

Safeguarding Children Policy

Introduction

Families United Network want everyone who uses the services it offers to be entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. All members are entitled to a duty of care and to be protected from abuse in any form, and FUN is committed to its duty of care whilst members are in its environment.

Scope

The aim of this Safeguarding Children Policy is to enable employees and volunteers of Families United Network to provide social activities where children are kept safe from harm and to know the procedure to adopt if abuse occurs or is suspected. We have a commitment to include young people in the development and implementation of safeguarding policies.

Practice

FUN accept their moral obligations to provide a duty care, to protect all children and safeguard their welfare, irrespective of age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, religion or belief, sex or gender and sexual orientation.

- The welfare of the member is paramount;
- All members have the right protection from abuse;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- All employees and volunteers of FUN understand and accept their responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

In order to meet its obligations FUN will:

- Provide and enforce procedures to safeguard the well being of all members and protect them from abuse;
- Ensure all members who take part in FUN's activities are able to participate in a safe and fun environment;
- Respect and uphold the rights, wishes and feelings of members;
- Employees, volunteers and Trustee Members will receive training on safeguarding;
- Any suspicion of abuse will be promptly and appropriately responded to by the appointed Child Protection Officer, once they have been notified;
- Employees and volunteers will be assessed as to their suitability to work with children;
- Employees, volunteers and Trustee Members will be informed of the policy and procedures they MUST follow.
- Review policies regularly.

Keeping Children Safe

- Any abuse will have an adverse effect on a child's well-being.
- A child with special needs or disabilities may not be able to use language to alert employees and volunteers if they are being abused
- Employees and volunteers must be vigilant, and monitor changes in a child's behaviour, physical condition or appearance.
- Personal mobile phones cannot be kept on a person or used when in the presence of children, on the premises or when on outings. This includes the mobile phones of employees, volunteers and visitors who wish to stay for significant periods of time within the setting.

There are four main types of abuse:

Physical

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.

Emotional

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a member's emotional development. It may involve conveying to the member that they are unloved, worthless, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include giving the member opportunities to express themselves. It may include overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the member participating in normal social interactions. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, (including cyber bullying) causing a member to feel frightened or in danger, which especially applies to when a member shares a protected characteristic.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a member to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the member is aware of what is happening. This may be contact and/or non-contact.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a member's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the member's health or development. Neglect may involve a parent/carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter; protect a member from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care givers, ensure medical care or treatment it may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a member's basic emotional needs.

Employees and Volunteers Recruitment

- All applications will be informed that posts are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- All initial interviews will be face to face and not undertaken by telephone. The notes taken from the interview will be kept, in the employee's or volunteer's personnel file, in a locking cabinet.
- All successful applicants will be met individually and interviewed by the recruiting manager prior to commencement of their voluntary or paid role.
- All Managers receive guidance on safeguarding children through the recruitment process and attend child protection training.
- All applicants will be required to complete an enhanced DBS (Formally known as CRB) check and provide details of at least two referees.
- Commencement is subject to a satisfactory DBS (formally known as CRB) clearance and suitable references.
- References must be sought directly from the referee and sent by a Families United Network member of employees. Letters provided by an applicant titled 'To Whom It May Concern' will not be acceptable.
- Where a DBS (formally known as CRB) check is outstanding, the member of employees will always be supervised during activities.
- During training and/or induction employees are directed to their job descriptions and volunteers to their roles and responsibilities. This includes reference to appropriate behaviour including dress code, and how this impacts on child protection and health and safety. Employees are informed of the disciplinary procedures should misconduct occur.
- Employees are informed during training about safeguarding children and behaviour code of conduct policies in annual training sessions and given training notes/handouts of what to do if they are worried that a child is being abused.
- Support and supervision for all employees and volunteers is provided by FUN managers on an informal or formal basis as required.
- Senior management to be clear about disciplinary consequences for non-compliance with Safeguarding Children Policy.
- All employees and volunteers will be rechecked every 3 year intervals.

Procedure for Suspected Child Abuse

This procedure will be followed whereby an individual disclosing they are being abused; and/or the behaviour of an individual towards a member.

