



Highland Games

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The Highland Games (HG) fully recognises the responsibility it has under section 175, of the Education Act 2002 to have arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This policy is in line with the statutory guidance for schools and colleges: Keeping children safe in education, April 2014 and is applicable to all children, including those in the EYFS (Reception Class age). There is a statutory requirement (EYFS Framework) to have a policy regarding the use of mobile phones and cameras in relation to effective safeguarding of children and our policy can be found in Appendix One and forms an important part of this overall Safeguarding Policy.

Through their day-to-day contact with children and direct work with families, staff at the HG have an important role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect and referring them to the appropriate agency, normally the appropriate Child and Family Team (Social Services).

This policy sets out how the organisation discharges its statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who attend the HG. It complies with the requirements of the London and Barnet Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

There are four main elements to our policy:

PREVENTION through the teaching and pastoral support offered to children and the creation and maintenance of a whole organisation protective ethos, raising awareness of safeguarding issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.

PROCEDURES for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse. It is the responsibility of every member of staff to ensure they are

fully cognisant of the procedures detailed within this policy and to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'. Staff are well placed to identify concerns early, provide help for children and to prevent concerns from escalating.

SUPPORT TO CHILDREN who may have been abused, in accordance with his/her agreed safeguarding plan

PREVENTING UNSUITABLE PEOPLE WORKING WITH CHILDREN through ensuring we practice safe recruitment by using appropriate selection and checking procedures to determine the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. When the organisation needs to use supply staff procedures are followed to ensure that the agency used has also carried out the necessary checks.

Our policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in the organisation. Concerned parents may also contact the Director of Highland Games

1 PREVENTION

- 1.1 We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult help to protect children.
- 1.2 The organisation will therefore:
 - 1.2.1 establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to. Our activity leaders are encouraged to establish personal rapport with children and parents and instil a feeling of trust and support;
 - 1.2.2 ensure children know that there are adults in the organisation whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
 - 1.2.3 ensure notices with up to date contact numbers of support agencies, such as 'NSPCC', are placed in accessible places around the organisation;
 - 1.2.4 include in the activities material which will help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to child care and parenting skills.
 - 1.2.5 include in the activities opportunities for PSHE which equips children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and information about who to turn for help.

- 1.2.6 ensure that children are encouraged to develop their 'voice'
- 1.2.7 provide activities which encourage self-esteem and confidence building, thinking independently and making assessments of risk based on their own judgements.
- 1.2.8 staff are advised regularly both verbally and in writing about how to keep children safe and themselves free of allegations, e.g. when doing 1:1 tuition, for example, by keeping door open or in a fairly open part of organisation, or working in a space which has a glass panel in door, etc. Not taking children in their own car. Not getting involved with children on social networking sites, being very careful when giving students personal mobile phone numbers and making sure that any messages sent cannot be open to misinterpretation.
- 1.2.9 the Safeguarding Children Policy will work in conjunction with the organisation's positive behaviour policy;

2 PROCEDURES

- 2.1 The Lead Person i.e. the Designated Safeguarding Person (DPS) taking responsibility for safeguarding in the organisation is Dawn Moore. She is also the designated person with responsibility for EYFS (Early Years' Foundation Stage, i.e. children aged under 5 years).

We will follow the procedures set out by the statutory guidance for organisations and colleges: Keeping children safe in education, April 2014, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' Revised Guidance March 2013, the London Child Protection Committee, "London Child Protection Procedures, Edition Four, 2011" (www.londonscb.gov.uk) if we come into contact with alleged or suspected cases of child abuse. Please see Appendix Four which sets out **Children's Welfare Procedures Guidelines for Staff**. These procedures set out good practice for staff in order to protect the children that we are responsible for while in our care and to protect ourselves as professionals.

