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Registered Charity 1195932

**Safeguarding Children Policy**

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| **Author’s Name** | Helen Abernethy |
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| ***SIGNED:*** | |
| **Chair of Trustees** | The hardcopy on file has been signed |

Safeguarding Children Policy

**Definitions**

Child - Anyone under the age of 18: any reference within this policy to children and young people means people of 18 years of age or under.

Abuse - Child abuse is any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child.

Significant Harm - In relation to children: The Children Act 1989 introduced Significant Harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children... it may include, "for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another". Harm is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development. Significant Harm is therefore relative to each individual concerned.

**The Sensory Place is fully committed to its duty:**

• to protect children and young people who receive The Sensory Place’s services from harm, abuse and exploitation. This includes the children of adults who use our services

• to provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection. This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of The Sensory Place trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

**We believe that:**

• children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind

• we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

**We recognise that:**

• the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we make

• working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people’s welfare

• all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse

• some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues

• extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse.

**We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:**

• valuing, listening to and respecting them

• appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people and a deputy.

• adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers

• developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures

• providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently

• recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made

• recording and storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with GDPR legislation and guidance

• sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions

• making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern

• using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately

• using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately

• creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise

• ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place

• ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance

• building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

**Designated Safeguarding Leads**

**Helen Abernethy – Trustee – 07941311432 – hello@thesensoryplace.net**

**Amy Henderson – Trustee – 07749951903 –** [**hello@thesensoryplace.net**](mailto:hello@thesensoryplace.net)

Their role is to co-ordinate all matters relating to safeguarding issues.

**These will include:**

* Ensuring that all issues concerning the safety and welfare of children and young people are properly dealt with through policies, procedures and administrative systems.
* Ensuring that volunteers, as well as children/young people and parents/carers are made aware of the safeguarding policy and procedures and what they should do if they have concerns about a child.
* Ensure all staff including paid employees and volunteers undertake training in safeguarding.
* Dealing with complaints against members of staff and volunteers.
* Being familiar with Sunderland Safeguarding Children’s Board procedures.
* Being familiar with Durham Safeguarding Children’s Board procedures.
* Being familiar with issues relating to child protection and abuse and keep up-to-date with new developments in this area.

**Procedures**

The Designated Person should be informed immediately by a trustee, volunteer or other persons which includes the parents, child or member/s of the public in the following circumstances

* Suspicion that a child is being harmed.
* There is evidence that a child is being harmed.

The Designated Officer will keep a full record (Safeguarding Log) of concerns raised and make referrals to Sunderland City Council Children’s Services Social Care or Durham County Council Children’s Service Social Care (area dependent) and the Police if necessary.

**Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

Adults who work with children and young people with SEND should be aware of the additional needs children may have that could mean they are more vulnerable to abuse and/or less able to speak out if something isn’t right however children with disabilities are most likely to turn to a trusted adult they know well for help such as family, friend or teacher.

Some children may be vulnerable because they:

* have additional communication needs
* they do not understand that what is happening to them is abuse
* need intimate care or are isolated from others
* are dependent on adults for care.

**Dealing with allegations of abuse**

Employees and volunteers must be prepared for children to make disclosures and/or allegations of abuse. In the case of younger children, or children with disabilities, allegations may have a non -verbal component.

In the event of a disclosure or allegation the need for staff is to:

* Facilitate the child’s communication using their preferred method through a sensitive response, communicating to the child that what they are saying is being taken seriously
* Concentrate on listening and take care not to contaminate evidence by offering suggestions or interpretations to the child or by repeatedly questioning the child
* Notify the child or young person that only the people who need to know will be informed.
* Don’t try to solve the situation yourself or confront anyone.
* Don’t disclose information to any non-relevant parties.
* A concern may arise from an observation and not a verbal disclosure, in this instance a detailed factual account should be made identifying the concern and actions taken
* Communicate the disclosure, allegation or concern quickly to the Designated Person, so that the appropriate referral and action can be taken. If the DSL is unavailable and you believe the situation to warrant further action, contact the police or either Sunderland or Durham Social Care depending on your location.
* Record the allegation or concern, including non- verbal communication, as accurately and completely as possible, complete a body map including a detailed description of any marks or injuries. Remember to include the date and time, what was said and any names and locations.

**Working with outside agencies**

The Sensory Place will ensure that where outside agencies and companies are used to deliver activities, the outside agency will have their own safeguarding policy, health and safety policy and public liability insurance in place and where they may have unsupervised access to children, an up to date and valid Enhanced DBS for each member of staff.

**Different types of abuse**

**Physical Abuse** A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child. Neglect The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

**Neglect** may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**Sexual Abuse** Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Emotional Abuse** The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child though it may occur alone.

**Supporting Documents**

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents:

* + - Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
    - Photo and Video Policy
    - Equality and Diversity Policy
    - Anti-bullying Policy
    - Complaints Procedure
    - Whistleblowing
    - Health and Safety Policy

**This policy has been informed by the following:**

* Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
* Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
* Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board Procedures
* Durham Safeguarding Children Board Procedures
* Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
* Children and Families Act 2014