



SAFEGUARDING AND RECRUITMENT POLICY

Registered in England No: 13293400

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1 Introduction

This policy recognises the obligations and duty of care of Champs Within as it works with children and young people as covered in the Children Act (2005), Keeping Children Safe in education (September, 2021), and Working Together to Safeguard Children (February 2019). A child is any person who has not yet had their eighteenth birthday. This policy is applicable to all staff members.

SECTION A

1.1 Aims

As one of its major activities, Champs Within, seeks to serve the needs of young people by promoting activities that offer holistic development. In doing so, Champs Within takes seriously the welfare of all young people and children who come onto its premises or who are involved in its activities. The organisation aims to ensure that all young people are welcomed into a safe, caring, environment in a happy and friendly atmosphere. To this effect, and in line with good practice, Champs Within will ask for an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure for all prospective members of staff who will be working directly with children and young people.

Champs Within recognises that it is the responsibility of each one of its staff members (paid and voluntary), to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of young people and children and to report any abuse discovered or suspected, directly to the appointed Child Protection Officer.

Champs Within recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures, which are designed to prevent and to be alert to such abuse. Champs Within will ensure that confidentiality is maintained where information is handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only. Information will be stored in a secured place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

The policy is also intended to protect those who work with young people and children from unfounded accusations or from behaving in ways that may be well-intended but inadvisable. Champs Within is committed to supporting, resourcing, and training those who work with young people and children and to providing supervision. It is committed to maintaining good links with the statutory childcare authorities.

The purpose of this policy section is to:

- Identify the names of responsible persons at Champs Within and explain the purpose of their role
- Describe what should be done if anyone has a concern about the safety and welfare of a child who attend any activity developed by Champs Within
- Set out expectations in respect of training

- Outline how complaints against staff will be handled
- Set out expectations regarding record keeping
- Clarify how children will be kept safe through activities promoted by Champs Within
- Outline how the implementation of this policy will be monitored

1.2 Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Chief Organiser to ensure through the Child Protection Officer that these procedures are implemented, that all staff members know the policy, and are given appropriate training to ensure that these procedures operate effectively. It is the responsibility of the Child Protection Officer to ensure that cases of abuse are reported. If the child or young person is in immediate danger the police should be contacted.

If a worker comes to the group in an agitated state; or is suffering excessive mood swings that may lead him/her to lash out; or show other signs of emotional instability, this will also be reported.

It is the responsibility of all staff members and volunteers to be alert and adhere to these procedures.

1.3 Planned work

Arrange that, no adult is left alone with a child or young person where there is little or no opportunity for the activity to be observed by others. This may mean groups working within the same large room or working in an adjoining room with the door left open. This good practice can be as much benefit to the adult as to the child or young person.

Ensure that all workers with children and young people do not meet a child or young person without a parent or other adult being present. Always aim to have two adults present with a group, particularly when it is the only activity taking place on the premises.

Always ensure appropriate ratios of workers to children are observed according to age and gender. Never take a group off the premises with fewer than two adults. Consent forms including medical details should always be used for outings or activities off the premises.

Use of premises

For example, do not expect children or young people to have to walk along a dark unsupervised path in order to enter an activity area. Staff needs to be aware of strangers on the premises whom they think might harass or frighten the children. Centre staff may know them; your responsibility is to know where they are in relation to the children.

Staff and volunteers need to reduce opportunities for abuse, by the way, they use the premises. For example, allowing children to go through meeting places and/or utilising toilets open to the general public is offering an unnecessary opportunity to potential abusers. Consider supervising children at all times if possible. Consider checking public toilets first or having a worker present during toilet breaks.

A worker should never use their position to form a relationship with a child to satisfy his/her emotional needs, or manipulate a response from a child, and should never invite a child in their care back to their own home.

When children and young people have to be transported by car or minibus, arrange as far as possible, to have more than one passenger in the vehicle and that children are seated in the back seats of the vehicle. If private cars are used for an outing, the drivers should be properly insured and have appropriate driving licences.

Ensure that children leave the premises only in the presence of adults known to have permission to collect them.

1.4 How to deal with discovery or disclosure of abuse

Staff and volunteers must use team meetings, staff meetings and supervision as various means of discussing problems and issues of child protection.

Workers must build good relationships with parents as well as children. That in itself helps to provide appropriate care for each child.

If abuse is suspected, discovered, witnessed, or reported the following procedures need to be followed.

