

## **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures**

### **1 Introduction**

Discover is committed to safeguarding all children and young people that come into contact with our work. We believe that all children have an equal right to protection from abuse, emotional abuse and neglect regardless of their age, race, religion, ability, gender, language, background or sexual identity and consider the welfare of the child to be paramount.

This policy is designed to work in parallel with Discover's Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities Policies and Child Photography guidelines. Discover complies with all the legal obligations placed upon it by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (England and Wales)

- 1.1** This document outlines the principles, policy and procedures which need to be followed by all staff and volunteers working with children at or on behalf of Discover. The appendices provide guidance for best practice.

They aim to:

- Promote a working environment in which the rights of children are respected
- Raise awareness of the need to protect children and reduce risks to them
- Provide guidance on creating a safe working environment and appropriate reporting structures
- Ensure that when abuse is suspected or disclosed, it is clear what action must be taken

- 1.2** These policies and procedures are designed to promote a positive and safe environment for all children involved in activities at or run by Discover. All staff and volunteers must be committed to working to the principles established in this document and must also be familiar with the procedures to be followed in the event of any concern about child abuse.

- 1.3** Discover will work with all statutory services to make appropriate referrals and co-operate with Newham's Local Safeguarding Board.

### **2 Principles for working with children**

Discover is committed to respecting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in all aspects of its work. Accordingly, the following principles underpin work with children and should inform all practice:

- All children deserve the opportunity to achieve their potential
- Children have the right to play and to take part in cultural, artistic and recreational activity
- All children are of equal worth and will be treated with equal respect regardless of age, ethnicity, race, colour, sex or disability
- All activities and events will be designed to promote the fullest possible social inclusion of children regardless of age, ethnicity, race, colour, sex or disability
- Children have a right to respect for their views and experience
- Children have a right to feel safe at all times when involved with any activity at Discover
- Children have a right to protection from all forms of violence or abuse
- Children have the right to protection from any actions which are detrimental to their best interests.

### **3 Creating a safe environment for children**

Children that visit the centre are usually accompanied by a parent or carer. There may on occasion be exceptions to this principle - see 3.2. When staff members are delivering outreach projects, carers or staff from the external agency will be requested to be present.

#### **3.1 Employment safeguards and policies**

In its recruitment and selection procedures, Discover will take all practical measures to ensure

that people unsuitable for working with children are not recruited to positions where they will have contact with children during the course of their work. In respect of all such applicants:

- They will be asked to account for gaps in employment history
- References will be checked before new members of staff begin work
- Referees will specifically be asked to state whether concerns of any kind have been raised about the candidate's relationships and work with children
- All new staff will have to undertake an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure if they do not have one already that is still in date (within the last three years).
- Once appointed, they will be inducted in the child protection procedures.
- Story Builders and volunteers will not be expected to have unsupervised contact with children.
- Freelance staff working on community and education projects will be required to have a recent (within the last three years) Enhanced DBS certificate.
- Discover will ensure every member of staff and volunteer knows the name of the designated Child Protection Co-ordinator and their role.
- Discover will ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and for referring any concerns to the designated Child Protection Co-ordinator.
- All new and existing members of staff will sign up to the code of conduct in Appendix 3
- Any member of staff who is charged with a criminal offence against a child, either in a personal or professional capacity will be immediately suspended pending the outcome of the criminal proceedings. Any such instances would be subject to Discover's Disciplinary Policy which may involve dismissal from their employment.

### **3.2 Unaccompanied Children**

If staff or freelance artists are delivering projects with unaccompanied children i.e. the Children's Forum, there will always be 2 members of staff or adults with DBS certificates so that no staff are working on their own with children. Appropriate information will be sought regarding medical needs and emergency contact details.

### **3.3 Prohibited behaviour within Discover**

The following types of behaviour are never acceptable when working with children as a staff member or volunteer with Discover and will always lead to disciplinary action:

- Hitting or striking a child
- Verbally abusing (including shouting or swearing at) a child
- Deliberately humiliating or undermining a child
- Encouraging or knowingly being involved in a child committing a crime
- Taking illegal substances before or during a Discover activity
- Being intoxicated at a Discover activity involving children.
- This list is not exhaustive and any behaviour which may harm a child will be treated in the same way.

Any staff member or volunteer, who suspects or is aware of a colleague behaving in any of the above ways, should immediately inform her/his line manager. If the person concerned is the line manager, the Deputy Chief Executive should be informed. In the event that the person concerned is the Deputy Chief Executive then the Chief Executive will be informed and in the event that the person is the Chief Executive then the Chair of the Board should be informed.

