

safestrongandfree
HIGHLAND



SAFE STRONG AND FREE PROJECT

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Child Protection Policy Statement

The Safe Strong and Free Project believes that every child has the right to grow up safe, strong and free and that preventing sexual assault and exploitation of children is the responsibility of the whole community.

Ssf is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. It recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation.

Ssf follows the Child Protection Guidelines as laid down by the Highland Council Child Protection Committee. A copy of the Guidelines can be found online under "publications" at the link below:

<http://www.forhighlandschildren.org/2-childprotection/publications.htm>

Staff and volunteers endeavour to work together to encourage the development of an ethos, which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people and adults.

Ssf will:

- ❑ Ensure that all workers understand their legal and moral obligations to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation.
- ❑ Develop best practice in relation to the recruitment of all workers.
- ❑ Ensure that all workers understand their responsibility to work to the standards and procedures detailed in the **ssf** Code of Conduct and the Child Protection Procedures.
- ❑ Ensure that all workers understand their obligations to report child protection concerns about a child or young person, or a worker's conduct towards a child or young person, to the relevant person as outlined in the **ssf** Child Protection Procedures.
- ❑ Ensure that all **ssf** procedures relating to the conduct of workers are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner.
- ❑ Provide opportunities for all workers to develop their skills and knowledge particularly in relation to the care and protection of children and young people.
- ❑ Ensure that children and young people are enabled to express their ideas and views in a variety of ways.
- ❑ Ensure that the **ssf** Complaints Procedure is available to all user groups or by contacting the Project Office.
- ❑ Ensure that parents and carers are encouraged to be involved in the work of **ssf** and, when requested, have access to all **ssf** guidelines and procedures.
- ❑ Endeavour to keep up-to-date with national developments relating to the care and protection of children and young people.

SAFE STRONG AND FREE PROJECT

Section 1: Introduction

The purpose of these procedures is to ensure that all concerns about the care and protection of children are effectively managed.

All persons involved in the Safe Strong and Free Project (**ssf**) are required to implement the procedures. This includes all workers, whether paid or voluntary, directors and advisors. All those involved in **ssf** have a duty to do what is reasonable to safeguard children's health, development and welfare. All those involved in **ssf** are committed to children's rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, especially the rights relating to protection from harm, abuse and exploitation (Articles 19, 34, 37, 39 UNCRC)

Any reference to staff in this policy includes volunteers.

Section 2: The recruitment and employment of staff

Ssf aims to ensure that children and young people are protected and kept safe from harm whilst they are with **ssf** staff. In order to achieve this we will ensure our staff are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised. **Ssf** is also committed to equal opportunities and treatment for all regardless of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability/ability, age or appearance, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religious or political beliefs.

Any reference to 'applicants' in this section includes volunteers.

Selection:

- ◆ All applicants to **ssf** will complete an application form. This will go on file as a personal profile if their application is successful.
- ◆ All applicants will complete a Self-Declaration Form when they apply for a post which requires PVG Scheme membership.
- ◆ All applicants will provide the names of three referees who will be prepared to give them a reference.
- ◆ The referees named by successful applicants will be contacted. Any employment offer will be dependent on satisfactory references. These will be followed up with a phone call or personal contact and discussion will take place with the referees on the applicant's suitability to work with children.
- ◆ All short listed applicants will be interviewed.
- ◆ All successful applicants appointed to 'childcare' positions [as defined in schedule 2 of the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003] will be required to become a Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme member. If the person is an existing PVG Scheme member they will be required to complete an "Existing PVG Scheme Member Application" so that we can have their Scheme membership verified by Disclosure Scotland.
- ◆ All workers will have a probationary period of at least 3 months. The probationary period will be extended until all elements of induction have been completed.

An individual who is appointed and is later found to be named on the 'Disqualified from Working with Children List' (other than provisionally) will be removed from a position which involves contact with children. An individual is referred to the 'Disqualified from Working with Children List' where the grounds for referral under the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 are met.

Training:

The successful applicant will receive induction training, which will give an overview of **ssf** and ensure they know its purpose, values, services and structure. Regular training and support will be provided on an ongoing basis and will cover information about their role and opportunities for practicing skills needed for work. Training on specific areas such as health and safety procedures, identifying and responding to abuse, and confidentiality will be given as a priority to new staff and will be regularly reviewed.

Supervision:

All staff will have a line manager who will provide regular feedback and support. All staff will attend an Annual Appraisal where their performance, skills, motivation and expectations will be discussed. A record of the meeting will be kept and signed by the line manager and staff member. One copy will be kept in the staff member's personnel file and the other will be given to the member of staff.