3.0 Additional procedures in relation to the Designated Staff Member for Safeguarding

- 3.1 In addition, the organisation will:

- 3.1.1 ensure it has at least two designated senior members of staff, who have received appropriate training in safeguarding and inter-agency working.
- 3.1.2 ensure this training is updated every two years in accordance with government guidance;
- 3.1.3 recognise the importance of the role of the designated staff and ensure that they have the time and training to undertake their duties;
- 3.1.4 ensure there are contingency arrangements should the designated members of staff not be available;
- 3.1.5 ensure that the designated member of staff will take advice from a safeguarding specialist when managing complex cases.
- 3.1.6 The Designated Safeguarding Person will take final responsibility for any referrals made to outside agencies. Referrals are made to the Children and Families Services relevant to the borough where the child normally resides, (e.g. Barnet, Camden, Brent, Hackney, Haringey, Westminster)
- 3.1.7 provide training in safeguarding (updated at least every three years) for all staff, ensuring that all new, temporary and part time staff and volunteers who work with children are made aware of the organisation's policies and their responsibilities before they come into contact with children and at least every three years thereafter
- 3.1.8 guidance as to what to look out for in terms of signs of possible abuse, and how to avoid asking leading questions is reviewed annually and disseminated to staff as part of their regular training.

3.2 The Role of the Organisation

The organisation will:

- 3.2.1 ensure every member of staff
 - the name of the Designated Safeguarding Person and their role;

- that they have an individual responsibility for referring safeguarding concerns using the proper channels and within the timescales set out in the guidance used;
- 3.2.2 provide training for all staff from the point of their induction, and updated every three years at a minimum, so that they know:
- their personal responsibility,
 - the safeguarding procedures,
 - the need to be vigilant in identifying cases of abuse
 - how to support and to respond to a child who tells of abuse
- 3.2.3 ensure that every member of staff receives guidance from the point of induction, updated annual guidance (via the Staff Guidelines document) and bi-annual specific training in how to work within the HG ethos and yet be sure to forestall any possible allegations of abuse.
- 3.2.4 ensure that all staff and volunteers recognise their duty and feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children and that such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed collegiate responsibilities procedures.
- 3.2.5 remedy without delay any deficiencies or weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements.

3.3 Liaison with Other Agencies

The organisation will:

- 3.3.1 work to develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters including attendance and written reports at initial case conferences, core groups and safeguarding review conferences;
- 3.3.2 notify the relevant Children and Family Services team if:
- it should have to exclude a child on the safeguarding register (whether fixed term or permanently);

- there is an unexplained absence of a child on the child protection register of more than two days duration from the organisation (or one day following a weekend); or as agreed as part of any safeguarding or core group plan.

3.4 Record Keeping

The organisation will:

- 3.4.1 keep clear detailed written records of concerns about children (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to Children and Family Services immediately;
- 3.4.2 ensure all records are kept secure, separate from the main child file, and in locked locations;
- 2.5.3 ensure all relevant safeguarding records are sent to the receiving organisation or establishment when a child moves organisations.

3.5 Confidentiality and information sharing

- 3.5.1 Staff will ensure confidentiality protocols are adhered to and information is shared appropriately. If in any doubt about confidentiality, staff will seek advice from the DSP or outside agency as required.
- 3.5.2 The DSP will disclose any information about a child to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.
- 3.5.3 All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and that in making decisions about what to share the needs of the child are considered as paramount. The DSP holds up to date contact details of all the agencies involved with HG children and in the case of a child who has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm, the local Children and Family Services, will be informed immediately where practicable and at least within 24 hours.
- 2.6.4 In a situation where a child may be disclosing personal information that may pose a danger to the child or to others, the member of staff must not promise the child unconditional

confidentiality.

3.6 Communication with Parents

The organisation will:

- 3.6.1 undertake appropriate discussion with parents prior to involvement of another agency unless the circumstances preclude this. (Further guidance on this can be found in the London Child Protection Procedures section 4.4.9)
- 3.6.2 ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the organisation and staff for safeguarding by setting out its obligations in the organisation's terms and conditions.
- 3.6.3 ensure that parents know and understand the organisation's policy in regard to the late collection of children and how the organisation would respond if your child were to go missing. Please see Appendices Two and Three.
- 3.6.4 make this policy available to parents on request and publish it on the website

