

TRANSITION CHICHESTER



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Transition Chichester's aim is for all staff and volunteers working with and for the organisation to create an environment where children are protected as much as possible from potential abuse. All staff or volunteers will report any concerns about a child, or about another person's behaviour using the procedures laid down below.

1. Designated Child Protection Person

There will be a Welfare and Protection Officer (WPO) for Transition Chichester who can be contacted at any time if ever a concern should arise regarding child protection issues. The WPO will be appointed by the Board of Trustees.

Any allegations or disclosures must be recorded in a designated book as soon as possible according to the procedure set out in this policy. The WPO should decide who should report the information and the time scales for passing it on. The role of the WPO is to:

- Know how to and which child protection agency to report concerns to should they arise.
- Ensure that Trustees, Project Leaders and employees have access to Transition Chichester's Child Protection Policy.
- Help any other employees and volunteers with child protection issues.
- Make sure that appropriate information is available at the time of a referral and the referral is confirmed in writing.
- Keep contact with social services, NSPCC and other agencies.
- Keep people who need to know aware (e.g. schools or organisations from which the children have been recruited) of any action taken and any further action to be taken e.g. disciplinary.
- Ensure that all records are kept properly and confidentially.
- Contact different organisations to review the child protection programme regularly to check that procedures are correct and comply with current good practice.

As stated in The Children's Act 1987 "the welfare of a child is paramount". This means that confidentiality must never be promised to a child in case a situation arises where information must be passed on for the safety or welfare of the child. However, other than following the correct procedures, confidentiality of all people concerned in an allegation and investigations should be kept if appropriate. For instance, any incident written in the designated book should be written on separate pages from others so people do not get to see other peoples' reports or concerns.

Key Transition Chichester contact(s) will be DBS checked to an appropriate level in order to supervise volunteers in a manner that protects both children and volunteers and staff of TC. All volunteers and staff and anybody else who comes into contact with children and is left with them unsupervised will be checked appropriately.

The key Transition Chichester contact(s) will identify themselves to the children and the volunteers so that concerns about Child Protection can be raised and dealt with.

Permission will be requested from school or organisations to use photos or any other media that may identify individual children, in order to protect 'At Risk' children and ensure confidentiality.

Transition Chichester accepts its responsibility of duty of care towards children and any person who may encounter any concerns whilst working with Transition Chichester will be supported when they come forward with any concerns in good faith.

2. Recruitment of volunteers and staff

Child protection shall always be a major priority for Transition Chichester in selecting staff and volunteers who will be involved with children, and appropriate recruitment procedures shall be followed.

Recruitment of volunteers:

When recruiting volunteers to work with children and young people, there will be a clear description of all roles available, so the most suitable appointees can be selected. For volunteers working unsupervised with children and young people, a DBS check will be required.

Recruitment of staff:

When recruiting staff to work with children and young people

- An appropriate level DBS check will be required, and a copy kept with successful applicants' details.
- Several selection techniques shall be used to maximise the chance of staff recruitment (interview, reference, checks).
- At least one member of the Board of Trustees of Transition Chichester shall meet with applicants to view and evaluate their attitudes towards working with children.
- All applicants must sign a declaration of previous convictions with submission to formal check.

The Board of Trustees will nominate a person to handle the verification of identification documents required for DBS checks.

3. Training and supervision of volunteers and staff

Transition Chichester expects all staff and volunteers to be aware of the Child Protection Policy and adhere to it at all times. Training will be given when it becomes apparent that staff and volunteers will be working with children.

Those responsible for planning projects and carrying out Risk Assessments should ensure that staff or volunteers work in pairs when dealing with children and young people. They should be able to see each other and their charges at all times.

Code of Conduct

- It is important to never have any physical contact with a child or young person.
- It is not good practice to take a child alone in a car or on any journey.
- Never make any suggestive or inappropriate remarks to a child. Such remarks, even if said in jest, could get taken the wrong way or offend.
- Never try to dissuade a child from making a disclosure of abuse.
- It is important for all staff members to be aware that child abusers come in all ages (even other children) they can be any gender, ethnic origin or class. It is also important not to

favour people and have pre-conceptions; this could prevent the right action being taken in a given situation.

- Transition Chichester staff and volunteers must always value and respect children and young people as individuals and must always exclude bullying, shouting, racism and sexism.

4. Responding appropriately to a child making an allegation of abuse

The examination process with a child or young person should be as open as possible and it is important that no more time should be spent alone with a child than is necessary.

- Stay calm.
- Listen to what the child has to say.
- Do not make any promises to keep secrets, as you may have to take it to someone else.
- Reassure the child that only those that need know about it will.
- Always let the child proceed at his or her own pace.
- Do not ask prompting questions.
- Ensure them that they have done the right thing by telling.
- Tell them what the next step is and who will be told.
- Record what the child said as accurately as possible recording date, time, names, who took the information, sign and the date that it was recorded.
- Do not decide for yourself whether abuse has taken place - that is for the professional child protection agencies to decide.

5. Procedure for reporting concerns

There are several ways in which suspicions or concerns may be raised:

- Reports by a volunteer or staff member
- Child disclosing abuse
- Bruising or signs of physical hurt which may or may not be accompanied by unusual behaviour.

If a volunteer or staff member has concerns, they should report it to the WPO straight away by telephone or in person. The WPO should also then receive a written report signed and dated within 24hrs to put in the designated book. It is of the utmost importance that these procedures be carried out as quickly as possible so as not to threaten the welfare of the child. If the concerns relate to a member of staff the WPO should be contacted immediately by telephone. The WPO will consider all concerns and will

Either: report them straight to the authorities.

Or: after seeking advice (possibly from NSPCC or alike) decide not to refer concerns to the authorities, but will keep a detailed record of the reports in the designated book.

6. Definitions of abuse

Physical

Non-accidental injury – deliberately inflicted: Hitting, shaking, squeezing, burns, bruises, broken limbs, scalds, bites, cuts, gripping, giving a child inappropriate drugs or alcohol. Attempting to poison, suffocate or drown.

Neglect

Persistent or severe failure to meet a child's basic needs: Lack of adequate food, inappropriate diet, exposing child to cold, leaving child unattended, inappropriate clothing, failing to attend to personal hygiene and failing to seek medical attention.

Sexual

Taking advantage of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult: Flirting and verbal suggestiveness, inappropriate fondling, masturbation, oral sex, anal sex, full intercourse, use of foreign objects, exhibitionism, exposing child to pornography, making pornographic materials, and ritualistic abuse.

Emotional

Persistent lack of affection and interaction: Continuously failing to show love and affection, persistent rejection, criticism, belittling, bullying, frightening, harassment, taunting, threatening, ridiculing and ignoring.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Board of Trustees has overall and final responsibilities in relation to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. The Child Protection procedure is, however, the direct concern of all those leading Transition Chichester's activities, employees and volunteers.

The effectiveness of this general policy statement will be reviewed annually and revised when necessary.