



Child Protection Policy

Introduction

This document sets out key areas and concerns for child safety. For the purposes of this document, 'participants' are defined as 'young people engaged in Embercombe activity' and 'staff' are defined as 'adults with responsibility for an Embercombe organised activity involving young people'. A 'child' is anyone under the age of 18 years. This policy relates to all children who are at Embercombe including children who are volunteers.

The aim of these guidelines

The aim of these guidelines is to safeguard and promote the welfare of all participants involved in Embercombe activities and minimise the risk of them coming to harm whilst participating in Embercombe activities. The guidelines are mandatory and apply to all staff and volunteers working for Embercombe.

Recognising types of child harm

Children and young people can be harmed or injured by another person at home, school or whilst they are attending community activities. This can involve any of the following:

(a) Physical abuse occurs when a child or young person is physically hurt by another adult. This would include situations when a young person is:

- Hit, shaken or thrown
- Burnt, scalded or bitten

(b) Emotional harm occurs when an adult adversely affects the emotional development of a young person. This can occur if they:

- Persistently fail to give them love or affection
- Continually reject or criticise them
- Convey a message that the young person is worthless or inadequate
- Place age-inappropriate demands upon them or leave them feeling frightened or in danger

(c) Neglect occurs when there is a failure to meet a child's basic needs. This could involve situations when an adult:

- Fails to provide them with adequate food or warm clothing
- Does not protect them from physical harm or danger
- Inappropriately leaves a child alone and unsupervised

(d) Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or another young person forces, manipulates or coerces a person under the age of sixteen years to take part in sexual activities to meet their own needs. This might be through:

- Sexual harassment such as sexual remarks or innuendos
- Making the young person watch pornographic literature or videos

- Involving the young person in the production of child pornography
- Physical contact including getting the child to touch them in a sexual manner or touching the child in a sexual manner (including full sexual intercourse). If an incident of child harm or maltreatment comes to the attention of the management or staff of Embercombe, a referral will be made to Social Services on the same day by a member of Core Team or Trustee.

Responding to a child or young person who reports that they have been harmed.

(a) Responding to a direct allegation

If a young person directly tells a member of staff that another adult has harmed them it is important that the allegations are taken seriously. It is not the responsibility of the person receiving the information to make a decision whether or not the allegations are true. Under these circumstances they should:

Report the allegations immediately to the Safe Guarding Officer or a member of Core Team.

(b) Indirect concerns about a child or young person.

Staff might also become concerned about a young person in other ways. This could include a report from another adult or young person or by observations of their behaviour or presentation. Some of the main ways in which a member of staff might become concerned that something might be wrong include:

- The child has an injury which they try to hide or which looks suspicious
- The child appears anxious or uncomfortable in the company of particular adults
- The child keeps seeking opportunities to talk to a member of staff and they suspect they may have a problem they wish to share. If the behaviour or presentation of a child leads a member of staff to suspect that they may have been harmed or are at risk of harm, they should report their concerns to the Safe Guarding Officer.

Any suspicions should not be discussed with the person suspected of harming the child, the parent or carer, or anyone else other than those mentioned above prior to the referral to Social Services.

Disclosure

There are two definitions of 'Disclosure':

'Disclosure' is the name of the Certificate given once the Criminal Records Bureau has confirmed that a person is allowed to work with children. For this document, the certificate will be called 'CRB Disclosure'. 'Disclosure' also means information told to a person in confidence. This is the definition of Disclosure that this section will be covering. Due to the nature of work and relationships built at Embercombe, it is possible that a participant may confide information to a member of staff. In the majority of circumstances, this information will be relevant to the discussion and may be personal. However, if you feel that by withholding this information, the confider may be at risk or neglected, then you must take action:

- If a person discloses information to you, you must explain that you are responsible for making your line manager and possibly Social Services aware of their disclosure, if you feel that by withholding information the person is at risk.

Information disclosed will be kept confidential within Social Services and staff members concerned.

- Contact the safeguarding officer and inform them of the information disclosed to you.
- This course of action may involve contacting Social Services.
- Social Services would then take responsibility for any further action.

Appropriate responses to children and young people

Any member of staff who is told by a child that they have been harmed or maltreated should:

- Try to create a safe environment by staying calm
- Keep questions to a minimum and try to avoid asking direct or leading questions or those which can be answered “yes” or “no”
- Primarily listen to what the young person has to say and encourage them to speak in their own words
- Try not to panic or rush into any activity that might be inappropriate
- Reassure the child or young person that they are not to blame and it was right to tell them
- Not make any promises that they cannot keep, for example by telling the child that they will keep what they say confidential
- Tell the child that they are going to talk to someone who will know how to help

Inappropriate Relationships

It is an offence for an adult to abuse his/her position of trust by entering into a personal relationship that undermines the rights of a child. The government defines a position of trust as being a “relationship in which one party is in a position of influence over the other by virtue of their work or nature of their activity”. (Dept. of Health). We must also be aware that an inappropriate relationship may be sought after by the child by making what they see as reasonable advances in an inappropriate situation. In both cases, it is the responsibility of the adult to report the incident and prevent the situation arising again.

Criminal Records Bureau Disclosures

The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) processes one-stop checks to replace the old police-checks, entitled Disclosures.

“The Police Act 1997 makes it a criminal offence for an employer not to check an employee working with children (meaning anyone under 18) or vulnerable adults”. (Arts Council England; Keeping Arts Safe; 2003:10).

All visiting facilitators who are leading courses must supply a photocopy of their CRB Disclosure certificate to Embercombe. This will be requested by Embercombe at contract stage. In the rare circumstance that the facilitator does not have a current CRB Disclosure certificate then a member of Embercombe staff with a current CRB Disclosure certificate will be present during the workshop. Volunteers may be asked to undertake a CRB check.

Discipline

Staff must not use any physical punishment, nor practices that humiliate or frighten participants, or any threats of these punishments.

Participants and Staff under 18

- All participants who are under the age of 18 years are either the responsibility of their school/college group leader or under under loco parentis.
- Where volunteers are under the age of 18 special care should be taken.

Staff/Participants ratio

Suitable ratios for specific activities are given within the risk assessments. Staff, volunteers or contractors should ensure that they are never alone with a child or group of children.