



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, in relation to this policy is defined as:

- *Protecting children from maltreatment*
- *Preventing the impairment of children's health or development*
- *Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care*
- *Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.*

(Definition taken from 'Keeping children safe in education' Statutory guidance for schools and colleges September 2019)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the latest guidance on Safeguarding; specifically:

- *Keeping children safe in education Statutory guidance for schools and colleges September 2020*
(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/892394/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2020.pdf)

We support the children within our care, protect them from maltreatment and have robust procedures in place to prevent the impairment of children's physical and mental health and development. Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with other company policies and procedures.

Introduction

The Outdoors Group Ltd is committed to the safeguarding of all the children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in its activities and in promoting their welfare.

It is the responsibility of each and every one at The Outdoors Group Ltd to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We are also responsible for preventing and dealing with bullying and harassment.

All children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to protection from abuse, regardless of their age, culture, disability, gender, racial origin, language or religious belief.

This document is intended as a guideline for all staff and volunteers and must be read and understood by anyone who has contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults both inside The Outdoors Group Ltd premises or on The Outdoors Group Ltd behalf.

Shevek Pring, Director is available to clarify procedures or provide further in depth reading on any issues raised here.

The Outdoors Group Ltd have the following people named as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO):

- DSL: Jake Ward jake.ward@theoutdoorsschool.co.uk
- DSO for the Kindergarten: Robert Cartwright

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robert.cartwright@outdoorsgroup.co.uk

- DSO for The Outdoors School: Deborah Ley
deborah.ley@theoutdoorsschool.co.uk
- DSO for the Transitional Learning Programme: Amanda Leach
amanda.leach@outdoorsgroup.co.uk
- DSO for Forest Schools: Nick Murphy nick.murphy@outdoorsgroup.co.uk
- LADO Contact: Shevek Pring shevek.pring@outdoorsgroup.co.uk

Other people to contact in the company should you require advice, guidance or support:

- Fabrianne Rowell: Kindergarten SENCo (fabrianne.rowell@outdoorsgroup.co.uk)
- Proprietor and Director in charge of Safeguarding: Shevek Pring
shevek.pring@outdoorsgroup.co.uk

Domestic Violence and Abuse

Domestic violence is defined by the Home Office as:

“any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality”

The issue of children living with domestic violence is now recognised as a matter for concern in its own right by both government and key children’s services agencies. The link between child physical abuse and domestic violence is high, with estimates ranging from 30% to 66%, depending upon the study.

All the five key outcomes for children identified in Every Child Matters can be adversely affected for a child living with domestic violence and abuse. The impact is usually on every aspect of a child’s life. The impact of domestic violence and abuse on an individual child will vary according to the child’s resilience and the strengths and limitations of their particular circumstances.

The three central imperatives of any intervention for children living with domestic violence are:

- To protect the children.
- To support the non-abusing parent to protect her/himself and any children they may have.
- To hold the abusive partner accountable for his/her violence and provide him/her with opportunities to change.

A significant number of children involved with Children’s Social Care or who have a Child Protection Plan in place have domestic violence and abuse as a major factor in their lives. This number increases considerably for children subject to a second or subsequent plan.

Children and young people can be subjected to domestic violence and abuse perpetrated in order to force them into marriage or to ‘punish’ them in the belief that they have brought ‘dishonour on their family’

The risks to children living with domestic violence include:

- Direct physical or sexual abuse of the child. There is a common link between domestic violence and child abuse. Among victims of child abuse, 40 per cent report domestic violence in the home. One study in North America found that children who were exposed to violence in the home were 15 times more likely to be physically and/or sexually assaulted than the national average. The Royal College of Psychiatrists states: "About half the children in such families have themselves been badly hit or beaten. Sexual and emotional abuse are also more likely to happen in these families."
- The child being abused as part of the abuse against the victim:
 - Being used as pawns or spies by the abusive partner in attempts to control the non-abusing parent.
 - Being forced by the abusive parent to participate in abuse and degradation of the victim.
- Emotional abuse and physical injury to the child from witnessing the abuse:
 - Hearing abusive verbal exchanges between adults in the household.
 - Hearing the abusive partner verbally abuse, humiliate and threaten violence.
 - Observing bruises and injuries sustained by the non-abusing parent.
 - Hearing the victim scream and plea for help.
 - Observing the abusive parent being removed and taken into police custody.
 - Witnessing the non-abusing parent being taken to hospital by ambulance.
 - Attempting to intervene in a violent assault.
 - Being physically injured as a result of intervening or by being accidentally hurt whilst present during a violent assault.
- Negative material consequences for a child of domestic violence:
 - Being unable or unwilling to invite friends to the house.
 - Frequent disruptions to social life and schooling from moving with the non-abusive parent fleeing violence.
 - Hospitalisation or permanent disability of the non-abusing parent.

