

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Overview

Villiers Park Educational Trust carries out activities which bring our employees and people working on behalf of our organisation into regular contact with children and young people. Villiers Park Educational Trust believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. The Trustees have a legal duty to act prudently and in the best interests of these children and young people and the purpose of this policy is to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to protect them and keep them safe. It also provides employees, tutors, workers and volunteers whose duties bring them into contact with children and young people with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection. The policy refers to all such people regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief and age. Failure to comply with this policy will result in disciplinary action (for employees), and termination of the contract for workers or volunteers.

Definitions

A "child" is anyone under the age of 18.

For the purposes of this policy and procedures "young people" includes children and those aged 18 up to their 19th birthday who are still in full time education at school or in a sixth form college (but not those at university).

"Worker" is any freelance contractor, person seconded for a fixed term from another organisation, tutor, cleaning contractor's staff or temporary agency staff who is paid to undertake work on behalf of the Trust which brings them into contact with children or young people.

Legislation

There is a considerable body of legislation designed to ensure that children are protected and it is important to understand that everyone is responsible for the safety of children. The main acts, policies and guidance include:

- Protection of Children Act 1999
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Education Act 2002
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Education Act 2011
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 (Statutory Guidance)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People 2018 (Statutory Guidance)

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children's Act 1989
- All children regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, 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 them, listening to and respecting them
- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for children and young people and a Deputy for safeguarding
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff, workers and volunteers
- Developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and procedures
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures

- Recruiting staff safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely, and sharing safeguarding and good practice with children, their families, staff and volunteers via our website, posters and one-to-one discussions
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with schools and other relevant agencies, and involving children, young people, families and carers appropriately
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that our policy and procedure will help us to deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- 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

Communicating this policy and concerns

All employees, tutors, workers and volunteers at Villiers Park Educational Trust will be made aware of this policy, and a copy will be included in the Staff Handbook and Volunteer Handbook and given to partner organisations who work with young people on our behalf and contractors who provide on-site workers.

Furthermore, a copy of this policy will be given to all relevant bodies with whom we work if requested, and will be made available via our website to parents and carers of children/young persons with whom we plan to work.

Any concerns about this policy or people involved should be addressed to the Chief Executive or the Chair of Trustees.

Confidentiality

All information regarding young people is highly confidential and should only be shared with appropriate people on a need to know basis. There are specific guidelines for Learning Mentors and e-mentors. Information must be stored in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (May 2018) and the Trust's Data Protection Policy.

Breach of this policy

Failure to follow the guidelines in this policy is considered a serious offence and will be investigated thoroughly and dealt with through our disciplinary procedure. Serious breaches may lead to dismissal.

Implementation, monitoring and review of this policy

This revised policy will take effect from **23 March 2020**. The Trustees have overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy, which will be reviewed on a regular basis following its implementation (at least annually) and additionally whenever there are relevant changes in legislation or to our working practices. The Designated Safeguarding Officer, or their deputy, will monitor the effective implementation of this policy by annually reviewing a sample of risk assessments and will audit child protection data practices for all locations in which we work with young people.

Contact Details

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Based at Foxton

Name: Deborah Richardson Phone: Internal 207

Mobile: 07593 021212

Email: dr@villierspark.org.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Foxton

Name: Sam Wainwright? Email: sam.wainwright@villierspark.org.uk

Deputy Safeguarding Lead - Hastings and Bexhill

Name: Alex Grant Email: ag@villierspark.org.uk

Deputy Safeguarding Lead - Swindon

Name: Becki Martin Email: rm@villierspark.org.uk

Deputy Safeguarding Lead - Tyneside

Name: Jack Healy Email: jack.healy@villierspark.org.uk

Trustee Lead for Safeguarding

Reporting Procedure

1. All Safeguarding concerns should be recorded on the appropriate form and emailed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at Villiers Park
2. Depending upon the severity of the concern the DSL will contact the Trustee Lead for Safeguarding to discuss a course of action
3. If the DSL is unavailable the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) in the relevant region should deputise as required.

Other Relevant Organisations

Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) - Local Safeguarding Partners consisting of The Local Authority, the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Chief of Police of the area police force

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command, CEOP
www.ceop.police.uk

NSPCC Helpline
0800 800 5000

Recruitment, Induction and Training

Those who are involved in situations where they have a sustained or prolonged unsupervised access to children are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders legislation. This means that prospective employees, workers and volunteers must declare all criminal convictions, however long ago; and these will be taken into account when deciding on their suitability for working with children.

