



## Safeguarding Policy

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Executive Committee and members of the SPICE are conscious of the problems and dangers of child abuse in society at large and mindful therefore of the need to manage SPICE according to certain protocols and guidelines.

It is the purpose of this document to set out the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures of SPICE in as simple and understandable form as possible.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Policy and Procedures were drawn up in keeping with the recommendations contained in the Code of Practice, "Safe from Harm", which was produced by the Home Office for voluntary organisations working with young people. The Safeguarding Policy contains following:
- Appendix 1 - A summary of the recommendations - **Safe from Harm**
  - Appendix 2 - Guidelines for adults working with young people
  - Appendix 3 - Guidelines for protecting children and workers.

### 3. POLICY

- 3.1 The policy of SPICE is to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people who are members of their group.
- 3.2 SPICE is committed to:
- Taking into account in all its considerations and activity the interests and wellbeing of young people.
  - Respecting the rights, wishes and feelings of young people.
  - Taking all reasonable practicable steps to protect young people from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.
  - Ensuring that staff and volunteers are carefully selected trained and supervised.

### 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 All SPICE Executive Committee Members and SPICE volunteers are responsible for the operation of the group's Safeguarding Policy.

It is the responsibility of all SPICE volunteers to ensure that:

- Their behaviour is appropriate at all times.
- They observe the rules established within the group for the safety and security of young people.
- They follow the procedures following suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse.



- 4.2 It will be the responsibility of the SPICE Executive Committee to advise volunteers on the implementation of our Safeguarding Policy and assist them in operating the policy and its procedures.
- 4.3 The SPICE Executive Committee must be satisfied that all those whom they appoint to work with young people are fit and proper persons to carry out the responsibilities of the appointment. They must ensure that all appointees have an understanding of, and a commitment to, the principles and procedures supporting the group's Safeguarding Policy.
- 4.4 In all cases where there is an allegation or suspicion of child abuse the Chair of SPICE Executive Committee must immediately take steps to ensure that no adult is placed in a position which could cause further compromise. To this end, suspension from SPICE related duties may be necessary.

## 5. DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse is any avoidable act, or avoidable failure to act, which adversely affects the physical, mental, or emotional wellbeing of a child. There are four categories of abuse as defined in "Working Together"; the Government guide to arrangements for inter-agency co-operation for the protection of children from abuse.

- 5.1 Neglect:** *"Actual or likely persistent/severe neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive."*

Neglect occurs when there is a failure to provide basic needs such as food, warmth or medical care. This failure would have to be severe. Non-organic failure to thrive means that a child is underweight for his or her age and there is no physical reason for this.

- 5.2 Physical Injury:** *"Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child including deliberate poisoning, suffocating and Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy."*

Physical injury includes bruises, cuts, burns or broken bones. It may also be that an adult has not caused the injuries but should have taken better care of the child to prevent the injuries. Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy is where parents continually present their child for medical examination and treatment when the child is not ill.

- 5.3 Sexual Abuse:** *"Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. This relates to the involvement of dependent developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent, or that violate the social taboos of family roles."*

Sexual abuse occurs if a child or young person is pressurised into any kind of sexual activity whether by an adult or another child.



**5.4 Emotional Abuse:** *"The actual or likely severe adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection whether deliberate or not."*

Emotional abuse includes sarcasm, isolation, exploitation, degrading punishments, continually picking on the child, using threats or not giving love and affection.

**6. HOW TO RECOGNISE CHILD ABUSE.**

Voluntary groups and organisations such as SPICE have an important role to play in protecting children. By having regular contact with a child we may be the first to notice that something is wrong or that the child has an unexplained or suspicious injury. By alerting the authorities (Social Services Department; Police) at the appropriate stage it may be possible to intervene to stop the abuse and provide support for the child and his or her family or in extreme cases to remove the child from abuse. Things to look out for:

**6.1 Physical Signs**

- Unusual or unexplained bruising, especially on the head (including black eyes)
- Finger and Thumb mark' bruising especially on the face or limbs
- Bruising at different stages of healing
- Bite marks
- Burn or scald marks (especially small circular marks from cigarettes)
- Bruising on back or stomach
- Soreness or discharge around genital organs
- Injuries to the mouth or face, including the lips, or tearing of the web of skin joining the upper lip and gum
- Fractures and dislocations which may show as an obvious deformation of a bone or joint, or swelling, or reluctance to move a limb, or obvious discomfort or pain
- If a child has been severely shaken, they may have suffered internal bleeding or brain injuries. Symptoms may include cold, clammy skin, drowsiness, vomiting. A further indication is bruising to the child's chest and back caused by gripping.
- Weals and scratches resulting from abnormal beating
- Failure to thrive - the child is small and light for age, limbs are thin, stomach often seems to protrude.

**6.2 Behavioural Signs - Child:**

- Over-watchful and wary of adults, frightened of saying the wrong thing
- Unresponsive and reluctant to play
- Fearful of failure, cries a lot
- Indiscriminate/impulsive with adults
- Wants to take care of parent
- Explicit sexual language, unusual for child's age
- Generally unkempt or dirty

**6.3 Behavioural Signs - Parent:**

- Reluctance to give information, general unavailability, or inadequate explanation of injury
- Drinking or violent episodes
- Lonely or isolated or feeling rejected
- Depressions



- Jealousy or rivalry to the child
- Unrealistic expectations of the child, lack of awareness of child's needs
- Oversensitive to criticism or questions about self or child
- Unusual behaviour, either showing complete lack of concern, affection and control or else reacting excessively in these areas
- Showing rejection of the child, blaming the child for their own or wider family's problems

## 7. PROCEDURES

### 7.1 If you suspect a child is being abused:

- Immediately tell the SPICE Safeguarding officer, Lucy Edwards.
- Record the facts as you know them and give a copy to Lucy Edwards.
- Ensure that the child has access to an independent adult.