Children who witness domestic violence suffer emotional and psychological maltreatment. They can have low self-esteem and experience increased levels of anxiety, depression, anger and fear, aggressive and violent behaviours, including bullying, lack of conflict resolution skills, lack of empathy for others and poor peer relationships, poor school performance, anti-social behaviour, pregnancy, alcohol and substance misuse, self-blame, hopelessness, shame and apathy, post-traumatic stress disorder – symptoms such as hyper-vigilance, nightmares and intrusive thoughts – images of violence, insomnia, enuresis and over protectiveness of the non-abusive parent and/or siblings.

Children affected by domestic violence often find it difficult to make a disclosure, or can go to great lengths to hide the violence. This could be because the child is:

- Protective of the non-abusing parent.
- Protective of the abusing parent.
- Extremely fearful of the consequence of sharing family 'secrets' with anyone. This may include fears that telling someone will cause further violence to the non-abusing parent and/or themselves.
- Being threatened by the abuser.

- Fearful of being taken into care.
- Fearful of losing their friends and having to change school.
- Fearful of exposing the family to dishonour, shame or embarrassment;
- Fearful that the non-abusing parent (and the children themselves) may be deported.
- Fear that the abusing parent or extended family may take them overseas.

Where a professional is concerned about or has recognised the signs of domestic violence, the professional can approach the subject with a child or victim with a framing question. That is, the question should be 'framed' so that the subject is not suddenly and awkwardly introduced, for example:

For a victim: *"As domestic violence is so common, we now ask everyone who comes into our service if they experience this. This is because it affects people's safety, health and well-being, and our service wants to be supportive and keep people as safe as possible".*

If you receive a positive disclosure,

- Validate what has happened to the victim.
- Give key messages such as:
 - You are not to blame for what has happened.
 - You are not alone.
 - You do not deserve to be treated like this.
 - Allowing yourself to admit you are being abused is the first step to seeking help.
 - Abuse is not your fault and you have a right to be safe, protected and supported.
 - Men can suffer domestic violence and abuse too (to men).
 - Domestic violence does occur in same sex relationships.
- Ask the victim what they want you to do.
- Act sensitively.
- Give several telephone numbers, including local domestic violence support services

Do not:

- Expect a positive disclosure, even if you suspect domestic violence.
- Push someone to disclose.
- Make decisions for the victims.
- Judge or make assumptions.
- Ask about domestic violence if anyone else is present.
- Act as a go-between between victim and perpetrator.

Part of your role, when working with victims of domestic violence is to create conditions of trust and confidence that will make it possible for victims to talk about what is happening to them.

As a minimum, a professional or organisation should be able to ensure that their current practice is informed by the following:

- Take the victim seriously and listen carefully to what they have to say. Remember that

it can be very difficult to disclose domestic violence and ask for help.

- Give the victim plenty of time to talk; only interrupt to get essential information.
- Find out what the victim's immediate problems are and what they want from you.
- Explain how you can help within the limitations of your role.
- Interview the victim in private and respect confidentiality. Recognise the very real dangers which may be created if confidentiality is breached. Perpetrators can go to great lengths to track down their ex-partners.
- Keep an appropriate confidential record of the case. Your organisation may have limits to its confidentiality, for example where there are concerns about a child's welfare, and you should make the victim aware of these. Remember that victims are often terrified of social services or police involvement in their lives.
- Give priority to ensuring the immediate safety of the victim and any children. Remember that they may be facing life-threatening violence. Find out what threats have been made. Does the victim have a safe place to go?
- Be sensitive to and discuss the victim's needs.
- Offer a worker of the same gender if possible. Be conscious that a worker from the same community as the victim may not be appropriate.
- If required, use a female interpreter for female victims. Always use a professional interpreter and **never use the victim's children to interpret** as this creates an additional burden on them. Similarly, do not use another family member.
- Provide information about all the available options open to the victim but don't make decisions for them. Remember that the victim's options may be limited by lack of, or limited access to, resources. Don't take over and tell the victim what to do – the perpetrator probably does that. The victim may need to regain self confidence in making decisions and taking control of their life. Don't pressurise them to take action. It may be that they just need to talk to someone and to feel that they aren't completely alone.
- Refer appropriately. Recognise the skill and contributions which other agencies are able to make. Discuss these services with the victim and refer them to them, **with their permission**. Cooperate with other agencies and keep in touch with the victim if possible.
- Ask for a safe address and telephone number where you can contact the victim without the perpetrator knowing.
- Refer to the child and/or adult safeguarding lead in your organisation as appropriate if the victim is a vulnerable adult or there are children living in the home.