No-one will be permitted to undertake a role which involves regular contact with children or young people without a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check. All staff also have to undertake the NSPCC online course *Child Protection in Schools* and an E-learning training on *Prevent* provided by the Home Office as an introduction to the Prevent duty to safeguard vulnerable young people from being radicalised to support terrorism or becoming a terrorist themselves. As part of their induction all staff, workers and volunteers will be instructed on their safeguarding and child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has concerns about a young person's safety or welfare as outlined in this document. Regular updating and training will be provided during the year as and when relevant.

Senior members of staff who interview on a regular basis are required to undertake the NSPCC online *Safer Recruitment in Education* course.

Planning and Supervision of Activities

All activities or assignments involving young people must be planned in advance to ensure they take into account the age range and ability of the participants and a risk assessment produced. Employees, tutors, volunteers or workers teaching, supervising and working with young people must be competent and trained to do so. Supervision must take account of the age, gender, nature of the activity and any special needs of the individuals.

- Lone Working

All employees, tutors, volunteers or workers should avoid working alone with a young person wherever possible. You should plan your work so that at least two adults are present at any time, where possible including a Villiers Park Educational Trust employee. If this is not possible, for example in one-to-one mentoring, ideally you should move to a workstation where you and the young person can both be seen by other colleagues or other adults e.g. through the glass panel of an office door. If this is not possible another adult should be made aware of the location of your meeting(s).

- External Providers and Off-site Activities

If other organisations provide services or activities on our site we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures. As part of our risk assessment, when the young people in our care attend off-site activities but excluding public events such as a theatre visit, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place. An external provider without a DBS check must never be left alone with our young people.

Safety

The safety of the people we work with is paramount and we are therefore committed to providing a safe environment within which to work. Those working with young people should ensure all appropriate risk assessments and security checks have been carried out prior to any assignment. This should include DBS checks, first aid cover and accident reporting.

If transporting young people, the transport should be checked to ensure that the drivers have a DBS certificate and that the coach or taxi is roadworthy and adequate for the purpose. Only coach companies whose coaches have seatbelts should be used. Any equipment used must be safe and only used for the purpose for which it is intended. Users should be adequately trained.

Employees should never transport a young person(s) in their private vehicle except in extreme circumstances and only on the authority of their line manager. In such circumstances they must be accompanied by another responsible adult who could either be an employee of Villiers Park or a member of staff from the young person's school and have appropriate up-to-date insurance with business cover.

Before a young person attends an activity, information is received by Villiers Park about their dietary requirements, any disabilities, medical conditions or other issues. Members of the

Education team work with the other staff and young people attending the activity or event to ensure that individuals are kept safe and are not discriminated against.

Photography and images

Only designated employees of Villiers Park Educational Trust should take photographs and videos of the young people in our care. To protect these young people we will:

- seek parental consent and/or, if over 16 years, the consent of the young people for photographs and videos to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications or with certain third parties and organisations)
- never allow organisations working with us to take photographs for their own use without the written consent of parents or students if over 16 years old.
- encourage young people to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

Physical contact

On no account must any employee, tutor, worker or volunteer have any physical contact with a young person unless it is to prevent accident or injury to themselves or anyone else, (e.g. to prevent a fall), or in the case of medical assistance being needed (e.g. to administer first aid) in which case the prior consent of the affected person should be requested where possible.

If a young person is hurt or distressed, you should do your best to comfort or reassure the affected person without compromising his/her dignity or doing anything to discredit your own behaviour.

Communication

Where appropriate, consent from parents or those with parental or caring responsibility must be obtained. Communication with young people is vital in establishing relationships built on trust. Those working with young people should listen to what they are saying, and respond appropriately. Young people are entitled to the same respect as any employees, workers and volunteers. It should also be made clear to them what standards of behaviour and mutual respect are expected from them.

Those working with young people must behave appropriately, ensure that language is moderated in their presence and must refrain from adult jokes or comments which are clearly unsuitable.

Contact must not be made with any of the young people with whom we are working for any reason unrelated to the particular project. In particular, staff are required to do everything to maintain our reputation for integrity and responsibility in dealing with young people, and must not enter into any social or other non-work related arrangements with them.

Use of Mobile Telephones

Employees should never contact a student by mobile telephone unless in a crisis or emergency and only as a final resort i.e. a student does not arrive back to a meeting point during a visit. Scholars should only be contacted through VP Mail or via their school/college. Mobile telephones should not be used to send reminders about appointments.

If an employee has to contact a student on their mobile telephone, they should first ask the permission of their line manager and have a witness whilst making the call. A follow up message to the relevant student(s) should be sent by VP Mail if it is a Scholar and by email if it is a student on an IEP course to confirm that the telephone conversation took place and why. Failure to follow this procedure will lead to disciplinary action.

Use of Social Media

For the purposes of this policy, social media refers to web based social networks, internet forums and blogs, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat. Given the rapid expansion of social media, it is impossible to list all possible types of media as they are constantly evolving and multiplying.

