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## Child Protection Policy

A child is defined by The Children Act, 1989 as a person under the age of 18, and this is the meaning used throughout this policy.

### 1. Statement of Purpose

1.1. This Child Protection Policy stresses the fact that we in [Your Friends Group] are determined to ensure that all appropriate steps are taken to protect from harm all children who participate in any [Your Friends Group] activities.

1.2. This policy establishes the organisation's position, role and responsibilities and clarifies what we expect from everybody involved within [Your Friends Group]. It highlights the importance placed by [Your Friends Group] on the protection of children at all times. Every child who participates in any [Your Friends Group] activity should be able to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from abuse. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in this organisation. We recognise however, that child abuse is a very emotive and difficult subject. It is important to understand the feelings involved but not to allow them to interfere with our judgement about any action to be taken.

1.3. [Your Friends Group] recognises its responsibility to take reasonable steps to safeguard the welfare of all children by protecting them from physical, financial, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying. We are committed to meeting our obligations to ensure that children taking part in [Your Friends Group] activities are provided with the highest standards of care.

1.4. We recognise that for children, high self esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good communication with trusted adults aids prevention. With this in mind, we will always endeavour to:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure.
- Ensure that children know that there are adults around on any project who they can approach when worried or in difficulty.

1.5. [Your Friends Group] will ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.

- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All Members working with [Your Friends Group] have a responsibility to report concerns to the person designated as responsible for Child Protection or the Chair.

## **2. Key Principles**

2.1 As a voluntary and co-operative organisation, Members of [Your Friends Group] are not expected to take on parental responsibility for other people's children, and [Your Friends Group] will organise activities which encourage children and their parents to take part together.

In addition to this, [Your Friends Group] will take responsibility for:

- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children taking part in our activities.
- Ensuring that all Members organising [Your Friends Group] activities adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse and abide by the procedures outlined within this document.
- Responding to any allegations appropriately.
- Regularly reviewing the policy.

## **3. Promoting Good Practice**

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

3.2. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school, sporting, leisure and recreational environments. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children in order to harm them.

3.3 There are some people in this organisation that, at some time, will have regular contact with children and may be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection.

## **4. Good Child Protection Practice**

- Always work in an open environment where possible, avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication
- Treat all children equally with respect and dignity
- Always put the welfare of each child first.

Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with service users. Physical contact with children should be limited to appropriate touching needed either to guide their movements during tuition, e.g. to aid positioning of hands on a guitar or to reassure them when they are ill or injured. Generally, the only safe place to touch appropriately is on the arm or shoulders.

All Members should maintain a strictly appropriate relationship with children who attend [Your Friends Group] activities. It is not appropriate to seek to develop relationships beyond this by, for example, arranging to meet a child away from an activity to further a friendship with that child.

- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children to share in decision making.

- Be an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children.
- Give enthusiastic, constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of children
- Keep written records of any injuries that occur, along with the details of any treatment given.

## **5. Physical Restraint**

5.1 There may be very rare occasions when Members find they need to use reasonable physical intervention to restrain children, for their own safety or the safety of others. Whenever such an incident occurs, the Child Protection Officer or Chair must be informed immediately and the incident recorded in the Incident Book kept in the Hub office. Restraint should only be used as a last resort, and then only the minimum force needed to prevent harm should be applied.

## **6. Monitoring and Review:**

- 6.1 This policy should be considered alongside other related policies of [Your Friends Group]
- 6.2 It will be reviewed after one year, or sooner if there is a major incident.