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SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Last Reviewed 26th February 2024- Jonathan Burfoot

Background

Newquay Forest School (**NFS**) places the highest importance on safeguarding at all times, whether during our activities or any other connected involvement with the charity. Furthermore, **NFS** recognises that both staff and learners have an important role to play within safeguarding (in particular, the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and preventing their abuse in any form*).

Purpose

NFS acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice which reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and the requirements of the charity.

Scope

Children and young people under the age of 18

Vulnerable adults – defined in section 59 of the Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) as a person aged 18 or over to whom one or more of the following apply:

- Receiving a social care service,
- Receiving a health service,
- Living in sheltered accommodation,
- Detained in custody or under probation order,
- Requiring assistance in the conduct of his/her affairs, or
- Receiving a service or participating in an activity targeted at old people, people with disabilities (learning or physical) or with physical or mental health conditions.

This policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children and vulnerable adults are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, all children:

have a positive and enjoyable experience with **NFS** in a safe and child centred environment.

are protected from abuse whilst participating in or in any way involved with any of the charities' activities

NFS acknowledges that some children, including SEND children and young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

As part of our safeguarding policy NFS will:

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored
- prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals
- ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

This policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved with the charity. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every 6 months, or in the following circumstances:

changes in legislation and/or government guidance

as required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, UK Sport and/or Home Country Sports Councils or the Forest Schools Association.

as a result of any other significant change or event.

Categories of Abuse

Children and Young People

Physical Abuse

This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child / young person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child / young person.

Emotional Abuse

This is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child/young person such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child/young person's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children/ young people that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectation being imposed on children/young people. These may include interactions which are beyond the child/young person's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child/young person from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve bullying and causing children/young people to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children/young people. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child/ young person, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

This involves forcing or enticing a child/young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution whether or not the child/young person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children/young people in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children/young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

This is the persistent failure to meet the child/young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child/young person's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failure to protect a child/young person from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child/young person's basic emotional needs.

Self Neglect/Harm

This is not a direct form of abuse but staff need to be aware of it in the general context of risk assessment/risk management and to be aware that they may owe a duty of care to a child/young person who places her/himself at risk in this way.

Vulnerable Adults

Physical Abuse

This includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, rough handling or unnecessary physical force either deliberate or unintentional, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

Sexual Abuse

This includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent to, or was pressured into consenting. Sexual abuse can occur between people of the same sex and it can also occur within a marriage or any long-term relationship. A relationship of trust and a duty of care should exist between a member of staff or a volunteer and the person for whom they are caring, it would be seen as a betrayal of trust, and therefore abusive, for that member of staff or volunteer to have a sexual relationship with the person they are caring for.

Psychological Abuse

This includes emotional abuse, bullying and threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Financial or Material Abuse

This includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, enduring power of attorney, or inheritance or financial transactions, or the inappropriate use, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Neglect and Acts of Omission

This includes ignoring or withholding medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition, clothing and heating.

Discriminatory Abuse

This includes racist, sexist, or other forms of abuse that are based on a person's disability and other forms of harassment, or similar treatment.

Self Neglect/Harm

This is not a direct form of abuse but staff need to be aware of it in the general context of risk assessment/risk management and to be aware that they may owe a duty of care to a vulnerable individual who places her/himself at risk in this way.

Dealing with a disclosure

(to be read in conjunction with Safeguarding guidance material)

Context

All complaints, allegations or suspicions of abuse must be taken seriously.

Absolute promises of confidentiality should not be given as the matter may develop in such a way that these might not be able to be honoured.

If the complaint/allegation comes directly from the child/young person/vulnerable adult, questions should be kept to the minimum necessary to understand what is being alleged. Leading questions must always be avoided.

Procedure

It is recognised that any member of staff or volunteer may come in contact with learners who make a safeguarding disclosure or who exhibit a safeguarding 'cause for concern'. No member of staff or volunteer should take any independent action themselves but must observe the protocol set out below, unless the individual is in crisis, in which case action should be taken to stabilise the situation in consultation with relevant managers.

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Safeguarding Officer (SO), as soon as possible using the online form (found on the staff portal).

A full record of any disclosure conversations must be made immediately after any conversations with the child/young person/vulnerable adult and must include, if known:

1. The date and time of the alleged abuse
2. The place where the alleged abuse happened
3. The child/young person/vulnerable adult's name
4. The name of the person making the disclosure
5. The nature of the alleged abuse
6. A description of any injuries observed (N.B. do not ask to see)
7. The account which has been given of the allegation (if disclosed directly by the child/young person/vulnerable adult, the account should be in their words)
8. The age of the child/young person/vulnerable adult
9. The address of the child/young person/vulnerable adult
10. The date and time of the observation/disclosure
11. SO name and the names of any other persons present.

