes are clearly communicated to staff, trustees and volunteers.

Chair of Trustees

Date: September 2023