Notes:

- ♦ It is an offence for an individual who is "barred" to undertake the type of work from which they are "barred".
- ♦ It is an offence for an organisation to offer regulated work to someone who is "barred" or fail to remove a person from regulated work if the organisation is notified that the person is "barred".
- ♦ It is an offence for an organisation not to refer an individual to Disclosure Scotland where the grounds for referral have been met.

Section 3: Types of harm

The following definitions may be useful but it should be noted that children's experiences of harm are complex and may have elements from several categories.

Physical injury: Actual or attempted physical injury to a child, under the age of 16 years, including administration of toxic substances, where there is knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted, or knowingly not prevented.

Sexual abuse: Any child below the age of 16 may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person/s, by design or neglect, exploits a child, directly or indirectly, in any activity intended to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person/s including organised networks. This definition holds whether or not there has been genital contact and whether or not the child is said to have initiated the behaviour.

Sexual abuse may also include:

- under-age pregnancies which may be a sign of sexual abuse;
- activities such as incest, rape, sodomy or intercourse with children;
- lewd and libidinous practices or behaviour aimed at children;
- indecent assault of children;
- taking indecent photographs of children; or

- encouraging children to become prostitutes or witness intercourse or pornographic materials.

Emotional abuse: Failure to provide for the child's basic emotional needs such as to have a severe effect on the behaviour and development of the child.

This may include situations where, as a result of persistent behaviour by the parents or carers, children are:

- rejected, belittled or made scapegoats;
- inappropriately punished;
- denied opportunities for exploration, play and socialisation appropriate to their age and stage of development or encouraged to engage in antisocial behaviour;
- put in a state of terror or extreme anxiety by the use of threats or practices designed to intimidate them;
- isolated from normal social experiences which prevent the child from forming friendships.

Physical neglect: This occurs when a child's essential needs are not met and this is likely to cause impairment to physical health and development. Such needs include food, clothing, cleanliness, shelter and warmth. A lack of appropriate care results in persistent or severe exposure, through negligence, to circumstances which endanger the child. Physical neglect may include a failure to secure appropriate medical treatment for the child, or when an adult carer persistently pursues, or allows the child to follow, a lifestyle inappropriate to the child's developmental needs or which jeopardises the child's health. This category covers children who are left on their own for long periods and do not receive enough stimulation or suffer sensory deprivation, especially in infancy. They may not experience enough nurturing, nor have many caregivers.

Non-organic failure to thrive: Children who significantly fail to reach normal growth and development milestones (i.e. physical growth, weight, motor, social and intellectual development), where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated and diagnosis of non-organic failure to thrive has been established.

Other issues, which can lead the abuse and neglect of children, are: domestic abuse, substance misuse, bullying, harassment, social exclusion factors and animal abuse.

Please refer to the Highland Child Protection Policy Guidelines for more information. They are available online under "publications" at the link below:

<http://forhighlandschildren.org>

Section 4: Procedures for responding to concerns about abuse and neglect.

Volunteers will:

- ♦ Inform the Project Worker if they have concerns for the safety or well-being of a child in the course of their work with **ssf**.
- ♦ If they do not feel the Project Worker treated their concerns appropriately they should pass on the concerns to the Project Co-ordinator.

Project Workers will:

- ◆ At the time of disclosure, use the **ssf** concern form to record exactly what is said.
- ◆ Give this form to the Designated Person for Child Protection (usually the Head Teacher or Nursery Manager), and mention that the information can be used to complete section 2.2 of the Standard Child Concern Form.
- ◆ If the Designated Person or Secondary Person for Child Protection is unavailable on the day, phone the Practice Lead for Care and Protection in your area, using the contacts list in your folder. If the child is in immediate danger, phone the Police.
- ◆ Leave the original paper copy of the **ssf** concern form with the Designated Person for child protection
- ◆ Retain a copy of the **ssf** concern form and send it in a double envelope to the Project Co-ordinator on the day of the concern / incident.
- ◆ Contact the Project Co-ordinator by phone on the day of the concern / incident to give a verbal report.

The Project Co-ordinator will:

- ◆ Advise the Board Chairperson that there has been an incident but will not give details.
- ◆ Store the concern form securely in the Project Office.
- ◆ Have contact with the Designated Person for Child Protection in the nursery where the concern arose within 7 days to ascertain what action was taken and whether the Named Person has been informed.
- ◆ Shred the concern form when the issue has been resolved satisfactorily.

In the event that a member of ssf staff is not satisfied with the action of the Designated Person for Child Protection, the concern will be passed on to the relevant Practice Lead for Care and Protection.

Section 5: Procedures to be followed if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of ssf staff

Any allegation of child abuse, current or historical, against a member of ssf staff or a volunteer will result in immediate suspension until the incident is fully investigated by the statutory authorities.

Procedures may be activated when e.g.

