

# **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

(To be read in conjunction with the Intimate Care Policy.)

The Management Committee of The Time Out Group recognise that, when involved in making provision for children, they have a responsibility to ensure that their welfare is always paramount. All children have a legal right of protection from abuse (The Children Act 1989). This policy stands alongside the ethos of caring, which is equally important in everything that we do.

A **child** is defined as a person under 18 years of age, by the Children Act 1989.

All Time Out staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report any concerns to the group leader. Such concerns will be responded to swiftly and appropriately.

## **POLICY AIMS**

The aim of this Time Out policy is to promote good practice to:

- Provide children with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of the Time Out staff and volunteers.
- Enable all staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Appendix A provides a code of guidance for staff and volunteers.

## **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

The Time Out Group recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way, and all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with them. The Time Out Group recruitment process for those who come into contact with children will therefore include the following:

- All volunteers and staff will complete an application form. The form will seek information about the applicant's work experience and ask for self-disclosure about any criminal record, where appropriate.
- We will require consent from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau and the appropriate check will be carried out – usually an enhanced disclosure.

## **RESPONDING TO SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS**

If a member of staff or volunteer has any concerns about possible abuse or inappropriate behaviour, they have a responsibility to report them. They do not have to decide whether or not abuse or inappropriate behaviour has actually taken place.

The steps to be taken are:

1. Concerns reported to group leader (if applicable);

2. Record made of what has been said or seen. Include the location, time and date. (See Appendix B)
- 3.. The Group Leader will report the matter to the Chair of the Management Committee
4. The Group Leader will report the matter to Children's Social Care Services, or the First Response line 0800 1313126, or the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111.
5. The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm or that this would prevent a member of staff from reporting the incident due to a concern over vulnerability. The group leader in this instance would ensure that social services were aware that the parents did not know.

Where the Group Leader is not available, contact should be made with the Chair of the Management Committee. In the unlikely event that none of them are available, contact should be made direct to Children's Social Care Services, or the First Response line 0800 1313126, or the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111. It is important not to delay as the individual may be vulnerable to more abuse.

## **CONCERNS ABOUT CONDUCT OF MEMBER OF STAFF OR VOLUNTEER**

Where the concern relates to a member of staff or volunteer it should be reported to the Group Leader, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question, and any other child who may be at risk. If the Group Leader is the subject of the concern, the report must be made direct to the Chair of the Management Committee who will, if appropriate, refer the allegation to the appropriate body for investigation.

There may be three types of investigation:

1. A criminal investigation;
2. A child protection investigation;
3. A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily. If, following consideration, the concerns have arisen as a result of poor practice, the Chief Executive may deal with it as a misconduct issue.

The Time Out Group will fully support and protect any member of staff or volunteer who, in good faith, reports their concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

## **ALLEGATIONS OF PREVIOUS ABUSE**

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, staff and volunteers should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The Group Leader and Chair;
- The parents or carer of the person who is alleged to have been abused;
- The person making the allegation;
- Social services/police, First Response, NSPCC and Childline;
- The alleged abuser (and parents/carer if the alleged abuser is a child).

The Time Out Group record of the concerns will be retained in safe storage by the Group Leader in accordance with data protection policy and the need to know requirements.

## **GUIDELINES FOR USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC OR OTHER IMAGING EQUIPMENT**

The taking of photographs, film or other images of children is not appropriate without consent from parents or nominated guardians or carers. Staff and volunteers must ensure that such consent is in place before making any such image of a child.

When such images are properly obtained then they must be used only for the purpose for which consent has been given. Special care must be taken when using any image in general publicity or in publications such as annual reports or press promotions. If there is doubt about the appropriate use of an image then staff must not be tempted to use it.

This policy was adopted by the committee on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2011

Signed..... Chair ..... Date

Signed..... Vice Chair..... Date

Signed..... Secretary ..... Date

Signed..... Treasurer ..... Date

## **APPENDIX A: CODE OF GUIDANCE FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS ON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation and can occur within many situations including home, school and the caring support environment.

It is a fact of life that some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A paid worker or volunteer may have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where a young person needs protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported to the Time Out Group line manager and or relevant authorities following the guidelines in this document. When an individual, who has been subjected to abuse outside the Time Out Group environment, comes into contact with Time Out Group staff, we must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the individual receives the required support.

### **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within Time Out Group activities.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment i.e. no secrets).
- Treating all children equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each person first, e.g. before partners or ourselves.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust, which empowers individuals to share in the decision-making process;
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible.
- Being an excellent role model – e.g. not smoking in front of children.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people.
- Securing carer consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.

- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

## **PRACTICES TO BE AVOIDED**

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of the children parents or carers. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- Avoid taking children to your home where they will be alone with you.
- Do not share a room with a child - this should occur only when it is deemed more of a risk for the child to be without 24hour care and should happen only in full consultation with the parents.

## **PRACTICES NEVER TO OCCUR**

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to an individual, even in fun.
- Reduce anyone to tears as a form of control.

NB. It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for an individual, e.g. if they are young or are disabled. Please read the '*Intimate Care Policy*' for guidance on this. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents or carers. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting/assisting to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained. If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to your line manager or other appropriate colleague, and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents or carers of the child are told:

- If you accidentally injure or cause discomfort to a child.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

## **APPENDIX B: HOW TO RECORD CONCERNS**

Information passed to the social services or the police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record at the time of the disclosure/concern. Information should include the following:

- The name of the child.
- Age of individual and date of birth
- Home address and telephone number
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or those of someone else?
- What is the nature of the allegation? Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information. Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries- record these on a body chart. Are behavioural signs or indirect signs evident?
- Witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents/carer been contacted? If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If it is not the child making the report has the individual concerned been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? If yes, record details of the allegation made, including the identity of the alleged abuser, the person making the allegation and the time and date.
- The name and capacity of the person making the report.

## **APPENDIX C: GUIDANCE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY OF CHILDREN**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Advice and procedures to be followed in permitting photography to take place or video cameras to be used particularly where young children may be the subjects. The use of today's modern digital cameras, often with video, and now the new generation of mobile phones presents the opportunity for misuse.

The magnification and manipulation that is possible with today's digital pictures and the fact there is no need for a third party to develop and print images is causing concern. Images taken with a mobile phone can, in seconds, be transmitted on to the World Wide Web. There are reports of unauthorised children's images taken, whilst using facilities, being posted on the web and some operators have already taken action in banning all unauthorised photography and the use of mobile phones on their premises.

### **Complete ban on use**

There are a number of public buildings which may include swimming pools, sports centres and the like that have a clearly defined policy of not allowing the taking of photographs under any circumstances.

### **Allowed only with permission**

Those facilities/activities which allow photography should have a written procedure in place. This would entail the prospective photographer having to obtain permission prior to using their camera or other device, such as a mobile phone, to take pictures. There should be a notice at the facility or event clearly stating that photography and the recording of images of any kind is only allowed with the written authorisation of the organiser.

The procedure for obtaining permission should be written down on a form and recorded. The forms devised should include the following details:

- The name, address and phone number of the person using the camera
- The name(s) of the subject(s)
- The reason or use the images are being or intended to be put to (e.g. family record)

### **Respect the rights of others**

The person given approval should be advised that if any affected person complains or expresses concern they must respect the rights of other people and stop taking 'photographs.

Most responsible adults presented with a form to complete quickly acknowledge that this is a sensible procedure and won't mind leaving their details.

### **Vigilance by the general public**

No matter what arrangements are put in place to prevent the use of cameras, videos or mobile phones with digital image recording the very nature of "peeping tom type photography" make it difficult to police. In recognition of this fact organisers of activities should ask their users to be alert to any suspicious activity particularly where children may be involved and encourage them to report any such incidents at the earliest opportunity to a member of staff.

### **Child protection procedures and training**

If you ask that members of the public be vigilant and report their suspicions it is important to ensure that you have child protection procedures in place appropriate to the situation and that all staff are trained in these procedures and know how to respond. If parents or other spectators are intending to photograph or video at an activity they should also be made aware of your expectations.

### **Easy rules to remember are:**

- Ask for parental permission to use their child's image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the activity.

- Only use images of children in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. With regard to the actual content it is difficult to specify exactly what is appropriate given the wide diversity of activities. However, there are clearly some activities - swimming, and athletics for example when the risk of potential misuse is much greater. With these activities the content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child and should avoid full face and body shots. So for example shots of children in a pool would be appropriate or if on poolside from the waist or shoulder up.
- If you are commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to an activity or event it is important to ensure they are clear about your expectations of them in relation to child protection.
- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour.
- Issue the photographer with identification which must be worn at all times
- Inform children and parents that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs
- Do not allow unsupervised access to children or one to one photo sessions at events.
- Do not approve / allow photo sessions outside the activity or at a child's home.
- Children and parents should be informed that if they have concerns they can report these to the organiser.
- Concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography should be reported to the event organiser or official and recorded in the same manner as any other child protection concern.