Staff, volunteers and contracted workers should assume that all online activity is covered by this policy and should follow these guidelines in relation to any social media that they use, both at work and to an extent in their personal situation.

While acknowledging the benefits of social media and the internet it is also important to recognise that risk to the safety and well-being of users is ever-changing and that the misuse/abuse of these facilities can range from inappropriate to criminal.

When using social media whether at work or outside of work staff should:

- Never share work log-in details or passwords
- Never share personal telephone numbers, email addresses, or other personal data with young people
- Never disclose any information confidential to Villiers Park to third parties
- Never publish material that is illegal
- Set privacy settings to private, friends only etc. to restrict access to certain groups of people on their social media sites and pages.

They should maintain appropriate boundaries and manage personal information effectively so that it cannot be misused by third parties e.g. for 'cyber-bullying' or identity theft.

All staff are personally responsible for what they communicate on social media. Often materials published will be accessible by the public and will remain accessible for a long time.

Staff are prohibited from and should not make 'friends' with the young people we work because this could potentially be construed as 'grooming', nor should they accept invitations to become a 'friend' of any young person.

Staff should keep any communications with young people transparent and professional and should only use their work laptop, mobile phone or VP Mail for communications.

Gifts and inducements

On no account should anyone from Villiers Park Educational Trust give a child/young person a gift or buy refreshments for example which could be in any way considered as a bribe or inducement to enter into a relationship with the Villiers Park Educational Trust person or give rise to any false allegations of improper conduct against the individual.

Behaviour and Abuse

We should all aim to promote an environment of trust and understanding. Those working with young people should not tolerate unsociable behaviour but should try to ensure good working relationships.

What is abuse?

All staff, tutors, volunteers and workers have a strict duty never to subject any young person to any form of harm or abuse. This also applies to student on student issues/ incidents.

There are four types of abuse: **physical, sexual, emotional and neglect**. This means that it is unacceptable for example to treat a young person in the following ways:

- to slap, shake, squeeze, throw, burn, scald, bite or cut them
- to hold them in such a way that it causes pain,
- to physically restrain them except to protect them from harming themselves or others
- to cause distress by shouting or calling them derogatory names
- to take part in horseplay or rough games
- to allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind
- to do things of a personal nature for the person that they can do for themselves – i.e. includes changing clothing, or going to the toilet with them unless with another adult
- to allow or engage in sexually suggestive behaviour with a young person or within their sight or hearing, or make suggestive remarks to them
- to give or show anything which could be construed as pornographic
- to seek or agree to meet them anywhere beyond the normal workplace without the full prior knowledge and agreement of the parent, guardian or carer.

Bullying and Cyber Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts the victims either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms and is often motivated by prejudice against a particular group, for example, on grounds of race, religion, background, physical disability or medical conditions.

All forms of bullying are unacceptable. It is the responsibility of the Trustees of Villiers Park Educational Trust to take measures to prevent and tackle bullying amongst children and young people on their premises and at external events.

Cyberbullying is an increasingly common form of bullying behaviour which happens on social networks, games and mobile phones. Cyberbullying includes:

- sending threatening or abusive text messages

- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- 'trolling' – the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms, online games
- excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- setting up sites or groups about a child
- encouraging young people to self-harm
- voting for against someone in an abusive poll
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble for them
- sending explicit messages
- pressurising young people into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations

Procedure for Reporting a Concern about a Young Person

Ways in which a concern might be brought to your attention

- A young person might make a direct disclosure about themselves
- A young person might make a direct disclosure about another child
- A young person might offer information that is worrying but not a direct disclosure
- You might be concerned about a young person's appearance or behaviour
- You might be concerned about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person
- An adult might make a disclosure about abuse that a young person is suffering or is at risk of suffering
- An adult offer information about a young person that is worrying but not a direct disclosure

If a young person discloses personal information to you or you have information or concerns about abusive behaviour towards a young person it is your responsibility to report it to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) of Villiers Park Educational Trust.

How to talk to a young person who has made a disclosure to you

- Remain, calm, approachable and receptive
- Listen carefully without interrupting. Do not try to investigate or quiz them but make sure that they are clear about what they are saying
- Be understanding and reassure them that they have done the right thing
- Tell them that you now have to do what you can to keep them (or the young person who is subject to abuse) safe
- Let the young person know what you are going to do next and who else needs to be informed – you cannot promise confidentiality

Helping a young person in immediate danger

- If the young person is with you, remain with them and call the police
- If the young person is elsewhere contact the police and explain the situation
- If the young person needs medical attention, call an ambulance and while waiting for it to arrive get help from a first aider if you are in a school/college or Villiers Park
- You also need to contact your line manager or the Designated Safeguarding Officer

A decision will be made about when and who should inform the young person's family and the local authority social services department and the next course of action by the relevant DSO. The welfare of the young person is of the highest priority when making decisions.

