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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Friends of Dartmouth Park has a legal and moral responsibility to provide a duty of care for children, and implement procedures to safeguard their wellbeing and protect them from abuse.

All references to child and/or children in this document applies equally to young people up to the age of 18 and 25 with a disability or in the protection of the Local Authority.

Friends of Dartmouth Park Management Committee will be the responsible person(s) for and safeguarding concerns

The role of the organisation is to:-

- Ensure that our organisation has procedures in place for child protection and all committee members are familiar with them;
- To act as the first point of call for volunteers concerned about the safety and welfare of a child;
- To be responsible for contacting children's social care in cases where a child is at risk of harm;
- To be familiar with current Sandwell Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) procedures;
- To ensure staff and volunteers know where they can find the child protection policy and procedures and understand their responsibility in implementing its content;
- To advise and provide guidance to volunteers concerned about a child protection issue;
- To support volunteers after they have shared their concerns about a child;
- To communicate to volunteers any changes in policy and procedures;
- To keep accurate records of concerns about children and actions taken;
- To source appropriate training for volunteers about how to respond to child protection concerns;
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding within the organisation;
- To retain data on all safeguarding activities across the organisation;
- To review and update the organisations policy and procedures on safeguarding;
- To ensure parents, carers, children and young people are aware of the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures;
- To promote the importance of safeguarding across the organisation;
- To manage complaints about poor practice of volunteers;
- To make decisions about appointing someone who has a criminal record; and

- To ensure the organisation meets the requirements of its insurers regarding its safeguarding responsibilities.

Definitions:

The Children Act, 2004 defines a child as being up to the age of 18 years old. Extensions of this exist for children who have special needs and for those in local authority care settings.

Working Together to Safeguard Children March 2015 placed an increased duty on the Voluntary Sector. Voluntary and private sectors 43. Voluntary organisations and private sector providers play an important role in delivering services to children. They should have the arrangements described in paragraph 4 of this chapter in place in the same way as organisations in the public sector, and need to work effectively with the LSCB. Paid and volunteer staff need to be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, how they should respond to child protection concerns and make a referral to local authority children's social care or the police if necessary. **This is new, it is important to read and understand the responsibilities place on your organisation.**

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf

Aim of this policy:

- To define the practice and procedures for staff and/or volunteers, in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It is aimed at protecting both the child and the member of staff and/or volunteer.

Objectives of this policy:

- To ensure that all staff and/or volunteers working with children are carefully selected, understand and accept responsibility for the safety of those individuals in their care;
- To ensure that the child's welfare is of paramount importance when undertaking any activities; and
- To respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and to ensure confidential information is restricted to the appropriate individuals within our organisation and appropriate external agencies.

Recruitment:

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable individuals are prevented from having any involvement with our organisation.

Volunteer recruitment procedures will include a Disclosure Barring Service check (previously CRB checks), at the appropriate level, for all personnel who will have access to children and should always include self-declaration and the use of references. This may include all members of the Management Committee if they

have or will have contact with children. Formal interviews will be held for all paid employees. All prospective volunteers should be 'interviewed', this need not be a formal interview.

We will ensure that all staff and/or volunteers have appropriate qualifications and training.

Should any concerns arise following a DBS check then this will be passed onto the Management Committee. Sandwell Safeguarding Children's Board will be contacted for information and guidance. A number of questions will be asked:

- Does the offence relate directly to work with children?
- What is the seriousness of the offence[s] and the circumstances surrounding it?
- How long since the offence was committed?
- Does the subject have a pattern of offending?
- Has the subject's situation changed since the offence occurred?
- What is the subject's explanation of the offence?
- Did the subject declare the offence prior to the Disclosure?

If all these questions are not answered satisfactorily then the prospective volunteer will be referred to the management committee before any volunteering commences

All new staff members and/or volunteers will go through a probation/induction process, including relevant training. Ongoing training and supervision will ensure all staff and/or volunteers are adequately supported.

