

# Child Protection Policy

## Contents

1. Policy Statement
2. Code of Practice
3. Designated Child Protection Person
4. Procedure for Reporting Concerns
5. Definitions of Abuse
6. Recruitment and Selection Procedures
7. Responding Appropriately to a Child

## Policy statement

The Winchelsea Bonfire Boyes (WBB) is a community association established to organize and promote the annual bonfire celebrations in Winchelsea, East Sussex. WBB's core activity is fundraising for and execution of the annual bonfire pageant, bonfire and firework display in Winchelsea, East Sussex

Throughout this policy children shall be taken to mean children and young people under the age of 18.

WBB is committed to practices which protect children from harm. For the purpose of this policy, WBB personnel include its volunteers. All such personnel who have unsupervised access to or contact with children are expected to:

- a) Recognise and accept their responsibilities;
- b) Develop awareness of the issues which can cause harm to children; and
- c) Use the procedure below to report concerns.

WBB will endeavour to safeguard children by:

- a) Adopting child protection procedures and a code of practice for all who act on behalf of the organisation;
- b) Reporting concerns to the relevant authorities;
- c) Following carefully procedures for recruitment and registration of staff and volunteers; and
- d) Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through support and training.

WBB is also committed to reviewing its Child Protection Policy and Code of Practice at regular intervals.

It is the WBB's policy that:

- a) All personnel working on behalf of the WBB accept responsibility for the welfare of children who come into contact with the WBB in connection with its tasks and functions, and that they will report any concerns about a child or someone else's behaviour, using the procedures laid down.
- b) There are designated child protection persons within the WBB who will take action following any expression of concern, and the lines of responsibility in respect of child protection are clear.
- c) Designated Child Protection Person(s) know how to make appropriate referrals to appropriate child protection agencies, and are provided with training if appropriate.
- d) All those who involved with children and young people on behalf of the WBB should adhere to the Code of Practice in relation to children.
- e) Information relating to any allegation or disclosure will be handled as soon as possible, and there is a procedure setting out who should handle information and the time-scales for reporting it.
- f) The Children Act 1987 states that the "welfare of the child is paramount". This means that considerations of confidentiality which might apply to other situations should not be allowed to over-ride the right of children to be protected from harm. However, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned when an allegation has been made and is being investigated.
- g) WBB's policy on duty of care towards children will be referred to or included in recruitment, training, moderation and policy materials where appropriate, and the policies are openly and widely available to volunteers and actively promoted within the organisation.
- h) A culture of mutual respect between children, and those who represent the WBB in all its activities will be encouraged, with adults modelling good practice in this context.
- i) All who work on behalf of the WBB with unsupervised access to children will be checked appropriately.
- j) It is part of the WBB acceptance of its responsibility of duty of care towards children that anybody who encounters child protection policy concerns in the context of their work on behalf of the WBB will be supported when they report their concerns in good faith.

## Code of practice

WBB expects that all personnel will be made aware of this Code of Practice and adhere to its principles in their approach to all children.

All one-to-one meetings with individual children should take place in publicly accessible areas, and it is important that no more time should be spent alone with children than is necessary.

In addition:

- a) It is important not to have physical contact with children and this should be avoided.
- b) It is not good practice to take children alone in car journeys, however short.
- c) Do not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted.
- d) It is important not to deter children from making a 'disclosure' of inappropriate action through fear of not being believed, and to listen to what they have to say. Guidance on handling a disclosure is set out in this document. If this gives rise to a child protection concern it is important to follow the WBB's procedure for reporting such concerns, and not to attempt to investigate the concern yourself.
- e) Remember that those who abuse children can be of any age (even other children), gender or ethnic background, and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions about people to prevent appropriate action taking place.
- f) Good practice includes valuing and respecting children as individuals, and the adult modelling of appropriate conduct – which will always exclude bullying, shouting, racism, sectarianism or sexism.