Coercive control is when a person with whom you are **personally connected**, repeatedly behaves in a way which makes you feel controlled, dependent, isolated or scared.

The following types of behaviour are common examples of coercive control:

- isolating you from your friends and family
- controlling how much money you have and how you spend it
- monitoring your activities and your movements
- repeatedly putting you down, calling you names or telling you that you are worthless
- threatening to harm or kill you or your child
- threatening to publish information about you or to report you to the police or the authorities
- damaging your property or household goods

- forcing you to take part in criminal activity or child abuse

Some of the behaviours in this list can be other offences as well as coercive control, so your abuser can be arrested for more than one offence for the same behaviour. For example, if your abuser broke your phone as part of his coercive control then he could be arrested and charged for coercive control and also the offence of criminal damage.

Your abuser will be guilty of the offence of coercive control if

1. they are personally connected to you, and
2. their behaviour has had a serious effect on you, and
3. your abuser knew or ought to have known that their behaviour would have a serious effect on you.

What does serious effect mean?

Your abuser's behaviour is considered to have a **serious effect** on you if:

- on at least two occasions you have feared that violence will be used against you, or
- you have felt serious alarm or distress and it has had a substantial effect on your usual day to day activities. The behaviour has had a substantial effect on you if it has caused you to change the way you live. For example, you may have changed the way you socialise, your physical or mental health may have deteriorated, you may have changed the way you do household chores or how you care for your children. If you have changed the way you live in order to keep you or your children safe from harm, it is possible that the behaviour you are experiencing is coercive control.

Coercive control is a criminal offence and should be reported to your DSO immediately if suspected.

How to recognise abuse in Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

Child abuse can take a number of forms but can be identified under four general categories:

1. Physical abuse
2. Neglect
3. Emotional abuse (including exposure to domestic violence)
4. Sexual abuse

It is not always easy to recognise child abuse. Significant harm includes ill-treatment and/or anything that seriously impairs a child's health, social or physical development or well-being.

There are a number of ways that abuse can be identified including:

- Disclosure by the child or young person.
- Information from a third party (e.g. friend, family member, another worker).
- Observation of unexplained injury or changes in behaviour.

How to deal with suspected abuse:

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- Disclosure, both to the Designated Lead and to the MASH team (details below) if the Designated Officer deems this necessary.
- There are four deputies if the Designated Lead is not available; these are detailed on page 3.
- If a child, young person or vulnerable adult wants to talk about abuse, listen, do not question.

Helpful things to say include:

- I believe you
- I am glad you told me
- It is OK to tell
- I will try to help
- Tell the child/young person/vulnerable adult that you will need to speak to someone else, be reassuring
- Make a record of what was said, if possible use the phrases/ words that the child/young person/ vulnerable adult uses.
- Never make promises you cannot keep

Information

If another person wants to give you information about alleged abuse then listen rather than question, accept what the person says and keep calm, ask them to make a note of what they were told or observed, let them know you will need to tell someone. Make sure there is a written record that is as close to word for word as you can make it, this should go to the designated officer or deputy if the designated officer is not available.

Observation

Some children, young people and vulnerable adults may display one or more of the following signs. They can have an innocent explanation but these signs can also be key signs to potential abuse:

- Bruising, cuts or burns particularly if the injuries are on parts of the body not normally injured in accidents such as the back of the legs.
- Changes in behaviour
- Aggressive behaviour
- Weight loss or excessive weight gain
- Inadequate or inappropriate clothing
- Sexually explicit behaviour
- The child/young person or vulnerable adult only seems happy with you
- Isolation from the group
- Lack of attachment or trust towards parents or other family members
- Having strange secrets
- Telling untruths

What to do

- Do not delay
- Consult with the Designated Lead (or Officer) or with the MASH team (details below) or report directly to your site manager if there is no-one else available. It is your responsibility to ensure that the Designated Officer has received the information.
- Fill out a report form on the appropriate system to your team.

The Designated Officer will take whatever steps are necessary to secure the safety of any child, young person or vulnerable adult who may be at risk. The strict guidelines followed are:

Children's disclosures and safety:

- Reporting to MASH where necessary
- Recording of incidents or observations that may be used as a body of evidence constituting harm
- Speaking directly to parents about issues
- Informing social services, police and other authorities where deemed necessary to the safety of the child
- Refusing to allow children out of our care if parents/carers/guardians are unfit to be in charge of children (for example if they come to pick up children when under the influence of drugs or alcohol)
- In the case of Female Genital Mutilation, to immediately inform the police

Allegations against staff:

- Suspending staff from work whilst investigations are proceeding
- Reporting and engaging with LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) where appropriate
- Termination of employment if deemed necessary after investigation

People working with us, for us, or on our behalf should understand these will not be compromised and if necessary, contact will be made with social services and the police.

