

# **Safeguarding Policy and Procedures**

Out There Forest School is committed to safeguarding the children with whom we are in contact, and to promoting the physical and emotional wellbeing of all children and adults involved in our Forest School. We aim to ensure that every child at our Forest School is safe and protected from harm.

We will always strive to:

- Protect children from maltreatment
- Prevent impairment of their health and development
- Ensure that children attending Out There Forest School are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Enable the children in our setting to have the best outcomes

*Working Together 2018*

This Safeguarding Policy is referred to in our Terms and Conditions, is available to all parents/carers on request and is accessible via our website.

This Policy will be reviewed in full annually. It was last reviewed on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2022. It is due for review in January 2024.

## **Safer Working Practice Policy and Procedure**

- All adults working and volunteering at Out There Forest School agree to our Code of Conduct, whereby they agree to
  - Ensure that the safety and wellbeing of children is paramount at all times
  - Follow the Out There Forest School Policies and Procedures at all times
  - Support the gentle, nurturing, inclusive and child-led ethos of Out There Forest school in all their words and actions
  - Treat all children, young people and adults with respect, dignity and equality.
  - Meet people where they are, encouraging young people to stretch their limits and challenge themselves only in a way which is holistically suited to them as an individual – “challenge by choice”
  - Attend Safeguarding refresher training every three years

## **Disclosure / Safeguarding Concerns Policy and Procedure**

All adults involved with Out There Forest School are aware of their responsibilities to report any disclosure of abuse from a child, and similarly to report if they become aware of or have concerns that a participant is being harmed. Safeguarding concerns are required by law to be reported under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

*Working Together 2018* defines abuse and neglect thus:

### **Abuse**

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

### **Physical Abuse**

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

### **Emotional Abuse**

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

## Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- a. Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- b. Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- c. Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);
- d. Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

- All Out There Forest School employees are trained in Safeguarding.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer for Out There Forest School is Joanna Neale (01953 887775 office@outthereforestschool.co.uk). The Alternative Designated Safeguarding Officer for Out There Forest School is Zoe Nicholls (01953 887775).
- All Out There Forest School Staff know how to recognise indicators of concern and how to respond to a disclosure, including how to document and report this information.
- All staff have access to a Safeguarding folder, which includes a copy of this Policy, the 'How to Record a Concern' leaflet, the 'Neglect ID Tool' the Norfolk County Council 'Concerned about a Child?' leaflet and the 'Reporting and Referral Flow Chart'
- In the event of a disclosure, the adult must
  - Listen calmly, not express shock of disbelief
  - Ask no leading questions, allow the child to talk
  - Not make any promises to 'keep it secret' or 'not tell'
  - As soon as possible, record the conversation on an Incident form (See Appendix B) and without delay pass the information to the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Out There Forest School staff will not seek to investigate any disclosures or safeguarding concerns. This is the role of specially trained experts in the Local Authority and Police.
- If we have a concern about a child, we will telephone the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) on 0344 800 8021. We will be prepared with full details of the child and family, what our concerns are and details of any

support we have given the child/family, and will discuss these with the CADS Social Worker.

- We will ensure that we gain consent from the parent/carer to make the referral, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm or undermine a criminal investigation. If we have not sought consent from the parent/carer, we will inform the CADS worker of this and the reasons for it.
- The CADS worker will agree the next steps with us, and will send us a written record of our conversation within 5 working days.
- We will keep accurate records of all conversations, written in ink, including the dates and times of who we spoke to, the information shared and the action agreed.
- In case of a disclosure involving the Designated Safeguarding Officer, the information should be passed to the Alternative Designated Safeguarding Officer or LADO. For full details on the process, see 'Whistleblowing Policy'
- In case of a perceived **immediate** risk to the child's safety, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will contact the Police.
- Key Legislation & Guidance:
  - Working Together 2018
  - What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015
  - Children Act 2004
  - Children Act 1989
  - Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and Their Families
  - Norfolk Threshold Guide [www.norfolkscb.org](http://www.norfolkscb.org)