



cygnets

CYGNETS is a not-for-profit group developing skills in the performing arts, providing performance opportunities, and using theatre, music and dance to increase confidence, improve self-esteem and aid personal and social development

BEHAVIOUR CODE OF PRACTICE FOR ADULTS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 CYGNETS recognises that it has a commitment to ensure that all volunteers have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities when working with children/young people. This policy will aid everyone to:
- have an understanding of the potential risks to themselves, and ensure good practice is adhered to at all times;
 - recognise signs of improper behaviour from others, and take appropriate action;
 - be protected against allegations of abuse;
 - be able to recognise the different signs of abuse, and what appropriate course of action should be taken in these circumstances.
- 1.2 Adults within CYGNETS have the responsibility to recognise, and respond to, safeguarding situations and concerns appropriately. As such, this policy affects all personnel, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of the organisation. They will be referred to throughout as volunteers.
- 1.3 It is the duty of anyone undertaking to care for a young person to ensure physical and mental health and wellbeing of the young person from all reasonably foreseeable risk.
- 1.4 The terms 'child' and 'children/young people' are used throughout the document, but this policy relates to anyone under 18 years of age. It is important that CYGNETS ensures all volunteers recognise their responsibilities and refer to this policy while developing awareness of safeguarding issues.

- 1.5 It is impossible to ensure that no incidents occur whilst a young person is in contact with a volunteer or an activity arranged by CYGNETS. However, implementing this policy and following the guidelines enables our volunteers to undertake their work confidently, knowing that they have taken all reasonable precautions to prevent harm occurring whilst prepared to deal with an incident should it occur.
- 1.6 We aim to make volunteers aware of their individual responsibilities and what to do if they suspect or have evidence of any form of abuse or neglect taking place against a child or young person with whom they have **contact**.
- 1.7 We also aim to make volunteers aware of the procedures and rights where abuse has been alleged against them.

2. Our Approach

- 2.1 Through this Policy we aim to adopt the highest possible standards and take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of the children/young people with whom we come into contact in relation to our work within CYGNETS.
- 2.2 It is the responsibility of all CYGNETS volunteers to do their best to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children/young people and to report any abuse, alleged or suspected.
- 2.3 CYGNETS will respond without delay to any complaints made that a child or young person, for whom we have come into contact with, may have been harmed.
- 2.4 CYGNETS will satisfy themselves as to the suitability of any person applying to take on any role where contact with children/young people is possible. DBS checks will be mandatory for all volunteers who have regular or unsupervised contact with the children or young people.

3. Golden Rule – Safety in Numbers

- 3.1 in as many situations as possible we should aim to ensure that no adult is in a one to one situation with a child. Safety in numbers should be the golden rule, whether the numbers are other children/young people or adults.
- 3.2 Volunteers should endeavour to be aware of situations that can be misconstrued or manipulated by others.

4. Those working with children / young people must...

- 4.1 Be professional and maintain the highest standards of personal behaviour at all times, giving an example we would wish others to follow. Remember that children/young people regard adults as role models and ensure your behaviour, language, gestures etc. are appropriate and above reproach.
- 4.2 Take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any child in contact with CYGNETS.
- 4.3 Prevent any other member of CYGNETS from putting any child in a situation in which there is a significant risk to their health and safety. Take appropriate action if you become aware of anyone physically, emotionally or sexually abusing a child or acting in ways that might be misconstrued.
- 4.4 Treat all young people with respect and dignity, whilst encouraging respect and care for others.
- 4.5 Respect a child's/young person's right to personal privacy.
- 4.6 Provide time for children/young people to talk to us.
- 4.7 Remember to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) of any suspicions or allegations about abuse if appropriate.
- 4.8 As far as is possible conduct all dealings with children/young people in a public environment in full view of others, in order that all behaviour can be observed
- 4.9 Report any concerns within the area of Safeguarding (physical, emotional, sexual or neglect) in confidence and without delay, to the designated DSL. This includes issues of bullying. Volunteers will not, at any time, discuss an allegation or suspicion with another person.
- 4.10 When reporting an allegation or suspicion record information, including relevant details. This includes the nature of the allegation, background information of the parties involved, the period of time to which the allegation relates and the degree to which the information is known to be fact rather than opinion or hearsay.
- 4.11 At no time make comment to the media. The DSL and Chairman should be made aware of any media interest in relation to this policy.
- 4.12 Be identifiable - wear a form of identification at all times.

