



Child Protection Policy

This policy outlines a code of practice, which will safeguard the welfare of children and young people within our activities, projects and general care. The main principle of this policy is to act as a set of guidelines for our staff and volunteers who have substantial contact with children and young people.

Responsibility/Duty of Care

We have a duty of care towards all children and young people who play in our concerts or take part in our musical events. Parents and carers have a right to expect that staff and volunteers who run activities for children and young people will not abuse their positions of trust and cause physical, sexual or emotional harm to those in their care.

Planning for Activities and projects

Before any activity is planned we will make sure that people are clear on their roles and responsibilities and that the following are considered:

- If the activity is going to be carried out by children/young people
- The staff/child ratio required and availability of staff.
- If the activity is the sole activity at the time within the venue
- The age groups of children involved and any special needs requirements.
- The skills and experience of staff
- The general health and safety requirements of the project e.g. space

Staff and Volunteers

- Staff need to be aware of any strangers who are on the premises, who they are and their reasons for being on the premises. Staff also need to know where they are in relation to the children/young people.
- Staff need to reduce opportunities for abuse, by the way they use the premises. We will supervise the children at all times.
- We will also aim to ensure that we limit the occasions that a single adult is in the company of a lone child.
- We will ensure that no activity takes place without being supervised by at least 2 responsible trained adults.
- Two workers will also supervise toilet breaks.
- Workers will ensure that staff are not using their position to form a relationship with a child/young person and will be informed clearly that at no time should they encourage children/young people in their care to their home.

Management responsibility

- Management has a responsibility to be aware of the emotional state of staff and its volunteers.
- Management must always know the person, to whom each staff/ volunteer is accountable.

How to deal with discovery or disclosure of abuse

- Staff and volunteers must use team/staff meetings and supervision as various means of discussing problems and issues of child protection.
- Staff and volunteers must build good relationships with parents as well as children.
- Staff have a duty in law to take action if they have grounds for suspecting abuse is taking place. Concern first and foremost must be for the child. Workers may feel caught between their responsibilities to the parent and the child. However, the worker's duty must be with the child. In any situation where child abuse is suspected, the social services department must be informed. Recordings of observations or discussions should be kept.
- If child abuse is suspected, confidentiality and sensitivity must be regarded at all times.
- Staff and volunteers must inform their senior manager.

Protection of workers

- Although these guidelines are for the protection of children and young people, they are also there to protect the workers.
- An anxiety shared at an early stage can prevent trouble. E.g. A worker may be the object of provocative behaviour from a young person of the opposite sex. This must be reported to their line manager/person in charge. In the case of students this is likely to be the headteacher of the school they attend.
- If a worker is accused by a child or young person of any abuse or sexual advance, the worker must always know that Girassol Women's Organisation supports their right to fair and just treatment. Police involvement should always be authorised by the supervisor/line manager.

Appointing Staff:

Criminal Records Bureau

When recruiting new staff, a criminal record check must be requested for all workers and volunteers who will be working with children and young people. This will be done via an agency that is registered to undertake these checks.

Disclosure

In addition, to the standard disclosure anyone having substantial contact with children and young people will require an enhanced disclosure. This contains details of all convictions on the Police National Computer (PNC). It includes spent convictions (i.e. convictions which happened some time ago and normally no longer need to be revealed as specified in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974). It also contains details of any cautions, reprimands or warnings. Where appropriate, information contained on the government department lists held by Departments of Health and Education will be included. The process from application to disclosure should take a maximum of six weeks.

Procedure

- The requirement for an enhanced disclosure from a successful candidate will be included in candidates' application packs and on the application form.
- All applicants called for interview should be encouraged to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process.
- When a job offer is made the letter must state that this is subject to the receipt of satisfactory references. The candidate must be asked to complete and sign an application for the relevant disclosure. Once processed a copy of the disclosure will be sent to the applicant. Depending on the content of this disclosure, either the candidate's application can be accepted (s)he can be called in for further discussion or the application can be declined with a brief explanation of the reasons.
- Each case should be considered on its merits taking into account the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the applicant's offences. Where a manager is unsure of the appropriate approach guidance and professional advice should be taken where appropriate.

Subsequent checks

Once in post, follow up checks will be made every three years to ensure that an offence has not been committed during the period of employment.

Code of Practice

There is a code of practice governing disclosures, which is to ensure that the process works fairly and that sensitive personal information is handled appropriately.

The CRB Code of Practice should be made available to all job applicants where a Disclosure will be requested.

As a group using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service via a local agency to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, the group complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information.

Disclosure information will never be kept on an applicant's personnel file and will be always kept separately and securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

Handling

In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We recognise that it is a **criminal offence** to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Usage

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

Retention

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep Disclosure information for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosure information for longer than six-months, we will consult the CRB about this and will give full consideration to the Data Protection and Human Rights individual subject before doing so.

Disposal

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is immediately suitably destroyed by secure means.

References

Two written references will always be sought. If at all possible, one should be from a previous employer and relate to the applicant's record of and suitability for working with children and young people. The other should be a character reference from someone, other than just a friend, who is able to comment with some insight. It is important to telephone referees as well as getting written responses. Sometimes people will say on the phone what they are unwilling to put in writing.

Training

It is important all workers and volunteers have access to and attend training on this area of work. It is the responsibility of senior workers and line managers to ensure guidelines are understood and training needs are met.

Reviewed and revised, 1 February 2016