4.0 SUPPORTING THE CHILD AT RISK

- 4.1 We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world as benevolent and meaningful. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of self-blame.
- 4.2 This organisation may be a stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Nevertheless, when at organisation their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn.
- 4.3 We recognise that some children adopt abusive behaviours and that these children must be referred on for appropriate support and intervention. The organisation is also alert to the possibility of peer to peer abuse and has procedures in place for dealing with any issues. If there is any case of child-on-child abuse both children will be referred to Barnet Family Services.
- 4.4 The organisation will endeavour to support the child through:

- 4.4.1 the content of the activities to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation (see section 2);
- 4.4.2 the organisation ethos which (i) promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment (ii) gives children a sense of being valued (see section 2);
- 4.4.3 the organisation's behaviour policy is aimed at supporting vulnerable children in the organisation. All staff will agree on a consistent approach, which focuses on addressing the behavioural element of any misdemeanours in a way which does not damage the child's sense of self-worth. The organisation will ensure that the child knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but s/he is valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred;
- 4.4.4 liaison with other agencies which support the child such as Children and Family Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, the Educational Psychology Service, Behaviour Support Services and the Education Welfare Service;
- 4.4.5 a commitment to develop productive and supportive relationships with parents whenever it is in a child's best interest to do so;
- 4.4.6 recognition that children living in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse are vulnerable and in need of support and protection;
- 4.4.7 vigilantly monitoring children's welfare, keeping records and notifying Children and Family Services as soon as there is a concern.
- 4.4.8 where the suspected abuse is by another child/young person, both children (i.e. suspected abuser and abused) must be referred.

5.0 **Drug Use and Safeguarding**

- 5.1 The discovery that a young person is using illegal drugs or reported evidence of their drug use is not necessarily sufficient in itself to initiate safeguarding proceedings, but the organisation will consider such action when there is evidence or reasonable cause:

- to believe the young person's drug misuse may cause him or her to be vulnerable to other abuse such as sexual abuse;
- to believe the child's drug related behaviour is a result of abusing or endangering pressure or incentives from others, particularly adults;
- to suspect that the misuse has been prompted by serious parent/ carer drug misuse.
- to believe a child may be affecting the welfare of other children by supplying them with either illegal substances or substances which may cause intoxication

6.0 Children of Drug Using Parents

6.1 Further enquiries and or further action will be taken when the organisation receives reliable information about drug and alcohol abuse by a child's parents/carers in any of the following circumstances;

- the parental misuse is regarded as problematic (i.e. multiple drug use including injection);
- a chaotic and unpredictable home environment exists which can be attributed to drug or alcohol misuse;
- children are not being provided with acceptable or consistent levels of social and health care;
- children are exposed to criminal behaviour.

6.2 The organisation has a duty of care to not release children to the adults collecting them in the event we believe the adult to be incapacitated as a result of drug or alcohol use.

7.0 PREVENTING UNSUITABLE PEOPLE FROM WORKING WITH CHILDREN

7.1 The organisation will operate safe recruitment practices. This will include following the DBS requirements in checking that applicants are registered with the authority and obtaining references and DBS checks as appropriate.

7.2 An allegation or suspicion of abuse of a child by a member of staff or a volunteer must be reported immediately to the DSP, or, in her absence or if an allegation against her, to the Director of HG. The organisation will consult with the designated Local Authority

Designated Officer for Child Protection (LADO). In cases of serious harm, the police are informed from the outset, so as not to jeopardise statutory investigations.

- 7.3 The organisation will ensure that any matters pertaining to allegations of abuse against children will be subject to disciplinary proceedings and will be concluded in full even when the member of staff is no longer employed at the organisation and that notification of any concerns is made to the relevant authorities and professional bodies and included in references where applicable.
- 7.4. The organisation has a legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is a reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. Referrals should be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual.
- 7.5 The organisation will ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the need for maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries in their relationships with children and parents as advised by the organisation's staff guidelines.
- 7.6 The organisation will ensure that staff and volunteers are aware that sexual relationships with children aged under 18 are unlawful and could result in legal proceedings taken against them under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (abuse of position of trust) and also that under their duty of care, sexual relationships with children aged 18 or over would constitute gross misconduct as laid out within the organisation's disciplinary procedures.

