



Appendix 10: Child Protection Policy and Procedures

POLICY STATEMENT

Living Streets believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

THE PURPOSE OF THE POLICY:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who receive Living Streets' services, or come into contact with our staff or volunteers.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.
- This policy applies to all paid staff, including senior managers, the board of trustees, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Living Streets.

WE WILL SEEK TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE BY:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- ensuring any staff regularly working with children or accessing systems containing personal data about children (e.g. Travel Tracker, photo permission forms) are checked with the Disclosure and Barring Service. The check will be repeated after 3 years to minimise risk in line with good practice recommended by education practitioners.

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Child Protection Procedures

PURPOSE AND AIM OF THE PROCEDURES

These procedures apply to everyone at Living Streets who comes into contact with children and young people, even if this is not their main role. The procedures provide clear step-by-step guidance on what to do in different circumstances, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of members of staff, trustees and volunteers.

In the nature of our work with children and young people, working in schools for short periods, alongside school staff, it is unlikely that a child will disclose abuse to you. However, if this happens, you need to respond in an appropriate way. In most cases, you should immediately report the disclosure to the member of school staff with whom you are working. Afterwards, inform a Living Streets child protection officer that this referral has been made.

RECOGNISING ABUSE

In general there are four main forms of abuse; physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. For more details of the possible signs of abuse, please refer to Annex 5.

It is important to remember: In most cases of child abuse, it involves adults they know and trust.

- A child is never to blame for the abuse.
- Disabled children could be more vulnerable to abuse.
- Children very seldom make false accusations that they have been abused.
- Children who are abused can be very good at hiding their unhappiness or distress.
- Abuse can have serious long term effects on children.

HOW TO RESPOND IF A CHILD DISCLOSES ABUSE TO YOU

- Listen.
- Remain calm.
- Accept what the child says. Reassure the child that what happened was not okay, that you believe them.
- Don't investigate.
- It is important to respect the child's right to privacy while balancing this with the need to discuss their disclosure with other adults. Explain to the child that what they have said needs to be shared by you with another trusted adult. Explain that this is the job of adults and it is how they help keep children safe.
- Explain to the child that he or she has done the right thing to tell and that they may have to tell their story to someone else whose job it is to talk to children about these issues.
- Thank the child for telling you.
- Report what the child said to the member of school staff with whom you are working.

- Keep a written record
- Inform a Living Streets Child Protection Officer of the referral.

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Members of staff, trustees and volunteers are not expected to investigate allegations of abuse or decide whether abuse has taken place, however they do have a responsibility to refer any suspicions or allegations. All suspicions or allegations of abuse of a child should be reported to Living Streets' child protection officers.

LIVING STREETS CHILD PROTECTION OFFICERS

Sam Potter, Project Manager (England)

Jenny Wiles, Regional Director (England)

Rebecca Simpson (Scotland)

Jenni Wiggle, Senior Director

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF, VOLUNTEER, TRUSTEE OR OTHER LIVING STREETS REPRESENTATIVE

If a member of staff or a volunteer is suspected of abuse, this must be reported to the child protection officer. If the child protection officers are suspected of abuse then these allegations should be reported to the Chief Executive or – if appropriate- the Chair of Living Streets, who is also a member of the Board of Trustees.

- Chair of Living Streets: Archie Robertson
- Email: archierob@aol.com

The member of staff or volunteer may be suspended from working with children until any enquiries are completed. This does not presume guilt but is to safeguard the welfare of the child / children. The member of staff or volunteer will be entitled to support from Living Streets during this time. The matter will be investigated and the results of the investigation may lead to action under Living Streets' Disciplinary Procedures. Living Streets' Child Protection Officer, the Chief Executive or the Chair will contact the appropriate contacts outside the organisation without delay. Phone referral to the contacts outside the organisation, must be followed up in writing within 48 hours and acknowledgments must be received within 3 working days. The protection officer, Chief Executive or the Chair will record full information about the child's first point of contact in the incident book. This should include name(s), address(es), gender, date of birth, names of person(s) with parental responsibilities. The protection officer, Chief Executive or the Chair will record all concerns and discussion about the allegations and the child. Decisions made must also be recorded in the incident book with explanations for the decisions.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Privacy and confidentiality should be respected where possible but if doing this leaves a child at risk of harm then the child's safety has to come first. Remember:

- Legally, it is fine to share information if someone is worried about the safety of a child.
- Not everyone needs to know when a concern or worry is raised. This respects the child's, family's and/or staff's rights to privacy. So only people who need to know should be told about it. Otherwise there might be gossip and rumours or other people may be genuinely concerned.
- It is fine to say that a concern has been raised and it is being dealt with following the organisation's procedures.