The staff member or volunteer must not delay the following actions and the person allegedly suspected of abuse must not be confronted.

All observations must be recorded and a member of the Senior Management Team - SMT informed immediately and in the strictest confidence.

SMT will assess the situation and information given if necessary initiating confidential discussion with other members of staff.

- If immediate action is required a member of the SMT should contact the Child Protection Officer. During any time lapse behaviour of the child should be monitored and observations recorded. The Child Protection Officer will undertake a further investigation if necessary.
- If abuse is suspected, the Child Protection officer will contact the Social Services Department and or (where deemed appropriate), the Police Child Protection Unit.
- If immediate medical attention is required, a first-aider will administer first aid. The parent/carer is to be informed and the Child Protection Officer is contacted immediately. Wherever physical injury is suspected through abuse the Child Protection Officer will contact the Duty Social Worker who may arrange for the child to be seen by a GP or Hospital Doctor in order to document professional evidence.
- If immediate medical attention is not required and physical evidence is not conclusive, staff member should complete a Child Protection Report Form and give SMT to store securely.
- If the child has suffered a serious injury or repeated minor injuries through suspected abuse, staff member will contact Child Protection Officer immediately.

- If a child alleges abuse, listen to the child, and record what the child has said. It is important to respond to questions in a way that the child feels comfortable with. Detailed questions should not be asked. This should be carried out by a qualified Social Worker to prevent contamination of evidence. Inform SMT immediately who may initiate confidential discussions with other workers if there is general concern. SMT should then complete Child Protection Form and keep secure before contacting Child Protection Officer.

1.5 Recording Information – Safeguarding and Welfare Incidents

All concerns about, or disclosures regarding any form of abuse or risk of being abused must be recorded. The record includes stating the time, date, circumstances, and who else was present as well as giving exact details of what the student said quoting the exact words used.

Signs of physical injury should also be recorded but you should record only what you can see without removing additional clothing.

Decisions regarding photographic recording of evidence and full medical examinations should be left to the experts.

Reports should be objective and based on evidence; they should distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion. The note should record the time, date, place and people who were present as well as what was said. When staff becomes aware of possible abuse, they must make a full written record as soon as possible and always within 24 hours of the situation arising. All records should be given to the DSL and may be passed to Social Services when a referral is made. Child protection records are not open to students or parents. All child protection records are kept securely by the DSL.

1.6 Protection of workers

These guidelines are primarily for the protection of children and young people in our care. However, these sensible precautions need to be followed as they are also for the protection of workers.

Very occasionally a worker may be the object of provocative behaviour from a young person of the opposite sex. This should always be reported to SMT. Any worry shared at an early stage can prevent further issues.

In the event of a worker being accused by a child or a young person of any abuse or sexual advance, an open-minded and thorough investigation of any allegation will be made to protect children from abuse and staff from wrongful allegations.

All complaints and allegations must be made to the Child Protection Officer and a detailed report will be made and recorded. The Child Protection Officer will inform SMT.

In extreme situations, the Child Protection Officer may call Social Services immediately after reporting the matter to the SMT. When a complaint has been made, the alleged member of staff will immediately be suspended on full pay whilst a thorough investigation is conducted. This in no way implies blame but is a measure taken to protect the child and the staff member.

If the complaint is against a volunteer then the alleged volunteer will be asked to refrain from volunteering for a stated period and will not be permitted to return until they have

been contacted and briefed on the investigation. If the parent/carer of the child is not the person making the complaint, they will be contacted by the Child Protection Officer to be appraised of the situation. If the Child Protection Officer is absent, SMT will act on his/her behalf throughout the procedure within 24 hours. When an allegation is received it is important to react immediately. Child Protection Officer should interview the informant and record the following information: Details of the child and family Nature of the allegation and the alleged perpetrator. Dates and times of the incident and anyone else involved. If the allegation is made against the Lead Organiser, it may not be appropriate to follow an internal reporting route. The allegations should then be reported to Social Services by the Chief Finance Officer.

SECTION B - GENERAL RECRUITMENT POLICY

2.1 Criminal Records Bureau

When recruiting new staff a criminal record check must be requested for all workers and volunteers who will be working with children or vulnerable adults. Champs Within is not registered with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) to undertake these checks but uses a third-party agency. Members of staff authorised to request checks will themselves be checked by the CRB and registered as countersignatories. The Admin officer is our lead officer and must countersign all applications.

