

# **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR THE VIABLES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Viables Community Association is firmly committed to the belief that all children and young people have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, and fully recognises its responsibility for child protection. The safety and protection of all children and young people that Viables Community Association supports is paramount, and has priority over all other interests.

The purpose of this Child Protection Policy is to ensure at all times the maximum protection from any kind of harm for all young people involved in any way with Viables Community Association.

For the purposes of this policy, harm is defined as:

- abandonment
- emotional abuse
- neglect
- physical abuse
- racial abuse
- sexual abuse or sexual exploitation

This policy forms part of the Terms and Conditions of Employment and applies to all employees. Its purpose is to protect the personal safety of all children and young people using the facilities, resources and activities provided by Viables Community Association actively promoting awareness, good practice and sound procedures.

## **POLICY PROCEDURES**

### **PERSONNEL/RECRUITMENT**

- All employees and volunteers working directly with children and young people are required to provide references, which are always verified.
- All employees and volunteers working directly with children and young people have criminal record checks at enhanced level
- No new employees or volunteers should start working with children or young people until references have been verified and DBS checks received. If this is not possible then new employees and volunteers must be closely supervised until references and DBS checks are completed satisfactorily.
- All employees and volunteers will receive, and will be required to read, the Child Protection Policy.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

- All employees and volunteers working on behalf of Viabes Community Association have a responsibility for the welfare of the children and young people that they work with in relation to the Association.
- All employees and volunteers have a duty to ensure that any suspected incident, allegation or other manifestation relating to child protection is reported using the reporting procedures detailed in this policy
- The Chair is the Community Association's designated Child Protection Officer and is responsible for child protection and the implementation of this policy. It is the responsibility of the Child Protection Officer to take appropriate action following any expression of concern and make referrals to the appropriate agency
- All employees and volunteers will be made aware of the named Officer and how to contact him/her
- Viabes Community Association frequently takes photographs of children and young people participating in activities and events. At all times permission from parents will be obtained before any photographic material is used in the public domain

## **REPORTING PROCEDURES**

- Any suspicion or allegation must be reported as soon as possible on the day of the occurrence to the designated Child Protection Officer. Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in a number of ways including a comment made by a child, physical evidence such as bruising, a change in behaviour or inappropriate behaviour or knowledge
- It is the responsibility of the Child Protection Officer to liaise with other relevant agencies where necessary and seek clarification from the Child Protection Unit of the local Constabulary, if there is any concern about the validity of any allegation
- Any suspicion or allegation of abuse must be recorded by the observer/s on the appropriate incident reporting form. This form must be kept strictly confidential and stored securely following the Data Protection Procedures
- All employees and volunteers are instructed to report the disclosure or discovery of abuse directly to the designated Child Protection Officer. If this is not possible and the matter is considered urgent, it should be immediately reported to Children's Services
- All stages of the reporting procedure must be documented, marked CONFIDENTIAL and stored securely following the procedures laid out in the Data Protection Policy

## **ALLEGATIONS AGAINST EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS**

- When any form of complaint is made against an employee or volunteer, it must be taken seriously and the complaint should initially be dealt with by the most senior person on site at the time the complaint is made
- The senior person must report the complaint immediately to the Child Protection Officer, giving details of the circumstances
- The Child Protection Officer will attend the site of the allegation to gain an initial account of what has occurred from all relevant parties, including the person against whom the allegation has been made. If this is not possible, contact will be made by telephone
- The Child Protection Officer will have the right to suspend from duty and /or the premises, any person who is a party to the allegation until a full investigation has been made.

**This action does not imply in any way that the person suspended is responsible for, or is to blame for any action leading up to the complaint. The purpose of any such suspension is to enable a full and proper investigation to be carried out in a totally professional manner.**

- It is the responsibility of the Child Protection Officer to make the decision as to whether to inform Social Services and/or the Child Protection Unit of the local Constabulary, depending on the nature of the allegation
- Viabes Community Association will co-operate fully with the Police, Social Services and all other parties involved
- The Child Protection Officer will ensure that an agreed statement will be prepared for the purpose of accurate communication with external sources and for the protection of the legal position of all parties involved
- The Child Protection Officer will make a full written report of the incident and the actions taken. This report will be stored securely following the procedures detailed in the Data Protection Policy

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

- All employees and volunteers work under the principle that confidentiality is extremely important and plays a large part in much of the work carried out with children and young people. However, under no circumstances will any volunteer or individual in the employ of Viabes Community Association keep confidential any information that raises concerns about the safety and welfare of a child or young person. This statement relating to confidentiality is made known to all who access any provision of the Viabes Community Association

## **REVIEW AND MAINTENANCE OF POLICY**

- Viabes Community Association shall undertake to review this policy, its implementation and effectiveness annually. The views of all employees shall be sought where necessary and reflected in the review process

- Any new legislation or developments in existing legislation regarding safeguarding of children will be considered as and when required and the policy will be updated to reflect these developments
- All employees and volunteers working directly with children will receive training in child protection procedures and the training will be reviewed as and when required

Date adopted: May 2021

Date for review: May 2022