The record should be, as far as possible, verbatim rather than summarised and it should be factual in terms of what the child/young person/vulnerable adult or person making the disclosure (where not a direct disclosure) has reported and should not be based on opinion or assumptions.

NOTE Some children/young people/vulnerable adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities may need additional support when making a disclosure. This may take the form of the child/young person/vulnerable adult's nominated carer or teacher being present at

any interview to act as a facilitator or in an advocacy role. It should NEVER be assumed that a child/young person/vulnerable adult with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is not capable of providing credible evidence.

The SO will record details of the suspected/alleged abuse and should refer the matter to the appropriate external agency (e.g. Children's Social Care) where they feel that the child/young person/vulnerable adult may be in need and/or may be at risk of suffering significant harm.

The SO will confirm any telephone referral in writing, using the appropriate referral form within 1 working day. A record should be kept of the time of the referral and the name of the person (and agency) to whom the referral was made.

The advice received from the referral agency on what action, if any, is to be taken, should be noted and kept on file.

Any further action to be taken by **NFS**, agreed with the referral agency should be noted and the SO needs to confirm that this action is being/has been taken.

School Children

Where a suspicion/allegation of abuse is made in respect of a learner or member of support staff who is enrolled/employed at a school or with another sponsor, staff should follow the procedures outlined above. The SO will liaise with the Child Protection Officer from the learner/member's school or sponsor, ensuring that the learner/member is informed of this process.

Allegations about a Member of Staff or Volunteer

Any suspicion, allegation or actual abuse of a child, young person or vulnerable adult by a member of staff/volunteer must be reported to the SO as soon as possible and in any case within 2 hours of the initial concern arising. If the SO cannot be contacted, another senior member of staff should be contacted.

The SO will take such steps as s/he considers necessary to ensure the immediate safety of the child/young person/vulnerable adult in question or any other person who is considered at risk.

Where any suspicion, allegation or actual abuse of a child, young person or vulnerable adult relates to the SO the Safeguarding Management Group (SMG) should be immediately informed. The SMG will rapidly consider the nature of the allegation and the evidence. The SO will play no role.

Where it is clear to the SO/SMG that a child/young person/vulnerable adult appears to have been harmed or is at risk of significant harm or a criminal act appears to have been committed:

An immediate referral will be made to social care or the police for investigation

The SO/SMG will also inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (01872 254596/254549) within 1 working day of receiving the report of an allegation and ensure that a report has been completed

NFS will inform the alleged perpetrator or person about whom there is a concern of the allegation or concern as soon as possible AFTER consulting with the LADO and in accordance with any restrictions on information sharing that may be imposed by the police or social care.

NFS will inform the alleged perpetrator/person against whom the concern has been raised how enquiries will be conducted and possible outcomes e.g. disciplinary action, dismissal etc. and inform them of sources of support e.g. professional organisations/trade unions. The SO and SMG will ensure that the Project operates correctly with relation to Staff Disciplinary Procedure.

NFS will not take any action that might undermine any future action or disciplinary procedure (e.g. interviewing the alleged victim, alleged perpetrator or possible witnesses) before agreeing this with the LADO, who will liaise with the police and social care.

NFS will seek advice from the LADO about how, when and by whom parents or carers should be informed unless there is an emergency situation, such as when a child/young person/vulnerable adult has been injured and needs medical attention.

Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from **NFS**'s employment or internally disciplined because of abusive conduct relating to a child/young person/vulnerable adult, **NFS** will notify the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), as appropriate.

Records

The SO shall retain a copy of:

The referral form (and report, where appropriate)

Any notes, memoranda or other correspondence dealing with the matter

Any other relevant materials.

Copies of reports etc. should be kept securely locked at all times and kept for a minimum period of seven years.

Copies of reports regarding allegations made against staff shall be kept securely by the SMG for a minimum period of seven years.

Confidentiality

All suspicions, allegations and investigations will be kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know.

Related Documentation

NSPCC SAFEGUARDING - <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research>

Positively safe: a practical guide to safeguarding (PDF). - Children England, Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and Safe Network. Children England, 2009

Practice Guidance for safeguarding children in minority ethnic culture and faith (often socially excluded) communities, groups and families (PDF). London Safeguarding Children Board, 2011

Safeguarding Disclosure log 1

Safeguarding Disclosure log 2

Safeguarding Officer (SO):

Jonathan Burfoot (07773 799 755 / 01726 860 022)

Safeguarding Management Group (SMG):

Matt Rundel: 07824 156 738

Jez Bayes: 07795 318 232

Liam Brannigan: 07889 173 094

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 01872 326 536 lado@cornwall.gov.uk