Once any immediate danger or medical emergency has been dealt with follow the steps set out in the flowchart at the end of this document. You have a right to enquire that the incident has been followed up with the relevant agencies resulting in action to protect the young person.

Supporting Employees

If an employee is affected by a disclosure or abusive behaviour you have witnessed, they should discuss this with the DSL who will offer advice and guidance on how to receive appropriate support.

Completing a Report of Record of Concern

- You must write careful notes of the facts on what you witnessed, heard or were told on the Record of Concern and email it, password protected to the DSO only within 24 hours. You must also notify the DSO by telephone call or text immediately that you have a concern. The DSO will be responsible for contacting the Designated Safeguarding Officer in the child's school and if necessary the local Safeguarding Children's Board and/or the police.
- If the concern or disclosure takes place in the young person's school then it should be reported to the DSO in the school immediately or within one working day and you will be

expected to complete a detailed report for the school. A Record of Concern should also be completed for Villiers Park records and other relevant partners.

It is NOT our responsibility to investigate our suspicions – this requires expertise we are not expected to have, our role is to report only.

Investigation Process for Allegations against Villiers Park Employees and Volunteers

- Once the details of any allegations have been completed and passed on to the relevant DSLs within one working day, they must be reported immediately to the Chief Executive of Villiers Park Educational Trust.
- If the concern or allegations do not involve an employee of Villiers Park Educational Trust or someone working on their behalf, it is up to the school, local children's authority or police to investigate the allegations further.
- If the concerns or allegations involve an employee or someone working on behalf of Villiers Park Educational Trust, then an internal investigation will be carried out by the Chief Executive who may then decide to refer it to the Police. The internal investigation must take place immediately or within one working day of the reporting of the concern or allegations.
- The person subject to the allegations will be informed as soon as possible, given an explanation of the process and any support and advice available to them.
- The Trust DSL or Chief Executive will inform the local Safeguarding Children's Board within one working day of all allegations against an adult that are brought to the attention of the Trust or that are made directly to the police.
- Once an internal investigation has taken place and a course of action decided upon, the person in question will be informed of the outcome. If it is a member of staff or a volunteer it may result in their immediate dismissal. Contractors/ external workers may have their contract terminated.
- In the instance that an employee or volunteer is dismissed because they pose a risk of harm to children/ young people a referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service who will consider whether to add the individual to the barred list.

Management of Retention of Record of Concerns and Data Protection

Retention of Records of Concerns of Abuse towards a Young Person

All concerns and incidents involving a young person should be reported on the relevant form from the DSO at Villiers Park Educational Trust and/or the school/college and returned to the named individuals.

Villiers Park has a designated Safeguarding drive for storing confidential and sensitive information which is accessed by the DSL and the Deputy DSL.

Records of any concerns and incidents will be kept for 50 years after our last contact with the young person.

Retention of Records of Concern about an Employee or Volunteer's Behaviour towards a Young Person

Records relating to concerns or allegations about an employee or volunteer will be kept in the person's confidential personnel file and a copy given to the individual. Records will be kept until the person reaches retirement age or for 10 years whichever is longer.

Records will be kept for the same amount of time even if the allegations were unfounded or if the person leaves the organisation.

If the allegations are malicious they will be destroyed immediately.

Related In-house Documents

- Code of Practice for Learning Mentors (Villiers Park Educational Trust Learning Mentor Handbook)
- Code of Behaviour for Adults Working with Young People
- Data Protection Policy (Staff Handbook Section 16)
- Privacy Policy (available on website)
- IT and Computer Use Policy (Staff Handbook Section 15)
- Whistleblowing Policy (Staff Handbook Section 17)
- Complaints Procedure (Staff Handbook Section 27 and on website)

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed by the Trustees on **11 March 2020**

Signed.....

Position.....

Flow Chart

Member of staff has concerns about a young person's safety or welfare



Member of staff makes notes of their concerns using the relevant Record of Concern form(s) and discusses them with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in the young person's school and at Villiers Park or at relevant University partner. In most cases the role of the DSL at Villiers Park and a University ends here.



If the young person's family does not already know about the concern, the DSL of the young person's school will discuss it with the family.



If there is still uncertainty about the concerns, the school DSL will decide whether to discuss it with the local authority's children care department or the NSPCC Helpline without disclosing the identity of young person.

**Concerned**

The school DSL refers to local Safeguarding Children's Board and confirms in writing within 24 hours. The police may also be informed.

**No longer concerned**

No further child protection needed. The school DSL and, if relevant, Villiers Park DSL or University partner DSL discuss actions to ensure the young person's needs are being met elsewhere.