## **4 Child Protection Procedures**

- Discover will ensure it undertakes an annual review of its Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- Discover will ensure it has a designated Child Protection Coordinator who has received appropriate training and support for this role. This role will usually be held by the Head of Learning (currently [Stephanie Bennett](#) ~~Ben O'Donnell~~), in his absence or in addition, the Deputy Chief Executive (Paul Callaghan).
- The Child Protection Coordinator will take responsibility for making all staff and volunteers aware of the policies and procedures for working with children and keeping them safe. In the event of any action needing to be taken in respect of child protection, it is the Child Protection Coordinator who must be informed and who will take lead responsibility.

### **4.1 Understanding child abuse**

Not only is it important to promote a positive environment for children, it is also necessary to be alert to the possibility that a child, with whom staff or volunteers are in contact, might be at risk of

abuse. Staff that work directly with children will be taken through Appendix 2.

#### **4.2 Allegations of abuse against a staff member or volunteer**

In the case of allegations against a staff member or volunteer, an investigation may have three related strands

- If the allegation reaches the threshold of significant harm, the matter should be referred to Social Care who will undertake child protection inquiries relating to the safety and welfare of any children involved
- Where circumstances warrant it, there may be a police investigation into a possible crime
- If it appears that allegations may amount to misconduct or gross misconduct, Discover's disciplinary procedures should be invoked.

Staff about whom there are concerns will be given information to help them understand the concerns expressed, the processes being invoked and be informed of the outcome of any investigation and the implications for disciplinary processes. The investigation will be completed as quickly as possible, consistent with its effective conduct. In any case involving a criminal investigation, the decision as to when to inform the suspect of the allegations should always be jointly agreed between the police and other relevant agencies.

All enquiries into allegations will be overseen by the Child Protection Coordinator who will liaise with police, Social Care, and other interested parties and attend relevant meetings as required and keep staff informed as appropriate.

#### **5. Responding to Changes in Legislation**

The Child Protection Coordinator will ensure that changes to legislation are reflected in this policy and the practices in Discover and will attend training where appropriate in order to implement legislation effectively. Appendix 5 outlines the changes since December 2012 to legislation.

## **Appendix 1- Documents used to complete this policy**

Working together to safeguard children, available from

<https://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00213160/working-together-to-safeguard-children>

The Protection of Children Act 1999, available from

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1999/14/contents>

Safe from Harm, available from

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/policyandlaw/consultations/closedconsultations/keepingchildrensafe/codeofpracticechildren?view=Binary>

Protecting Children, Barnardos, available from

[http://www.barnardos.org.uk/search?cx=010239517264350833691%3Aidjo4m7jsci&ie=UTF-8&q=Protecting+children&qText=Protecting+children&siteurl=www.barnardos.org.uk%2Fwhat\\_we\\_do%2Fwho\\_we\\_are%2Fwhat\\_we\\_believe.htm&ref=www.barnardos.org.uk%2F&ss=](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/search?cx=010239517264350833691%3Aidjo4m7jsci&ie=UTF-8&q=Protecting+children&qText=Protecting+children&siteurl=www.barnardos.org.uk%2Fwhat_we_do%2Fwho_we_are%2Fwhat_we_believe.htm&ref=www.barnardos.org.uk%2F&ss=)

## **Appendix 2: What is Child Abuse and what should you do if Abuse is reported to you?**

### **What is child abuse?**

An abused child is a person under the age of 18 who has suffered from or is likely to suffer from significant harm. Abuse can be:

- **Abuse and Neglect** – Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult, or another child or children.
- **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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. This situation is commonly described as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen syndrome by proxy.
- **Emotional abuse** – 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 conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. 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** – Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **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 as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:
  - 1) Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
  - 2) Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
  - 3) Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers)
  - 4) Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### **How a concern about abuse might arise at Discover**

Awareness of the possibility of a child being abused might be raised in a number of different ways:

- A child may disclose abuse or give reason to suspect that they or another child are being abused or at risk of significant harm
- A parent or other adult may raise a concern about either their own or another child
- A member of staff or volunteer may be suspected of abusing a child.

### **Responding to suspected abuse**

If anyone acting for or employed by Discover has reason to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, then the safety and welfare of that, or any other child likely to be affected, is the paramount consideration in deciding what action needs to be taken. The concerns must be discussed initially with their line manager, and then with the Child Protection Co-ordinator.

