

South Warwickshire Local Food – Policy

Child Protection Policy

For the purpose of this policy (irrespective of the age of consent for consensual sexual contact), the terms 'child/children' and 'young person/people' means any child or young person under the age of 18 and is inclusive of those staff under the age of 18. Vulnerable adults are people who are, or may be, in need of community care services because of mental disability or other disability, or due to an illness or their age, and who are, or who may be, unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

1. Child Abuse

South Warwickshire Local Food (SWLF) considers Child Protection to be very important and undertakes to ensure that all staff who work **alone** with children have been checked under recognised procedures and have received information that will enable them to recognise the signs of a child/young person in distress and to follow the referral procedure. However, it is a matter of policy that all children or young people on site should be accompanied by their carers or recognised guardians and that these people should supervise their charges and ensure that they are safe and under control at all times.

Induction

This policy will form part of the induction process for all new staff whose role involves working with children and young people although as stated above it is not company policy for staff to be working alone with children or young people carers or guardians should be present at all times during the work. Volunteers will be briefed in relation to their level of responsibility and duration/frequency of contact with children and young people, and as they are not CRB checked for this occasional voluntary work, will be advised to stay with members of staff/parents of the children at all times.

Responsibilities of staff and volunteers:

- Staff and volunteers have a responsibility to protect children and young people from abuse.
- Staff and volunteers must be able to respond appropriately to a child or young person's disclosure of abuse, ensuring the information they receive is handled correctly.
- Staff and volunteers are not responsible for judging whether an allegation is true or for sorting it out.
- Staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report and protect.

Forms of child abuse

The main forms of abuse are:

1. *Physical abuse*: Where adults physically hurt or injure children, hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning and biting are all forms of physical abuse. Giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison and attempted suffocation or drowning are also physical abuse.
2. *Sexual abuse*: girls and boys are abused by adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs. This might be full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse or fondling. Showing children pornographic magazines or videos is also included.
3. *Emotional abuse*: Persistent lack of love and affection damages children emotionally. Being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted can make the child very nervous and withdrawn.
4. *Neglect*: An adult may fail to meet a child's basic needs, which include food or warm clothing. Children might be constantly left alone unsupervised.

Abuse in any form can affect a child/young person of any age.

Identifying signs of possible abuse

Staff may be important links in identifying a case where a child/young person needs further protection. Child abuse may come to light in a number of ways:

- A child/young person may tell you what has happened to them
- From a third party (e.g. another child/young person)
- Through the child/young person's behaviour
- A suspicious, unexplained injury to the child/young person

Recognising abuse is not easy. Most children will sustain cuts, grazes and bruises from time to time and their behaviour may give reason for concern. There may be other reasons for these factors aside from abuse, but any concerns should be immediately discussed with the individuals outlined below.

Warning signs that may alert to possible abuse include:

- Unexplained bruising, cuts or burns on the child/young person, particularly if these parts of the body are not normally injured in accidents
- An injury which a parent/carer tries to hide or for which they might have given different explanations
- Changes in behaviour such as a child/young person suddenly becoming very quiet, tearful, withdrawn, aggressive or displaying severe tantrums
- Loss of weight without a medical explanation
- An inappropriately dressed or ill-kept child/young person who may also be dirty
- Sexually explicit behaviour, for example playing games and showing an awareness inappropriate for the child's age

- Continual masturbation, aggressive and inappropriate sex play
- Running away from home, attempted suicides, self inflicted injuries
- A lack of trust in adults, particularly those who would normally be close to a child/young person
- Disturbed sleep, nightmares and bed wetting, particularly if a child has previously been dry.
- Eating problems, including over eating or loss of appetite

Procedures to follow with a child/young person if you suspect abuse

1. Talk to the child/young person sensitively to find out if there is anything worrying them
2. Do not ask questions. You need to be clear what the child/young person has said, and it is permissible to repeat back to them what they have said to you (reflexive listening)
3. If the suspicions arise when you are conducting an activity for another organisation discuss your concerns in private with the person responsible for arranging your activity, and also report the matter to your line manager at SWLF
4. Contact with parents should be delayed until advice has been sought from Social Services. The designated staff member will seek this advice.