- 4.13 Obtain written consent from parent(s) or guardian for permission when children/young people are under 18 years to use IT equipment, access the Internet and for the taking of photographs or video for publicity purposes.
- 4.14 Obtain written consent from parent(s) or guardian when children/young people are under 18 years of age are to participate in supervised off-site activities and events without the presence of the parent/guardian. DBS Chaperones will be provided where necessary, as required by legislation.
- 4.15 Be aware of safeguarding issues in relation to work and do not become complacent and believe it could never happen to me". Be aware that, someone else might misinterpret our actions even if they are well intentioned.

5. Those working with children/young people must not engage in any of the following:

- 5.1 Physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any child or young or vulnerable person.
- 5.2 Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person.
- 5.3 Sexual relationships with young people under our responsibility even if they consent.
- 5.4 Let allegations a child makes be ignored or go unrecorded. Volunteers should not jump to conclusions without checking facts, while ensuring that allegations of child abuse are not exaggerated or trivialised.
- 5.5 Make inappropriate or intrusive touching of any form.
- 5.6 Do things of a personal nature for a child that they can do themselves. It may occasionally be necessary for volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children/young person, particularly if they are very young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out under full consent from the parent/carer. If an emergency occurs that requires this type of help without prior consent, the parent/carer must be fully informed as soon as possible.
- 5.7 Ask young people to partake in activities that are potentially dangerous, illegal or unreasonable.
- 5.8 Take children/young people into a volunteer's home. Never enter a house when a child is alone. Children/young people should only be taken alone in a vehicle in an extreme emergency. Never arrange to meet a child alone outside CYGNETS, without parents' consent.

6. Definitions of Abuse

- 6.1 The definitions below are based on those from the NSPCC website (see **reference** given in 14.2) and with reference to Working Together to Safeguard Children/young person (Department of Health, Home Office, Department of Education and Employment, 1999). They are intended to ensure that all volunteers have has a comprehensive understanding of their responsibilities when working with children/young person. They should allow volunteers to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse.
- 6.2 It is generally accepted that there are five main categories of abuse.
- Physical
 - Sexual
 - Emotional;
 - Neglect.
 - Bullying

7. Physical Abuse

- 7.1 Physical abuse can involve the actual, or likely, physical injury to a child from actions such as hitting, burning, shaking, throwing and suffocating. It can also be the deliberate poisoning of a child, whose symptoms or physical signs have been secretly induced by a parent(s) or carer. This is known as fabricated illness.
- 7.2 It is sometimes difficult to spot non-accidental injuries, as most cuts and bruises are part and parcel of everyday life.
- 7.3 Some physical signs to be aware of:
- Injuries that the child cannot explain, or explains unconvincingly;
 - cuts, bruises and burns situated on parts of the body where accidental injury is unlikely, such as cheeks, thighs;
 - bruising that resembles hand or finger-prints;
 - cigarette burns;
 - bite marks.
- 7.4 Behavioural signs to be aware of:
- fear of the parent/carer being approached about injuries;
 - covering arms and legs, even in hot weather, unless for religious reasons;
 - fear of going home;
 - flinching when touched or approached;
 - depression or mood swings that are out of character.

8. Sexual Abuse

- 8.1 Sexual abuse involves an adult enticing a child to take part in sexual activities to which the child cannot give their consent because of their dependency on adults. This can include direct actions, such as genital or anal sexual contact, and penetrative acts, such as rape, buggery and oral sex. Indirect actions can include showing a child pornographic material, genital exposure, and encouraging children/young person to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- 8.2 Some physical signs to be aware of:
- pain, itching, bruising or bleeding to genital or anal areas;
 - stomach pains or discomfort when the child is walking or sitting;
 - sexually transmitted diseases.
- 8.3 Some behavioural signs to be aware of:
- sexually explicit behaviour, including the use of inappropriate language;
 - sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour;
 - reluctance to change clothes for sports etc unless for religious reasons;
 - fear of being left with a specific person.

