

## **Child Protection Policy**

### **Child Protection Policy Statement**

Reede Road Tenants and Residents Association have a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in Reede Roads Tenants and Residents Association from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. Reede Road Tenants and Residents Association will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in Reede Roads Tenants and Residents Association organised events through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by Reede Road Tenants Association.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

### **Policy aims**

The aim of the Reede Roads Tenants Association's Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Reede Roads Tenants Association.
- Allow all committee members and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

### **Promoting good practice**

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgment about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the voluntary community environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

### **Good practice guidelines**

All committee members and volunteers should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

### **Good practice means:**

- Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication.
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children (e.g. it is not appropriate for TRA committee or its volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children to share in decision making.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible.
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

### **Practices to be avoided**

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If a case arises where these situations are unavoidable (e.g. the child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of an event), it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the TRA or the child's parents.

### **Otherwise, avoid:**

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- Taking or dropping off a child to an event.

## **Practices never to be sanctioned**

### **The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:**

- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

**NB** It may sometimes be necessary for committee members or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

## **Incidents that must be reported/recorded**

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a child.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

## **Use of photographic/filming equipment at TRA events**

Reede Road Tenants and Residents Association understands the issues around photographic and filming of children and take all reasonable steps to ensure agreement is obtained by a responsible carer / parent before use of the equipment.

## **Appointment and training of Committee Members and Volunteers**

Reede Road Tenants and Residents Association recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

All committee members and volunteers should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.

Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.

Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.

Evidence of identity should be provided (e.g. passport or driving licence with photo).

They should sign up to Reede Roads Tenants and Residents Association's Code of Ethics and Conduct.

Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.

## **Training**

**In addition to the appointment process, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help committee members and volunteers to:**

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
- Work safely and effectively with children.

## **Reede Road Tenants and Residents Association Requires:**

Relevant Committee Members and volunteers to complete recognised awareness training on child protection.

Relevant committee member to receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.

Relevant committee member to undergo national first aid training (where necessary).

Attendance of updated training when necessary.

## Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Reede Road Tenants Association, to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

Reede Road Tenants Association will assure all volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern that a committee member or volunteer may be, abusing a child.

### Where there is a complaint against a member of committee there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation.
- A child protection investigation.
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

## Action

### 1. Concerns about poor practice:

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the Child Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the relevant officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate proceedings.

### 2. Concerns about suspected abuse:

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Child Protection Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

The Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department which may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.

The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.

The Child Protection Officer should also notify the relevant **TRA** officer who in turn will inform the Error! Reference source not found. Child Protection Officer who will deal with any media enquiries.

If the Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate Manager or in his/her absence the Error! Reference source not found. Child Protection Officer who will refer the allegation to social services.

## **Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

### **This includes the following people:**

- The Child Protection Officer.
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused.
- The person making the allegation.
- Social Services/Police.
- The Error! Reference source not found. Chair and Error! Reference source not found. Child Protection Officer.
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

## **Internal enquiries and suspension**

The Error! Reference source not found. Child Protection Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any committee member or volunteer accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries. Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the Error! Reference source not found. Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a committee member or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Error! Reference source not found. Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information, which could suggest that on a balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

### **Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse**

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of help lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189. Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

### **Allegations of previous abuse**

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children).

Where such an allegation is made, the club should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside the Tenants and Residents Association, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

### **3. Concerns outside the immediate Tenants and Resident Association (e.g. a parent or carer):**

Report your concerns to the Child Protection Officer, who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible.

See 4. Below for the information social services or the police will need.

If the Child Protection Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact social services or the police immediately.

Social services and the Child Protection Officer will decide how to involve the parents/carers.

The Child Protection Officer should also report the incident to the Error! Reference source not found.

#### **Governing body.**

The governing body should ascertain whether or not the person/(s) involved in the incident play a role in Error! Reference source not found. And act accordingly.

Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.

See 4. Below regarding information needed for social services.

#### **4. Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse:**

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact Barking and Dagenham Social Services or the Police direct , or the **NSPCC Child Protection Helpline** on **0808 800 5000**, or **Childline** on **0800 1111**.