

Child Protection Policy & Guidelines

A Child Protection Policy statement

“It is the policy of the Lancashire Global Education Centre to safeguard the welfare of all children by taking all reasonable steps to protect them from physical, sexual and emotional harm”

LGEC will endeavour to safeguard children and vulnerable adults by:

- Adopting child protection guidelines for staff, volunteers and management committee members.
- Providing effective information, training and support for staff, volunteers and management committee members.
- Follow procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers.
- Investigating and responding to all suspicions and allegations of abuse with the appropriate agencies.
- Reviewing the Child Protection Policy and guidelines at regular intervals.

Definitions of Abuse

Child abuse occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater power causes harm to a child or young person and can take a number of forms, including:

- Physical Injury – which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or suffocating.
- Sexual Abuse – may involve physical contact, penetrative or non-penetrative acts, involving children or young people in watching pornographic material or sexual acts.
- Emotional Abuse – may involve conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate, and cause them to feel frightened, in danger, exploited or corrupted.
- Neglect – may involve a carer failing to provide food, shelter, clothing or a failure to protect from physical harm or danger or deny access to medical care or treatment.

Possible Signs of Abuse may include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries.
- A child or vulnerable adult describing an abusive act involving themselves.
- Changes in behaviour e.g. becoming withdrawn or sudden outbursts of temper.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or sexually explicit behaviour.
- Distrust of adults, particularly parents or other family members.
- Loss of weight for no apparent reason.
- Eating problems, including over-eating or loss of appetite.
- Disturbed sleep, nightmares and bedwetting.
- Difficulty socialising with other children.
- Soreness or itching in the genital area.
- Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.

It is important that the above signs are not taken as indications that abuse has taken place. They should make us stop and think, but does not prove that abuse is taking place. It not the responsibility of those working for LGEC to decide that abuse is taking place, but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns.

If a child or vulnerable person says or indicates that they are being or has been abused, you should:

- **Let them know that you may need to tell someone else – do not promise confidentiality.**
- Accept at face value what the young person says.
- Ensure that the young person is given the opportunity to talk to you, or an independent person.
- Listen to the young person without interruption, and do not ask questions about what you may suspect.
- Do not pass judgement on what is said, but do try to alleviate any fears or guilt which the young person may have.
- Provide support as appropriate, but do not make false promises.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next.
- Do not approach a suspected abuser yourself
- You must always refer – you must never investigate.
- Write down the facts, as you know them – record dates and times of events, when you were told about them and when you made the record. Sign the notes and always keep a copy for yourself in a secure place.

If you suspect or receive an allegation of child abuse by an adult

- Don't delay – consult with your nominated person who deals with child protection issues.
- Record the nature of the allegation in detail, including a description of visible bruising or other injuries, dates and times of events.
- Do not try to sort it out yourself.

What do you do if you have concern?

There is always a commitment with parents and carers where there are concerns about a child or vulnerable adult. Therefore in most situations, it is important to talk to them to help clarify any initial concerns.

However, if there are circumstances where a child or vulnerable adult may be placed at greater risk if concerns are shared, any allegations must be reported to your nominated Child Protection Officer who will inform Social Services. If the nominated person is unavailable, you should immediately contact Social Services.

The nominated people to deal with all matters relating to Child Protection is:

Name: Richard Corbridge
Address: Lancashire Global Education Centre
37 St Peter's Square
Preston, PR1 7BX
Tel No: 01772 252299
Position in Organisation: Chief Executive

The contact numbers for Lancashire County Council Social Services Child Protection Team are:

Office Hours: 01772 261256
Out of Office Hours: 0845 6021043

Additional help may be sought from the **NSPCC National Child Protection Helpline** that operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. An email service responds to requests for advice within 24 hours. Helpline staff also respond to letters and faxes.

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 0808 800 5000 help@nspcc.org.uk

Guidelines for Self-Protection and the Protection of Children and Vulnerable People

Promoting good practice can reduce the possibility of potentially abusive situations and help protect staff and volunteers.

Always

- Ensure all staff and volunteers at LGEC are aware of these guidelines.
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Provide an example you wish others to follow.
- Ensure that another adult is present when you are in the company of young people (ideally mixed genders)
- Respect a person's right to privacy.
- Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes and behaviour they do not like.
- Remember someone might misinterpret your actions and your comments, no matter how well intentioned.
- Recognise that caution is required particularly in sensitive moments, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement, grief, or abuse.
- Be aware of the possible implications of physical contact with young people.
- On a residential: Ensure that there is separate sleeping accommodation for leaders and male and female young people. Ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to protect young people from 'outsiders' by conducting a risk assessment.

Never

- Permit abusive youth peer activities (e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying).
- Jump to conclusions.
- Allow yourself to be drawn into any inappropriate attention seeking behaviour by young people (e.g. tantrums, crushes)
- Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.
- Show favouritism to any individual.
- Make suggestive remarks or gestures.
- Rely upon your good name to protect you.
- Believe "It couldn't happen to me", both dealing with abuse or being accused of committing abuse.

What to do if One-One contact is unavoidable

- Make sure it is for as short a time as possible.
- Ensure that you are accessible to others.
- Tell someone where you are going, what you are doing and why.
- Try to move with the child to areas where there are more people.
- Try to avoid unnecessary physical contact especially if it may be misconstrued by the child or other people.
- If you do have to touch the child, ensure that you get their permission beforehand.

Complaints against staff / volunteers

In situations where it is not clear if an allegation constitutes abuse or not, advice should be sought from the Nominated person or Social Services, as there may be circumstances where allegations are about poor practice rather than abuse.

LGEC assures all staff and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports a concern that a colleague is or may be abusing children or vulnerable adults or neglecting their responsibilities. Where there is a complaint of abuse made, there are 3 types of investigation that LGEC could take:

- A disciplinary investigation

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- A child protection investigation
- A criminal Investigation

If the allegation is considered and clearly about poor practice, LGEC will deal with it as a misconduct issue and follow LGEC Grievance & Disciplinary Procedures.

If there is an allegation or suspicion of child abuse, the nominated person or staff member/volunteer will take steps to ensure the safety of the child/children or vulnerable adult/s and refer the allegation to the Social Services, who may involve the police. Parents or carers will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Social Services department.

The result of a police and social Services investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Procedures for Staff and Volunteers

LGEC recommends the following procedures are implemented to ensure the safety of any children, vulnerable adults, staff, volunteers and management committee members involved with LGEC.

- All employees, volunteers and management committee members should be supplied with a copy of LGEC’s Child Protection Policy and the Home Office ‘Safe from Harm’ document as part of their induction.
- All employees and volunteers who work with children or young people will undergo appropriate Child Protection Training within the first 6 months of them starting with LGEC. It is also desirable for other staff as necessary.
- All new employees and volunteers who will work with children or young people will need to complete an enhanced check CRB Disclosure form.
- If the person has recently completed an enhanced CRB check for another reputable organisation within the last 3 years, they must present this to the nominated person.
- Enhanced CRB checks will be renewed every 3 years.
- Employees and volunteers without a valid enhanced CRB Disclosure are only permitted work with children or young people with another person who has.
- Risk assessments will be carried out for all events, trips and residentials to identify and minimise the risk of harm to young people (see attached form)
- When recruiting staff and volunteers, all references will be followed up. For staff and volunteers who will be working with children or young people, at least one person who has experience of their work or contact with young people should be asked for a reference.

Last reviewed: November 2008

Adopted at the meeting on:

Signed:

Review Date:

Position: