



# **Child Protection Policy**

# Child Protection Policy

BelEve UK believes that children have the right to be completely secure from both the fear and reality of abuse, and we are committed to protecting all the children in our care from harm.

This policy is written in line with current legislation i.e. The Children Act (2004), The Human Rights Act (1998) and The Data Protection Act (1998). Best practice guidance and codes of practice is provided by publications "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused" Dept of Health (2003) and "Keeping Children Safe" Bromley Area Child Protection Committee (2007). BelEve UK will review its Child Protection policy and procedures annually or before this if there are changes to legislation, guidelines or codes of practice. Parents/carers will be made aware of the child protection policy the induction period of any activity their child is participating in.

**BelEve UK Director's will be responsible for liaising with social services and Ofsted in any child protection matter.**

- A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).
- A vulnerable adult is defined as a person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

# Recognising Child Abuse

All staff will receive child protection training and will be vigilant to signs and evidence of physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect.

## **Physical Abuse:**

This involves hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, suffocating or any other physical harm. Deliberately causing a child's ill health also constitutes physical abuse.

## **Sexual Abuse:**

This involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts.

Showing children pornographic materials, sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways also constitutes sexual abuse.

## **Emotional abuse:**

Emotional abuse involves persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or torture causing severe adverse effects on the emotional stability of a child. Such behaviour may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate, or making them feel unnecessarily frightened or vulnerable.

## **Neglect:**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional or psychological needs, such as is likely to have a severe impact on their health, development or emotional stability. Neglect may involve failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing for a child, or failing to adequately protect them from physical harm or ill health. Neglect can also manifest itself in a failure to meet the basic emotional needs of child.

# Staff Support and Training

## **The Registered person, Rochelle Powell will ensure that:**

- All volunteers, mentors and sessional workers are carefully recruited, have verified references and have full and current Criminal Record Bureau checks as stated in the Children Act.
- All volunteers, mentors and sessional workers are given a copy of the Child Protection policy during their induction, and have its implications explained to them.
- All volunteers, mentors and sessional workers receive regular training and are supervised in child protection issues and are provided with any relevant information and guidance.
- All volunteers, mentors and sessional workers are aware of their statutory requirements in respect of the disclosure or discovery of child abuse and the procedure for doing so. All students and volunteers are instructed to report the disclosure or discovery of abuse to the Manager.
- BelEve UK will take appropriate action in relation to the findings of any investigation into allegations of abuse, consistent with its duties to protect the safety of children and uphold fair processes for staff, students and volunteers. BelEve will effectively share appropriate information with agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children as stated in The Children Act
- Any member of staff, a student or volunteer under investigation for the alleged abuse of a child will be subject to the provisions of the Staff Disciplinary Policy.

# Safe Caring

All volunteers, mentors and sessional workers understand the BelEve UK's child protection procedures and have had appropriate training and guidance in the principles of safe caring.

## **To this end:**

- If a child makes inappropriate physical or verbal contact with a member of staff, this will be recorded fully in the Incident Record Book.

- Volunteers and mentors will never carry out a personal task for children that they can do for themselves. Where this is essential, volunteers, mentors and sessional workers will help a child whilst being accompanied by a colleague. Unless a child has a particular need, volunteers, mentors and sessional workers should not accompany children into the toilet. volunteers, mentors and sessional workers are aware that this and other similar activities could be misconstrued. When volunteers, mentors and sessional workers do assist a child with a personal task this is recorded in the incident book and the parent/carer is informed.

- Volunteers, mentors and sessional workers will be mindful of how and where they touch children, given their age and emotional understanding. Unnecessary or potentially inappropriate physical contact will be always avoided.

- All allegations made by a child against a volunteers, mentors and sessional workers will be fully recorded, including any actions taken, in the Incident Record Book. In the event of there being a witness to an incident, they should sign the records to confirm this.

## **Discussing Concerns with Parents/Carers**

If a volunteers, mentors and sessional workers has concerns about a child they should discuss it with a Director. It may be possible to involve the parent or carer as this may help to clarify the reasons for the concern and may reveal other reasons why the child has changed. Support for parents and families can often help prevent further abuse or neglect from occurring.

If you think that a parent or carer may be responsible for sexually or physically abusing a child or for another form of abuse, you should not discuss this with the parent without advice from the police or social services, as this may put the child at an increased risk of significant harm.

If a child requires urgent medical attention, staff should seek medical help as a matter of urgency. After this, volunteers, mentors and sessional workers should consult with a Director, social services, the Police or the NSPCC on whether to involve the child's parents or carers.

# Dealing with Allegations

Any allegation will be treated seriously and sensitively. BelEve UK will not carry out any investigation itself into a suspected child abuse incident. On discovering an allegation of abuse, the Director will immediately refer the case to the local statutory child protection agencies. Further to this, the following principles will govern any suspected or reported case of abuse:

- Where actual or suspected abuse comes to the attention of a volunteer, mentor or sessional worker, they will report this to the Director at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Volunteers, mentors and sessional workers are encouraged and supported to trust their professional judgment and if they suspect abuse has, or is taking place, to report this.
- Full written records of all reported incidents will be produced and maintained. Information recorded will include full details of the alleged incident; details of all the parties involved; any evidence or explanations offered by interested parties; relevant dates, times and locations and any supporting information or evidence from a volunteer, mentor or sessional worker. BelEve UK will demonstrate great care in distinguishing between fact and opinion when recording suspected incidents of child abuse. The Director will be responsible for ensuring that written records are dated, signed and kept confidentially.
- If an allegation of abuse is made against a Director, the registered person will be informed as soon as possible. They will then assume responsibility for the situation.