Discuss the concerns with the child, *if appropriate*

Discuss your concerns with the Child Protection Coordinator. This discussion should focus on:

- The nature of the concerns
- The risks to the child
- Action /next steps

Concerns should normally be discussed on the same working day

Ensure detailed written records are made of all events and what the child has said when applicable:

### **Disclosure of Abuse**

In the event that a child divulges information to a Discover staff member or volunteer about being abused, mistreated or in danger, but requests that such information is not passed on to others, the following steps should be taken:

- The child should be informed that it may **not** be possible to protect his/her confidentiality
- The staff member or volunteer should inform the child that she/he will have to discuss the matter with her/his line manager and colleagues
- The staff member or volunteer, or Child Protection Co-ordinator should make all efforts to help the child understand the need for seeking appropriate help
- If it is felt that the child is at risk of significant harm, it will be necessary to refer the matter to Social Care, thereby breaching the child's confidentiality. However, the child should be informed as fully as possible of what is happening and why.

If a child discloses significant harm, the staff member or volunteer should listen carefully, giving the child undivided time and attention. The child is never to blame in situations of abuse and should be reassured that they have done nothing wrong, either in relation to the abuse or in reporting it. The aim is to facilitate the disclosure (but not to cross-examine) in order to determine whether there is real cause for concern. The responsibility for undertaking any investigation lies with the area Social Care Services Department.

The child must be informed, whenever possible, about any action being taken on their behalf and what is likely to happen. If there is no immediate danger, it is advisable to give the child time to fully understand what action is being pursued and why before proceeding.

Information concerning the disclosure, or any other child protection concerns, should be recorded as soon as possible. The record should include:

- The date and time of the interview or disclosure
- The child's account
- Any injuries noted
- An assessment made by the staff member or volunteer as to why the information given constitutes a child protection concern
- Action taken by the staff member or volunteer

The record should be signed and dated, and a copy sent to the line manager and Discover's Child Protection Coordinator.

### **Reporting abuse**

Any action to be taken will be determined by the urgency and seriousness of the circumstances. Where there are serious concerns to the child's safety, act immediately. If the Child Protection Coordinator is not available, discuss the matter with your line manager or the Deputy Chief Executive. Delaying the process may place the child at further risk.

If you are working on an outreach project or a project that takes place in school or in a children's centre then you must discuss the matter with a representative from the school or centre e.g. the class teacher, who will then take the matter to the relevant member of staff, ensure that you also inform the Discover Child Protection Coordinator.

If the personal safety of the child is immediately threatened, urgent action must be taken. In most cases, this will mean contacting the duty social worker or an out-of-hours duty social worker or NSPCC child protection helpline. In exceptional circumstances, a referral can be made to the police.

NSPCC – Child Protection Helpline – 0808 800 5000  
<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/>

Newham Children's Services – Social Care – 0203 373 4600 opt. 3  
<http://www.newham.gov.uk/Pages/Services/Child-protection.aspx>

Childline 0800 1111  
<http://www.childline.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

Family Rights Group 0808 801 0366  
<http://www.frg.org.uk/>

If you think a child is immediate danger call 999

**Allegations of abuse against a staff member or volunteer**

If the behaviour of a staff colleague or volunteer towards children causes you concern:

- Do not ignore your concerns
- Do not confront the person about whom you have concerns
- Discuss your concerns with the Child Protection Coordinator or in his absence Paul Callaghan, Deputy Chief Executive of Discover.
- If the Child Protection Coordinator or Deputy Chief Executive are not immediately available, you should speak to your line manager or the Chief Executive.
- Do not delay in passing on concerns to someone who is in a position to take them forward and ensure that a proper investigation takes place.
- Do not worry that you may have been mistaken. It is better to have discussed it with someone with the experience and responsibility to make an assessment.

Discover's designated Child Protection Coordinator is [Stephanie Bennett](#)~~Ben O'Donnell~~, Head of Learning or in his absence Paul Callaghan, Deputy Chief Executive of Discover. Should you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact [Ben-Stephanie](#) on 020 8536 5546

### **Appendix 3: Effects of Abuse**

Without appropriate intervention and treatment, the sustained abuse or neglect of children physically, emotionally or sexually is likely to have major long-term effects on all aspects of the child's health and well-being, such as:

- growth and development,
- own self-image and self-esteem
- difficulties in forming or sustaining close relationships
- getting established in the work force
- developing the attitude and skills necessary to be an affective parent

Children may suffer or be at risk of suffering significant harm. Harm may be attributable to:

- ill treatment which may include sexual, physical or emotional abuse or
- the impairment of physical or mental health or
- the impairment of physical, intellectual or behavioural development

This may be the result of:

- a deliberate act by a parent, carer or other adult or child
- a failure to act or to provide proper care
- or both of these

#### **How is harm deemed to be 'significant'?**

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, and the extent of premeditation, degree of threat and coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements in child abuse.