Any concerns about a staff member and/or volunteer will be passed on to the Essex Avenue Management Committee

For further safer recruitment information

Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People:

<http://bit.ly/1WIAZPw>

If a child reveals that they are being abused:

- Reassure the child, tell them that they are right to tell you [do not promise to keep it a secret as it is your responsibility to inform others];
- Stay calm – ensure the child is safe and feels safe;
- Accept what you have been told [this should not be seen as believing or disbelieving what you have been told];
- Reassure the child and stress that they are not to blame;
- Tell the child that you will offer support but you will have to pass the information on;

- Do not question the child and/or rush into details that may be inappropriate;
- Do not make promises you cannot keep;
- Do not approach or contact the alleged abuser[s];
- Complete the **Incident Record Form** as soon as possible after the event detailing what you and the child discussed;
- Inform the designated person/manager. If this is not possible contact the chair or an appropriate member of the management committee. If the matter is urgent and none of the above can be contacted, then contact social services or the police; and
- Concerns would normally be shared with parents/carers as soon as possible. However, there could be circumstances when this could put the child at greater risk or there may be concerns that parents/carers will not respond appropriately.

Photography, video, etc:

Formal permission from parent/carers should be obtained before taking any photographs, videos, etc.

Adult to child ratio:

In youth work practices the ratio of legally responsible adults to children tends to be 1:8 regardless of age, other guidance suggests 1:10 for older children. It is recommended that there is a minimum of two staff or volunteers with legal responsibility present at all times for children under eight years old.

Review:

Our organisation will ensure that issues of child protection receive continuous attention and will regularly review the way that we operate to support this principle.

Sources of Further Information:

Safe network – Safe Activities for Everyone. Website: www.safenetwork.org.uk.

For Disclosure Barring Service visit: www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/overview.

ChildLine – for children and young people to talk about their worries. Online chat and email also available. Tel: 0800 1111. Website: www.childline.org.uk.

Children England – charities working for children and families. Tel: 020 7833 3319. Website: www.childrenengland.org.uk.

NSPCC - a registered charity established to prevent cruelty to children. Helpline for concerns about a child's welfare. Tel: 0808 800 5000 [24 hours] website www.nspcc.org.uk.

What to do if you think a child is at risk of abuse/neglect:

If you have concerns that a child is being harmed as a result of abuse or neglect, you must not keep these concerns to yourself. Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility.

Members of the public with concerns

If you are worried a child may be suffering significant harm, or if you are concerned a child has suffered harm, neglect or abuse, please follow the advice below:

- If you believe a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm, you should contact the police by dialling 999.

If you have concerns about a child or young person but believe they are not at immediate risk you can:

- Discuss your concerns with a professional you trust such as a health visitor, teacher or GP
- Contact the Sandwell Safeguarding Team on 0121 569 3100
- Contact the NSPCC on **0808 800 5000** (free service, lines open 24 hours a day). They will listen to your concerns, offer advice and support and can take action on your behalf if a child is in danger. You can also report concerns anonymously. For further information or to report your concerns online visit: www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/

If you have a concern about a member of staff working with children (in either a paid or voluntary capacity) please contact the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) on 0121 569 4770.

Professional workers with concerns

For referrals and re-referrals where professionals have safeguarding or child protection concerns for children

If you have safeguarding or child protection concerns in relation to children please consult the SSCB Multi Agency Thresholds Document and if necessary make contact with Sandwell Children's Services, including Early Help using the pathways and details below.

For information on the SSCB Multi Agency Thresholds document and guidance please see the links below:

If you believe that Early Help services will be able to assist the family through either yourself as the lead professional or through additional Early Help Services or via the [Community Operating Groups \(COGs\)](#) then refer via the e-caf system

(training is available at the website address www.sandwell.gov.uk/integratedworking).

Alternatively a paper Early Help Assessment obtained from the website can be sent in which should be e-mailed securely to ecaf_queries@sandwell.gcsx.gov.uk (please note that the email will only be secure if it is also coming from a secure email address i.e. gcsx/nhs.net/pnn.police/cjism). For enquires or queries regarding new referrals/early help cases or advice and guidance please contact the Early help Desk on 0121 569 3100

Non Emergency

If you believe that the risk is significant and is a child protection issue but the child is in no immediate danger you must complete a Multi Agency Referral Form (MARF) as soon as possible and within a maximum of 24 hours.