Procedures to follow when a child/young person discloses abuse

1. Never promise to keep a secret. If you do so and the child/young person is being hurt you will not be able to help them. Tell the child/young person you may need to talk to someone about it. Emphasise that you will be talking to someone who wants to help.
2. Allow the child/young person to decide if s/he wants to open up. Do not push them to do so.
3. Do not ask questions. Leading questions may invalidate later proceedings. The disclosure must be in the child/young person's control.
4. Do not be judgemental
5. Allow the child/young person to talk at their own pace; do not pressure them to disclose anything they do not want to.
6. Do not leave the child/young person until they are ready, and then talk to the designated person or colleague as soon as possible. Even if the child/young person has decided not to disclose, you should still inform a relevant person.
7. Write down, sign and date a detailed report of what exactly has been said as soon as you can while your memory is sharp.
8. Volunteer or employee and/or their direct supervisor from South Warwickshire Local Food (i.e. project leader or line manager) must compile a written report which gives details all the factual information.
9. Anyone dealing with a child/young person that has disclosed information can be referred for professional help to enable them to deal with the experience.
10. Take care of yourself. Discuss with a supervisor or colleague how you are feeling.

Contact numbers for advice and reporting

If you wish to report a matter to the police, call 101 and state your concerns.
If you wish to report an emergency matter always dial 999.
Social worker (out of office hours): 024 7683 2222.

If there is no immediate danger or you need advice or information, you should call the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub on 024 7678 8555.

If you want to discuss your concerns or need advice e.g. if you are not sure whether your concerns are justified, you would like more information about issues like confidentiality or you would like to know what happens next (after you have reported your concerns), do one of the following:

- Call Childline on 0800 1111
- Call the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000
- Check Coventry CSCP procedures

2. Our approach to safeguarding children/young people whilst volunteering

1. The minimum age of volunteering with South Warwickshire Local Food is 14 years old.
2. Due to Health and Safety implications some volunteering roles are suitable only for young people 16yrs or older.
3. A risk assessment will be completed for every new volunteer under the age of 16 to ensure that any potential hazards of volunteering associated with their age have been identified and that any risks are reduced to an acceptable level.
4. We will endeavour to safeguard children who volunteer with us by taking the following approach:
 - a) Young people under 18 will not be left unattended.
 - b) Any potentially dangerous activity will have constant adult supervision (SWLF staff supervisor is responsible for managing and monitoring this).
5. Written parental/guardian consent will be obtained for any volunteers under the age of 16.
6. Although parental/guardian consent will not be obtained for volunteers aged 16-18 the General Administrator will strongly encourage volunteers in this age group to discuss their activities with their parents/guardians.
7. Young people who wish to volunteer independently of their parents will come at least twice with a parent/guardian to ensure that they will have an appropriate attitude towards their volunteering.

3. Behaviour guidelines for staff and volunteers working with children/young people

The aim of these guidelines is to ensure the safety and well being of all young people and to support the staff and volunteers in providing a safe, caring environment.

- Staff and volunteers should set examples of appropriate behaviour. As children and

young people learn by example, staff and volunteers should avoid using sarcasm or discrimination, direct criticism, labelling and unnecessary competition or comparison.

- Good behaviour should be positively encouraged
- Staff and volunteers should not physically punish any child/young person
- Staff and volunteers should not deprive any child/young person of, or force any child/young person to consume, food or drink.
- Staff and volunteers should not humiliate or frighten any young person
- Staff and volunteers should avoid situations in which they risk putting themselves or the child/young person at risk. This includes being alone with a child/young person unnecessarily. Staff are strongly encouraged to avoid situations where they will be alone in a room with a child/young person with the door closed. (Staff and Volunteers who are not CRB checked for their occasional role are asked to avoid this altogether.)
- Staff and volunteers should offer respect to the child/young person at all times and strive to be sensitive to their feelings.
- Adult to child/young person ratios should reflect best practice (1:10 max for 10 years and over, 1:8 max under 10)
- The same guidelines should be followed for working with vulnerable adults, with the addition of those listed below:
 - Staff and volunteers should treat vulnerable adults as adults, not as children.
 - Staff and volunteers should avoid reinforcing negative emotions and behaviours.

4. Procedures to follow regarding photographing children and young people for staff and volunteers

It is against child protection good practice to photograph children and young people without parental consent. This is especially important where these photographs are likely to be published.

For children of members and friends of members attending social events and work mornings: It is SWLF's policy to contact the child's parents before publication of photos where the child is clearly identifiable.

For children attending education project events, work experience etc.. The school/other organising body is asked to obtain permission for all children to be photographed. Those children whose parents don't give permission will be clearly identified with a sticker on their name badge.

Reviewed by the Steering Committee on :

Review due: