

# Sustainability Trust Child Protection Policy



Effective: 1 October 2018  
Review date: 1 October 2019

## *Policy Statement*

**Sustainability Trust** is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in its care. We recognise the responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation while participating in our activities.

Staff and volunteers will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of children and young people. For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures a child is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years.

This policy is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of children is the primary concern
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse
- Child protection is everyone's responsibility
- Children have the right to express views on all matters which affect them, should they wish to do so
- Our organisation will work in partnership together with children and parents/carers to promote the welfare, health and development of children.

## *Policy Objectives*

The aim of this policy is to promote good practice through:

- Promoting the health and welfare of children by providing opportunities for them to take part in sustainability education safely
- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children
- Promoting and implementing appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and protect them from abuse
- Recruiting, training, supporting and supervising staff, members and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse and to reduce risk to themselves
- Requiring staff, members and volunteers to adopt and abide by the Child Protection Policy and procedures
- Responding to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children in line with the Policy and procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating the implementation of this Policy and procedures.

## **Procedures**

### **1. Screening of Employees and Volunteers**

As part of our duty of care, we will ensure that suitable and appropriate employees and volunteers (including parents) are engaged to work with children. When recruiting people to engage with children we will ensure that there is robust recruitment process that includes:

- Following up on referees, and asking if they have any concerns regarding the applicant working with children
- Police Checks

### **2. Appointing a Child Protection Officer**

A Child Protection Officer (CPO) shall be appointed to manage child protection issues. As the majority of child-centred activity is based in the Education team, the Eco-Enterprise Manager has this responsibility. The Current CPO has attended Child Matters child Protection Training. The CPO will manage child protection issues by:

- Ensuring that child protection procedures are understood and adhered to by all staff and volunteers in contact with children
- Organising promotional activities, training and raising awareness within the organisation,
- Establishing and maintaining the complaints procedure
- Regularly reporting any relevant information to the Chief Executive
- Acting as the main contact for child protection matters
- Keeping up-to-date with developments in child protection legislation
- Liaising with local child protection agencies
- Maintaining confidential records of reported cases and any action taken and
- Regularly monitoring and reviewing existing policies and procedures

### **3. Good Practice Protocols**

The protocols provide guidance to those working with children by outlining good practice and establishing boundaries in a range of situations.

*Applying a child-centred approach where all children are treated equally and with dignity.*

- Activities should be appropriate for the age and development of the children in your care
- Ensure feedback to children is about their performance and not of a personal nature
- Use positive and age-appropriate language when talking to children and in their presence.

### *Creating a safe and open working environment*

- Ensure that all physical contact with children is relevant and appropriate to the activity
- Seek permission to touch when doing the above
- Do not engage in any intimate, over-familiar or sexual relationships with people under the age of 18 years
- Ensure that any filming or photography of children is appropriate. (Obtain consent prior to filming or photographing & explain purpose e.g. to promote course etc)
- Request parental consent before transporting young people in a vehicle. (Ensure vehicle is insured & has current WOF and everyone wears a seatbelt)
- Ensure you have parental consent to administer first aid if required
- Do not use alcohol in the presence of children and do not offer alcohol to children under any circumstances
- Do not engage in communication on a one to one basis through social media or email other than relevant coach/trainee feedback or administration
- Do not allow parents, coaches, other children, or spectators to engage in any type of bullying behaviour (this includes cyber bullying)
- Do not engage in any bullying activity.

### *Avoiding situations where you are alone with a child.*

- Avoid private or unobserved situations, including being alone with a child in the changing rooms.
- Avoid entering changing rooms. If you must enter, knock and announce yourself and try to have at least one other adult with you
- Avoid driving a child unaccompanied
- Do not invite or encourage children to your home

#### **4. Dealing with allegations, responding to concerns**

In accordance with staff and volunteers' responsibility to act on any serious concerns, the following should be brought to the attention of the CPO.

- Any instance where policy is breached or good practice protocols are not followed
- Any disclosure by a child that abuse or harm is occurring
- Any suspicions or concerns about a child being subject to abuse.

#### ***Where concerns about poor practice are reported***

Poor practice involves actions that are contrary to the good practice protocols provided by our organisation and increase the risk of harm to children.

- Initial concerns should be discussed with the CPO (in the absence of a CPO the Chief Executive or Board should be informed)
- Consider the allegation and where there is a legitimate concern follow the Trust's standard disciplinary process.
- If the poor practice is continued or repeated poor practice disciplinary action may include expulsion from this organisation
- Consider actions across all circumstances for example – classroom, EcoCentre, and outdoors.

#### ***Where abuse is suspected or reported***

The welfare and interests of the child or young person are the first and paramount considerations. If a staff member, volunteer, or any adult suspects abuse, the following action should be taken.

#### **RESPOND – REPORT – RECORD**

Respond:

- Ensure the child is safe from immediate harm
- Listen carefully to the young person and accept what has been said.
- Reassure the young person and alleviate guilt if the child refers to it, "it's not your fault".
- Do not question about the detail of the allegation or criticise the alleged person
- Say that you will do your best to support him/her.
- Explain to the young person that you cannot deal with this alone and you have to get help.
- Tell the young person that you have to get advice on what the best thing to do.
- Avoid questioning the child beyond what has already been disclosed
- Do not question or counsel the alleged offender

Report:

- Consult immediately with the CPO or person-in-charge of the children
- The CPO will alert the Chief Executive
- Notify Child Youth and Family or the Police and follow their instructions.
- The parents or guardians of the child involved should be notified immediately unless it is suspected they may be responsible for the abuse.

Record

- As soon as possible, record accurately and appropriately the information received on Incident Report Forms in the Trust's Health and Safety system
- Records should be factual (not opinion or hearsay) and concise and include:

- i. The nature of the allegation
- ii. Who noticed/disclosed the abuse and their relationship to the child
- iii. Details of any witnesses
- iv. Signs and symptoms noted (including behavioural change)
- v. Any particular incidents with dates, times and places (if possible)
- vi. Any Action taken
- vii. Record any information about times, dates, locations and names of any potential witness. Sketch or describe signs of physical injury.

- Consider whether any other children are likely to be or have been at risk in the light of the allegation.
- Do not investigate/presume expertise.

### ***Policy Review***

This Policy and Procedures will be regularly reviewed:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children or following any changes within the **Trust's education or child-centred programmes**
- Following any issues or concerns raised about the protection of children within the **Trust's programmes**
- In all other circumstances, at least every twelve months.

### ***Additional Guidance***

Sustainability Trust will:

- Have access to a register of every child involved with the group including relevant medical details and have a contact name and number accessible in case of emergencies
- Treat everybody with respect
- Set an example we would wish others to follow
- Where possible consider activities that involve more than one adult being present or within sight and hearing of others
- Be aware that on occasions our actions may be misinterpreted by others even if they were well intentioned
- Respect a child's right to personal privacy
- Provide time and attention for children to talk to us
- Encourage children to respect and be courteous to others
- Intervene to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour
- Have a pre-arranged plan for the safe collection of children after educational programmes have finished
- Ensure that any suspicions or allegations of abuse are REFERRED not INVESTIGATED
- Only refer and seek support from other agencies as identified under the Child Protection Policy