Please send your completed MARF via secure e-mail to: access_team@sandwell.gcsx.gov.uk

For information on how to access and complete a MARF please see the links below:

Emergency

If a child is at imminent significant risk of harm/immediate danger you should consider calling 999 in the first instance (for Police or Ambulance) and contacting Children's Social Care by telephoning Sandwell's Contact Centre on 0121 569 3100 (out of office hours is the same number). You will be expected to complete a MARF without delay.

MASH – Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

The MASH has been formed to protect children and families who may be at risk of harm including domestic abuse. It is a co-located multi agency team which securely shares information between agencies. The information is used to understand the needs of a child or adult about whom concerns have been raised. The MASH identifies a full picture of the known risks affecting the children and their family and then ensures timely and relevant actions to address these issues.

The following documents provide guidance on when to make a referral:

- [Multi-agency Thresholds Document](#)
- [Multi-agency Referral Form \(MARF\)](#)
- [MARF Guidance](#)

COG Manager: Claire Martin
Court House High Street
West Bromwich B70 8LU
Tel: 0121 569 7293
Email: westbromcentral_cog@sandwell.gov.uk

Allegations about a Colleague/Professional

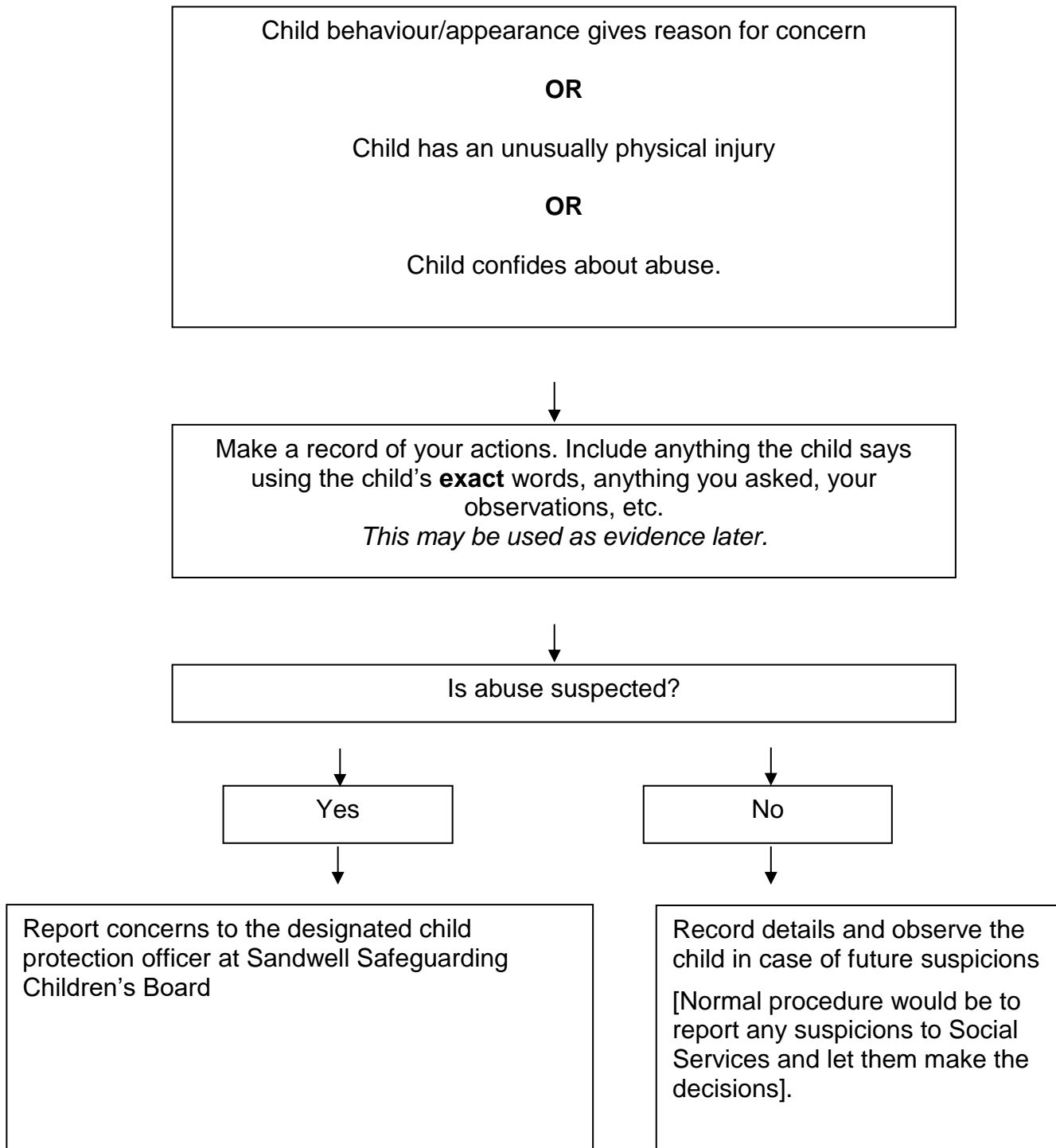
If your concerns or suspicions are about a colleague or professional/carer (including volunteers), you must report them. Please see the [Allegations Against Staff/LADO page](#)

