

Oasis Children's Venture

Safeguarding Policy

Reviewed January 2018 JB

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, students or anyone working on behalf of Oasis Children's venture.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect children and young people who visit and use our three supervised sites:

The Oasis Children's Nature Garden

The Oasis Adventure Playground and Cycle Project

The Oasis Karting Project

- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding

Legal Framework

- This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely: Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children

We recognise that :

The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989

All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

Oasis Children's Venture recognises that all children have basic needs which include:

- Physical care and protection
- Affection and Approval
- Stimulation and teaching
- Discipline that is consistent and age appropriate
- The opportunity to acquire self-esteem, confidence, independence and responsibility, through play.

Oasis Children's Venture has responsibility to take appropriate actions and inform relevant agencies, when there is a concern a child is suffering from or likely to suffer from neglect or abuse.

How old is a child?

Legally in the UK a child is anyone under the age of 18 years of age. Oasis Children's Venture recognises that a child is under the age of 18 years old.

Definition of neglect/abuse

Oasis Children's Venture recognises that there are many forms of abuse.

Neglect

The persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to danger or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care resulting in significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non organic failure to thrive. (non organic failure to thrive means that a child is very small or underweight for their age and there is no physical reason, such as disease, for this.)

Physical Abuse

Actual or likely physical injury to a child or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child.

Sexual Abuse

Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. Sexual abuse is where adults try to use children for their own sexual intentions. This may involve pornography, sexual intercourse, or other forms of sexual activity, which the child cannot fully understand and therefore cannot consent to.

Emotional abuse

Persistence of severe emotional ill treatment or rejection that has had or is likely to have adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of the child.

1) Child Disclosure

All allegations of abuse made by a child or young person will be taken seriously. She/he will be reassured that it is okay to share her/his worry or secret.

If a member of staff finds him/herself in such a situation the member of staff will encourage disclosure, but will never ask leading/prompting questions. It is advisable that the member of staff does not promise to 'keep a secret,' but rather reassure the child that he/she will speak to people who will help.

Staff recognise the variety of ways abuse can be disclosed e.g. through

- Observation
- One child discussing the situation of another child
- Disclosure.

It is important to remember that it can be extremely difficult to determine when there has been neglect, physical emotional abuse. Staff and management Committee members must recognise and consider:

Any cultural, religious or class implications

Value Judgements

2) Procedure for staff reporting abuse/fear of abuse

When there are concerns about the welfare of a child the staff member must report these concerns to the Project Manager.

The Project Manager will gather information and monitor the situation.

All information/concerns will be recorded and kept in a confidential file at the Oasis main office (33 Priory Grove, London SW8 2PD)The situation will be monitored by The Director, until concerns have been resolved and or alternatively until The Director decides otherwise.

The Project Manager will report all concerns about the welfare of a child to the Director. The Project Manager can report concerns directly to The Director.

The Chair of the Management Committee, in consultation with the other Management Committee members, will take a decision on further action in reference to the Children's Act 1989 and the London Child Protection Procedures (1997) LSCB.

All referrals to Social Services must be kept on file and dated.

3) Allegations against staff or management committee members

Allegation procedures should be used when there is an allegation of concern that any person who works with children at Oasis, in connection with their employment or voluntary activity, has:

- Behaved in a way that that has, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved in a way that indicated that they are unsuitable to work with children

Or where there are:

- Concerns about an individual's behaviour to his/her own children
- Concerns about behaviour in the private or community life of a staff member

All Oasis staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.

We understand that a young person, or other may make an allegation against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the manager or the most senior person if the manager is not present.

Allegations can also be made about staff by people from outside the organisation. These allegations must be managed in the same way as if the allegation was from a person connected directly with the organisation.

The manager on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the Director – the Lead Officer for Safeguarding. The Director will consult with the Chair of Oasis and inform him/her of the steps that are being taken.

If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the manager, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Oasis who will consult without notifying the manager first.

The person to whom the allegation is first reported should not :

- Investigate and ask leading questions
- Make assumptions
- Promise confidentiality
- Disclose the allegation to the accused person

A written record of the information must be made which is signed and dated.

Information must only be shared on a need to know basis in order to protect the child, or manage employment related processes.

Allegations should be reported to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) within one working day.

A referral should not be delayed in order to gather information

Advice from the LADO should be sought before informing the parents or the accused employee of the allegation.

Oasis will follow the guidance in Lambeth Safeguarding Children Board's (LSCB) 'Toolkit for managing allegations against staff in youth, voluntary and faith setting' policy and 'procedures for managing allegations against staff' which can be found in the office at 33 Priory Grove.

