

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

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SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Harrow Association of Somali Voluntary Organisations

Introduction

Staffs and Volunteers working in Harrow Association of Somali Voluntary Organisations (HASVO) have a duty of care towards the children attending and this duty brings with it the responsibility to ensure that all efforts are made to safeguard children from suspected and actual harm. Children attending the supplementary school or after school clubs or holiday clubs have a right to feel safe and Staffs and Volunteers, in partnership with parents/carers, have a responsibility to act on any concerns they may have regarding a child's welfare and well-being.

The Legal framework for this policy

- Children act (2004/1989)
- Working together to Safeguard children (2006)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

Practitioners have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care we provide, Staff and Volunteer will often be the first people who sense that there is a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide about abuse. The member of Staff or Volunteer has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society. This statement lays out the procedures that will be followed if we have any reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to welfare issues including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well being of children in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents/carers, Staff and Volunteer to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. All Staff and Volunteer will work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interest of the child.

All Staffs and Volunteers will be familiar with their own responsibilities to act swiftly upon any suspicions or concerns they may have about any child or member of Staff or Volunteer at the Centre. The supplementary school or after school clubs or holiday clubs will follow the procedures set out in the Harrow Safeguarding children's board (Green Book) Guidance, and as such will seek advice on all steps taken subsequently. HASVO has a duty to report any suspicions around abuse to Harrow Children's Access Team who, under the children Act 1989 have an obligation to investigate such matters.

Staff or Volunteer must not make comment either publicly or in private about a parent's supposed or actual behaviour, strict confidentiality will be observed at all times. Staff or Volunteer must raise any concerns initially with the ' Designated senior member of Staff or Volunteer for Safeguarding', who will discuss these concerns with the registered person on a need to know basis and appropriate action will be considered.

Staff or Volunteer responsibilities do not include investigating the suspected abuse and all related information must be kept in a locked filing cabinet. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgemental manner whilst investigations by the appropriate authorities are being carried out in the best interests of the child.

It is the policy of the supplementary school or after school clubs or holiday clubs to provide a secure and safe environment for all children from abuse. Staff or Volunteer will therefore not allow an adult to be left alone who has not received their enhanced CRB check clearance and all our staff and volunteers will receive safeguarding training. We know how important Staff or Volunteer ratios are and ensure that we follow a ratio of one adult for every 8 children.

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HASVO aims to:

- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of the supplementary school or after school clubs or holiday clubs Staff or Volunteer.
- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times.
- Ensure that all Staff or Volunteer are alert to the signs and understand what is meant by safeguarding and
- are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed, including by other children i.e. bullying.
- Ensure that all Staff or Volunteer are familiar with safeguarding issues and procedures when they register with the supplementary school or after school clubs or holiday clubs and kept informed of all updates when they occur.
- Regularly review and update this policy.

What is child abuse?

A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Staff or Volunteer in the supplementary school or after school clubs or holiday clubs recognise that child abuse can and does happen in all types of families. The different social and cultural backgrounds of the children do not constitute barriers to child abuse and in most cases children are abused by individuals known to them, rather than strangers. Child abuse can take many formats, but all instances can be broadly categorised under one of four headings; neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse. The following identifies some possible manifestations of child abuse; however these lists are not exhaustive.

Neglect

Is the persistent failure to meet basic physical and psychological needs, which may result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development. For example; poor hygiene, untreated medical problems, emaciation or under nourishment. Staff or Volunteer may notice behavioural signs such as a child who always seems to be hungry, is constantly tired or talks of being left alone.

Procedure:

- The concern should be discussed with the parent/carer.
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent/carer will have access to such records.
- If there appears to be any queries regarding the circumstances the children's services access team will be notified.

Physical abuse

Physical signs may involve unexplained bruising in unlikely areas, facial bruising, hand/finger marks, bite marks, burns, lacerations or abrasions. Staff or Volunteer may notice certain behavioural signs that also indicate physical abuse such as a child that shy's away from physical contact, is withdrawn or aggressive towards others or their behaviour changes suddenly.

Procedure:

- All signs of marks/injuries to a child when they come into supplementary school or after school clubs or holiday clubs will be recorded as soon as noticed by a Staff or Volunteer member

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- The incident will be discussed with the parent/carer at the earliest opportunity.
- Such discussions will be recorded and a signature obtained from the parent/carer who will have access to such records.
- If there appears to be any queries regarding the injury, Harrow Children's Access Team should be informed immediately.

Sexual Abuse

Physical signs may include bruising consistent with being held firmly, discomfort in walking/sitting, pain or itching in the genital area, discharge or blood on under clothes, or loss of appetite. Behavioural signs may include drawings or play showing indicators of sexual activity, sexual explicit language, knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, seductive behaviour towards others, poor self esteem and a child who is withdrawn.

Procedure:

- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report.
- The observed instances will be reported to the DSMS/Centre manager.
- The matter will be referred to Harrow Children's Access Team immediately.

Emotional Abuse

Physical signs of emotional abuse may include a general failure to thrive, not meeting expected developmental milestones and behaviourally a child may be attention seeking tells lies, have an inability to have fun, low self esteem, speech disorders, and be inappropriately affectionate towards others.

Procedure:

- The concerns should be discussed with the parent/carer by the DSMS/Manger.
- Such discussions will be recorded and the parent/carer will have access to such records.
- If there appears to be any queries regarding the circumstances, Harrow Children's Access Team will be notified.

However, when identifying any potential instances of abuse, Staff or Volunteer must at all times be aware that children may demonstrate individual or combinations of the indicators detailed, but may not be the subject of abuse. Individual or isolated incidents do not necessarily indicate abuse. However, Staff or Volunteer should always remain vigilant and must not ignore warnings signs and contact Harrow Children's Access at any stage for support.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosers

Staff or Volunteer will make an objective record of any observation or disclosure and include:

- Child's name.
- Child's address
- Child's age and date of birth
- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- EXACT words spoken by the child/injuries or marks seen
- Name of person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time and the names of
- any other person present at the time.
- Any discussion held with the parent/carer.

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These records are signed and dated and kept in a separate confidential file. All members of Staff or Volunteer must know the procedures for recording information. It may be thought necessary that through discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be raised with the Children's services access team and OFSTED. Staff or Volunteer involved may be asked to supply details of any information they have of concerns with regard to a child. HASVO expects all members of Staff or Volunteer to co-operate with Harrow Children's Access and OFSTED in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

All Staff or Volunteer will attend Safeguarding Training or complete the E Learning training and receive basic training as part of their induction.

Staff and Volunteering

A senior member of staff is identified within the supplementary school or after school clubs or holiday clubs as the 'Designated senior member of staff for safeguarding' (DSMS), in their absence the Deputy manager assumes this responsibility. The designated person will undertake specific training and accesses regular updates to developments within this field.

Designated Senior Member of Staff for Safeguarding(DSMS):

The named DSMS at HASVO is **Yusuf Yusuf**.

We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of the children

- Applicants for the post within the supplementary school or after school clubs are clearly informed that their positions are exempt from Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed.
- Where applicants are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and challenge incorrect information.
- All applicants must have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure check
- We abide by OFSTED requirements in respect of references and police checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the supplementary school or after school clubs or has access to the children.
- Volunteers, including students do not work unsupervised
- The deployment of staff within the supplementary school or after school clubs allows for constant supervision.

Informing Parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of Harrow Safeguarding Children's Board does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating Officer will inform the parents.

Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and only shared with those who need to know.

Any information is shared under the guidance of the Harrow Safeguarding Children's Board.

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Support to Families

HASVO takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers within the Centre.

- The supplementary school or after school clubs continues to welcome a child and their family whilst investigation are being made in relation to abuse within the home.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with parents or those who have parental
- responsibility for the child, only if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding
- Children's Board

Employees of the Centre/ Allegations of abuse by member of staff

If an allegation is made against a member of Staff or Volunteer the DSMS will immediately inform the Harrow Children's Access Team. It is important to take a name of the person spoken to and they will advice on the next steps to be taken.

OFSTED and the Independent Safeguarding Authority will also need to be informed and this will be investigated.

- Staff or Volunteer will cooperate with the investigating authority.
- The supplementary school or after school clubs reserves the right to suspend any member of staff on full pay during an investigation
- All investigation/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file. Records on the alleged perpetrator will be kept until they reach normal retirement age or for 10 years if that period of time is longer. This includes records of people no longer associated with the provision.
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated.
- All allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisation (Harrow Children's Access Team) and will result in the termination of employment. OFSTED may be notified immediately of the allegation. The supplementary school or after school clubs will also be required to notify the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) to ensure their records are updated.
- Counselling will be available for any member of the supplementary school or after school clubs who is affected by the allegation, their colleagues in the supplementary school or after school clubs and the parents.
- If an allegation of abuse is made about the supplementary school or after school clubs manager /registered person, the person making the complaint is likely to contact Children's services or the police directly.

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Useful Numbers

1. Harrow Children Access Team (Golden Number
020 8901 2690
2. (LADO) Local authority Designated officer
Rosalind South
Tel: 07871 987254
Monday – Friday 9:00am- 5:00pm

REVIEW OF THIS DOCUMENT	
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