

Child protection and safeguarding policy

Purpose

1. 1.1 This policy applies to all staff and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone else working on behalf of and representing SMCC.
2. 1.2 The purpose of this policy is:
 1. 1.2.1 To protect children and young people who receive services from SMCC. This includes children of adults who use any of our services or attend our events.
 2. 1.2.2 To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles which guide our approach to safeguarding.
3. 1.3 SMCC believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. As an organisation and individuals, we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects all children and young people from harm.

2. Definition

2.1 The Charity Commission defines safeguarding as: a charity commissions main guidance on safeguarding states that a charity's trustees are ultimately responsible for ensuring there are measures in place to protect the people who come into contact with the charity.

3. Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of 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
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2014
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children.

4. Policy

4.1 We recognise that:

- 4.1.1 The welfare of children is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989.
2. 4.1.2 All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation have a right to equal protection from all types of harm and abuse.
3. 4.1.3 Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
4. 4.1.4 Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

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

1. 4.2.1 Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
2. 4.2.2 Adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
3. 4.2.3 Developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures.
4. 4.2.4 Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
5. 4.2.5 Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
6. 4.2.6 Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers.
7. 4.2.7 Sharing concerns with agencies that need to know and involving parents and children appropriately.

5. Procedures

What to do if you have concerns about a child:

You may have concerns about a child because of something you have seen or heard, or a child may choose to disclose something to you. If a child discloses information to you, you should:

- Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and refer to Children's Social Care Services.
- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is said.
- Reassure the child, but only as far as is honest, don't make promises you may not be able to keep eg: 'Everything will be alright now', 'You'll never have to see that person again'.
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child refers to it. For example, you could say, 'You're not to blame'.
- Do not interrogate the child; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
- Do not ask leading questions (eg: Did he touch your private parts?), ask open questions such as 'Anything else to tell me?'
- Do not ask the child to repeat the information for another member of staff.

- Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.
- Take notes if possible or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards.
- Record the date, time, place any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child (do not paraphrase).
- Record statements and observable things rather than interpretations or assumptions. Whatever the nature of your concerns, discuss them with the designated safeguarding lead or a senior member of staff or management.