

Leith Festival Association
Child Safeguarding Policy

Implemented	Written By	Approved by board
06/09/2024	Jai Adami	September 2024

Revisions

Review Date	Changes	Reviewed by:
11/03/2024	Minor formatting edits	Barbara Kerr

Introduction

This document may be changed from time to time in line with current best practice and statutory requirements.

Staff and Volunteers have an important role to play in creating a positive and safe environment where children are concerned. The organisation further recognises its responsibility to protect children; to recognise the possible signs of abuse or neglect; and if there is cause for disquiet, to report any issues to the committee member who has agreed to act as monitor for child protection issues.

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and members of the Board.

Aims

The main aims of this policy are to:

- Set out the responsibilities of staff, volunteers and members of the Board in relation to Child Protection issues
- Define Child Abuse – to include bullying
- Ensure that children have the right to be protected from abuse and harm at all times and in all situations.
- Ensure that all staff are aware that Child Protection is the responsibility of every adult who has involvement with children
- Provide information on the ways in which abuse or neglect may present in the child

In addition to this policy Leith Festival has a framework of policies which designed to ensure the emotional and physical safety of service users, staff and volunteers which includes:-

- Grievance Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Volunteer Policy

Responsibilities

Responsibility for developing and maintaining a child-safe environment rests with everyone at some level.

Members of the Board have a duty to:

- Ensure that this policy is communicated to all staff, volunteers and members of the Board
- Ensure that the policy and procedures are adhered to by all staff, volunteers and members of the Board.
- Provide appropriate training and guidance to all staff and volunteers working with children.
- Support members of staff and volunteers who report child care concerns
- To maintain confidential records in relation to any allegations and the effectiveness of the response in relation to these allegations and in keeping with the terms of this policy

- Report any notifiable event involving incidents of abuse or mistreatment of children to OSCR in accordance with their notifiable events procedures
- Understand, explain and promote the policy to staff and volunteers
- Encourage staff and volunteers to raise any concerns they have regarding bullying and/or other forms of child abuse
- Be responsive and supportive to any employee or volunteer who so raises a concern

Employees and Volunteers have a duty to:

- Familiarise themselves with this policy and procedures
- Raise any concerns they have relating to bullying or child abuse at the earliest opportunity
- Advise their Board/Staff contact immediately if they are under suspicion or accused of any conduct which may affect their suitability to work with children

Definitions

The following definitions are summarised from the [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - updated 2023](#).

Child protection:

Child protection refers to the processes involved in consideration, assessment and planning of required action, together with the actions themselves, where there are concerns that a child may be at risk of harm.

Protecting children involves preventing harm and/or the risk of harm from abuse or neglect. Child protection investigation is triggered when the impact of harm is deemed to be significant.

When there are concerns that a child may have experienced or may experience significant harm, and these concerns relate to the possibility of abuse or neglect, then police or social work must be notified.

The updated guidance also incorporates the UN Convention on The Rights of the Child, which states that Children should be involved in decision-making in ways that are attuned to the needs and understanding of each child.

Child abuse and child neglect

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Abuse or neglect may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be maltreated at home; within a family or peer network; in care placements; institutions or community settings; and in the online and digital environment. Those responsible may be previously unknown or familiar, or in positions of trust. They may be family members. Children may be harmed pre-birth, for instance by domestic abuse of a mother or through parental alcohol and drug use.

Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after.

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. 'Persistent' means there is a continuous or intermittent pattern which has caused, or is likely to cause, significant harm.

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is an act that involves a child under 16 years of age in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a person under 18 into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Criminal exploitation refers to the action of an individual or group using an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Child trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt, exchange or transfer of control of a child under the age of 18 years for the purposes of exploitation.

Neglect consists in persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. There can also be single instances of neglectful behaviour that cause significant harm. Neglect can arise in the context of systemic stresses such as poverty, and is an indicator of both support and protection needs.

Female genital mutilation is an extreme form of physical, sexual and emotional assault upon girls and women which involves partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Such procedures are usually conducted on children and are a criminal offence in Scotland. FGM can be fatal and is associated with long-term physical and emotional harm.

Forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the full and free consent of both parties and where duress is a factor. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual, and emotional abuse. Forced marriage is both a child protection and adult protection matter.

Bullying:

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Bullying is an unacceptable form of behaviour through which a child/ young person or groups feel threatened, abused or undermined by another individual or group.

Bullying is behaviour that can be defined as a repeated attack of a physical, psychological, social or verbal nature by those who are able to exert influence over others.

Bullying can take many forms. It may include physical aggression, intimidation, threatening, extorting, pressurising, name-calling or teasing.

Less obvious examples such as ignoring or excluding someone are also regarded as bullying and their possible effects should not be minimised.

Bullying can happen at any time or anywhere - a child can be bullied online when they are alone in their bedroom trying to relax or do homework - so it can feel like there's no escape (NSPCC, 2016). This can make it even more difficult for children to cope with being bullied. Cyberbullying can make children feel more frightened and helpless than bullying that happens offline (Munro, 2011).

If a child is being bullied online, they may not know who is bullying them (the bully may have created an anonymous online account). This can be extremely frightening.

Bullying can cause stress and can affect a child's health, and can lead to self harming behaviours.

Recognition of Abuse

Possible indicators of physical injury are bruises, particularly bruises of a regular shape which may indicate the use of an implement such as a strap, or the marks of a hand, lacerations, bite marks or burns

Possible indicators of physical neglect are inadequate clothing, poor growth, poor hunger, poor hygiene

Possible indicators of emotional abuse are excessive dependence, attention seeking, and self harming

Possible indicators of sexual abuse are physical signs such as bruises, scratches or bite marks to thighs or genital areas; or behaviours such as precocity, withdrawal or inappropriate sexual behaviour

Note: Such symptoms may be due to a variety of other causes such as bereavement, domestic violence or changes in family circumstances. However, they may be due to child abuse.

No list of symptoms can be exhaustive. Also, alternative medical, psychological or social explanations may exist for the signs and symptoms described. In particular bruises to the legs are often accidental.

Further guidance from the Scottish Executive explains how children rarely tell if they are being abused. However, there may be signs which make you concerned and may be an indication of a child being abused or neglected.

Child Protection Procedures

We accept that it is our responsibility as an organisation/group to check that all adults with substantial access to children have been appropriately vetted.

We will ensure that every new volunteer or member of staff will complete an application form.

We will ask for the names of two referees who will be prepared to provide a written reference

We will follow up each reference during which we will discuss the applicant's suitability to work with children. A record of this reference will be kept in the applicant's file

We will interview/induct all prospective volunteers and staff;

We will hold a register of every child involved with the organisation/group including relevant medical details and have a contact name and number close to hand in case of emergencies

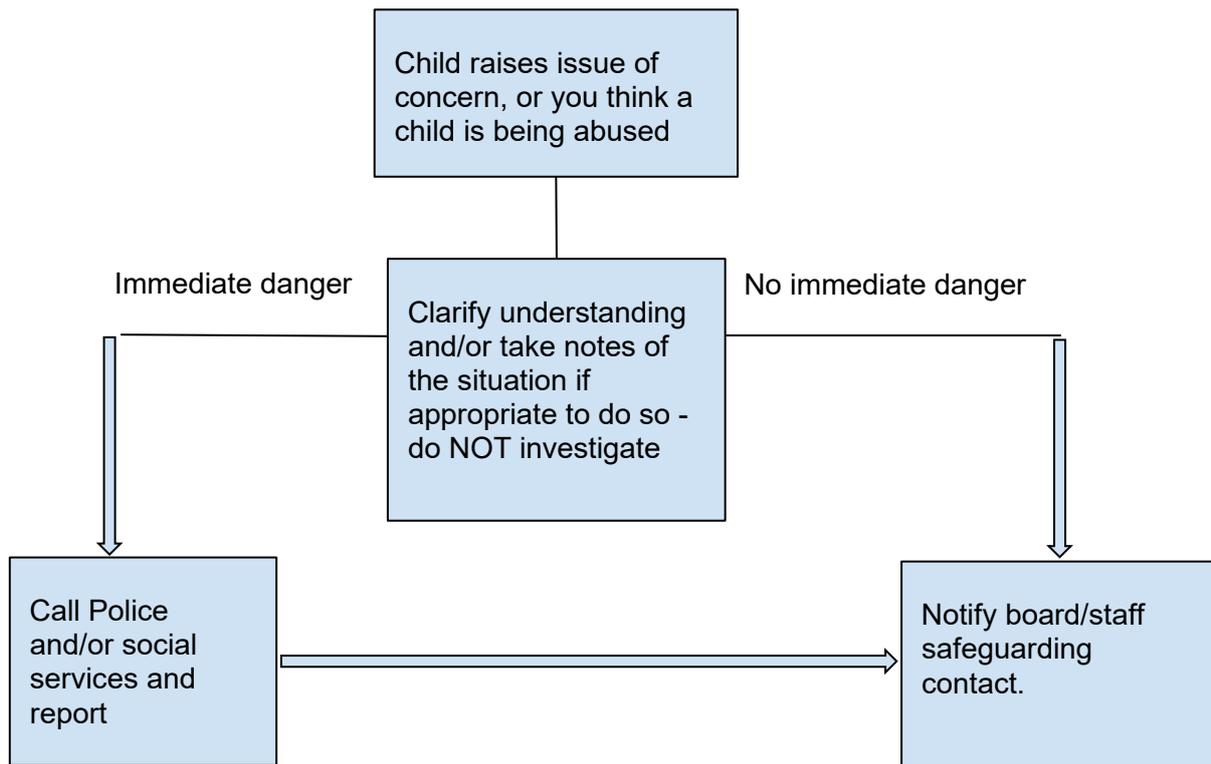
Behavioural Procedures

Every child, regardless of age, has at all times and in all situations a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice that results in a child being physically or psychologically damaged. In our organisation if we have suspicions about a child's physical, sexual or emotional well being, we will take action.

