**Blueprint for All**

**Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Young Adults Policy**

The policy consists of: -

1. Policy Statement
2. Definitions
3. Procedures
4. Guidelines for the Implementation of the Procedures

**A. Policy Statement**

Blueprint for All seeks to serve the needs of children, young people, and vulnerable adults, promoting a sense of wholeness of life. In doing so we take seriously the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults who access our services and activities with a view of preventing physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of children and young people and to this end recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and review the following procedures.

We continuously remind staff, volunteers, delivery partners, and service providers that there are positive ways of protecting children and young people. Young people need: -

* to feel safe and secure
* health and happiness
* appropriate affection
* lots of smiles
* praise and encouragement
* to be able to talk to someone
* to be listened to
* new experiences
* respect for their feelings
* rewards and treats

**B. Definitions**

**Child**: In this policy we define children as all those under 18 years of age in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**Vulnerable Young Adult**: Our programmes often work with young people and adults aged 18-30. A vulnerable young adult, according to this policy, is a young person aged 18-30 who may be at additional risk or in need of additional support due to mental health needs, learning and/or physical disability or other reasons which put them at increased risk of harm and abuse. Our Safeguarding Policy aims to be inclusive of both children and vulnerable young adults.

**Safeguarding**: Actions and practices designed to protect children from all forms of abuse and maltreatment, proactive actions to prevent harm and promotion of wellbeing by ensuring safe environments

**C. Procedures**

* To plan the work of the organisation to minimise situations where the abuse of young people or children may occur.
* To have a named designated safeguarding member of staff or team to which issues and concerns can be escalated.
* To give all staff and volunteers clear roles in relation to their safeguarding responsibility
* To recruit staff who will work with children and vulnerable young people in a safe way, including DBS checks
* To explore employee applicants, experience of working or having contact with children and young people before appointment
* To confirm with other groups/organisations, who work with children and young people and who wish to work with Blueprint for All that they undertake to follow best practice to ensure young people are safeguarded.
* To implement and issue a policy to all employees on how to deal with abuse and to give training to all delivery staff in relation to the same. This policy will include the following: -
* A reminder of the worker’s duty, both to prevent abuse and to report any abuse discovered or suspected
* Guidance on what constitutes abuse and how to recognise it
* Specific instructions on who to inform if abuse is disclosed or discovered
* Some indication of what might happen if the abuse is reported
* Guidance on how to support the abused child or young person

**Definitions and examples of the different types of abuse**

The following may help you decide whether a child’s welfare is at risk of abuse, harm, or neglect

**Physical**: where children and young people receive physical harm or injury. This includes unexplained or hidden injuries or those which have received no medical attention.

Signs that may suggest physical abuse

* multiple bruising to different parts of the body
* bruising of different colours indicating repeated injuries
* fingertip bruising to the chest, back, arms or legs
* burn of any shape or size
* an injury for which there is no adequate explanation

Signs that may suggest neglect

* squalid, unhygienic, or dangerous home conditions
* parents who fail to attend to their children’s health or development needs
* children who appear persistently undersized or overweight
* children who continually appear tired or lacking in energy
* children who suffer frequent injuries due to lack of supervision

**Sexual**: where adults seek sexual gratification by using children and young people. This includes allegations made by the child or young person, pre-occupation with sexual matters, sexual activity through words, play or drawings, severe sleep disturbances with fears and phobias, being sexually provocative with adults.

Signs of possible sexual abuse

* something a child has told you
* something a child has told someone else
* a child who shows worrying sexualised behaviour in their play or with other children
* a child who seems to have inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age
* a child who may be visiting or being looked after by a known or suspected sexual offender

**Emotional**: where children and young people are harmed by a constant lack of love and affection, or threats and taunting. This includes regression in behaviour, nervousness, sudden under-achievement, inappropriate relationships with peers/adults, attention-seeking, running away/stealing/lying, looking uncared for.

Signs which may suggest emotional harm

* Children whose behaviour is excessive. For example, excessive bedwetting, overeating, rocking or head banging
* Children who self-harm. For example, they may cut or scratch themselves or overdose
* Children who attempt suicide
* Children who persistently run away from home
* Children who show high levels of anxiety, unhappiness, or withdrawal
* Children who usually seek out or avoid affection

**N.B**. Physical abuse and neglect are difficult to hide. Sexual abuse can be almost impossible to identify and prove. Many symptoms of distress can point to abuse but there may be other explanations. It is important, therefore, that the above signs are not taken as indications that abuse has taken place. They should make us stop and think, but not necessarily jump to conclusions.