8. OTHER RELATED POLICIES

8.1 Physical Intervention

Our policy on physical intervention by staff is set out in Staff Guidelines and in the 'Physical Restraint Policy'. We acknowledge that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimum force necessary to prevent injury to themselves, another person or property. All incidents involving physical restraint must be reported to the Director and the relevant proforma must be

completed. The organisation has a duty to report the use of physical restraint to the child's parents by the end of the same day.

8.2 **Bullying**

Our policy on bullying is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by the Director. We acknowledge that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under safeguarding procedures.

8.3 **Racist Incidents**

Our policy on racist incidents is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by the Director. We acknowledge that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under safeguarding procedures.

8.4 **Health and Safety**

Our Health and Safety policy, set out in a separate document, is reviewed annually by the Director. It reflects the consideration we give to the protection of children.

8.5 **Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs**

We recognise that statistically children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. HG staff who deal with children with profound and multiple disabilities, cerebral palsy, sensory impairment and or emotional and behavioural problems are particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

9. THE DIRECTOR'S SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1 The Director fully recognises his responsibilities with regard to child protection and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

He will:

- designate a DSP who will oversee the organisation's safeguarding policy and practice and champion safeguarding issues

- ensure that staff members do not promise confidentiality to the child and always act in the interests of the child.
- ensure the child's wishes or feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide to protect individual children through ensuring there are systems in place for children to express their views and give feedback in conjunction with the DSP ;
- ensure that the organisation's child protection policy and it's staff conduct policy are provided to all staff – including temporary staff and volunteers – on induction;
- carry out an annual review of the organisation's policies and procedures to safeguard children and how effectively the related duties have been discharged.

10. Useful contact numbers

10.1 DBS
PO Box 181,
Darlington
DL1 9FA
(tel 01325 953795);

10.2 Barnet's LADO should be contacted via the Investigations Officer on 0208 359 6056

10.3 Barnet Children's Service - Safeguarding and Social Care, Referral and Assessment Service 020 8359 4066

Appendix One

Mobile Phones and Camera Policy in relation to the whole organisation

The Data Protection Act does not prevent parents and teachers from taking photos of HG events– asking permission to take photos is normally enough to ensure compliance. For further information please read the Information Commissioner's Office Good Practice note:

http://ico.org.uk/for_organisations/sector_guides/~media/documents/library/Data_Protection/Practical_application/TAKING_PHOTOS_V3.ashx

Mobile Phones and Camera Policy for EYFS (Reception)

Mobiles

The welfare, protection and safety of every child in our care is of paramount importance, and we take our responsibility to safeguard children seriously. We have procedures in place which we ask everyone to respect, to help promote the safety of the children in our care.

We believe our staff should be completely attentive during their hours of work to ensure all children in the EYFS receive good quality care and education. Mobile phones must not be used when working with children.

- Mobiles must be kept on silent during working hours and locked with staff belongings in the staff room
- Mobiles may only be used on a designated break and only in a child free area of the EYFS setting (e.g. the staff rooms)
- Mobiles must never be used to take photographs of any of the children or any area of the EYFS or the work or any member of staff at work

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to be vigilant and report any concerns to the Director. Concerns will be taken seriously, logged and investigated appropriately (see section on allegations against a member of staff in main body of Safeguarding Policy).

The Director reserves the right to check the image contents of a member of staffs mobile phone should there be any cause for concern over the appropriate use of it.

Should inappropriate material be found then our Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted immediately. We will follow the guidance of the LADO as to the appropriate measures for the staff member's dismissal.

Camera

Camera's may not be used by HG staff during while the HG is in session.

Failure to adhere to this policy will lead to an investigation which may lead to disciplinary procedures being followed. This forms an important part of our Safeguarding Policy in regard to EYFS children.

Appendix Two

Late Collection Policy

Parents are required to inform leaders exactly who is collecting their child. If an arrangement falls through or a parent or care fails to collect a child, the leader makes sure the child is safe in his or her care and has a drink and a snack. The child is reassured and a phone call is made to the parent. The child is cared for in the organisation until they are collected. If a leader has to leave, he or she ensures the child is in the care of a senior member of staff. A message is sent to parents to notify them where to collect their child.