2.2 Disclosure

There are three levels of disclosure that are available. The standard disclosure is required for all manager, and posts, anyone having occasional contact with children and all reception staff. Staff working directly with children or vulnerable adults will require an enhanced disclosure. It includes spent convictions, and details of any cautions, reprimands, or warnings. Where appropriate, the information contained on the government department lists held by the Departments of Health and Education will be included. The process from application to disclosure should take a maximum of six weeks.

2.3 Subsequent checks

Once in post, follow-up checks will be made every three years to ensure that an offence has not been committed during the period of employment.

2.4 Code of Practice

There is a code of practice governing disclosures, which is to ensure that the process works fairly and that sensitive personal information is handled appropriately.

The CRB Code of Practice should be made available to all job applicants where a Disclosure will be requested. They should also be shown a copy of the charity's policy on Disclosures.

2.5 Costs

There is a charge for each disclosure for paid posts. Disclosures for volunteers are made available free of charge. Champs Within will meet the cost of disclosures for its own staff and volunteers.

2.6 References

Two written references will always be sought. If at all possible, one should be from a previous employer and relate to the applicant's record of and suitability for working with children. The other should be a character reference from someone, other than just a friend, who is able to comment with some insight. It is important to telephone referees as well as get written responses. Sometimes people will say on the phone what they are unwilling to put in writing.

2.7 Training

It is important that all workers and volunteers have access to and attend training in this area of work. It is the responsibility of senior workers and line managers to ensure guidelines are understood and training needs are met.

SECTION C - ENHANCED VETTING AND SAFER RECRUITMENT

3.1 Policy Statement for disclosure to applicants

Champs Within complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed. Champs Within is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff, or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, age, physical/mental disability, or offending background.

We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills, and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications, and experience. A Disclosure is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts, and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

Where a Disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for an interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover, to a designated person within Champs Within and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

At the interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to the withdrawal of an offer of employment.

We make every subject of a CRB Disclosure aware of the existence of the CRB Code of Practice and make a copy available on request. We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar the job applicant from working with Champs Within. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

3.2 Roles and Responsibilities

All staff, coaches, and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure that any activities conducted by Champs Within are safe and secure for children and that appropriate procedures are followed. It is the responsibility of those involved with the recruitment, selection, and induction of coaches, staff, and volunteers to ensure a full and satisfactory vetting process has been followed.

Those arranging interviews must ensure that at least one person on the interview panel has completed safe recruitment training either via the NSPCC website or through a recognised provider. Management Check (s128 Directive) will also be undertaken.

3.3 Vetting and Safer Recruitment

Appropriate vetting of potential employees and volunteers is an essential aspect of Champs Within commitment to safeguarding the welfare of children.

Purpose:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is integral to Champs Within. The purpose of this policy is to:

- collate principles of good practice and provide guidance that incorporates statutory requirements.
- ensure that Champs Within fulfills its obligations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by preventing as far as possible the recruitment of individuals who are unsuitable to work with children and by recruiting and training individuals who have positive safeguarding attitudes.
- ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities, and suitability for the position;

All staff involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy.

The measures described in this policy are applied in settings where adults are in contact with children directly or indirectly whilst undertaking paid or voluntary work for Champs Within or delivering services as part of a contractual agreement with an external organisation.

3.4 Vetting and Recruitment Process for Employees

The following elements of the recruitment process should be used to deter and reject unsuitable candidates:

- Job descriptions must be up to date and make reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as well as include the 'safeguarding statement'.
- The person's specification must include specific references to suitability to work with children.
- Advertisements must include the 'safeguarding statement' provided above.
- Application forms should be used by interviewers to obtain and scrutinize comprehensive information about applicants and to explore any gaps in employment. Applicants will be asked at or prior to the interview stage to account for gaps in employment.
- The application form will ask candidates about safeguarding, including their attitudes towards children and their knowledge and experience of safeguarding. It will also ask candidates to inform the School if they are disqualified from working with children and to disclose details of any previous criminal convictions, cautions, reprimands, or final warnings which are not "protected" as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013).
- Face-to-face interviews must be conducted, and where this is not possible, video conferencing (such as Skype) should be used.
- At each interview the candidate will be asked questions which are designed to ascertain their suitability to work with children. All staff interviewing candidates will be aware of their safeguarding responsibilities throughout the interview.
- Verification of identity, right-to-work documents, and original proof of relevant qualifications must be provided prior to taking up the role.



Sammy McKay
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