

WANSTEAD HOUSE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

SAFEGUARDING

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Wanstead House Community Association (WHCA) provides a wide range of facilities and services. As a result there will be occasions when trustees, members, employees, staff, volunteers, and contractors will be in contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults to varying degrees.

WHCA recognises that the protection of children and young people and vulnerable adults is a corporate responsibility. It will seek to ensure that all children, young people and vulnerable adults who come into contact with the Association and its employees, staff and agents are protected and treated with respect.

- WHCA recognises that all children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to exist in a safe, secure and caring environment, and that they should be respected and valued as unique individuals; it also acknowledges their vulnerability and the need for protection. We are committed to the principles and duties contained within the Children's Act 2004 and Working Together 2015 and the Care Act 2014.
- We will take seriously all allegations of abuse and take any action we consider necessary to protect the child, young person or vulnerable adult from abuse. We co-operate with the relevant partner in the Local Authority in order to protect adults and children who are at risk of abuse or neglect.
- We will ensure that all staff, members, visitors and hirers know where to go to report any concerns regarding safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

At the same time, we will work to ensure that our employees, staff, trustees and members are protected from the risk of malicious or unfounded allegations of abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

This policy applies to all employees, staff, volunteers, and contractors of WHCA whether or not they are in regular contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults. In this policy, all of the above will be referred to collectively as "employees".

Organisations, classes, clubs or groups involved in the provision of services to children, young persons or vulnerable adults on our premises or under our control are required to have regard to this policy and to have their own suitable safeguarding policies and procedures in place for their activities (including appropriate insurance), which where required may include appointing a safeguarding officer and undertaking appropriate risk assessments and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

WHCA does not provide supervision for children, young people or vulnerable adults who use our premises and facilities. This is the responsibility of parents, nominated responsible adults and carers and/or the organisations, classes, clubs or groups which they attend.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

WHCA Management Trustees will be responsible for ensuring that the WHCA Safeguarding Policy is effectively implemented and revised. This role may be carried out through the Centre Manager or by a Safeguarding Officer appointed by the Trustees.

All employees of WHCA, at every level, have an individual responsibility for ensuring the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is expected that all employees will:

- Understand their responsibilities under the WHCA Safeguarding Policy.
- Challenge poor practice as appropriate.
- Discuss areas of concern with the Centre Manager as appropriate.
- Report through the appropriate channels any concerns they have about an individual.
- Only work with organisations which also adopt good practice in their approach to safeguarding and obtain a copy of their operating procedures.

3. CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN SESSIONS OR WITHIN WHCA FACILITIES.

3.1 Unsupervised

Children under the age of 8 years are the legal responsibility of their parents and/or carers and as such must always be accompanied by a responsible adult whilst on any WHCA premises, unless participating in an organised supervised activity or session specifically for children.

Children aged 8 or over remain the legal responsibility of their parents and/or carers or their nominated responsible adult unless engaged in organised supervised activity booked through WHCA.

3.2 Supervised

Clubs, Organisations and Groups for or including separate children's activities organised by them and booked through WHCA shall be required to have a compliant children, young persons and vulnerable adults protection policy in place.

In the absence of parental or nominated adult or carer responsibility children, young persons and vulnerable adults shall be the responsibility of the organisers and shall be supervised at all times as required by law by appropriately trained and checked persons.

Suitable ratios of employee, club/group leader to children should be maintained throughout based on risk assessments and any governing body guidelines.