Suspension of the member of staff against whom an allegation has been made needs careful consideration.

4) Whistleblowing

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues. Any concerns by staff about their colleagues should be addressed in the first incidence to the Director.

5) Access to Information/files

Families who want access to confidential files should write to the management Committee. Decisions will be made by the Committee Safeguarding representative after all the information has been considered.

6) Working with other agencies.

Lambeth Social Services

Lambeth Social Services have a duty under section 47 of the Children's Act 1989 to investigate wherever there is a reason to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. All child protection investigations are jointly worked with the Police Child Protection Team.

The prime tasks of the investigation are:

To establish the facts about the circumstances giving rise to concern.

To decide if there are grounds for concern.

To identify source and levels of risk

To decide protective or other action in relation to the child/ren and any others.

To gather information as part of an assessment of risk for presentation at any future case conference.

To maintain throughout a focus on the needs of the child.

Lambeth social services publish their own material providing information for parents on a child protection investigation and child protection case conference.

To make a referral

CYPS Referral and Assessment Team 020 7926 5555

Out of Hours duty worker 020 7926 1000

Police Child Abuse Investigation Team 020 7232 638

Working with other agencies

Staff may find it useful to liaise with other organisations regarding concerns over a child/children such as their school.

All verbal or written information must be recorded and kept in the Safeguarding. Staff must be aware that families may need to be informed when working with other organisations.

7) Recording Information

The Project Manager will make an accurate immediate record of any allegations and/or what has been observed, as well as any action taken. There must be an incident book kept on each site for taking immediate notes when such occasions occur.

The Project Manager will record any further incident or concern. A point-by-point account of what was said or done must be written down. (No Prompting)

8) Training

The core staff of Oasis Children's Venture will receive Safeguarding training.

Oasis Children's venture will strive to ensure that all sessional staff receive Safeguarding training.

Oasis Children's Venture will strive to ensure all volunteers receive Safeguarding training.

The Director and Chair of The Management Committee will receive Safeguarding training level 2.

9) Staff Induction

New staff member inductions will include a section on the Safeguarding Procedure.

New staff must be given a copy of the procedure.

10) Access and availability of Safeguarding Policy and procedures to staff and families

A copy of the Safeguarding Procedure must be kept at all times on each of the three sites. Staff must be made aware by the Project managers/Assistant Project Managers, of where the procedure is kept.

A Safeguarding statement must be displayed on all three sites along with the relevant referral phone numbers.

11) Information available to children

The Child Line phone number and social services phone numbers must be displayed on site in areas used by children. The Childline phone number is 0800 1111.

12) Supervision of staff

Project Managers should always be available to discuss staff concerns on a day-to-day basis.

A section on Safeguarding will regularly be discussed in staff supervision.

Workers involved with safeguarding procedures need to work sensitively with families and children and acknowledge their distress. Stress for workers also needs to be recognised and considered through consultation and supervision with management.

13) Recruitment

(i) Staff

Two references must always be taken up before staff take up post. Any concerns, as a result of the references must be checked prior to the person taking the post.

During the interview and selection process the member of staff responsible must be aware of substantial gaps in a candidates C.V and ask candidate questions regarding gaps.

All workers and volunteers at Oasis Children's Venture must have an enhanced DBS check.

A risk assessment will be completed for any positive disclosure.

(ii) Management Committee and sub committee members

Management Committee and sub committee members must complete an enhanced CRB check

Two references must be taken up before a Management Committee member has access to any children using Oasis sites.

Management Committee members must complete a CRB Check form prior access to any children using Oasis sites.

Interviews for Management Committee members must pay concern to Safeguarding (as staff recruitment)

Management Committee members taking safeguarding decisions will have Safeguarding Training.

Management Committee member's induction will include Safeguarding policies and procedures.

A risk assessment will be completed for any positive disclosure.

(iii) Volunteers

Volunteers must complete an application form (including disclosure of offences)

All volunteers have an enhanced CRB check

Two references are taken for volunteers

A risk assessment will be completed for any positive disclosure.

(iv) Contract of employment

The standard contract of employment will state that any convictions, allegations or cautions must be reported to the management committee immediately. Non disclosed convictions could result in dismissal.

Appendix 1.

Amended Dec 13 JB

Safeguarding Code of Conduct for all staff and volunteers working at Oasis Children's Venture.

Introduction

This document provides a guide for staff and volunteers working at Oasis about acceptable and desirable conduct to protect both adults and children and young people.

It refers to and complements other policies and guidance at Oasis including:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- E safety policy

All staff and volunteers working at Oasis should know the name of the Designated Safeguarding Officer (Joanne Brown - Director), be familiar with local safeguarding arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people.

