

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

At SNAPS we believe that children have the right to feel safe and protected from any form of abuse. We therefore aim to provide a caring environment wherever the venue where children's self esteem and autonomy are nurtured.

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- To raise awareness of both employed staff and volunteers of the need for safeguarding children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To provide a clear statement on how SNAPS will act to promote the welfare of children.
- To support the child's development in ways which will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To establish ways of working together with other agencies.
- To promote the children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to, by encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
- To provide an environment in which children are physically safe.

### **PROCEDURES**

- Immediate action to refer or consult is required where there is suspicion of physical or sexual abuse or neglect.
- Investigation is not the responsibility of SNAPS but is the responsibility of children and families' assessment team and the police.
- Written notes must be signed and dated, will be kept at each stage and stored in a secure place.
- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Staff will maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Staff, Trustees and volunteers are required to obtain disclosure checks from the criminal records bureau. These will be in line with requirements for regulated activity. This is the SNAPS Project Manager's responsibility. Safe recruitment guidelines in line with DBS procedures must be followed for all adults working with children.
- SNAPS take stringent security steps to ensure that no person whom is not authorised has unsupervised access to the children.

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- Families accessing SNAPS are required to supervise their children at all times.
- Children will be assured that they can approach an adult if they are worried about anything and that they will receive an appropriate and supportive response.

#### **SHARING CONCERNS**

- Consultation is a crucial requirement whenever there is any concern that a child may be subject to abuse, even when it is not immediately apparent that an urgent referral is appropriate.
- Keep a noted record of low-level concerns over a period before referring to the family assessment team.
- Urgent or emergency situations require referral to the assessment team or to the police. Actual physical injury, verbal statements of actual abuse and evidence of serious neglect justify an urgent referral.
- Evidence of domestic violence requires referral of the family to the assessment team.
- The family must be informed that a referral has been made, and told the reason for concern. The Children and Family assessment team must be told what has been said to the child's parents/carers.
- Write down the name of the Children and Family assessment team worker who was spoken to, with a record of the date, time and details of the discussion.
- Write down any subsequent conversations with any parents/carers.
- Inform any Trustee or the SNAPS Project Manager of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any member of staff/volunteers.

#### **DISCLOSURES**

Where a child tells you that they or another child is being abused, staff should:

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Reassure the child as far as possible but don't promise confidentiality as staff have a duty to refer.
- Don't ask leading questions; these could later invalidate evidence.
- Ask open questions.
- Explain what you have to do next and who will be told.

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- Record the child's name, address, age, date and time of observation or disclosure. Write down any non-verbal behaviour and the actual words/signs used by the child rather than "interpretations". Record the name of the person reported to.

### ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF OR VOLUNTEERS

- We ensure that all parents/carers know how to complain about staff/volunteer action within SNAPS, which may include an allegation of abuse through the complaints procedure.
- Dependant on the nature of the complaint, each stage will be followed through the complaints procedure and factual information recorded from the outset.
- If a member of staff is informed about a possible allegation they should immediately notify the SNAPS Project Manager or Site Manager or one of the Trustees.
- If a member of staff or volunteer has witnessed any form of abuse by another member of staff they should inform the Project Manager or Site Manager immediately.

**At SNAPS we want our children to feel happy, safe and secure, we want them to have all their individual needs met and have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.**

REVIEW PROGRAMME:

DRAFTED 23 January 2017 / TRUSTEE REVIEW 30 January 2017 / NEXT REVIEW 30 January 2020