- Any concerns regarding a member noted by employees or volunteers must immediately report their concerns to the named person.
- The employees or volunteer who raises the concern will need to write a report, including where the injury is, size, shape, colour, what was too said to the member and their response.
- The named person will collate the details and decide on the course of action in line with Local Safeguarding Children's Manual of Procedures
- If abuse is suspected a referral to Social Services must be made.

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Reviewed by Board of Trustees
Next Review Date due: 10th February 2024

- The named person will discuss concerns with parents/carers in a sensitive and tactful manner. If it is felt that the member would be at risk by informing the parents, then Social Services will be contacted.
- Concerns about the behaviour of employees and volunteers towards a member must be reported to the named person and appropriate action taken.
- Any verbal referral to Social Services must be recorded and followed up in writing to Social Services within 24 hours.
- If an acceptable reason is given, the concern will be recorded, and no further action will apply.
- The parent, guardian or carer will be informed of a referral to Social Services unless sexual abuse suspected to have occurred outside the organised event or that by informing the parent/carers of the member will be at further risk.
- If employees feel unable to talk to the named person or dissatisfied with the response they receive they can contact the Chair of Families United Network, via the FUN office on 01582 420800. Calls will be treated with the strictest of confidence. Employees could also call Social Services direct or the local police, the numbers for which are at the end of the policy.

Accidental Injuries

- Any accidental injuries sustained by a member while attending an event organised by Families United Network will be recorded on the accident/incident form and filed in the folder.
- The parent, guardian or carer will be informed immediately of an incident or accident and consent to treatment being administered.
- If a parent, guardian or carer is not present, administer basic first-aid if necessary.
- Make a recording of injury sustained, first-aid administered even if there is no mark
- Information in the accident/incident record must be signed by the parent, guardian or carer to indicate that they have been informed of the accident.
- Pass this accident/incident form to the Charity Manager as soon as possible.

Records

- Any concerns raised about a member must be recorded.
- Any concerns raised in connection with the behaviour of individuals an event/activity must be recorded.
- The files must be filed in a secure locked place.
- Informal advice can be obtained from Social Services duty desk, provided the name of the member is NOT divulged.
- All conversations with Social Services must be recorded including the name of the social worker. The entry must include the date and time of the conversation.
- The Chair of Families United Network Board of Trustees must be informed of any recorded incidents.
- The record will include:
 - The member's name
 - Address
 - Date of birth
 - Parents, guardian or carer's name and address, if different from member
 - Time and date of observations

- Details of concerns including, where appropriate, a description of the member's behaviour/appearance.
- Details of injury observed
- Details of the exact words spoken by the member, or other communicative behaviours
- Details of actions taken, including any conversations with parent, guardian or carer, employees and volunteers etc
- Who has this information been passed onto?
- The date, name and signature of the recorder
- Photos and images (only taken after parental consent has been sought)
- All reports are to be factual and not stating any opinion

When recording the information, never ask any questions and DO NOT talk to anyone other than the named person or Families United Network's Chair of Trustees.

Records are confidential and will be kept by the named person.

The Child Protection Policy is reviewed bi-annually and whenever initiatives from local or national government advice changes. Employees and volunteers are provided with current information at the time of their training.

Multi-agency referral forms to Social Services are kept in the office at Families United Network and also in the on-site file.

Referrals, where necessary, will be made by the named person via a CAF form (Common Assessment Framework).

Contact Numbers

Families United Network:

Appointed Safeguarding Officer: Caroline Fonseca - Charity Development Manager 01582 420800 / 07946 081719

EMERGENCY SOCIAL SERVICES NUMBERS:

Duty Social Services Officer Desk: office hours / out-of-hours

Luton Borough	01582 547 653 / 0300 300 8123
Central Bedfordshire	0300 300 8585 / 0300 300 8123
Bedford Borough	01234 718700 / 0300 300 8123

LOCAL POLICE STATIONS:

NORTH & MID BEDFORDSHIRE: 01234 841 212
LUTON & SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE: 01582 401 212

IF IN IMMEDIATE DANGER: 999

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