

**Chase Meadow Community Centre (CMCC)**

**CHILD & VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY**

**Child abuse**

CMCC considers child/vulnerable adult protection to be very important and undertakes to ensure that all volunteers/employees receive information that will enable them to recognise the signs of a person in distress and to follow the referral procedure.

**Responsibilities of volunteers**

* Volunteers have a responsibility to protect children & vulnerable adults from abuse.
* Volunteers must be able to respond appropriately to a child or adult’s disclosure of abuse ensuring the information they received is handled correctly.
* Volunteers are not responsible for judging whether an allegation is true or for sorting it out.
* Volunteers have a responsibility to report and protect.

**Additional Information**

Forms of child and/or vulnerable adult abuse are:

* **Physical Abuse** – where adults physically hurt or injure vulnerable people. Hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning and biting are all forms of physical abuse. Giving children and/or vulnerable adults inappropriate alcohol drugs or poisons; attempting suffocation or drowning are all also considered acts of physical abuse.
* **Sexual abuse** – both girls and boys can be abused by adults who use children and/or vulnerable adults to meet their own sexual needs. This might include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse or fondling. Showing children or vulnerable adults pornographic magazines or videos is also a form of abuse.
* **Emotional abuse** – persistent lack of love and affection can be damaging to children and /or vulnerable adults emotionally. Being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted can make people very nervous and withdrawn.
* **Neglect** – an adult may fail to meet a child or vulnerable adult’s basic needs, like denying food or warm clothing. Vulnerable persons might be constantly left alone unsupervised. Abuse in any form can affect a person of any age.

 **Identifying signs of possible abuse**

Volunteers may be important links in identifying a case where a child or vulnerable adult needs further protection. Abuse may come to light in a number of ways:

* A person may tell you outright what has happened to them.
* A third party (e.g. another child or family member) may tell you of an incident.
* A child or vulnerable adult’s inappropriate or angry behaviour may give cause for concern.
* A suspicious unexplained injury to the person may ring warning bells.

Recognising abuse is not easy. Most children and vulnerable adults can receive cuts, grazes and bruises from time to time during the normal course of their lives. There may be legitimate reasons for these factors aside from abuse, but any concerns should be immediately discussed with the individuals’ outlined below.

**Warning signs that may alert to possible abuse include**:

* Unexplained bruising, cuts or burns on the child, particularly if these parts of the body are not normally injured in accidents.
* An injury which a parent/carer tries to hide or for which they might have given different explanations.
* Changes in behaviour such as a child suddenly becoming very quiet, tearful, withdrawn, aggressive or displaying severe tantrums.
* Loss of weight without a medical explanation.
* An inappropriately dressed or ill kept child who may also be dirty
* Sexually explicit behaviour for example playing games and showing an awareness inappropriate for the child’s age.
* Continual masturbation and/or aggressive and inappropriate sex play.
* Running away from home, attempted suicides, self-inflicted injuries.
* A lack of trust in adults, particularly those who would normally be close to a child.
* Disturbed sleep, nightmares and bed wetting, particularly if a child has previously been dry.
* Eating problems, including over eating or loss of appetite.

**Procedures to follow with a child or vulnerable adult if you suspect abuse (appropriate to the relationship and knowledge you have with that person)**

1. Talk to them sensitively to find out if there is anything worrying them.
2. Keep your questions to a minimum but make sure you are absolutely clear about what the child has said.
3. Be sure not to take sole responsibility. **Discuss your concerns with David Brown the designated person/another member of the Management Committee and jointly make an informed decision on appropriate action.**
4. Contact with parents should be delayed until advice has been sought from Social services or other professional that you trust.

**Procedures to follow when a child or vulnerable adult discloses concerns or abuse**

* 1. Never promise to keep a secret. If you do so and the person is being hurt, you will not be able to help them. Tell the person you may need to talk to someone about it. Emphasise that you will be talking to someone who wants to help.
	2. Allow the person to decide if s/he wants to open up. Do not push them to do so.
	3. Avoid using ’leading’ or ‘directing’ questions and don’t offer ‘suggested’ responses.
	4. Allow the children to talk at their own pace; do not pressure them to disclose anything they do not want to.
	5. Do not leave the child until they are ready, and then talk in private to the designated committee member as soon as possible. Even if the child has decided not to disclose, you should still inform the committee member.
	6. Volunteer and committee member must compile a written report, which should detail all the factual information.
	7. Anyone dealing with a child or vulnerable adult that has disclosed information to them and they have found distressing can be referred for professional help to enable them to deal with the experience.

 **Behaviour guidelines for volunteers working with young people**

The aim of these guidelines is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all local people and to support the volunteers in providing a safe, caring environment.

* 1. Volunteers/employees should set examples of appropriate behaviour. As people learn by example, volunteers should avoid using sarcasm or discrimination, direct criticism, labelling and unnecessary competition or comparisons.
	2. Good behaviour should be positively encouraged
	3. Volunteers/employees should not physically punish any person.
	4. Volunteers/employees should not deprive any person of, or force anyone to consume, food or drink.
	5. Volunteers/employees should not humiliate or frighten any person.
	6. Volunteers/employees should avoid situations in which they risk putting themselves or the person at risk. This includes being alone with a person unnecessarily.
	7. Volunteers/employees should offer respect to the person at all times and strive to be sensitive to their feelings.
	8. Adult to young person ratio for activities and/or events should reflect best practise (1:10 max for 10 years and over, 1:8 max for under 10).
	9. Volunteers working with children and/or vulnerable adults should be easily identifiable and sign into and out of the centre as appropriate.

Electronic media and devices including PC’s, tablets, laptops, mobile phones, webcams etc create an additional risk on our children.

Internet chat rooms, discussion forums or social networks and applications can all be used as a means of contacting children and young people with a view to grooming them for inappropriate or abusive relationships. They can also be used for the provision of inappropriate content. The anonymity of the internet can allow adults to pretend to be children and have conversations with children and in some cases, arrange to meet them. The internet is also a tool in the distribution of indecent photographs of children. Users can engage in or be a target of cyberbullying using a range of methods including text and instant messaging to reach their target. Mobile phones are also used to capture violent assaults of other children for circulation (happy slapping), or distributing indecent images of children (e.g. sexting).

The best protection is to make users aware of the dangers. As third parties run the majority of services and groups in the centre, we ask each of our user groups to provide their own safeguarding policy, following best practice guidelines. Policies should be auditable upon request.

Anyone leading, or volunteering in a group on behalf of CMCC will be provided with a copy of CMCC’s safeguarding policy which they should adhere to.

We ask any group using the centre to remember that Protection is Prevention and to this end:

* Controls are in place to minimise access and to highlight any one accessing inappropriate sites or information for both public computers and the Centre network.
* We can obtain details of people accessing the WIFI.
* Staff and volunteers should not give out their personal details, phone numbers, home address, computer passwords etc.
* The police will be involved if there is any criminal element to misuse of the internet, phones or any other form of electronic media.

# Approved by ………………………………….(Ms Helen Venn, Chair) on behalf of the CMCC Management Committee.

# Dated…………… February 2019



**Chase Meadow Community Centre (CMCC)**

**CHILD & VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY NOTE**

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| 1. Name of child/vulnerable adult
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| 1. Parents/carers details
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| 1. Childs/vulnerable adults address
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| 1. Phone numbers
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| 1. What is said to have happened
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***(Example Reporting Form to be photocopied for use)***