

Climate Ed

Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy

Statement of Intent

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and session workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of the charity.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect children and young people who receive the charity's services.
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

We understand that everyone is responsible for safeguarding children and promoting children's welfare. Therefore, to fulfil this responsibility, we adopt a child-centred approach and always consider what is in the best interests of each child. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

We believe that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. However, we understand that abuse may happen at any time, in any place, including online. Therefore we are committed to ensuring our safeguarding policy and processes are reviewed annually and updated to ensure they are robust and effective.

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up based on law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0 to 25 years – statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities: HM Government 2014
- Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers: HM Government 2015
- Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children: HM Government 2015
- As we work closely with school organisations: Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020).

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communications need or other issues.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
- Rather than duplicating content from Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020) in this policy, it should be understood that Climate Ed will always refer to KCSIE as the benchmark for all safeguarding practice and decision-making within an educational setting.

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, a Deputy and a Lead Board Member for safeguarding.
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all safeguarding checks are made.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely.
- 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.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us 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.

Contact Details

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO): Ben Cuddon, email: contact@climateed.net

Board member with responsibility for safeguarding: Victoria Harrison

Deputy board member with responsibility for safeguarding: Claire Gilbert

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually. In addition, safeguarding is included on the agenda of every board meeting.

This policy was last reviewed on 23/9/2024

Safer Recruitment, Induction and Training

- All paid staff and volunteers with access to children and young people or sensitive information relating to children will be required to have an enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check dated within three years.
- Staff and volunteers working directly with children or with access to sensitive information will be required to complete Child Protection Training. Their training will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.
- All staff and volunteers will be required to read the Safeguarding Policy. This will be reviewed to ensure that their knowledge is up to date.
- All staff and volunteers will complete an application form. This will include details of all previous employment, details of any conviction for criminal offences including spent convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, agreement for an enhanced DBS check, permission to contact 2 referees, including their current or most recent employer.
- The potential staff member or volunteer will be interviewed for their suitability by a nominated person from within Climate Ed.
- The interview panel must consist of at least one member of staff who has successfully undergone safer recruitment training, (to be retaken every 5 years).
- Staff and volunteers will be subject to a probationary period during which time they will be supervised and have regular meetings with their manager/supervisor to identify and concerns and training & support needs.
- Staff and volunteers will have a period of induction during which they will complete any induction training and familiarise themselves with internal policies.
- All staff and volunteers with access to children will be briefed on reporting/disclosure processes and escalation, and correct use of the Climate Ed safeguarding reporting form.

Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers

- All staff should avoid ever being alone with an individual child. Wherever possible interviews or work with individual children or parents should be conducted in view of other adults.
- Guidance about the code of conduct and safer working practice, including the safe use of mobile phones, media and off site activities by staff and volunteers will be given at induction.
- Staff or volunteers who have concerns about another staff member should immediately inform their line manager or a member of the safeguarding team.
- If their concern is regarding their line manager, they should go directly to the safeguarding team. Any concern regarding one of the safeguarding officers should be reported to the Chair of Trustees.
- All concerns can be reported with reference to the complaints policy.
- The safeguarding team will liaise with local authorities, police and other professionals as appropriate for advice and guidance to adequately address any concerns.
- If an allegation is made, the member of staff may be disciplined or suspended as appropriate. Support will however be given to the member of staff should an allegation be made.
- The member of staff will be kept informed of the process and any investigation will be carried out in a timely manner.

Recording, Storing and Sharing Information

The charity will apply the following principles:

- Ensure it has named safeguarding staff who have undertaken appropriate Safeguarding (Child Protection) training, which is up to date.
- Appoint a Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) (DSO) and a designated Board member with responsibility for safeguarding.
- Ensure that designated staff will take advice from a Safeguarding (Child Protection) Specialist when managing complex cases.
- There is a requirement to distinguish between fact, hearsay and opinion. There is also a need to ensure that opinions expressed are relevant to the situation, respectful and appropriate in tone. The charity will investigate any issues or concerns immediately.
- In cases of poorly explained serious injuries or where behaviour arouses suspicion, the DSO will consult with the relevant statutory authority, for example the local Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- The charity will keep written, signed and dated records detailing any allegation and action taken as near to the time of disclosure as possible, even when no investigation is undertaken. Verbal referrals will be followed up in writing within 24 hours.
- The Safeguarding Lead will keep all records on file in a secure locked filing cabinet or secure ICT system and share concerns in accordance with information sharing protocols.
- The Safeguarding Lead will retain all records in accordance with the charity's policy on retention of records.