4. ABUSE

4.1 Children and Young People

There are four main categories of abuse to be considered under WHCA Safeguarding Policy for children and young people:

- Physical Abuse - deliberately inflicting physical, non-accidental injury.
- Emotional Abuse- persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection by having no feeling of warmth, care or concern for the individual.
- Sexual Abuse- forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities whether or not they are aware of or consent to what is happening.
- Neglect - the persistent failure to meet the needs of the child, young person or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs

4.2 Adults

There are nine main categories of abuse to be considered for Adults:

- Physical abuse – including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.
- Domestic violence – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence.
- Sexual abuse – including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to

pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

- Psychological abuse – including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.
- Financial or material abuse – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- Modern slavery – encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.
- Discriminatory abuse – including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
- Neglect and acts of omission – including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating
- Self-neglect – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

5. ABUSE GUIDANCE

5.1 Signs of Abuse

WHCA Management Trustees and their employees should understand that abuse can be a complex issue, and that diagnosis is the responsibility of relevant, expert agencies. Their role is to report and refer, not to investigate or judge. However they should be aware of indicators that may be indicative of abuse. These indicators can be both physical and behavioural.

5.2 Reporting Concerns

The protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults is everyone's business, and WHCA has a duty to raise any concerns or suspicions that an individual is being abused.

Concerns or suspicions may be alerted in four forms:

- Observing physical or behavioural indicators
- An individual mentioning something that has happened to them.
- Someone else expressing their concerns
- Suspicion that an individual is a threat or there is suspicious behaviour.

Whenever concern is raised about the welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult, it is important that employees follow the procedures below:-

- All reports and records must be factual
- Any opinions reported or recorded must be clearly stated as opinions and not facts.

No promise of confidentiality must be made, as confidentiality will be governed by the need to protect the child, young person or vulnerable adult, and may not be maintained if the withholding of information will prejudice the welfare of the individual.

Employees should take the following steps if they have concerns of abuse:

1. Listen to the individual carefully, and repeat what they say to be sure it was understood
2. Never ask leading questions
3. Ensure the individual is comforted and safe
4. Immediately contact a senior official, manager or supervisor
5. Complete a written statement to include:
 - The location and type of any physical or behavioural indicator
 - The date and time of any disclosure made
 - Circumstances in which any disclosure was made
 - Details of what was said, as accurately as possible, in the words used
 - Details of what was said in response
 - Details of any action taken
6. Sign, date and time the report.
7. Submit report to the Centre Manager.
8. Cooperate with any professional agency or support if asked to do so.
9. Be prepared to answer questions on the reports during any investigation or subsequent hearing.

Concerns or suspicions relating to the activities and attendees of any clubs, groups, classes or organisations booking WHCA facilities should be referred to and be dealt with by their safeguarding officer, organiser or other personnel responsible for the hire of WHCA facilities.

5.3 Guidance for Receiving Concerns of Abuse

1. Immediately arrange a formal meeting with the person raising the concern to discuss the issues expressed in the report.
2. Make a formal record of the meeting and concerns expressed
3. In most circumstances, the agreement of the parent/carer should be sought before a referral is made, providing this will not place the individual at an increased risk of harm.
4. In situations where there is no immediate risk to the individual contact the London Borough of Redbridge Welfare Team on 020 8708 3751
5. In a situation where the manager or employee believes the individual is in need of emergency protection or urgent care contact Social Services on 020 8708 5897, the Child Protection and Assessment Team on 020 8708 5353 or Redbridge Police on 020 8478 1123.
6. All telephone referrals should be followed up in writing to the London Borough of Redbridge Social Services Team within 48hours.
7. Agree a review/feedback meeting with the person raising the concern.
8. Keep all notes and documentation in a secure location.

5.4 Concerns about a Suspicious Individual

If an employee raises concerns about an individual who may be a threat to children, young people or vulnerable adults the Centre Manager must:

1. Ensure the individual is kept under surveillance at all time
2. Monitor behaviour of the individual to help decide the course of action
3. If suspicions remain, contact the Police immediately.
4. If the individual leaves the facility or area, contact the Police again and allow them access to CCTV.
5. Communicate accurately with the Police to assist their investigations.
6. Inform the Management Trustees
7. Complete an Incident Report recording accounts from all witnesses.

5.5 Suspicions or Allegations against an Employee

If an employee is suspected of abuse the following procedure should apply.