A confidential record will be maintained on the appropriate system for your team, where staff can log any details of any incidents and circumstances which have caused them concern. **It is important that all concerns are logged whether social services are informed or not.**

If the situation is critical such that the child/young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger then the police or social services should be contacted immediately.

Changing

Although it is not a regular part of The Outdoors Group Ltd provision to require attendees to change, the fact that groups are outdoors in all weather means that there are situations where it is both inevitable and important to allow attendees to change. If attendees are in

danger of suffering ill health or are extremely wet and cold it is important to be able to offer this facility.

The Outdoors Group Ltd does not have a designated changing facility on all sites, but if this is a necessity then attendees will be provided with a private area behind suitable screening and left undisturbed to change. If it is necessary for a member of staff to assist someone with changing then a person of the same sex will be used, and wherever possible this will be a member of staff that is known to the student.

If it becomes necessary for someone to communicate with attendees during changing this will be done from outside the screened area, under no circumstances would the screening be removed or entered for the purpose of communication alone.

Intimate Care

The Outdoors Group Ltd have a separate Intimate Care Policy with specific guidance on this area of care.

Vulnerability to Abuse

Children should be encouraged to recognise and challenge inappropriate assistance and behaviour that erodes their dignity and self-worth. Staff should be encouraged to listen.

The following are factors that can increase a child's vulnerability:

- Children who need help with intimate care are statistically more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse
- Children with disabilities may have less control over their lives than others
- Children may experience multiple carers
- Children may not be able to distinguish between intimate care and abuse
- Children may not be able to communicate

If a child is hurt accidentally he or she should be immediately reassured and the adult should check that he or she is safe and the incident reported immediately to the designated line manager.

If a child appears sexually aroused, misunderstands or misinterprets an action/instruction, the incident should be reported immediately to the designated line manager.

Safeguarding and Allegations of Abuse

If a child is hurt accidentally, he or she should be immediately reassured and the adult should check that he or she is safe and the incident reported immediately to the designated line manager.

If a child appears sexually aroused, misunderstands or misinterprets an action/instruction,

the incident should be reported immediately to the designated line manager.

Personnel working in intimate situations with children can feel particularly vulnerable. The Outdoors Group Ltd Intimate Care Policy can help to reassure both staff involved and the parents of vulnerable children.

Action should be taken immediately should there be a discrepancy of reports between a child and the personal assistant, particularly with reference to time spent alone together.

It is advised that the support role be changed as quickly as possible, should such a discrepancy occur, and then reviewed on a regular basis.

Where there is an allegation of abuse, the guidelines in the Devon Child Protection procedures should be followed.

Training in Safeguarding

Training in child/young person or vulnerable adult protection will be provided for all staff and offered to volunteers at The Outdoors Group Ltd. Site managers and Nursery managers are trained up to the statutory and Ofsted required levels and all staff are regularly updated on protocols and procedures.

All staff receive Level 2 Safeguarding training as a minimum requirement and the Designated Lead and Officers are trained to Level 3.

It is recognised that radicalisation has become a focus and a cause for concern within schooling, all company staff are placed on a cycle of PREVENT training to ensure they are aware of the issues and what to look out for in relation to the radicalisation of learners.

DBS

All staff both paid and voluntary will be subject to a disclosure check with the Disclosure and Barring Service; all jobs both paid and voluntary will be offered subject to confirmation that the applicants are not on record as being unsuitable to work with children.

The Outdoors Group Ltd must also meet our responsibility under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006; which includes a duty to make a referral to the DBS services where a member of staff is dismissed (or would have been had they not left the setting first) because they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm.

Extra Safeguards

- The Safeguarding Forum (made up of all designated staff) will meet on a monthly basis to provide peer support and to develop practice.
- All posts will have a minimum probationary period of 6 months.

- Any concerns about this policy or its administration can be logged through The Outdoors Group Ltd complaints procedure and appeal, copies are available on request.
- If the complaint about the named person in this document please contact Thomas Lowday, Director (details on website).
- This policy will be reviewed annually.
- This document has been drawn up from the guidelines in:
 - 'Safe from harm' A code of practice for safeguarding the welfare of children in voluntary organisations in England and Wales. Published by the home office.
 - Keeping children safe in education Statutory guidance for schools and colleges September 2020
 - **Police MASH Sergeants: Sally Wootton 01392 448921**
 - NSPCC keeping children safe

Useful Contacts

Devon MASH Contact Details

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
PO Box 723
Exeter
EX1 9QS

Telephone: 0345 155 1071

Email: mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk

Fax: 01392 448951

Date amended: 1st September 2020

Signature of Director or Company Secretary:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shevek Pring', written in a cursive style.

Name: Shevek Pring

Review date set: 1st August 2021

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