

Child Protection Policy

Date this policy came into effect	September 2018
Date reviewed	July 2022
Next review	July 2024

Scope

This policy document identifies the key aspects of Volunteer Action's policy to ensure at all times the maximum protection from any kind of harm for all children involved in any way with Volunteer Action. For the purposes of this policy a child is defined as any young person under the age of 18. There is a separate policy covering safeguarding vulnerable adults.

Responsibility

The Trustee Board has responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice by ensuring that all staff and volunteers have sufficient information and are aware of their responsibilities.

Policy Statement

Volunteer Action is firmly committed to the belief that all children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, and fully recognises its responsibility for child protection.

Volunteer Action will drive unaccompanied children ONLY as part of their contract with Oundle School. All drivers who volunteer for these drives will undertake additional training supplied by Oundle School and commit to following their safeguarding policies and procedures.

Volunteer Action will undertake other drives involving children only if there is an accompanying parent or guardian.

Volunteer Action believes

- That the safety and welfare of children should always be of paramount importance whatever the circumstances.
- That everyone with a role in working with children has a duty to safeguard and promote a child's welfare particularly when it comes to protecting children from abuse
- That special care is needed in dealing with children whose age, inexperience or physical state makes them particularly vulnerable to abuse.

Procedures

Personnel

- All staff and volunteer drivers will be given a copy of the Child Protection Policy when they join and an overview of the policy will be included in their compulsory initial training. The policy will also be available on Volunteer Action's website.
- All staff and volunteers will be required to provide references.

- All volunteer drivers and befrienders will have Disclosure and Barring Service check.
- All volunteers who drive for the Oundle School Community Action programme must complete the online Child Protection training required by Oundle School and to notify Volunteer Action when they have completed it.

Responsibilities

- All those working at Volunteer Action will accept responsibility for the welfare of the children who come into contact with the organisation.
- The Manager will be the nominated Child Protection representative who is responsible for child protection and the implementation of this policy. If the concern is about the manager, the Chair of Trustees will be the nominated representative
- All those working at Volunteer Action will be made aware of the named representatives and how best to contact them.
- All those working on behalf of Volunteer Action have a duty to ensure that any suspected incident, allegation or other manifestation relating to child protection is reported to the Manager/Chair of Trustees.
- If Volunteer Action, during the course of its normal activities, takes photographs of children participating in activities and events, at all times it will obtain written permission from parents / guardians before any photographic material is used in the public domain.

Reporting Procedures

- Any suspicion or allegation must be reported as soon as possible on the day of the occurrence to the Manager/Chair of Trustees. Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in a number of ways including a comment made by a child, physical evidence such as bruising, a change in behaviour or inappropriate behaviour or knowledge
- It is the responsibility of the Manager/Chair of Trustees to liaise with other relevant agencies where necessary and seek clarification from Social Services if there is any concern about the validity of any concern
- All stages of the reporting procedure must be documented, marked CONFIDENTIAL and stored securely.
- If a child discloses abuse to you, it is important to react appropriately.

<p>DO:</p> <p>Remain calm and receptive</p> <p>Listen without interrupting</p> <p>Only ask questions of clarification if you are unclear what the child is saying</p> <p>Make it clear you take them seriously</p> <p>Acknowledge their courage in telling you</p> <p>Tell them they are not responsible for the abuse</p> <p>Check what they have said to you with them to ensure your understanding is right</p> <p>Let them know you will do what you can to help them and, where possible, get their consent to inform your Manager and Northamptonshire Social Care team (County Council)</p> <p>Be aware of your own safety</p> <p>Make a written record of who, what, where, when and how</p>	<p>DO NOT:</p> <p>Ignore the allegation</p> <p>Allow your shock or distaste to show</p> <p>Probe for more information/ask other questions</p> <p>Make assumptions/judgements or speculate</p> <p>'Defame' anyone</p> <p>Make negative comments about the alleged abuser or anyone</p> <p>Make promises you cannot keep</p> <p>Agree to keep the information secret</p> <p>Make contact with the alleged abuser</p> <p>Investigate further</p>
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- It is essential that everything possible is done to protect children who place their trust in us. If a child tells you that they are being, or have been, abused you must:
 - make an immediate record of what the child has said, using their own words
 - follow the instructions for reporting to the Manager/Chair of Trustees, as set out in the procedure
 - never give an absolute guarantee of confidentiality BUT
 - tell them that you **will have** to inform those who need to know which will be your Manager/Chair of Trustees and that, if appropriate, the Northamptonshire Social Care team

APPENDIX 1

Child Protection Code of Good Practice

This Code has been developed to provide you with advice that not only will help to protect children, but will also help you and your colleagues identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse. It is important that at all times firm appropriate boundaries must be adhered to. Politeness and helpfulness in your volunteer capacity is a good thing, over familiarity is not.

Good practice will also protect Volunteer Action by reducing the possibility of anyone using their role to gain access to children, in order to abuse.

If in doubt, consider how an action or activity may be perceived as opposed to how it is intended.

Wherever possible, you should be guided by the following advice:-

- don't engage in or allow any sexually provocative games involving or observed by children, whether based on talking or touching
- never make suggestive remarks or discriminatory comments
- don't engage in or tolerate any bullying
- don't engage in or tolerate inappropriate physical activity
- never trivialise abuse
- never let allegations by a child go unreported, including any made against you

APPENDIX 2

Internal Procedure

In the event of a safeguarding issue, the designated officer will:

1. Seek consent from the child concerned. If they are deemed not to have capacity to consent, log the decision to act without it.
2. Collect all available relevant facts and appropriate information
3. Make a written record of the concern
4. Tell the child involved what is being done and note their views regarding how they wish the matter to be dealt with
5. Tell only the people who need to know
6. Consider the balance between listening to someone's wishes and needing to let relevant authorities know in order to make the child safe and protect others who may be at risk
7. Inform the person involved about the outcome of any process

If someone is injured or at immediate risk, take immediate action. Seek help by dialling 999 for the police or an ambulance.