**Recording of disclosure/concerns**

If note taking is inappropriate, or not possible at the time, the member of staff involved should immediately afterwards make a written note of any key points and mark it “Child Protection”- Strictly Confidential”, using the child’s own words and phrases, if possible. These notes must be kept as originals, timed, dated and signed, as they could well be used as evidence in court. As soon as possible the member of staff must seek out the Designated Person. If that person is unavailable, the information should be forwarded to the Chair of the board of trustees and CEO.

Disclosure information from a child or young person cannot be discussed with any member of staff, other than the Designated Person or Chair of the board of trustees and the CEO.

Following consideration, the Designated Person may decide to make a referral to Children’s Social Care. You should not expect to hear of the outcome of a safeguarding disclosure, but it remains your responsibility to make the disclosure fully and immediately.

**Physical Evidence**

If any physical injuries or bruising are noticed it is appropriate, as a caring adult, to ask the child how they sustained the bruise, graze, scratch, bite, or other mark on their body. All such marks or injuries howsoever caused, must be recorded on a “Body Map Record”, and handed to the Designated Person with the child’s explanation attached. You must not examine a child beneath their clothing, ask any leading questions or conduct any further investigations.

**Designated Person for Child Protection**

**The designated officer for Child Protection for Blueprint for All is Head of Programmes: Chanel Noel. In the absence of the DSL the Chair will adopt the role as the designated senior member of staff.**

**The role of the Designated Person is to: -**

* **Ensure that child protection procedures are in place and updates as appropriate.**
* **Ensure that all staff, volunteers, and service providers are aware of Child Protection Procedures at the charity.**
* **Be available to provide advice/support to staff, volunteers, and service providers for confidential discussions about concerns.**
* **Be available to provide support to the children and young people who access our service.**
* **Keep records of any concerns/suspected cases of abuse/referrals**
* **Review arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people on an annual basis and support the implementation of any action plan arising from this review.**

**Making a Referral**

If you are unsure that a child may be suffering but are worried, or if you are concerned that a child has suffered harm, neglect or abuse you should inform the designated child protection officer.

**Name**: Chanel Noel

**Role:** Head of Programmes and Designated Safeguarding Lead

**Contact Tel No**: 0208 1002800

**Contact Email:** safeguarding@blueprintforall.org cnoel@blueprintforall.org

When the Designated Person has been informed of a case of suspected abuse or of a young person who may be at risk of abuse, they may make a referral to Children’s Social Care. If it is unclear that the matter being referred is a safeguarding concern, the Designated Person will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) from Children’s Social Care to determine if a formal referral should be made.

Referrals to the relevant London Borough Children’s Social Care should normally be made in writing but social care will accept telephone referrals on the understanding that the referral will be in writing within forty-eight hours. All referrals should be made or confirmed using the appropriate pro-forma. All referrals to Children’s Social Care should be screened/evaluated by that agency within 1 working day and a decision made regarding the next course of action. Where there is to be no further action, feedback should be provided to the Designated Person about the decision and the reason for making it in writing within 48 hours.

**If you suspect abuse DO NOT DELAY**

**If a child or young person wants to talk about abuse:**

* Accept what the child or young person says, keeping calm and looking at them directly
* Let them know that you need to tell someone else, do not promise confidentiality
* Even when a child or young person has broken a rule they are not to blame.
* Be aware that the child or young person may have been threatened.
* Never push for information or ask leading questions.
* Reassure the child or young person they were right to tell you and that you believe them.
* Let the child or young person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
* Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what was said and when he/she said it. Record dates and times of these events and keep the hand-written/typed record.

**D. Guidelines for the implementation of the procedures: -**

* Plan the work of the charity to minimise situations where the abuse of children and young people may occur.
* Arrange that, as far as possible, a member of staff and delivery partners/volunteers are not left alone with a child or young person where there is little, or no opportunity of the activity being observed by others. This may mean groups working within the same large room or working in an adjoining room with the door left open. This good practice can be of as much benefit to the adult as to the child or young person.
* When meeting with a child or young person individually off site, workers will take reasonable measures to ensure the safety of the child or young person and themselves by informing relevant people where they are going and the time of their expected return.
* Where possible have two workers present with a group.
* If there is only one activity taking place at least two workers must be present.
* Never take a group off the premises with fewer than two adults.
* Think about the use of premises. For example, do not expect children or young people to have to walk along a dark, unsupervised path to take part in an activity being hosted by the charity.
* Where children and young people must be transported by car or minibus arrange, as far as possible, to have more than one adult in the vehicle.

