

## The aim of safeguarding is:

- protecting children and young people from abuse and maltreatment.
- preventing harm to children and young people health or development.
- ensuring children and young adult's grow up with the provision of safe and effective care.
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

This procedure is in place to ensure:

- Infinity Children's Wellbeing maintains a safe environment for all children, young people, and adults.

Staff and volunteers are carefully selected at Infinity and every staff member or volunteer has a legal duty to provide a safe and caring experience for all children and young people in our setting. DBS checks are obtained for all staff members.

If a member of staff has concerns, evidence is NOT necessary. A cause of concern can be raised on suspicion of abuse or neglect.

Any suspicion should be reported to Natalie Bryden Infinity Children's Wellbeing's Safeguarding Officer.

All safeguarding concerns must be reported to the Local Authority.

Further safeguarding information can be found

[www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/safeguardingchildren](http://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/safeguardingchildren) and <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

## Guidelines for safeguarding children, young and vulnerable people

It is a child and young person's right to be safe and happy and a parent's right to expect that whatever organisation or event they entrust their child or young person to is one that will keep them from safe from harm. It is the responsibility of every adult to protect children and young people from abuse.

Organisations have a duty of care to protect any child, young or vulnerable person within their care, or for whom they provide services. This includes all clients and Infinity Children's Wellbeing staff.

Often child abuse is hidden from view. Adults in the child or young person's life may not recognise the signs that they are being abused as the child or young person may be too scared or too ashamed to tell anyone what is happening to them.

Abuse is regardless of age, racial origin, gender, religious belief, disability, or sexual identity. Often the abuse will be carried out by people they know and trust within or outside the family.

It is possible to reduce situations in which abuse can occur and help protect staff members by promoting good practice. The following guidelines should be adhered to when working with children and/or young or vulnerable people within any context.

## Types of Abuse may include:

### 1. Sexual abuse

Defined as: The forcing of undesirable sexual affection by one person upon another. Both boys and girls can be sexually abused in the following ways.

By direct contact:

Full sexual intercourse, touching, masturbation, oral sex and fondling.

By non-contact:

Showing children pornographic pictures, videos or engaging in sexual conversation  
Asking children to take part in making videos or taking pornographic photographs.

What to look for:

- Pain, itching, bruising, or bleeding in genital area
- Bite marks and scratches
- Recurrent sexually transmitted infections
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking
- Pregnancy
- Self-harming
- Unexpected sources of money
- Inappropriate drawings, language, or sexually explicit behaviour
- Aggressive, withdrawn behaviour or fear of one person.

### 2. Physical abuse

Defined as: Contact intended to cause feeling of intimidation, injury or other physical suffering or bodily harm. For example, hitting, pushing, restraining, shaking, squeezing, biting, burning - or providing alcohol, poison, or drugs. In certain situations abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training exceeds the capacity of the child's body.

What to look for:

- Unexplained or untreated injuries
- Injuries on unlikely parts of the body
- Loss of clumps of hair
- Black eyes or bruised ears
- Cigarette burns, bite or belt marks, scalds
- Fear of parents being contacted, going home or receiving medical advice
- Flinching when touched
- "Spaced out" appearance
- Refusal to discuss injury
- Deterioration of health with no obvious cause
- Withdrawal and mood swings
- Covering of arms and legs in hot weather

## 3. Neglect

Defined as: A passive form of abuse in which the perpetrator, is one who is responsible for provide care, for an individual but fails to provide sufficient supervision, nourishment, medical care or other basic needs.

Neglect might also occur during organised activities if the child or young person is placed in an unsafe environment, are exposed to extreme weather conditions or are at risk from being injured.

Self-Neglect is also a factor to consider when an individual is unable to maintain their own personal hygiene, or unable to access basic resources such as food, water, or shelter.

What to look for:

- Poor personal hygiene – smelly and unkempt
- Constant hunger
- Inappropriate clothing or dress
- Unattended medical issues
- Abuse of alcohol or drugs
- Frequent illnesses
- Constantly tired
- Lonely, no friends
- Underweight
- No parental support or interest
- Low self esteem
- Dishevelled appearance.

## 4. Emotional abuse

Defined as: Threats or actions to cause mental or physical harm, humiliation, or isolation. This can be by threatening an individual or by coercing them through harassment verbally or by isolation.

This form of abuse includes:

- Persistent lack of love or affection
- Humiliating or constantly criticising a child
- Frequently threatening or shouting at a child
- Making child the subject of jokes, or using sarcasm, or taunting a child
- Not recognising a child's own individuality or trying to control their lives
- Failing to promote a child's social development
- Over-protection which can lead to poor social skills.
- What to look for:
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Sudden speech disorders
- Extremes of emotions
- Self-harm
- Reluctance for the individual to be with specific people
- Lack of confidence
- Aggression towards others
- Severe anxiety

## 5. Domestic abuse

Defined as: Abuse of one partner within an intimate or family relationship using repeated, random, or habitual measures to intimidate or control partner.

What to look for:

- Seemingly afraid to displease a member of the family
- Going along with everything the perpetrator suggests without question
- Low confidence and self esteem
- Frequent unexplained injuries or no consistent explanation to the injury
- Significant changes in personality

## 6. Bullying

Defined as: Repeated verbal, physical, social, psychological, aggressive behaviour from one person towards a less powerful person that is intended to cause harm, distress, or fear.

What to look for:

- Withdrawal
- Reluctance to be with certain individuals
- Unexplained injuries
- Aggression towards others
- Displaying emotions such as fear, anxiety or sadness
- Signs of self-harm

Some children are more likely to be abused than others. Children with one or more risk factors should be carefully monitored.

