

# Charities Within Reach

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### Introduction

Everyone who participates in Charities Within Reach is entitled to do so in a safe environment. Charities Within Reach is committed to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, staff and volunteers, to provide them with a safe and healthy environment. Charities Within Reach is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone accepts and acts on their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection while in the care of Charities Within Reach and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

### Policy Statement

Charities Within Reach is committed to the following:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, disability, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to enjoy a safe environment
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- All suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All Charities Within Reach staff who work with children will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be knowledgeable of good practice and child protection procedures
- Monitor and review the policy and procedures

The implementation of procedures should be regularly monitored and reviewed. The nominated person should regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements gaps and areas where changes are required to the Charities Within Reach Board of Directors. The policy should be reviewed yearly or whenever there is a major change in the organization or in relevant legal constraints in the population served.

## Promoting Good Practice

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework e.g. Every Child Matters. It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is all of our responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if there exists concerns about the welfare of the child. This section will help identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

## Good Practice

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action:

- Children's rooms are off limits to volunteers and others unless the child's or a staff member's permission has been obtained and a staff or board member of Charities Within Reach accompanies the individual.
- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- Make the children's experience fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- Treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity
- Always put the welfare of the young person first.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given
- Be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- Always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognizing the developmental needs and capacity of the young person
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given

## Poor Practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- Unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young

- people away from others
- Sharing a room with a young person
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun
- Reducing a young person to tears as a form of control
- Allow allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon

When a case arises where it is impractical/ impossible to avoid certain situation e.g. transporting a young person in your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the young person involved. If during your care you accidentally hurt a young person, the young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague and make a written note of it.

## Defining Child Abuse

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust.

**There are four main types of abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.** The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person.

Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood. Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

## Types of Abuse

**Physical Abuse:** Exists where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, or drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse.

This category of abuse can also include when a parent/caretaker reports nonexistent symptoms or illness deliberately causes ill health in a young person they are looking after. This is called Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

In a sports situation, physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training disregard the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.

**Emotional Abuse:** Exists when the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, and is likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, and inadequate or is valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn.

Ill-treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse may occur when the young person is constant criticized, given negative feedback, or expected to perform at levels that are above their capability. Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying. Bullying may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behavior, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying. It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or demeaning remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text, email or chat room messages), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating form the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

**Neglect:** occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example: failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or

danger, and failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.

**Sexual Abuse:** occurs when adults (male and female) use children to meet their own sexual needs. Siblings and family members can be the abuser. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

## **Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

## **Orientation/Volunteer Responsibilities**

The safeguarding process includes orientation to help staff and volunteers to analyze their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations. Recognize their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse Respond to concerns expressed by a child.

## **Work safely and effectively with children**

Charities Within Reach requires all employees and volunteers to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of positive culture towards good practice and child protection All staff and volunteers will receive advisory information outlining good/bad practices, and policies informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behavior of an adult towards a young person. All volunteers will receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy and will sign a form acknowledging receipt and understanding of the policy prior to commencing their work at the home.

## **Declaration**

On behalf of Charities Within Reach we, the Board of Directors, will oversee the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.