**Give all committee members, staff, volunteers, and service providers clear roles.**

Abuse of children and young people is most easily concealed where there is confusion amongst adults about roles and responsibilities. Blueprint for All board members, staff, volunteers, and service providers should have a job description or a responsibility outline, which include their responsibilities for the protection of children and young people.

Volunteers and service providers should also have a clear idea of what is expected of them, as outlined in the volunteer guidance, and accompanied by induction and training/a briefing.

**Use supervision as a means of protecting children and young people.**

Regular opportunities should be made for workers to meet to review and plan their work, to share their experiences, to receive training and to talk about their relationships with the children and young people. Special attention should be paid to any situation in which a child or young person is being either highly favoured or harshly treated as these could be signs of abuse.

When possible, leaders of groups should take opportunities to observe those for whom they are responsible as they work with children and young people.

**All workers must share personal details as part of their application to work in the charity.**

All staff and charity volunteers need to provide details of referees.

References will be sought, in writing, for all workers. It will be made clear that the person will be working with children and young people and that their views on their suitability for this work will be taken into consideration. If replies are vague or ambiguous it may be necessary for them to be followed up in person or by telephone.

All convictions which involve children and young people are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that all convictions which relate to children and young people, however old, must be declared. Information about other criminal convictions must also be given, as these may be relevant to the suitability of the person.

A determined, convicted abuser may well tell a lie. It is for this reason that a reference should be obtained. If the volunteer has moved frequently from one (voluntary) job/organisation to another it would be advisable to find out why.

**Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Requirements**

Enhanced DBS checks should always be carried out on all who work with children or young people. Since sometimes DBS checks take a long time to be processed, while the check is moving through the system the person will be allowed to work with Blueprint for All but will never be left in an unsupervised situation, with no co-worker.

**Explore applicant’s experience of working or having contact with children and young people before appointment.**

More time talking with a worker before appointment will give the opportunity to find out about the candidate’s contacts with children and young people. These may be through previous work within or with the charity, through family contacts, through work with a voluntary organisation or in other ways. If there is any doubt about the suitability of the staff, volunteer, or service provider, this should be explored further through searching questions.

**Duty to Refer**

Wherever possible, staff will deal with incidents and disclosures within the Organisation by reporting it to the Designated Officer (Chanel Noel). In their absence, to the Chief Executive (Sonia Watson). In the absence of both the Designated Officer and the Chair, staff should refer the matter to a board Member. When an incident is more serious a referral or reporting of the information will take place. Such agencies could be Children’s Social Care, Childline, NSPCC, CCPAS or the Police Child Protection Unit.

If staff, volunteers, or service providers are uncomfortable reporting incidents to the designated person, they can contact an independent whistleblowing company, Safecall. They can be contacted on 0800 915 1571 or online on [www.safecall.co.uk/report](http://www.safecall.co.uk/report) where an anonymous report can be made detailing any concerns raised.

**Issues of confidentiality**

If a child or young person requests confidentiality, they must be told that this cannot be promised, and it should be explained that staff have a responsibility to share information with those adults who will be able to help protect them from harm. The child or young person should be reassured that only staff who need to know about it will he told. This could result in the young person not continuing the conversation, in which case your enquiries should not be pursued but concerns recorded in writing and handed to the Designated Person.

Staff should take care not to discuss information given in confidence outside the appropriate professional contexts. All documentation regarding the disclosure should be treated and marked as STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL and should only be shared with others on a need-to-know basis.

**Working with Parents and Carers**

The Designated Person and other professionals should aim to work in partnership with parents and carers by attempting to discuss any concerns they have with them where possible. Permission should be sought by the Designated Person from the person holding the parental responsibility for the child before discussing a referral about them with other agencies, unless this process may place a child at risk of significant harm or prejudice a criminal investigation, Social Care advice may be sought on the issue, as appropriate.

**Regulating and Vetting Visitors**

All visitors, parents/carers to the charity will be required to always wait in the reception area. They will not be permitted to enter any rooms or parts of the building in which the children or young people are taking part in activities. Should they need to speak to or see their own child or young person, that child or young person will be escorted to and from the reception area.