Were the organisation to be unable to contact parents over a protracted period, the organisation would contact the family members using contact details provided by the parents. In the unlikely event this

failed and no contact had been made by any member of the child's family by 6.00pm, the Director or DSP would contact social services.

This policy is reviewed annually.

Appendix Three

Missing Child Policy

Children being children, they are not always where they should be, or where you expect them to be. The leader in charge must keep in mind at all times, and act upon, the primary principle laid down in the Children Act – the welfare of the child is paramount.

Rarely is this anything other than the child having moved unexpectedly, but staff need to establish a procedure to ensure that the child is located and returned to staff control as quickly as possible. A child going missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

In our 'missing child' procedure is as follows:

1. The senior member of staff present arranges for the other children to be satisfactorily supervised. All other children and staff will be accounted for.
2. One member of staff will search the immediate environment. The surrounding area is checked to see if the child can be located in particular areas, such as toilets, cupboards or other areas of a size capable of hiding a child;
3. Enquiries are made of any other adults in the vicinity;
4. The Director will be informed promptly.
5. Details will be recorded of a description of what the child is wearing and the time and place of the incident.
6. The Director will inform :
 - a. The police and/or any other appropriate emergency service
 - b. The parents/carers of the child (within 15 minutes of being notified that the child is missing) and the child's photograph will be sought.
 - c. The appropriate OFSTED officer (Tel: 08456 404040, www.ofsted.gov.uk)
7. The DSP will be asked to be available to support parents.
8. Activity leaders will maintain calm in the organisation.
9. Siblings of the missing child will be cared for.
10. Contact numbers for parents are updated regularly. All contact details are available from the central file

Appendix Four

Children's Welfare Procedures Guidelines for Staff

Any members of staff who are at all worried about any child should discuss their concerns as quickly as possible with a member of the HG DSP or seek advice from children's social care. Although at first a situation may not seem serious it should be remembered that prompt help could prevent minor abuse escalating. Any case of actual or suspected child abuse is to be reported immediately or as soon as is practicable to The DSP, a written, dated and signed note of the concern should be given to the DSP to put in the confidential Children's Welfare file. The safety and welfare of a child overrides all other considerations.

The legal definition of abuse is set down by the Children Act, 1989. The primary justification for the State to take action is 'actual or likely harm to the child, where harm includes both ill-treatment (which includes sexual abuse and non-physical ill-treatment such as emotional abuse) and the impairment of health and development, (health meaning physical or mental health and development meaning physical, intellectual, emotional, social, or behavioural development).'

The main forms of abuse are:

Physical Abuse where a parent [or somebody else caring for a child] physically hurts, injures or kills a child. This can involve

- hitting,
- shaking,
- squeezing,
- burning and biting.
- giving a child poisonous substances,
- giving a child inappropriate drugs or alcohol
- failing to prevent injury
- attempted suffocation or drowning and
- Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

Sexual Abuse-actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be dependent and/or developmentally immature.

Neglect -where parents [carers] fail to meet the basic essential needs of children such as adequate food, clothes, warmth or medical care. Also leaving children alone and unsupervised. Refusing or failing to give adequate love and affection in the case of emotional neglect.

Emotional Abuse- actual or likely severe effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection.

The earliest indication that a child is being abused may not be a severe injury. Bruises or marks on a child's body, remarks by the child/carer or friends; a child's behaviour and reactions, families under stress, may all arouse concern that a child is being abused. Please be alert to the possibility that a child may be being abused by another child at the organisation. Where the suspected abuse is by another child/young person, both children (i.e. suspected abuser and abused) must be referred.

This section gives an indication of the type of diagnostic clue which you may become aware of in your work with children.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

1. Delay in reporting accident.
2. Discrepancy between the history and the physical signs.
3. History of previous injuries to child or sibling.
4. Abnormal parental attitudes and behaviour.
5. Indications of social stress.
6. Signs of poor care, e.g. failure to thrive.
7. Bruising/abrasions/bite marks.
8. Injuries to mouth.
9. Burns.
10. Unexplained convulsions.
11. Fractures - particularly multiple, spiral, 'metaphyseal'.
12. Exposure to dangerous situations, e.g. 'accidental' poisoning.
13. Repeated visits to GP or hospital with a list of trivial complaints.

