

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

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Related Policies;

- Information sharing
- Confidentiality
- Missing Children
- Uncollected Children
- Safer recruitment and vetting policy
- Anti- Bullying Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Policy on the employment of ex-offenders
- Positive Behaviour Policy

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

The Board of Directors and Centre Management takes seriously its responsibility under section 11 of the Children Act and duties under "working together" to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements exist within our setting to identify and support those children who are suffering harm or are likely to suffer harm.

We recognise that all staff and Directors have a full and active part to play in protecting our children from harm, and that the child's welfare is our paramount concern.

Principles:

The six main sections of our policy are:

1. Raising awareness of child protection issues with staff, students, volunteers and equipping children with the skills require to keep safe.
2. To provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued, and respected, feel confident and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties.
3. To ensure that all adults within The Sunshine Centre who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability. This includes other community users of our facilities, following correct staff recruitment and selection procedures.
4. Training and supporting our staff to equip them to appropriately recognize, respond to and support children and adults who are vulnerable and may need safeguarding.
5. To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure we, contribute to assessments of need and support plans for those children where appropriate.
6. To acknowledge the need for effective and appropriate communication between all members of staff in relation to safeguarding children and young people.

7. To develop effective working relationships with all other agencies involved in safeguarding children.
8. Supporting children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan and members of their family.
9. Establishing a safe environment for children, mums, dads, and carers where they can find support, learn and develop.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Act 1989, and in line with the following:

- "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2022
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
 - "Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families" 2023
 - "What to do if you are worried a Child is being Abused"
 - Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education 2022
 - The Care Act 2022
 - Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (www.oscb.org.uk)
1. **Raising awareness of child protection issues with staff and equipping children with the skills required to keep safe.**

- A. Establish and maintain an environment where children and adults feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to. Vulnerable children and adults are identified and supported through the Sunshine Centre staff team and activities. Additional support through the Strength and Needs process,

TAC meetings and involvement of appropriate support agencies will be provided. Referrals are made to Social Care where appropriate. (See appendices 1, 2, 3. Child Protection and Recording Procedures)

- B. Ensure children know that there are adults in the Sunshine Centre whom they can approach if they are worried. This is done through the key person system, group leaders and 1:1 sessions. Mum's, Dad's, and Carer's are also made aware that they can approach staff if they have concerns.
- C. Include opportunities in the Sunshine Centre Program of activities for individuals to develop the skills they need to recognise signs of and to stay safe from danger and abuse. An example of this a Centre approach on 'stranger danger', 'stop bullying'
- D. Ensure that Mum's, Dad's, and Carer's have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the Sunshine Centre for child protection. (See confidentiality statement displayed around the centre).

2. Ensuring we practice safer recruitment by checking the suitability of staff, volunteers, directors, partner agency staff and contractors.

- A. Ensure safer recruitment practices are always followed. Every interview panel will have at least one member who has a certificate in Safer Recruitment. We will check the identity of candidates, follow up references and scrutinize applications for gaps in employment. We will ensure that safeguarding considerations are at the Centre of each stage of recruitment process (see Safer Recruitment Policy).
- B. Ensure that all staff are aware of the issues raised in the government guidance document 'Guidance on Safer Working for Adults who Work with Children and Young People' DCSF 2007

and ensure that its recommendations, which appear in the following policies, are followed:

- IT Policy
- Telephone Procedures
- Disciplinary Procedures for Sunshine Centre Staff
- Dealing with complaints of harassment
- Managing allegations of abuse against school staff
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Lone working

3. Training and supporting our staff to equip them to appropriately recognize, respond to and support children and adults who are vulnerable and may be in need of safeguarding.

A. Ensure we have a designated senior person for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role. (See Roles and responsibilities of designated person). They will access safeguarding training at least every two years. A Director will be given responsibility to oversee safeguarding.

B. Ensure every member of staff (including temporary, supply staff, contracted staff, and volunteers) and the Board of Directors knows the name of the designated person responsible for child protection and understands their role. The induction process includes this policy being made available to staff and any supply staff are reminded of their safeguarding responsibilities before starting work.

C. Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and their responsibilities for referring any concerns to the designated person responsible for child protection. (see Child Protection Procedures) All staff will receive training in safeguarding at least every three years and a record of attendance kept in The Sunshine Centre.

D. All Directors must attain the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Certificate

4. Implementing and reviewing regularly, in the light of experience, our procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse.

- A. Notify children's social care if there is an unexpected absence of a child who is subject to a child's protection plan.
- B. Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters, including attendance at case and family support conferences, core groups and the provision of relevant reports.
- C. Maintain links with relevant agencies when children and families are seeking support and help under Common assessment Framework (CAF) arrangements or under Children in need planning.
- D. Keep written records of concern about children, even when deciding that there is no need to refer the matter immediately. (See record recording guidelines). These records will be kept separately from the child's development records.
- E. When making a referral, the Sunshine Centre will complete a child referral form, sending one copy to children's social service and keeping one copy at the Centre. Urgent telephone calls to Social Care are always followed up immediately with a fax.
- F. Ensure all records are kept securely in a locked cabinet. In the Sunshine Centre this means that such records are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the Centre manager's office.

5. Supporting children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan and members of their family.

We recognize that children who are abused or witnessed violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation, and some sense of blame. The Sunshine Centre may be the only stable, secure, and predictable element in the lives of children at

risk. When at the Sunshine Centre their behavior may be challenging and defiant or they are withdrawn. The Sunshine Centre will endeavor to support the children through:

- A. 1:1 session and/or small group work.
- B. Liaison with other agencies that support such children such as Child and Adolescence Mental Health Service.
- C. Providing a safe and secure environment for children to have contact with absent family members, be interviewed by other agencies or receive support from other agencies.

6. Establishing a safe environment for children, parents and carers where they can find support, learn and develop.

A. The Sunshine Centre will keep up to date the Single Central Record in line with the Safer Recruitment Policy, to ensure that identity checks have been carried out, that DBS checks or ISA registration checks have been completed as appropriate and the data recorded.

B. Processes for children and adults to report concerns or make complaints about others are understood by children, adults, and staff. The means by which this is done is well advertised.

C. The use of physical intervention with children will only be used when circumstances require it to prevent damage to the child, to other children, to an adult or to property. In all cases the intervention must be appropriate to the level of perceived risk, only last as long as is required to reduce the risk and minimise any possible harm to the child. Only senior staff should intervene. In emergency situation any staff member should act in the best interests of the child or children. Any use of physical intervention will be recorded on an incident form and the centre manager made aware as soon as possible. (Positive behaviour policy)

D. The Sunshine Centre has a zero-tolerance statement which is publicised around the Centre. All adults and young people are made fully aware this statement.

E. Security within The Sunshine Centre is carefully managed and reviewed annually. All visitors to the Centre must sign in, show some official identification, and be accompanied by an adult at all times while on the premises. A lower level of supervision will be required when the Sunshine Centre is satisfied that the visitor has had the relevant checks carried out by their employer.

F. All staff, students, volunteers, partnership workers and visitors are required to wear a badge whilst at the Centre.

G. The Sunshine Centre is fully aware of the relevant Health and Safety legislation and complies with all aspects of this to keep children, adults and staff safe. Risk assessments are undertaken when required and advice sought when appropriate.

7. Forced marriages (FM)

FM is now a specific offence under Section 121 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 that came into force on 16 June 2014.

A FM is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties, and where duress is a factor. Forced marriage is when someone faces physical pressure to marry (e.g., threats, physical violence or sexual violence) or emotional and psychological pressure (e.g. if someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). This is very different to an arranged marriage where both parties give consent.

FM is illegal in England and Wales. This includes:

- taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place)
- marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they're pressured to or not)

Link to the guidance:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380125/MultiAgencyPracticeGuidelinesNov14.pdf

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls, and therefore should be dealt with as part of existing child safeguarding/protection structures, policies, and procedures.