- ◆ A child alleges that they have been harmed by a member of ssf staff.
- ◆ A parent or carer or other individual from out-with ssf alleges that their child or another child has been harmed by a member of ssf staff.
- ◆ Others may have witnessed or have concerns about a member of staff's behaviour towards a child.

The Board of Directors will follow the **ssf** complaints procedures if a complaint is made against a member of staff. Disciplinary procedures will follow if it is found that the member of staff breached the ssf Code of Conduct. This may result in dismissal and referral to the Scottish Ministers for consideration to be included on the 'Disqualified from Working with Children List' if the grounds for referral are met.

Section 6: Data Protection and management of confidential information.

Ssf respects the rights of children to confidentiality unless a member of staff considers that a child or children may be at risk of abuse or harm. At all stages, children's views will be sought and the reasons for sharing information will be explained in child-friendly language. Children have a right to an opinion, and for it to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12, UNCRC)

Ssf will store confidential information securely at the Project Office and manage confidential information responsibly. Confidential information will only be kept for as long as is absolutely necessary and will be disposed of by shredding.

Confidential records about a child or children will not be kept electronically by **ssf**.

Section 7: Review of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

The Child Protection Procedures and Policy Statement, and other care and protection policies, procedures and guidelines will be reviewed annually or according to need to take account of new legislation or recommendations, whichever comes first. It is the responsibility of the Advisors to indicate when it is necessary to review the policy and procedures out-with the annual cycle.

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SAFE STRONG & FREE CONCERN FORM

This information should be used to complete section 2.2 of the Standard Child Concern Form, where there is a child protection concern.

1. Child's Name..... DOB
2. Date and time of incident/concern.
3. Name of Nursery/ Playgroup/ Day Care.....
4. Which workshop were you leading at the time.....
5. Name/s of nursery/playgroup/day care staff present at the time
.....
6. Name/s of other observer/s present
.....
7. Give details of the concern / incident. *(Use a continuation sheet if necessary)*

8. What action did the Designated Person say they would take?

Name of person who completed this form:.....

Signature

Date.....

SAFE STRONG & FREE CONCERN / INCIDENT REPORT

Continuation sheet

Child's Name..... Date.....

Name of establishment.....

This folder contains:

- ❖ Safe Strong & Free Concern Forms
- ❖ Business cards with Project Co-ordinators name
- ❖ Stamped pre-addressed double envelopes
- ❖ **ssf** Child Protection Policy Statement and Procedures

If you have a concern about a child or there is an incident:

- At the time of the concern, use the **ssf** concern form to record exactly what is said.
- Give this form to the Designated Person for Child Protection (usually the Head Teacher or Nursery Manager), and mention that the information can be used to complete section 2.2 of the Standard Child Concern Form.
- If the Designated Person or Secondary Person for Child Protection is unavailable on the day, phone the Practice Lead for Care and Protection in your area, using the contacts list in your folder. If the child is in immediate danger, phone the Police.
- Leave the original paper copy of the **ssf** concern form with the Designated Person for child protection
- Retain a copy of the **ssf** concern form and send it in a double envelope to the Project Co-ordinator on the day of the concern / incident.
- Contact the Project Co-ordinator by phone on the day of the concern / incident to give a verbal report.

- Do not go to parents meetings or children's workshops without this folder.

- DO NOT DISCUSS THE CONCERN WITH ANY OTHER MEMBER OF STAFF.

How to Establish Whether there is a Child Protection Concern

If a child says/does something that you think may indicate a Child Protection concern, ask yourself the following **4 Questions**:

- 1. Why do I think this child is not safe?**
- 2. What is getting in the way of this child being safe?**
- 3. What have I observed, heard or identified from the child's history that causes concern?**
- 4. Are there factors that indicate risk of significant harm present and, in my view, is the severity of factors enough to warrant immediate action?**

Good recording of relevant information, strengths as well as risks and pressures, and the sharing of this information with the professionals allocated to undertake the assessment of risk and needs will support any subsequent measures to protect the child.

Concerns about other aspects of a child's well-being

When a practitioner who is not the Named Person or Lead Professional has concerns about a child's well-being which indicate that whilst the child is not in need of protection he/she may be in need of additional support, these concerns and relevant information should be shared with the child's Named Person or Lead Professional.

When such a concern comes to the attention of an ssf Project Worker they must:

engage with the child to consider the **5 Questions**:

- 1. What is getting in the way of this child's well-being?**
- 2. Do I have all the information I need to help this child?**
- 3. What can I do now to help this child?**
- 4. What can my agency do to help this child?**
- 5. What additional help, if any, may be needed from other agencies?**

This information must then be shared with the nursery member of staff who was present in the ssf workshop, who can then contact the Named Person.

This information should also be included in the workshop record, using only the child's initials.