

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Purpose of policy

The purpose of this policy is:

- to implement our Overarching Safeguarding Statement (attached as Appendix),
- to protect children who are cared for by the Parent House and the children of adults who use our services and
- to provide service-users, staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

The Parent House is committed to providing a safe environment for children, parents, carers and staff and to promoting a climate where children and adults will feel confident about sharing any concerns that they may have about their own safety or the well-being of others.

This policy applies to:

Staff and volunteers.

Definitions:

“Parent House” means The Parent House Trust.

“Service-users” means the parents and carers who use or receive the services of the Parent House.

“Staff” means everyone working with or for the Parent House who is remunerated, and also students on placement, whether or not they are remunerated.

“Volunteers” means everyone working with or for the Parent House who is not remunerated: Volunteers may be either **“Service-user volunteers”** or **“Non-Service-user volunteers”** (which includes trustees).

Table of contents

1. Statement of policy
 2. Types of abuse
 3. Recruitment of staff and volunteers
 4. Training and supervision of staff and volunteers
 5. Crèche
 6. Procedure for safeguarding concerns relating to staff members
 7. Procedure for safeguarding concerns relating to parents or carers
 8. Other policies & procedures
- Appendix – Overarching Safeguarding Statement

1. Statement of policy

We comply with the ‘Working together to Safeguard Children’ 2018 and ‘London Child Protection Procedures’ 2017, including the Children Act 2004 and changes to practice in the light of Every Child Matters 2004.

We ensure that issues of child protection receive continuous attention and regularly review the way that we operate to support this principle. This policy is reviewed annually and when there are any changes in legislation.

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind.
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people with whom we come into contact, either because we care for them or because they are the children of service-users, and to behave in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount.
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them.
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and training for staff and volunteers.
- implementing an effective online safety policy.
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures.
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- recording information fully and accurately and storing it securely.
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice as appropriate with children, their families, staff and volunteers.
- using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately.
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

2. Types of abuse

Child abuse is generally divided into four categories:

1) Physical Abuse

Physical abuse 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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to, a child whom they are looking after. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick child.

Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

2) Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

3) *Sexual Abuse*

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, buggery or oral sex or non-penetrative acts such as fondling.

Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people and by all members of society, acting in a professional or private capacity.

4) *Neglect*

Neglect is 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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

3. **Recruitment of staff and volunteers**

- We will take all reasonable steps to ensure unsuitable individuals are prevented from having any involvement with the Parent House.
- Staff/volunteer recruitment and engagement procedures will include an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check for all personnel and will always include self-declaration and the use of references.
- All prospective staff/volunteers will be interviewed: for volunteers this need not be a formal interview. We will ensure that all staff and volunteers have appropriate qualifications and training in relation to child protection.

4. **Training and supervision of staff and volunteers**

- New staff and volunteers will have a designated person (supervisor) who will ensure that a proper induction takes place. The supervisor will provide regular support and supervision to the new member of staff and volunteer in all areas of their work including child protection.
- All new staff and volunteers will read and understand this policy as part of their induction process. Staff and volunteers will be able to identify the signs of abuse and will be confident about the steps to take and who to report any concerns.
- All staff and volunteers will attend external training on child protection, when possible. Until external training is possible, child protection training will be cascaded by supervisors/managers at the Parent House.
- Staff and volunteers affected by child protection issues are supported and, if necessary, advised to access counselling services.

5. **Crèche**

- All applicants for posts within our crèche are exempt from The Rehabilitation of Offenders' Act 1974 (that is, broadly, they are obliged to disclose any criminal convictions or cautions).
- The correct ratio of staff to children as stated in Ofsted guidelines will be maintained at all times.
- We work openly within the crèche. The layout of the crèche room ensures that there are no 'hidden areas.' Adults and children can be seen at all times.
- All crèche staff attend external safeguarding training at least every three years.
- There will be a minimum of two qualified adult crèche staff at all times.
- All crèche staff will be over the age of 18.
- We will respond to any suspicions of abuse. The child is our first concern. Any changes in behaviour or appearance will be investigated and recorded.