FGM is illegal in the UK. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.

Other than in the excepted circumstances, it is an offence for **any person (regardless of their nationality or residence status)** to:

- perform FGM in England, Wales or Northern Ireland (section 1 of the Act);
- assist a girl to carry out FGM on herself in England, Wales or Northern Ireland (section 2 of the Act);
- assist (from England, Wales or Northern Ireland) a non-UK person to carry out FGM outside the UK on a **UK national or permanent UK resident** (section 3 of the Act).

Link to the guidance:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380125/MultiAgencyPracticeGuidelinesNov14.pdf

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

The sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts, and relationships where young people, (or a third person or persons) receive something, (e.g., food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affections, gifts, money) as a result of them performing and/or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur using technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other

resources. Violence, coercion, and intimidations are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child's or young person's limited availability of choice, resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability. (DCSF 2009)

Key facts about CSE

- Sexual exploitation often starts around the age of 10 years old. Girls are usually targeted from age 10 and boys from age 8.
- It affects both girls and boys and can happen in all communities.
- Any person can be targeted but there are some particularly vulnerable groups: Looked After Children, Children Leaving Care and Children with Disabilities.
- Victims of CSE may also be trafficked (locally, nationally, and internationally).
- Over 70% of adults involved in prostitution were sexually exploited as children or teenagers.
- Sexual violence or abuse against children represents a major public health and social welfare problem within UK society, affecting 16% of children under 16. That is approximately 2 million children.

Good practice – Individuals

- Recognise the symptoms and distinguish them from other forms of abuse.
- Treat the child/young person as a victim of abuse.
- Understand the perspective / behavior of the child/young person and be patient with them.
- Help the child/young person to recognise that they are being exploited.
- Collate as much information as possible.
- Share information with other agencies and seek advice / refer to Social Care

Good practice – Organisations

- Ensure robust safeguarding policies and procedures are in place which cover CSE.

- Promote and engage in effective multi-agency working to prevent abuse.
- Work to help victims move out of exploitation.
- Cooperate to enable successful investigations and prosecutions of perpetrators.

Link to guidance

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/278849/Safeguarding_Children_and_Young_People_from_Sexual_Exploitation.pdf

Slavery

There Is No One Face of Modern Slavery

There is no typical victim of slavery - victims can be men, women and children of all ages and cut across the population. But it is normally more prevalent amongst the most vulnerable, minority or socially excluded groups.

Types of slavery include:

Child trafficking - Young people (under 18) are moved either internationally or domestically so they can be exploited.

Forced Labour/Debt Bondage - Victims are forced to work to pay off debts that realistically they never will be able to. Low wages and increased debts mean not only that they cannot ever hope to pay off the loan, but the debt may be passed down to their children.

Forced labour - Victims are forced to work against their will, often working very long hours for little or no pay in dire conditions under verbal or physical threats of violence to them or their families. It can happen in many sectors of our economy, from mining to tarmacking, hospitality and food packaging.

Criminal Exploitation - Often controlled and maltreated, victims are forced into crimes such as cannabis cultivation or pick pocketing against their will.

Domestic Servitude - Victims are forced to carry out housework and domestic chores in private households with little or no pay, restricted movement, very limited or no free time and minimal privacy, often sleeping where they work.

You can report it by calling the Modern Slavery helpline on

0800 0121 700

Link to more information <https://modernslavery.co.uk/index.html>

Honor Crimes

"Honour" crime involves violence, including murder, committed by people who want to defend the reputation of their family or community. Honour killing is the murder of a person accused of "bringing shame" upon their family.

Victims have been killed for refusing to enter a marriage, committing adultery or being in a relationship that displeased their relatives.

In many instances, the crimes are committed by family members against a female relative.

Link to more information <http://hbv-awareness.com/>

Signed *John Bridgeman*

Date 9th November 2023

Name : John Bridgeman.

Chair of Board of Trustees