Dealing with Disclosures about a Child or Young Person

Anyone conducting an interview with a child who discloses abuse, will do so in accordance with the following guidelines:

DO . . .

Do treat any allegation seriously and act at all times towards the child as if you believe what they are saying.

Do tell the child that they are right to tell you.

Do reassure them that they are not to blame.

Do tell the child what you are doing, when and who you will have to tell, and keep them up to date with what is happening.

Do take further action – you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse – tell your nominated person immediately.

Do make a record of the discussion and include time, place, persons present and what was said.

Do use the child's language when recording their account of events, do not substitute words.

Don't . . .

Don't coach or prompt the child to say something they weren't going to.

Don't make promises you can't keep.

Don't interrogate the child – it is not your job to carry out an investigation – this is the role of the police or social workers who have experience in this area.

Don't cast doubt on what the child has told you, don't interrupt them or change the subject.

Don't say anything that makes the child feel responsible for the abuse.

Don't take photographs of any injury.

Don't do nothing – make sure you inform a member of the safeguarding team immediately – they will know what action to take and where to go for further advice.

The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) will be a senior member of staff from the charity's leadership team. The DSO will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. This will be explicit within the post holder's job description.

The DSO will have the appropriate status and authority within the charity to carry out the duties of the post. They will be given the time, funding, training resources and support to:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters.
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or to support other staff to do so.
- Contribute to the assessment of children.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will be expected to:

- Refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care as required.
- Support staff who make referrals to the local authority children's social care.
- Make appropriate referrals to the Channel programme where there is concern of radicalisation.
- Make appropriate referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service where a person has been dismissed or left due to risk or harm to a child.
- Make appropriate referrals to the police where a crime has been committed.
- Liaise with the case manager and the designated officer(s) at the local authority over child protection concerns and any case which involves a member of staff.
- Liaise with staff on all matters of safety and safeguarding and to provide staff with support, advice and expertise.
- Liaise with relevant agencies when deciding whether to make a referral.

Raising Awareness

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will:

- Ensure that the charity's safeguarding policies are known, understood and used appropriately.
- Ensure that the charity's safeguarding policy is reviewed annually, and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly.
- Ensure that the safeguarding policy is made publicly available.
- Liaise with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to ensure that staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding.

Definitions of Abuse

There are four recognised types of abuse. It is important to know what they are and how to recognise them. Most types of child abuse can take one, or several of these forms, for example bullying and domestic violence are often both physical and emotional forms of abuse.

Physical Abuse

This is when a child is hurt or injured by a child or an adult. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It includes giving a child harmful drugs or alcohol. Female genital mutilation is a form of physical abuse which is illegal in the UK. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child they are looking after.

Emotional Abuse

This is when adults deny children love or affection, or constantly threaten or humiliate them. Sarcasm, degrading punishments and ignoring a child are also forms of emotional abuse and undermine a child's confidence and sense of self-worth. Emotional abuse is 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 serious 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

This is when a child is used sexually by an adult or young person. Sexual abuse can include kissing, touching the child's genitals or breasts, vaginal or anal intercourse and oral sex. Encouraging a child to look at pornographic magazines or videos is also sexual abuse. Sexual abuse includes sexual exploitation, such as forcing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people.

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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born 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, failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers) 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.

Possible Signs of Abuse

Signs of Physical Abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries in places on the body which are not normally exposed to falls or games
- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Bruises consistent with hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching)
- Cigarette burns
- Bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds

- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Undernourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, such as wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Depression
- Withdrawn behaviour
- Running away from home

Signs of Emotional Abuse

The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- A failure to thrive or grow particularly if a child puts on weight in other environments, eg in hospital or away from their parents' care
- Sudden speech disorders
- Persistent tiredness
- Development delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Being unable to play
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Fear of making mistakes
- Self-harm
- Fear of parent being approached about their behaviour

Signs of Sexual Abuse

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital or anal area
- Bruising or bleeding near the genital or anal areas
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, eg becoming withdrawn or aggressive
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares
- Running away from home
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
- Sexual drawing or language
- Bed wetting
- Eating problems such as over-eating or anorexia
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- Substance or drug abuse
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money or expensive gifts
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- Acting in an inappropriate sexually explicit way with adults

Signs of Neglect

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- Constantly dirty or smelly
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- Having few friends
- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised