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from one professional provider

Child Protection

Policy

Policy statement

Joseph Allnatt Centres Ltd has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in its activities from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. Joseph Allnatt Centres Ltd will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in its activities through adherence to its Child Protection guidelines.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

Policy aims

The aim of the Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Joseph Allnatt Centres Ltd (*the company*)
- allow all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Promoting good practice

- Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgment about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and will be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

When a child enters the Allnatt Outdoors environment having been subjected to child abuse outside this environment, we can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem through camp and its activities. In such instances the company will work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

Good practice

Good practice guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a tent with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Making adventure activities fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the relevant national governing body or specific training programmes. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving. Young people and their parents should always be consulted and their agreement gained.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance in adventure activities.
- Involving teachers/parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the tents. If groups have to be supervised in the tents, always ensure parents, teachers, coaches or officials work in pairs.
- Ensuring that at residential events, the company staff team should not enter children's tents or invite children into their tents.
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act *in loco parentis*, if the need arises to administer 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.

Negative practice

Practices to be avoided

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone from the school, preferably the teacher in charge or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital:

- avoid spending time alone with children away from others
- avoid taking or dropping off a child to a hospital. Use the emergency services whenever practicable

Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should **never** be sanctioned. You should never:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- share a tent with a child
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child
- do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of teachers and / or parents/carers and the players involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. 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 or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Bullying

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations'.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying in sport:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the company's Child Protection Officer, Teacher in charge or the school (wherever the bullying is occurring).

Incidents to report and use of photographs

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- if you accidentally hurt a participant
- 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.

Use of photographic equipment at Allnatt Outdoors

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events and school trips as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled children in vulnerable positions. All staff should be vigilant and any concerns should to be reported to the company Child Protection Officer

Recruiting our staff

Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers

The company recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Pre Selection checks must include the following:

- All staff inc. volunteers should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo).

Interview and induction

All employees (and volunteers) will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive an induction, during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- Their qualifications should be substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.
- They should sign up to the company's Child Protection policy.

Responding to concerns

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in the company in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities.

Joseph Allnatt Centres Ltd will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- a criminal investigation
- a child protection investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.

Reporting concerns

Reporting concerns about poor practice

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice the designated company Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the companies Child Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the relevant local authority or sport National Governing Body who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate further action/proceedings.

Reporting concerns about suspected abuse

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the companies Child Protection Officer, 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.

The companies Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police.

The teachers and/or parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.

The companies Child Protection Officer should also notify the relevant local authority

If the company Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate Manager or in his/her absence the local authority who will refer the allegation to Social Services.

If you are concerned about a child and unable to contact the designated person in your organisation, please call the [NSPCC 24-hour Helpline](#) on 0808 800 5000

Providing information

Providing information to police or social services

Information about suspected abuse must be accurate and a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. It should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- 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. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of 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.
- Your relationship to the child / situation
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

Confidentiality

Every effort should 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 company's Child Protection Officer
- the teacher in charge
- the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- the person making the allegation
- social services/police
- the local authority
- the company's directors

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Follow up

Enquiries and further action

The company's Child Protection Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the company Directors will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled.

This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the company Directors must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.

The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189, E-mail: bac@bacp.co.uk, Internet: www.bacp.co.uk.

Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

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, the company should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside the school, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