Each of these elements has been associated with more severe effects on the child and / or relatively greater difficulty in helping the child overcome the adverse impact of the ill-treatment.

Sometimes, a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm (e.g. violent assault, poisoning or suffocation).

More often, significant harm is a compilation of significant events, both acute and longstanding, which interrupt, change or damage the child's physical and psychological development. Some children live in family and social circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For them it is the corrosiveness of long-term emotional, physical or sexual abuse that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant harm. In each case it is necessary to consider any ill-treatment alongside the family's strengths and supports.

It is important to always take account of the child's reactions, and his or her perceptions, according to the child's age and understanding.

Minor shortcomings in health care or minor deficits in physical, psychological or social development should not require compulsory intervention unless cumulatively they are having or are likely to have, serious and lasting effects upon a child.

#### **Sources:**

ITC, NSPCC,

Department of Health 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children>

ACE 'Keeping arts safe'

[http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication\\_archive/keeping-arts-safe-second-edition/](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/keeping-arts-safe-second-edition/)



## **Appendix 4: Discover Code of Conduct**

### **Code of conduct**

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- Always put the welfare and safety of the child or young person first
  - Treat all children and young people equally, with respect and dignity
  - Do not have, or be perceived to have, favourites
  - Ensure you have agreed roles, responsibilities and standards of behaviour with other adults involved, including teachers
  - Never agree to work with children or young people without a teacher or other responsible adult in the room
  - Wherever possible avoid spending time with individual, or small groups of children or young people unobserved
  - If it is absolutely necessary to be alone with a child or young person:
    - Make sure another adult knows where you are and approximately how long you will be
    - Invite the child or young person to bring a friend
    - Leave the door open of the room you are in
    - Move into the centre of the room so you are in plain view
  - Avoid physical contact with children or young people unless it is necessary for a particular activity or if a child or young person has been, or is about to be injured
  - If physical contact cannot be avoided, seek permission of the child or young person first and ensure they are comfortable with what you are going to do
  - Listen to what children and young people have to tell you
  - Ensure that children and young people understand that you will treat what they tell you confidentially, unless you believe them, or another young person, to be in danger
  - If a child or young person discloses something to you, or you see something that concerns you, contact the Child Protection Co-ordinator at Discover who will be able to advise you on the best course of action
  - If you see something that concerns you regarding an adult, contact the Child Protection Co-ordinator at Discover who will follow an appropriate course of action
  - Do not contact children and young people outside of the school setting or hours
  - Do not give children and young people your personal telephone number, email address or Social Media contact information.
  - Do not develop social or sexual relationships with the children or young people you are working with
  - Never accept, or give, gifts or money to children and young people
  - Support and watch out for colleagues you are working with to ensure they are not being drawn into situations that could be misinterpreted – remember how colleagues view each other's' practice will indicate how outsiders will view it
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Signed

Date

Signed By Child Protection Coordinator

Date

## **Appendix 5: Recent changes to Legislation**

### **Vetting and Barring Scheme**

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/vetting-barring-scheme/>

The situation until December 2012 was that the [Criminal Records Bureau](#) was responsible for the disclosure of criminal records and the Independent Safeguarding Authority for the barring function.

Both of these functions have been retained since the changes set have been implemented, but it is more economical to have moved to a situation where we have one body responsible for pre-employment checking and barring unsuitable people from working or volunteering with vulnerable groups, rather than two.

On the commencement of the relevant parts of the Protection of Freedoms Bill, therefore, the Criminal Records Bureau and the Independent Safeguarding Authority merged. In essence, this has combined the criminal records disclosure responsibilities of the CRB, with an independent barring function which was the responsibility of the ISA.

However, the safeguarding regulations introduced in October 2009 continue to apply. These include:

- if your organisation works with children or vulnerable adults and you dismiss or remove a member of staff or a volunteer because they have harmed a child or vulnerable adult (or there is a risk of harm), or you would have done so if they had not left, you must tell the Independent Safeguarding Authority
- a person who is barred by the ISA from working with children or vulnerable adults will be breaking the law if they work or volunteer, or try to work or volunteer with those groups
- an organisation which knowingly employs someone who is barred to work with those groups will also be breaking the law
- if your organisation works with children or vulnerable adults and you dismiss a member of staff or a volunteer because they have harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or you would have done so if they had not left, you must tell the Independent Safeguarding Authority

The Child Protection Coordinator abides by the DBS code of conduct when information has come to light from staff members' DBS certificates to ensure that it is handled fairly and used properly.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>