Arrangements for visiting children or young people whilst taking part in activities being organised by Blueprint for All can be agreed in advance by the Chair or a committee member or senior member of staff in her absence, where appropriate.

All staff, volunteers and service providers are responsible for ensuring that visitors are carefully monitored, in a manner appropriate to the individual circumstances. **Under no circumstances, should any visitor ever have unsupervised access to other children**. Staff are expected to challenge anyone on site if they are unsure of their identity. This good practice should also be upheld in relation to online spaces that we hold with young adults and children i.e., zoom or MS teams workshops and talks. The attendee list and breakout rooms should be coordinated with the same staff presence principles as in-person sessions and delivery.

**Media and Online Processes and Practices**

Images should not be taken of children or vulnerable young adults unless we have their parent/guardians permission.

**Use of Mobile Phones and other Multi-Media Devices**

Blueprint for All staff should not use their personal phones to communicate with young people directly (whether via phone or a social networking site or platform) nor to take images of a young person. Young people, for example, are not permitted to use their mobile phones with image capability (i.e., camera or video facilities) or internet access during sessions to capture images of each other, and **staff and external delivery partners are not permitted to use their mobile phones to record or store images of any children or young people taking part in activities organised by the charity at any time.**

**Internet use and email policy**

With our programme participants on schools programmes, charity staff and delivery partners should not communicate directly with the young people via email or the internet. Communication should be planned via a member of staff at the young person’s school or academy. For young people that are participants on our programme directly (i.e., not via their school or sixth form) should only be communicated with if at least two members of charity staff always remain in the communication loop I.e., a second member of staff is kept in the loop but being placed in ‘cc’ for every email).

**Children and young people may wish to talk with an independent person**

Arrange for a person to be available for children and young people to talk to if they feel that they have been abused in any way. The person should be totally independent of the activities of the children and young people but should be someone to whom they could relate. It may be necessary or appropriate to ask someone from a different organisation, for example Childline or NSPCC to undertake this role.

If this is done the appointed person must be given clear, written guidelines as to what action to take to stop any abuse disclosed by a child or young person, otherwise they may unwittingly permit the abuse to continue. It is strongly recommended that contacts should be by telephone rather than one-to-one.

**Ways of letting the children and young people know that such a person is available for them to talk to**

Display the number of Childline or a similar organisation on a notice board which is regularly seen by children and young people.

Make sure that all adults working with children and young people know the name of a suitable person with whom they could put the child or young person in contact, or to whom they could turn to for help.

Consider the need also to provide opportunities for workers to talk to independent people about any difficulties or anxieties in relation to their work.

**Concerns involving a member of staff**

Any concerns that involve allegations against a member of staff, volunteer or service provider should be referred immediately to the Designated Person who will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for the relevant Borough Council, (to discuss and agree further action to be taken in respect of an allegation). Any child protection allegation concerning the DSO or designated DSO should be referred to the CEO and chair of the board of trustees.

**Support for staff subject to allegations**

The Designated Person will inform any member of staff who is subject to an allegation about that allegation as soon as possible but (s)he will have to follow directions from Children’s Social Care and/or the police as to what can be shared and when.

It is recognised that any allegation of abuse will cause the member of staff anxiety and advice will be given as to possible avenues of support from, for example, the Citizen’s Advice Bureau or their union, professional association, or Committee Members.

**Safe relating with our Children**

Staff, volunteers, and service providers must be aware of the potential problems associated with making physical contact with children, especially with children of the opposite sex. Contact is always discouraged but if it does happen must always be appropriate to the relationship of the member of staff and the young person and must not be inappropriate in nature or location of touch. Some children and young people may have been damaged by inappropriate contact and they may be very sensitive or unable to process contacts appropriately.

There may be times when it is appropriate for staff to spend one to one time with a child. Staff should always ensure that proper safeguards are in place for the protection of both themselves and the child e.g., making sure that other staff are aware and will check irregularly that everything is okay, and keeping doors open. Regard should always be given to the potential additional problems of caring for children of the opposite sex. Advice should be taken from senior staff regarding what is acceptable or unacceptable risk-taking in this area.

**Other useful information and telephone numbers**

**Monitoring**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Person and monitored in accordance with best practice. Staff, volunteers, service providers and committee members will be asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the procedures whenever they have had occasion to put them into practice.

Child protection involves taking steps to safeguard vulnerable children sand young people at risk or suffering from physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.

**Contact details: -**

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