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# Dealing with Allegations

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- Directors will ensure that all concerns and allegations are treated with sensitivity and confidentiality.
- Any children involved in alleged incidents will be comforted and reassured.



## Dealing with a disclosure:

.It is recognised that a child may seek out an adult to share information about abuse or neglect or talk spontaneously individually or in groups when a staff are present. In these situations, the staff member **MUST**:

- Listen carefully to the child. DO NOT directly question the child
- Give the child time and attention.
- Allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make an accurate record of the information that has been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed as evidence.
- Use the child's own words where possible.
- Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared - do not offer false confidentiality.
- Reassure the child that: they have done the right thing in telling you & they have not done anything wrong;
- Tell the child what you are going to do next and explain that you will need to get help to keep him/her safe.
- DO NOT ask the child to repeat his or her account of events to anyone

# Information required when making a referral

- A referral involves giving Children's Social Care or the Police information about concerns relating to an individual or family in order that enquiries can be undertaken by the appropriate agency followed by any necessary action.
- If the Manager or staff member has reasonable grounds for believing that a child has been or is in grave danger of being subject to abuse a referral will be made.
- Contact will be made, at the earliest possible opportunity, with the local social services department
- Parent/carers should be informed if a referral is being made except in the following circumstances:
  - where Sexual Abuse or sexual exploitation is suspected
  - where Organised or Multiple Abuse is suspected
  - where Fabricated or Induced Illness (previously known as Munchausen Syndrome by proxy) is suspected to where Female Genital Mutilation is the concern
  - in cases of suspect Forced Marriage
  - where contacting parents/carers would place a child, yourself or others at immediate risk
- Inability to inform parents for any reason should not prevent a referral being made. It would then become a joint decision with Children's Social Care about how and when the parents should be approached and by whom.

# Information required when making a referral

Be prepared to give as much of the following information as possible (in emergency situations all this information may not be available). Unavailability of some information should not stop you making a referral.

- Your name, telephone number, position and request the same of the person to whom you are speaking.
- Full name and address, telephone number of family, date of birth of child and siblings.
- Gender, ethnicity, first language, any special needs.
- Names, dates of birth and relationship of household members and any significant others.
- The names of professionals known to be involved with the child/family e.g. GP, Health Visitor, School.
- The nature of the concern; and foundation for the concern.
- An opinion on whether the child may need urgent action to make them safe.
- Your view of what appears to be the needs of the child and family.
- Whether the consent of a parent has been given to the referral being made.

# Action to be taken following the referral

- Ensure that you keep an accurate record of your concern(s) made at the time.
- Put your concerns in writing to the Children's Social Care Duty & Investigation Team following the referral (within 48 hours - and using the Common Assessment Framework - CAF form).
- Accurately record the action agreed or that no further action is to be taken and the reasons for this decision.
  
- OFSTED will be informed of any allegations of abuse against a Director, student, volunteer or sessional worker, or any abuse that is alleged to have taken place on the premises or during a visit or outing.

## **Review:**

- The policy will be reviewed every 12 months or earlier if there are changes to guidelines from Ofsted or Local Authority or Government Legislation.

### **Contact Numbers:**

- For support and advice for Out of School please contact Lewisham Safeguarding Children Board
- Kaleidoscope, Lewisham Centre for Children and Young People,
- 32 Rushey Green, SE6 4JF Tel:020 7138 1446
- Email: [safeguardingboard@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:safeguardingboard@lewisham.gov.uk)

**If at any time you have reasonable concern that a child or young person has suffered significant harm or may be at immediate or acute risk of suffering significant harm, telephone the Children's Social Care Referral and Assessment Team on the numbers listed below.**

- Lewisham Children's Social Care on 020 8314 6000.
- For the Children's Social Care Duty Team call 020 8314 6660. Out of hours call 020 8314 6000.
- Lewisham Childcare Service: 020 8314 8567
- Ofsted Complaints, Investigation & Enforcement Team: 0300 123 4666
- Main Ofsted number: 0300 123 1231
- Police Child Protection Team: 0208 284 5882
- NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- Emergency services (for urgent medical attention): 999
- Please note if the child is not resident in The London Borough of Lewisham you must contact the borough where they live:

### **Borough Telephone Number**

Croydon 020 8726 6400 (24 Hours)

Bromley 020 8461 7379 020 8461 7404

020 8461 7373 020 8461 7309

Southwark 020 7525 1921

# Safeguarding young people online

- The most important thing to remember here is that our safeguarding policy and procedures should be followed in the same way as when you deliver face to face youth work.
- We have updated this policy in accordance with the NYA Red Redness guidance.
- Staff are not permitted to use their personal telephone numbers or email addresses to host online youth work sessions.
- Staff training will be provided on how to use the agreed platform(s) we have chosen to use.
- All staff must read the NSPCC guidelines on online abuse.  
• <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/online-abuse/#what-is>
- Ideally, staff should use a work phone, however, in the absence of a work phone they must use a work email address to register with the online platform.
- When facilitating online workshops working participants must not send the session invite to anyone that is not a member of the organisation.
- All participants must have their cameras on throughout the duration of the session.

# Safeguarding young people online

- Two staff members must be present during online sessions and understand their role, e.g. who is leading the session, who is monitoring behaviour and who will be taking register.
- Parents/carers and young people will be sent information and guidance on safeguarding in advance of joining our online workshops, explaining how the online sessions will work.
- You must follow the same procedure for reporting an issue online as face-to-face work except you will fill in the digital version of the form and email to **Rochelle.Powell@beleveuk.org** our designated safeguarding officer.

## For online support

- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>
- <https://parentinfo.org/>
- <https://londonyouth.org/about-us/>