

## Child Protection Policy

### 1. Statement of Purpose

- 1.1. This Child Protection Policy stresses the fact that we in the Lordship Hub Co-Op organisation are determined to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect from harm, all children and young people who participate in any of the Lordship Hub Co-Op programme or any related activities, or who works as a volunteer in the Lordship Hub Co-Op.
- 1.2. This policy establishes the organisation's position, role and responsibilities and clarifies what we expect from everybody involved within Lordship Hub Co-Op. It highlights the importance placed by Lordship Hub Co-Op on the protection of children and young people at all times. Every child and young person who participates in any of the Lordship Hub Co-Op activities or who works as a volunteer should be able to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from abuse. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in this organisation. We recognise however, that child abuse is a very emotive and difficult subject. It is important to understand the feelings involved but not to allow them to interfere with our judgement about any action to be taken.
- 1.3. The Lordship Hub Co-Op organisation and management recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, financial, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying. We are committed to meeting our obligations to ensure that Lordship Hub Co-Op provides opportunities for children and young people with the highest standards of care.
- 1.4. We recognise that for children, high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good communication with trusted adults aids prevention. With this in mind, we will always endeavour to:
  - Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure.
  - Ensure that children know that there are adults around on any project who they can approach when worried or in difficulty.
  - Include in any project activities an induction that helps children to understand some of the skills they need to stay safe.

- Establish and maintain good relationships with parents/carers and colleagues from other agencies.

1.5. Lordship Hub Co-Op will ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All staff, volunteers and Board members working in this organisation have a responsibility to report concerns to the person designated as responsible for Child Protection (Dave Morris - Hub Chair, or to the Office Manager)

## **2. Key Principles**

2.1 Lordship Hub Co-Op will take responsibility for:

- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children and young people when they are in our care.
- Training and inducting all volunteers, staff members and Board members to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and young people from abuse and to abide by the procedures outlined within this document.
- Ensuring that all adults who work unsupervised with children are DBS checked.
- Responding to any allegations appropriately.
- Regularly reviewing the policy.

[A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989)]

## **3. Promoting Good Practice**

3.1 Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, arouses strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement

about the appropriate action to take.

3.2. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school, sporting, leisure and recreational environments. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them.

3.3 There are some people in this organisation that, at some time, will have regular contact with young people and may be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection.

#### **4. Good Child Protection Practice**

- For all children and young people under 18, obtain written parental consent to allow them to volunteer at Lordship Hub Co-Op
- Always work in an open environment, where possible, avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication
- Treat all young people equally with respect and dignity
- Always put the welfare of each child or young person first.

Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with service users. Physical contact with children should be limited to appropriate touching needed either to guide their movements during tuition, e.g. to aid positioning of hands on a guitar or to reassure them when they are ill or injured. Generally, the only safe place to touch appropriately is on the arm or shoulders.

Staff, volunteers, Board members and tutors should maintain a strictly professional relationship with children who attend the hub for activities, volunteer work or assistance. It is not appropriate to seek to develop relationships beyond this strictly professional relationship by, for example, arranging to meet a child away from an activity at the hub to further a friendship with that child.

- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children to share in decision making.
- Keep up to date with training, qualifications, DBS checks and insurance involving children/young people/parents/carers and workshop leaders.
- Be an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Give enthusiastic, constructive feedback rather than negative criticism

- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of young people
- Secure parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- Keep written records of any injuries that occur, along with the details of any treatment given.

## 5. **Positive ways of protecting children**

### **What do children need?**

- To feel safe and secure
- Health and happiness
- Appropriate affection
- Lots of smiles
- Praise and encouragement
- To be able to talk to someone
- To be listened to
- New experiences
- Respect for their feelings
- Rewards and treats.

## 6. **Types of Abuse and Neglect:**

6.1. Signs - or indicators of abuse and neglect are helpful if they are used with some caution. They are not necessarily evidence of actual abuse or neglect. However, if you are concerned about a child or young person, they can help you think about why you have that concern.

### 6.2. Signs that may suggest physical abuse:

- Any bruising to a baby - pre-walking stage.
- Multiple bruising to different parts of the body.
- Bruising of different colours indicating repeated injuries over time.
- Fingertip bruising to the chest, back, arms or legs
- Burns of any shape or size
- Any marked injury for which there is no adequate explanation.

6.2. Signs of possible sexual abuse:

- Something a child has told you.
- Something a child has told someone else.
- A child showing sexualised behaviour in their play or with other children.
- A child who seems to have inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age.
- A child who may be visiting or being looked after by a known or suspected sexual offender.

6.3. Signs which may suggest emotional harm:

The following signs may be present in children whose parents are over-critical or emotionally distant, or who are unable to meet their child's emotional needs:

- Children whose behaviour is excessive. Eg. excessive bedwetting, overeating, rocking, head banging.
- Children who self harm. Eg. they may cut or scratch themselves or overdose.
- Children who attempt suicide.
- Children who persistently run away from home.
- Children who show high levels of anxiety, unhappiness or withdrawal.
- Children who usually seek out - or avoid affection.

6.4. Signs which may suggest neglect:

- Squalid, unhygienic or dangerous home conditions.
- Parents who fail to attend to their children's health or development needs.
- Children who appear persistently undersized or underweight.
- Children who continually appear tired or lacking in energy.
- Children who suffer frequent injuries due to lack of supervision.
- Children who appear consistently dirty or inadequately dressed

Please note that these lists are possible indicators of abuse - any signs of abuse have to be considered in context.