Volunteers and staff must, at all times:

- Treat all children and young people with respect
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow
- Acknowledge the age group they work with
- Where possible consider activities which involve more than one adult being present or at least within sight and hearing of others.
- Be aware that someone else might misinterpret actions even if they are well-intentioned
- Provide time for children to talk to us
- Encourage children to respect and care for others
- Take action to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- Refrain from making any demeaning/suggestive remarks or gestures and/or from showing favouritism to any individual.
- Refrain from adding children and young people to any social networking sites such as facebook, X, instagram, tiktok, snapchat etc.
- Respect a child's right to personal privacy
- Never trivialise or exaggerate child abuse issues;
- Refrain from interrogating or questioning a child other than to clarify understanding. (If the matter is to be investigated further it will be so done by trained professionals).
- Be honest - in that you may have to talk to someone else who can help and that the information although confidential cannot be kept a 'secret'
- Remain calm, no matter how difficult it is to listen to the child
- Listen to the child - REALLY LISTEN - taking what they say seriously.
- Share concerns with the committee member who has agreed to monitor child protection issues
- Remember to REFER not INVESTIGATE any suspicions or allegations about abuse;

Reporting process:



If the situation is clearly an urgent case, the child is too frightened to go home or you have very serious doubts about the child's safety, contact Social Services or the Police immediately.

If your concerns are more general about a child's welfare, then discuss these with your board/staff contact.

If appropriate they will then make a referral to Community Social Services who in turn will make the necessary arrangements. It is important that all volunteers and staff communicate concerns accurately as described below:

Upon suspicions being raised, or on the receipt of any information from a child, it is necessary to record what has been seen, heard or known of at the time the event occurs

Share these concerns with the line person responsible for the organisation/group and agree action to be taken

Always REFER never INVESTIGATE any suspicions or allegations about abuse

If we have concerns we must act - it may be the final piece of the jigsaw that is needed to protect that child or we may prevent other children from being hurt.

Both the Community Social Services and Police Station telephone numbers noted below

Community Social Services: 0131 200 2324 (out of hours: 0800 731 6969)

Police: 101 In an emergency call 999

Appendix 1 - Protecting Children info card

Protecting Children	Everyone's Job	Matters for Concern	What To Do
<p>“ It's everyone's job to M make sure I'm alright”</p>	<p>Every volunteer and member of public has a role to play in protecting children. It's NOT just doctors, nurses, social workers, teachers and the Police.</p> <p>The child's welfare is the paramount concern. If in doubt, seek guidance from a group leader, Child Protection advisor, Social Worker or the Police.</p> <p>Anyone can make a referral directly to the Children's Reporter or to Social Services.</p>	<p>Children can be at risk through:</p> <p>Physical abuse Emotional Abuse Sexual Abuse Neglect Failure to thrive</p> <p>You may see or hear things which make you worry about a child's care, welfare or safety.</p> <p>If you have any such concerns, YOU SHOULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEM.</p>	<p>Every voluntary group that works with children/ young people should have to hand a copy of these policies and procedures and be familiar with it.</p> <p>If you have concerns about a child, at the very least you should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listen to what is said 2. Observe what is happening 3. Write down exactly what you see and hear 4. Report exactly what you see and hear to your group leader

Appendix 2 - CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING

Advice on dealing with incidents	
<p>DO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish a group approach to deal with bullying • acknowledge bullying takes place • take complaints and concerns seriously • investigate immediately when the complaint is received from a member of your group • show fairness, consistency and impartiality to all parties concerned • respect confidentiality and limit knowledge of the incident to those directly involved with it • hold information separately in an anti-bullying file with the outcome clearly noted • ensure that all understand that bullying is not to be tolerated 	<p>DON'T:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • say there is no bullying in your group • say 'Go away, I'm too busy just now' • make assumptions based on previous incidents or misbehaviour

Organisation checklist – please tick	
Bullying Incident Reported	
Logged telephone call to parent to inform them	
Letter sent out to parent to inform them	
Incident Form completed	
Reference Number allocated	
Child who has been bullied is satisfied with the way the incident has been dealt with and is reassured	
Bully has been dealt with positively	