SEXUAL ABUSE

1. Lack of trust in adults
2. Fear of a particular individual.
3. Withdrawal and introversion.
4. Running away from home
5. Child takes over the parenting role

6. Sudden organisation problems, truanting and falling standards
7. Low self-esteem and low expectations of others
8. Stealing
9. Drug misuse
10. Display of sexual knowledge beyond the child's years
11. Sexual drawing that is not age/developmentally appropriate
12. Vulnerability to sexual and emotional exploitation
13. Revulsion towards sex
14. Fear of organisation medical examinations
15. Sleeplessness, nightmares and fear of the dark
16. Depression/suicide attempts
17. Anorexia Nervosa
18. Other eating disorders or changes in eating habits
- 19 Itchiness or soreness in the genital area

2.6 We would like to reaffirm the **importance of passing on any concerns** and assure you that the responsibility for following up falls to the safeguarding team; we expect any new concerns to be immediately communicated to a member of the safeguarding team.

While we need to be vigilant, there can always be an innocent reason why clues are there. If abuse - there will be repetition of signs over period of time, which should be picked up by the child protection team in their half-termly reviews, we also meet on an ad hoc basis as a complete or partial team if there is a concern in the interim.

Notes from these meetings and concerns about a child are kept in a file locked away in Dawn's room and accessible only to three members of the team.

Any child who has a note in the file will have also have a yellow dot sticker on their own organisation file. This enables staff to be aware that there is a current concern or that there has been past concern. In addition to this the child protection team regularly update the 'Sensitive Information Note' which can be found in the 'User Defined Field' section on SIMS; this is a good port of call for staff to check as to which students are already being monitored.

Once the DSP considers a case she will decide on appropriate response (child welfare plan) including:

- Monitoring
- Discussion with child
- Discussion with parents or guardian (where this would not put the child at further risk)
- Banning people from site who may create a feeling of lack of safety for a child
- Or referral to 'Children and Family Services' (social services).

After referring any concern, members of staff should feel supported through :

- a] debriefing
- b] support in activity sessions
- c] ongoing review

It is important to convey to the child/young person that if they tell you something which you feel could harm them or anyone else that you have to tell someone. This 'Someone' should be the DSP. You should never promise to keep anything a secret.

In light of this information, the child/young person may then choose not to tell you. They have a right to do this and will hopefully tell what they have to at another time when they are ready. You should not pressure them. If they do choose not to tell you should still inform the DSP of what has happened.

If the child accepts that you may have to pass on any information they give you and still wants to tell, suggest that both of you go to the DSP. Explain that you would have to tell them anyway and that they would probably want to talk to the child/young person themselves. If what the child/young person has to tell is very distressing it is advisable to try to minimise the amount of times that they have to repeat it.

Responding to Disclosure

When a young person discloses to you, stay calm and be reassuring. In the most appropriate way possible try to convey that:-

- 2 You are glad the young person told you.
- 3 That you believe what you are being told (young people rarely lie about abuse).
- 4 That you know it is not the young person's fault.
- 5 That you will do your best to protect and support the young person.

Dealing with Disclosure

Receive:

- 6 Listen to what is being said, trying not to display shock or disbelief.
- 7 Accept what is being said but do not comment upon it.
- 8 Record the information as soon as possible. (Ensure that you include the circumstance that led up to the disclosure). Write exactly what the young person told you, not your interpretation, sign it, date it and hand to a member of the child protection team.

Reassure:

- 9 Reassure the young person but only so far as is honest and reliable, for example don't make promises you may not be able to keep, such as, "I'll stay with you", or, "Everything will be all right now".
- 10 **Don't** promise confidentiality; you have a duty to refer.
- 11 **Do** reassure and alleviate guilt, if the young person refers to it. For example, you could say: "You are not to blame." or "You are not alone, you're not the only one this sort of thing has happened to."

Reaction:

- 12 **Do not** ask 'leading' questions, for example, "what did s/he do next?" (This assumes s/he did!), or, "Did s/he touch your private parts?" Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the young person's) in any later prosecution in court.
- 13 **Do not** criticise the perpetrator; the young person may love him/her, and reconciliation may be possible.