### 7.2 If a child discloses to you abuse by someone else:

- Take them seriously
- Tell them they are not responsible for what has happened
- Try to reassure them
- Seek help and advice to act to protect the child
- Listen to the child very carefully
- Make a record of what the child tells you and give
- Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you must pass the information on.  
(Source: Berkshire Area Safeguarding Committee - Safeguarding)

### 7.3 If you receive an allegation about yourself:

- \* Immediately tell the SPICE Safeguarding officer, Lucy Edwards.
- \* Record the facts as you know them and give a copy to Lucy Edwards.
- \* Try to ensure no one is placed in a position, which could cause further compromise.

7.4 All allegations or suspicions of child abuse must be referred immediately and directly to the Safeguarding officer, Lucy Edwards. If the safeguarding officer is implicated then refer to the Secretary of the Executive Committee. All allegations must be referred no matter how insignificant they seem to be, or when they occur.

7.5 On receipt of a referral then the following action should be taken by the safeguarding officer of the Executive Committee as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours:

- \* Write down notes – dates, times, facts, observations, verbatim speech if possible.
- \* Ensure that correct details are available of the young person's name and address, and the name and address of parent or guardian.

\* **Immediately contact SPICE - Lucy Edwards**

\* **Slough Children First – 01753 474053**

\* **LADO@scstrust.co.uk**

Ask for the LADO and indicate that you wish to discuss a matter of Safeguarding.

a) Ask for the name of the person with whom you are speaking.



Discuss the situation fully and openly – no information should be filtered or withheld.

- b) Ask for advice.  
State your intention to advise anyone you intend to inform i.e. The safeguarding officer of the SPICE Executive Committee.
  - c) Ask if anyone else should be informed.
- \* Contact the safeguarding officer of the SPICE Executive Committee and inform of the situation and the advice given by Social Services.
  - \* Prepare a confidential file, which contains all recorded notes, conversations and advice from Social Services.
  - \* Follow advice from Social Services and take no further action unless advised to do so by Social Services.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 SPICE has a unique role in connection with the work it carries out with young people. Adults involved often get to know individual young people quite well forming trusting relationships, observing changes in behaviour and they are available for the sharing of concerns.
- 8.2 There are occasions when child abuse is alleged or is suspected and because these situations must be taken seriously we must have a clear policy and procedures to cover such eventualities.
- 8.3 If there is an allegation, or suspicion of abuse, then this must be referred immediately. We are not an investigation or intervention agency. At all times the young person's welfare should be paramount. Swift reporting will enable the correct authorities to give advice and take appropriate action. There is an obligation upon us to act in this way.
- 8.4 These procedures are not negotiable – they enable us to fulfill our responsibilities to young people. If in doubt at any stage during this procedure, refer to the Chair of the Executive Committee for guidance.

## **9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- \* 'Fire Services Youth Training Association Safeguarding Policy' – FSYTA
- \* 'Safe From Harm' – The Home Office (1993)
- \* 'Safeguarding – a guide for voluntary organisations and groups' – Berkshire Area Safeguarding Committee



## **GUIDELINES FOR ADULTS WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

- \* Do treat everyone with respect.
- \* Do provide an example you wish others to follow.
- \* Do plan activities, which involve more than one other person being present, or at least which are in sight or hearing of others.
- \* Do respect a young person's right to personal privacy.
- \* Do have separate sleeping accommodation for leaders and young leaders.
- \* Do provide access for young people to talk to others about any concerns they may have.
- \* Do encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like.
- \* Do remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned.
- \* Do recognise that caution is required even in sensitive moments of counseling, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse.
- \* Do NOT permit abusive youth peer activities (e.g. Initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying).
- \* Do NOT play physical contact games with young people.
- \* Do NOT have any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others.
- \* Do NOT jump to conclusions about others without checking 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 favoritism to any individual.
- \* Do NOT make suggestive remarks or gestures.
- \* Do NOT rely on your good name to protect you.
- \* Do NOT believe "it could never happen to me".

All suspicions disclosures or allegations must be referred as per the safeguarding procedural guidelines. You must not investigate.

Source: 'Young People First' – Code of Good Practice Card – The Scout Association (1994)



## **PROTECTING CHILDREN AND WORKERS**

1. You can reduce likely situations for abuse of children and help protect your staff and volunteers from false accusations by making sure that everyone is aware that, as a general rule, ***it doesn't make sense to ...***
  - ✓ Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
  - ✓ Take children alone in a car on journeys, however short.
  - ✓ Take children to their home.
  - ✓ Where occasions arise where it is unavoidable that these things do happen, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of the Group Manager or the child's parents.
  
2. You should make it clear to all staff and volunteers in your organisation that they should ***never...***
  - ✓ Engage in rough, physical or sexually proactive games, including horseplay.
  - ✓ Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
  - ✓ Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
  - ✓ Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child even in fun.
  - ✓ Let allegations a child makes go unchallenged or unrecorded.
  - ✓ Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves.
  
3. It may sometimes be necessary for your staff and volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or are children with disabilities. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents. In an emergency situation, which requires this type of help, parents should be fully informed.

In such situations, it is important that you ensure that all staff is sensitive to the child and undertakes personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

Source: 'Our Duty to Care' – Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children - Department of Health and Social Security.

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