## **7. What to do if you are worried**

7.1 If you are concerned about a child - or if someone discloses that they are being abused, whether in the home, school or a recreational sport setting, then upon receiving the information you should:

- React calmly.
- Reassure the child that they were right to tell and that they are not to blame and take what the child says seriously.
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. **Don't ask about explicit details.**
- Reassure but **do not promise confidentiality**, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
- Inform the child/young person what you will do next.
- Make a full and written record of what has been said/heard as soon as possible and don't delay in passing on the information. **Make sure that you put the date on this record and sign it.**

## **7.2 Any report should include the following**

1. The child's name, age and date of birth.
2. The child's home address and telephone number
3. Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns - or those of someone else.
4. The nature of the allegation, including dates, times and special factors and any other relevant information.
5. Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
6. A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.

7. Details of any witnesses to the incidents.

**7.3 The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.**

- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details

7.4. Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

7.5 If there are concerns about sharing the above information with a colleague, you can contact the Children's Service, Social Care in Haringey or the Police direct, - or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000.

**8. What Lordship Hub Co-Op will do next:**

8.1 It is not our responsibility to decide whether abuse has taken place or not, however we will pass on the information to the appropriate authority. This will be the Haringey Child Protection Team:

**020 8489 4470**

**(during office hours – Monday to Thursday 8:45am to 5:00pm; Friday 8:45am to 4:45pm)**

**020 8489 0000**

**(out of office hours, including weekends)**

In what instances would the police 101 Or 999 be called as an initial point of contact?

8.2. We will record all of the information so that if we are asked at a later time we can produce a written report.

8.3. Severe and obvious cases of abuse will be reported immediately.

8.4 As a provider of services for children and young people we have a statutory duty under The Children Act 1989 to ensure the welfare of a child and to make a referral to the appropriate agency if we suspect abuse.

8.5 It is not our duty or responsibility to carry out the investigation of an alleged instance of child

abuse, only to make the referral to the appropriate agency. The investigation will be carried out by whichever agency Haringey Child Protection Team decide is appropriate (either Social Services or the Police). These agencies have a legal responsibility to investigate if the referral meets their threshold guidelines, and all Eco-hub staff, Board members and volunteers have a duty to co-operate with those investigations. This may involve talking to the child and their family, and gathering information from other people who know the child. Enquiries may be carried out jointly with the police. Clearly then, concerns about children must not be taken lightly.

8.6 It is very important that Lordship Hub Co-Op staff, Board members or volunteers do not attempt to carry out their own investigation or cross-examine children or witnesses. This may contaminate evidence that may be at some point used in a court. We should use only the minimum questioning to establish whether or not there is a case for referral. All such questioning must be completely open-ended, and we should avoid at all costs asking leading questions. For example, we should say, "there's a bruise around your eye, how did that happen?", never "Did someone hit you in the eye?"

**The protection of children is paramount and if we have any concerns about a child being abused or neglected we will contact the Haringey Child Protection Team (contact details on page 6).**

## **9. Liaison and Co-operation with other agencies**

9.1 In the event of any incident the designated Child Protection person will work closely with Haringey Child Protection Team and with the Police and Social Services if the Child Protection Team refer the case on to them.

9.2. If a referral made by us meets the Haringey Child Protection threshold guidelines, a case conference may be held. Case Conferences offer the opportunity for all agencies involved with the child and his or her family to share information and formulate a plan of action. The Lordship Hub Co-op will always send a representative to any Case Conference if an invitation is received.

## **10. Physical Restraint**

10.1 There may be occasions when staff in the course of their duties, find they need to use reasonable physical intervention to restrain children, for their own safety or the safety of others. Whenever such an incident occurs, one of the managers must be informed immediately and the incident recorded in the Incident Book kept in the Lordship Hub Co-Op office. Restraint should only be used as a last resort, and then only the minimum force needed to prevent harm should be applied. Do we need to define physical restraint?

## **11. Record-keeping, information-sharing and confidentiality**

11.1 Well kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Staff should record any concerns held about a child or children on our programme or projects. When there are child protection issues it is vital that these concerns are passed on to the designated member of staff. (Office Manager)

11.2 All information relating to individual child protection issues will be treated with appropriate professional confidentiality. Child protection information will be kept in a secure locked cabinet. Information will only be available on a need to know basis. We will only pass information on to appropriate persons.

11.3 If a child alleges abuse, Lordship Hub Co-Op has responsibility for reporting the allegations to the Haringey Child Protection Team and parents must be informed of our intentions to do this, but if the allegation is against the parents, we will not inform the parents of the details of the allegation until the Child Protection Team advises that it is appropriate to do so.

11.4 It is important that a child is not guaranteed confidentiality from adults when disclosing information. It is the responsibility of the adult to pass that information on to the appropriate person. All disclosures must be dealt with in a very sensitive manner.

## 12. Monitoring and Review:

12.1 This policy should be considered alongside other related policies for Lordship Hub Co-Op.

12.2. It will be reviewed after one year, or sooner if there are legislative changes or there is a major incident.

Approved by Board on (date) 11 February 2018



Signed (Board member) Dave Morris

Reviewed January 2018

Re-reviewed July 2022

Next review date: July 2023