### Risk Factors

- Physical and Learning Disability
- Isolation
- Being in the care system
- Has a parent who has substance or alcohol abuse
- A parent with a mental health illness
- A parent who has been abused themselves
- A child living in a family where domestic abuse is present
- Poverty
- Lack of support
- Living in a difficult environment
- Age – the younger the child the less likely they are to report abuse

Not all children can verbalise abuse but may try to communicate by using other means.

- Direct disclosure is when a child makes a statement regarding the abuse they have experienced.
- Indirect disclosure is when a child will make one or more ambiguous statements which imply something is wrong

- Behaviour disclosure is when a child behaviour is deliberate to that indicates that something is wrong.
- Non-verbal disclosure is when a child communicates through their writing or drawings.

## **What to do if a child approaches you or you suspect abuse:**

Listen attentively and let he/she know it was right to tell someone about their worries. Don't react to what they are telling you.

Stay calm and make sure that the child feels safe and knows that he/she is not to blame for what has happened.

Only ask questions that establish what was done and who did it.

Do NOT suggest specific answers.

Make a note of what the child said and the date and time of your conversation.

Explain that you will have to tell someone else about the abuse if it is to stop.

Explain that it is not right to keep secrets.

Don't act without seeking help from Infinity Children's Wellbeing Safeguarding Officer.

If a child is at significant risk of harm, contact the police immediately.

Contact the Local Authority Children's Services Department to report an incident.

Seek advice before telling parents or carers about the conversation.

Do not let any person suspected of abuse know what's happened—you could be putting the child in greater jeopardy by doing so.

If you are in any doubt report it.

Many children are devastated by the experience of abuse and, in the most serious cases, may be seriously harmed or have their life threatened.

## **The Safeguarding Code for Infinity Children's Wellbeing Staff Members**

## **Do:**

Treat everyone with respect and take notice of their reactions to your tone of voice and manner.

Always seek the parents' and child/young person's consent if he/she requires help to go to the toilet.

Remember that it is okay to touch children in a way which isn't intrusive or disturbing to he/she or to observers.

Make sure that all allegations/suspensions are recorded/acted upon.

Always be publicly open when working with children.

Avoid situations where a staff member and a child are completely unobserved.

Where possible, children should not be left unsupervised.

Make sure that parents are responsible for their children if they need to change their clothes.

Treat everyone equally and with respect. Take notice of an individual's reaction to tone of voice and manner.

The use of ridicule and sarcasm can be particularly upsetting to the individual and should not be used.

**Make sure that any allegations/suspensions are recorded and acted upon.**

## **Do not:**

Engage in rough physical games including horseplay

Touch a child in an intrusive or sexual manner.

Use inappropriate language or make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even as a joke.

Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves.

Do not go into a room on your own with a child.

Allow allegations made by a child to be ignored, unrecorded or not acted upon.

Take children alone on car journeys.

## First Aid:

When administering first aid, ensure that you always have an additional staff member present

If you need to take the child to the washroom to clean up an injury, ask the parents to join you. If not present, ask an additional member of staff.

If the child or young person is unconscious, follow the Emergency First Aid at Work guidelines applicable at the time.

If referred to hospital, and travelling in your own transport, it is ESSENTIAL that you are accompanied by a parent or an additional member of staff.

If some of these situations are unavoidable, try to get parental permission first. If this isn't possible make sure you let parents and the safe guarding officer, Natalie Bryden, know what has happened as soon as possible.

## What to do if you have concerns

It is not for staff members to take individual responsibility for deciding whether child abuse is taking place. However, there is a responsibility to protect children in order that appropriate agencies (e.g. Social Services, Local Authority or the Police) can then investigate and take appropriate action.

In being vigilant of a child protection it is crucial that all staff members with a responsibility for childcare are aware of the steps used to recognise signs of child abuse. It is also important to remember Social Services are available in an advisory capacity if you are unsure of what to do.

There should always be a commitment to work in partnership with the parents/carers where there are concerns about their children. Therefore, in most situations it would be important to talk to parents/carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, he or she may have experienced a family bereavement.

However, there are circumstances in which a child may be placed at even greater risk if such concerns were shared (i.e. where a parent/ carer may be responsible for the abuse, or not able to respond to the situation appropriately). In these situations, or where concerns still exist, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to Infinity Children's Wellbeing Safeguarding Officer, Natalie Bryden.

**The primary responsibility of the person who first suspects or is told of abuse is to report it and ensure that their concern is taken seriously.**

## Staff Members

If there is ANY type of allegation against a member of staff, the individual must be placed on a temporary suspension from coaching and teaching for Infinity Children's Wellbeing until an internal investigation has taken place.

It is the policy of Infinity Children's Wellbeing that a member of staff is immediately terminated from employment or voluntary position of support, with a total withdrawal of insurance cover if the following is established:

1. If a staff member is convicted of ANY offence relating to child abuse
2. If a staff member fails a DBS check due to anything relating to child related offenses
3. If a staff member is found to be in possession of any indecent publications, indecent printed material or indecent electronic images of children (PC/iPad/Desktop or handheld device etc)

## **Dealing with allegations against a staff member**

Should a member of staff become aware of an allegation of child abuse, or unsafe practice against another colleague, it is vital that the following procedures are followed:

Take ALL allegations seriously. It is your duty to consider any allegation to be potentially dangerous to the child and therefore report it. Make a written record of any details as part of your report. Report the allegation or concern to the Safeguarding Officer. Do not cloud your report with opinions or judgements. The report must be based on fact. Record all details with dates, times, individuals concerned etc.

Details regarding any alleged safeguarding event is confidential and should only be discussed with the relevant people identified in this report.

**This policy acknowledged and agreed by Natalie Bryden, Business proprietor of Infinity Children's Wellbeing.**