## Role & responsibilities of Designated Child Protection Person (DCPP)

The WBB has appointed one or more designated child protection persons who are responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children. Contact details for the designated child are circulated with this Policy and are posted on the WBB's website. The WBB will provide appropriate training for the DCPPs. The role of the DCPP is to:

- a) Know which outside child protection agency (police, social services, health services) to contact in the event of a child protection concern coming to the notice of the WBB;
- b) Provide information and advice on child protection within the WBB;

- c) Ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing under confidential cover;
- d) Liaise with police, local social services and health services and other agencies as appropriate;
- e) Keep relevant people within the WBB informed about any action taken and any further action required;
- f) Ensure that a proper record is kept of any referral and action taken, and that this is kept safely and in confidence;
- g) Advise the WBB of child protection training needs; and
- h) Liaise with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) to review the operation of the child protection policy regularly to ensure the procedures are working and that it complies with current best practice.

### Procedure for reporting concerns

Staff could have their suspicion or concern raised in a number of ways, the most likely of which are:

- a) the conduct of a member of the WBB personnel;
- b) a child 'disclosing' abuse
- c) bruising or evidence of physical hurt; which may or may not be accompanied by;
- d) unusual behaviour by a child.

If a member of staff has such concerns they should be reported to a DCP. Concerns about a specific child should be reported immediately by telephone to the DCP and confirmed in writing within 24 hours. Delay could prejudice the welfare of a child. If the concerns relate to the conduct of a member of personnel these should be reported by phone to the DCP at the earliest opportunity. The DCP will consider the report and either refer this immediately to the authorities or, after taking appropriate advice (which may include discussing the circumstances on a confidential basis with the NSPCC) decide not to refer the concerns to the authorities but keep a full record of the concerns.

### Definitions of abuse

Physical abuse is any action which may cause physical harm to a child either as the result of a deliberate act or the omission or failure to act to protect.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

### Sexual abuse

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 any sexual contact with a young person under the age of 18 where the adult is in a position of trust can be construed as abuse even if the young person consents to, or indicates their consent to the contact. In general sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. It may involve physical contact, including rape or oral sex, or non-penetrative acts such as fondling.

Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, and by other young people. It also includes non-contact activities such as involving children in watching or taking part in the making of pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in inappropriate ways.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and /or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or failing to ensure that a child gets appropriate medical care or treatment.

### Recruitment and selection procedures

Appropriate recruitment and selection procedures for volunteers in the context of child protection have been adopted by the WBB and include the following:

#### New volunteers

1. WBB will maintain a register of volunteers and will reserve the right to ask for proof of identity.
2. For those volunteers whose work will bring them into contact with children or who will have a management responsibility in relation to those whose work does bring them into such contact, requirement of a declaration of previous

convictions and submission to formal criminal records bureau check, together with the issue of a copy of the Child Protection Policy.

3. A clear guarantee that disclosed information will be treated in confidence, including adherence to the Criminal Records Bureau code of practice.

4. At least one representative from the WBB meeting with every volunteer where appropriate.

5. Written references where appropriate.

### Responding appropriately to a child making an allegation of abuse

1. Stay calm.

2. Listen carefully to what is said.

3. Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.

4. Tell the child that the matter will only be disclosed to those that need to know about it.

5. Allow the child to continue at his/her own pace.

6. Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.

7. Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.

8. Tell them what you will do next, and with whom the information will be shared.

9. Record in writing what was said, using the child's own words as soon as possible – note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that you sign and date the record.

10. It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred.

That is a task for the professional child protection agencies, following a referral from the DCPP in the organisation.

### **Guidance on levels of CRB disclosure: level description examples**

#### None

No contact with children or young people; attendance at a public occasion; short-term contact with children or young people under supervision

#### Basic

Not yet available. Standard Regular communications (contact at a distance) with children or young people; occasional and irregular contact with children or young people.

#### Enhanced

Extended or overnight supervision or contact with individual children or young people including by individual electronic mail; direct management or supervisory responsibility for an individual having contact with children or young people.

Disclosures should be renewed at least every five years.

### **Designated Child Protection Person (DCPP)**

Richard Marsh ([richardmarsh@fastmail.fm](mailto:richardmarsh@fastmail.fm))

*30 June 2009*