9. Emotional Abuse

- 9.1 Emotional abuse can involve cases where the parent carer shows a persistent lack of affection and/or basic emotional care. Emotional abuse can have a severe impact on the child's/young person's behaviour and/or physical development. A child may be constantly threatened, taunted, or shouted at, leading to the child becoming withdrawn and nervous. This can also result **from excessive over-protection** and unrealistic pressure to succeed. However, some children/young person are naturally shy and withdrawn, and it is important not to confuse this with abuse.
- 9.2 Some physical signs to be aware of:
- delayed emotional or physical development;
 - sudden speech disorders;
 - failure to thrive and grow.
- 9.3 Some behavioural signs to be aware of:
- self-harming;
 - excessive need for approval, attention and affection;
 - incontinence;
 - reports of young people frequently visiting a particular home;
 - excessive lack of confidence.

10. Neglect

- 10.1 Neglect is the failure to meet a child's/young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, including failure to protect the child from any danger, such as cold or starvation. This can result in a significant impairment in a child's/young person's health or development. Neglect can also involve children/young person being left unsupervised or unattended.
- 10.2 Some physical signs to be aware of:
- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from others;
 - loss of weight;
 - dirty/smelly;
 - untreated medical conditions - injuries and illnesses.
- 10.3 Some behavioural signs to be aware of:
- Constant tiredness;
 - Hardly any friends;
 - Compulsive scavenging;
 - Left alone or unsupervised regularly.

11. Bullying

- 11.1 Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, including physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group) and Cyber (through social media and other technological means).
- 11.2 The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, cause them significant harm (including self-harm). All settings in which children are provided with services or are living away from home should have in place rigorously enforced anti-bullying strategies
- 11.3 Some physical signs to be aware of:
- Belongings getting "lost" or damaged
 - physical injuries such as unexplained bruises
- 11.4 Some behavioural signs to be aware of:
- Not joining in or achieving as much as usual
 - Asking for or stealing money (to give to bully)
 - Being nervous, losing confidence or becoming distressed or withdrawn
 - Bullying others

12. All planned contact with a child/young person should include:

- 12.1 A clear purpose;
- 12.2 Information to be gathered, shared and discussed by all involved in planning of the event prior to the date;
- 12.3 Reference to any immediate concerns, including missed contacts and how these issues will be addressed.
- 12.4 Other methods of controlling the situation have been tried and failed.

Further information can be found on NSPCC Website, see Reference section.

13. Use of information relating to children/young people

- 13.1 Information about children/young person e.g. name and address must be treated confidentially. It must be kept securely, stored only as long as necessary and disposed of in a way which maintains their confidentiality (use of a cross shredder to be the preferred method).

14. Working Practices

- 14.1 All referrals to external agencies concerning the well-being of a child/young person must be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.
- 14.2 Service requests relating to the well-being of children/young person are given equal weight regardless of whether the contact is from an identified or anonymous source.
- 14.3 It is the responsibility of the all personnel to ensure that work involving contact with children/young person is planned and managed in accordance with this policy.
- 14.4 During an investigation due regard will be paid to the rights of the vulnerable child; the person alleged to have carried out the abuse and the **person making** the allegation (if it is not the person being abused). All those involved can expect to be treated in a fair and unbiased way and to receive the appropriate level of support and information throughout the investigation. Confidentiality will be maintained except where, in the broader public interest and duty of care, the information needs to be shared with statutory bodies or other persons/organisations.
- 14.5 Where a volunteer is involved in an allegation of abuse the CYGNETS Disciplinary and Grievance Policy and Procedures in relation to gross misconduct should be invoked. In

serious cases this could involve immediate suspension of a volunteer; in less grave instances it could be sufficient to ensure that the person concerned does not work with vulnerable adults or the vulnerable individual concerned.

- 14.6 Where the alleged perpetrator is not a volunteer the responsible person should contact the DSL or Duty Manager at Children/young person Services or call the police.

15. Equality and Diversity

15. 1 We aim to be an Organisation that values, recognises and responds to the diverse needs of members and those we serve. We adhere to the Equality Act 2010 and will not discriminate against any person or other organisation with particular reference to the protected characteristics.

16. References

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-childrenand-young-people/safeguarding-children-and-young-people>

[https://www.ncl.ac.uk/studentambassadors/assets/documents/NSPC
CDefinitionsandsignsofchildabuse.pdf](https://www.ncl.ac.uk/studentambassadors/assets/documents/NSPC%20Definitionsandsignsofchildabuse.pdf)

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