Basic Principles

1. The Child's welfare is paramount (Children Act 1989)
2. Staff and volunteers working at Oasis are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead a reasonable person to question their motivation or intentions
3. Staff and volunteers should discuss and/or take advice promptly from a senior member of staff about any incident which could give rise for concern.
4. A record should be kept of any incidents that give cause for concern and of decisions made/further actions agreed.
5. Staff and volunteers should apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality.
6. Staff and volunteers should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines that could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.
7. Staff and volunteers should be fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people and by taking all reasonable steps to protect them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse
8. Staff and volunteers should conduct themselves in a way that reflects the values of Oasis and meets the expected high professional standards
9. Safer recruitment and selection procedures will be followed for all appointments.

All staff and volunteers at Oasis must:

- **Be familiar with and work in accordance with the policies at Oasis including in particular:**
Safeguarding
Behaviour Management
E Safety
Health and Safety
Whistleblowing
- **Provide a good example and a positive role model to children and young people.**
- **Behave in a mature, respectful, safe, fair and considered manner.**
For example: Not making sarcastic remarks or 'jokes' to children/young people that are personal, sexual, racist, discriminatory, intimidating or otherwise offensive.
- **Not discriminate favourably or unfavourably towards any child/young person**
For example : Treat all children and young people equally – never building 'special' relationships
- **Encourage and praise achievement**
- **Ensure that relationships with children and young people remain on a professional footing.**
For example :
Only touching children or young people for professional reasons when this is necessary and appropriate for the child's/young person's well being or safety.
Not behaving in a way that could lead a reasonable observer to question conduct, intentions or suitability to care for other people's children.
There may be times when a distressed child or young person needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self aware at all times in order that their conduct is not threatening, intrusive or subject to interpretation.
- **Not make arrangements to contact, communicate or meet with children/young people outside work (this includes use of email, text and other messaging systems).**
- **Not develop 'personal' or sexual relationships with young people.**
Particular attention is drawn to the provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 which creates a new criminal offence of abuse of a position of trust (when a person aged 18 or over is in a 'position of trust' with a person under 18 and engages in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child or causes or incites that child to engage in or watch sexual activity)

A relationship between a member of staff, a volunteer or a governor and a child or young person cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of young people and all adults have a responsibility to ensure that the unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. It is important to recognise that women as well as men may abuse a position of trust.

- **There are certain behaviours by staff or volunteers which are not appropriate and if witnessed should be reported to a senior member of staff.**

These behaviours include:

An adult who:

- Allows a children/young person to be treated badly; pretends not to know it is happening
 - Gossips/shares information inappropriately
 - Demonstrates inappropriate discriminatory behaviour and/or uses inappropriate language
 - Dresses in a way which is inappropriate for the job role
 - Does not treat children and young people fairly - demonstrates favouritism
 - Demonstrates a lack of understanding about personal and professional boundaries
 - Uses his/her position of trust to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine
 - Appears to have an inappropriate social relationship with a child or young person.
 - Appears to have special or different relationships with a child or young person.
 - Seems to seek out unnecessary opportunities to be alone with a child or young person.
- **Children/young people are not allowed on any Oasis site, unless there are at least two members of staff (paid or volunteer) present.**
 - **If a worker is teaching, instructing, supervising, in conversation with a child alone, they should inform colleagues that this is taking place. At least one other worker should be in the vicinity and aware that this is taking place. Any such conversation with a child may only take place in a room which is accessible and the door must be open and participants visible.**
 - **Members of staff should not walk a child home alone, nor drive them anywhere in their car, other than in exceptional circumstances.**
 - **Children may not linger in storage areas; they may be allowed into storage areas but for safety and security it may be advisable that children are accompanied by an adult, in which case other workers should be in the vicinity and where possible doors should be left open.**
 - **Workers wearing an Oasis T shirt off site, during working and non-working hours must be aware that they are representing Oasis, and must behave appropriately.**
 - **Only specifically authorised staff may have access to child records and data.**
 - **All members of staff must report disclosures and concerns about safeguarding promptly. They may be reported to the Director or a project manager, or in case of unavailability to the person appointed, to the person appointed to deputise for them.**
 - **The Director is the lead safeguarding officer for Oasis and should be informed of all disclosures. The Director will then inform the Chair of Oasis. (If one of the foregoing is the subject of concern of complaint, or there is a perceived conflict of interest, the report shall be made to one of the others referred to; and also to the Chair of Oasis.)**
 - **The Director and managers are responsible for ensuring the above is carried out. Where a manager is away from the site for the whole session, a designated deputy shall take this responsibility. They must report as above any concerns.**