6. Procedure for safeguarding concerns relating to staff members or volunteers

- If an allegation of abuse is made in relation to any member of staff or volunteer (whether by a parent or carer by a member of staff or volunteer or by any other person), they will be interviewed immediately by the Crèche Safeguarding Lead or the Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate, and the Director; they should also have a representative in attendance. Records of this meeting will be kept on file and the staff member or volunteer may be suspended from work if an investigation is to follow. If the allegation relates to any member of the management team, then the interview will be carried out by members of the board of trustees.
- Social Services and Ofsted would be informed and updated throughout any of the above processes.

7. Procedure for safeguarding concerns relating to parents or carers

- If a safeguarding concern arises in relation to a parent, family member or caregiver, **we will ensure there is an immediate assessment of the concern.** The advice of the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Crèche Safeguarding Lead as appropriate will be sought immediately (failing them, the Director) and a decision made about any urgent child protection issues.
- If it is agreed that a referral is necessary, contact will be made with the Islington Children's Services Contact team or the Emergency Out of Hours team.
- The parent will be informed of the referral unless it is considered that further harm would come to the child as a result.
- Ongoing liaison may be required with Children's Services.
- If there are no immediate child protection concerns, the advice of the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Crèche Safeguarding Lead as appropriate will nevertheless be sought and it may be appropriate to offer ongoing support services to the family either at the Parent House or from another agency.
- All safeguarding concerns must be signed off by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Crèche Safeguarding Lead as appropriate and ongoing engagement with the family from the Parent House must be discussed.
- A record of all events and decisions will be kept, dated, and countersigned by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Crèche Safeguarding Lead as appropriate.
- If a mentor (a volunteer) is involved, she should also record information with assistance and support from her supervisor.

8. Related policies and procedures

There are a number of other relevant policies that are applicable to the Parent House as a whole and so are relevant to this policy. These include:

- Health & Safety policy
- Crèche policy
- Confidentiality policy
- Disclosure & barring service (DBS) policy
- Data Protection policy

APPENDIX

Overarching Safeguarding Statement

Definitions:

“**Parent House**” means The Parent House Trust.

“**Service-users**” means the parents and carers who use or receive the services of the Parent House.

“**Staff**” means everyone working with or for the Parent House who is remunerated, and also students on placement, whether or not they are remunerated.

“**Volunteers**” means everyone working with or for the Parent House who is not remunerated: Volunteers may be either “**Service-user volunteers**” or “**Non-Service-user volunteers**” (which includes trustees).

Safeguarding Statement

The Parent House is committed to safeguarding children and adults across the organisation. The welfare of parents and their children who come into contact with our services, either directly or indirectly, is paramount and all our staff and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure that best practice is followed, including compliance with statutory requirements.

All children, young people and vulnerable adults, have an equal right to protection from abuse, regardless of their age, race, religion, ability, gender, language, background or sexual identity.

We provide services across the Borough of Islington, and adhere to Islington’s Safeguarding Children Board and Safeguarding Adults Board arrangements.

We ensure that all staff and volunteers receive the right level of training relevant to their roles and responsibilities. We meet all statutory requirements in relation to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and pre-employment checks.

As part of the Parent House's commitment to safeguarding throughout our services, we have appointed staff members to the following roles (this list is also posted on the kitchen wall at the Parent House):

- Designated Safeguarding Lead – Jyoti Mayer
- Crèche Safeguarding Lead – Anita Bergstrom
- Safeguarding Manager – Gina Camputaro

We have also appointed a lead Parent House trustee for safeguarding and we have safeguarding policies for both vulnerable adults and children.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

All staff and volunteers are required to act in accordance with our Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy, and to act on any information that comes to their attention which gives reasonable grounds to suspect that an adult has been, is being, or could be, abused.

Any abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights. Abuse includes physical, sexual, psychological and financial abuse, material neglect and acts of omission, institutional, discriminatory abuse and self-neglect.

Safeguarding Vulnerable children

All children and young people who are cared for by the Parent House have the right to protection from neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility for the protection of children and for reporting concerns about the welfare or safety of any child cared for by the Parent House or whose parents are service-users.

All Parent House staff and volunteers who come into contact with children will:

- Be able to identify potential indicators of abuse or neglect,
- Have read and understood our safeguarding policies,
- Know their roles and responsibilities,
- Know how to communicate and record concerns,
- Know how to act upon concerns in line with the principles and procedures for local child protection management and ‘The Working Together to Safeguard Children’ guidelines.

Change Record

Date of Change	Changed by	Date approved by Trustees	Comments
18 January 2022	Trustees	18 January 2022	