- The person raising the concern must report immediately to the Centre Manager.
- The Centre Manager will make a record of the formal meeting and report to a member of the Management Trustees.
- On consultation with Vision, if appropriate, and the Management Trustees, the Centre Manager must decide whether the case is due to poor working practice or abuse.
- If abuse is suspected, Social Services and the Police should be contacted.
- If poor working practice is suspected, the matter should be dealt with as misconduct under the disciplinary procedure.
- The member of staff should be contacted and suspended from duty until the investigation has been carried out.

5.6 Misuse of Procedure

Malicious complaints about an employee(s) and/or serious and/or persistent abuse of these safeguarding procedures will not be tolerated and will be dealt with through the disciplinary process.

Employees may not discuss any allegation of abuse, whether substantiated or not

- Except with the manager they initially reported it to or the Management Trustees
- Except with the official agency leading any investigation

This does not exclude the employee from the need or right to consult with a solicitor, trade union representative, or other legal advisor.

Any enquires from the media concerning an allegation of abuse must be referred to the Management Trustees. Any direct question to an employee should be answered with the phrase “no comment”.

6. PHYSICAL CONTACT

Touching is an essential part of life and necessary for basic care. However, all touching or physical contact should be safe and appropriate.

Employees should observe the following guidelines in dealing with children, young people and vulnerable adults:

- Keep everything public.
- Touching should be related to the needs of the individual, not the employee.
- Touching must be age appropriate, and initiated by the child, young person or vulnerable adult, not the employee.
- Any touching that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating must be avoided.
- Children, young people or vulnerable adults have the right to decide how much or little physical contact they have with others. This must always be respected, other than in exceptional circumstances such as a medical emergency.
- Employees should be aware of, and monitor, each other, in physical contact and be ready to help and advise each other.
- An employee with concerns over the way in which a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being touched should report such concerns to the Centre Manager.

6.1 First Aid

When administering first aid, whether to children, young people or vulnerable adults, it is advisable to do so in the presence of a witness(es). This is particularly important when dealing with a member of the opposite sex.

However, the administration of first aid should not be delayed simply because there is no witness present.

6.2 Physical Restraint

In extreme circumstances, it may be necessary for employees to physically restrain a child, young person or vulnerable adult for their own or others protection. Employees are authorised to do this only if they consider it necessary to do so to prevent injury or harm to the child, young person, vulnerable adult, themselves or others. In such situations, the guidelines below must be followed:

- Employees must have good grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary to prevent an individual from harming themselves or others.
- Physical restraint should be avoided through dialogue and diversion. A verbal warning that physical restraint may be used should be given if the circumstances allow.
- Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury should be used.
- Where possible, the presence of another employee should be obtained before applying physical restraint, to assist and act as a witness.
- Physical restraint should be standing either side of the individual and holding their arms against their body.
- Physical restraint should be applied in a way that allows the individual to regain control of them whilst allowing them to preserve self-respect, as far as possible.
- As soon as it is safe to do so, restraint should be gradually release to allow the individual to regain self-control.

Following an incident where physical restraint has been used, the employee must:

- Notify the Centre Manager
- Complete an incident form

The Manager must:

- Ensure the incident report is completed
- Ensure the parents/carers of the child, young person or vulnerable adult is informed
- Arrange a meeting with the employee to discuss the incident.
- Write up an account of the meeting with the employee.
- Assess the operation/activity to determine if there is a need for training or change of working practice to reduce the risk of a reoccurrence.

7. PHOTOGRAPHY

The taking of images, photographs or film using any device is prohibited within the communal areas of the Association's facilities. Those individuals who wish to take photos must obtain formal authorisation from the Centre Manager.

The taking of images, photographs or film using any device during organised activities by Clubs, Organisations and Groups booked through WHCA shall be at the discretion of the organisers. The Association reserves the right to ask Clubs, Organisations and Groups or any other user of the Association's facilities to refrain from taking photographs where parents with children or other customers may not want to be photographed and may have concerns about the use of such images.

Employees or members of the Press taking photographs for company publicity, inclusion in press material and marketing purposes must ensure they have the permission of the child, young person or vulnerable adult's parent/carer. This should be in the form of written consent.

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