Procedures/Advice

If you wish, you can browse the [West Midlands Procedures Manual](#) e.g. if you wish to obtain information about Confidentiality, how Child Protection Enquiries will be undertaken or about Information Sharing.

You can also download general guidance '[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#)'

Reporting procedure for suspected cases of child abuse



Appendices

Types and definitions of abuse and the indicators you may observe:

The signs summarised below do not necessarily mean that a child is being abused. Similarly there may not be any signs; you may just feel something is wrong. If you are worried report it to the designated person. It is not your responsibility to decide if it is abuse but it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it by reporting.

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 clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers);
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect in recreational or social activities might occur if volunteers fail to ensure that children, in their care, are safely protected or are exposed to undue risk of injury, cold, excessive heat, etc.

Signs of Neglect:

- Constant hunger;
- Poor personal hygiene;
- Constant tiredness;
- Poor state of clothing;
- Emaciated;
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school;
- Untreated medical problems;
- Destructive tendencies;
- Low self-esteem;
- Neurotic behaviour;
- No social relationships;
- Running away;
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging.

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.

Signs of Physical Abuse:

- Unexplained injuries or burns;
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries;
- Refusal to discuss injuries;
- Untreated injuries;
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive;
- Bald patches;
- Withdrawal from physical contact;
- Arms and legs covered in hot weather;
- Fear of returning home;
- Fear of medical help;
- Self-destructive tendencies;
- Aggression towards others;
- Running away.

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.

Signs of Emotional abuse:

- Physical, mental and/or emotional development slows down;
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive;
- Over-reaction to mistakes;
- Continual self-deprecation;
- Sudden speech disorders;
- Fear of new situations;
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations;

- Neurotic behaviour e.g. thumb sucking, hair twisting, etc.;
- Self-mutilation;
- Fear of parents being contacted;
- Extremes of passivity or aggression;
- Substance misuse;
- Running away;
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging.

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 (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Signs of Sexual Abuse:

- Lack of trust in adults and/or fear of a particular individual[s];
- Over familiarity with adults or provocative behaviour;
- Withdrawal and introversion/problems with peer relationships;
- Running away from home/sudden behaviour changes e.g. falling standards, truancy, etc.;
- Low self-esteem;
- Stealing;
- Substance misuse;
- Displaying sexual knowledge beyond age group;
- Involvement in prostitution;
- Over-sexed behaviour;
- Sleeplessness, nightmares, fear of the dark;
- Bruises, scratches, bite marks;
- Depression, suicide attempts;
- Anorexia nervosa/eating disorder or a change in eating habits;
- Pregnancy, particularly when reluctant to name the father;
- Recurring urinary tract problems/vaginal infections.

Domestic Abuse – (16 and 17 year olds)

Domestic violence and abuse refers to “any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members

regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional. Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.” (Home Office 2013) Domestic violence is an abuse of power and control and is characterised by a pattern of abusive controlling behaviour rather than by a one off incident. The definition includes so called ‘honour-based violence’, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. [West Midlands Domestic Abuse Standards](#)

Indicators of Domestic Abuse:

- Weight, appearance or grades have changed dramatically;
- Worried about how a partner will react to things;
- Feeling their needs and desires come second;
- Thinking twice about expressing their own thoughts or feelings;
- Worried they might make the "wrong" decision about what to wear, where to go and who to hang out with;
- Family or friends are worried about this person’s safety;
- They are frightened of a partner, maybe not before but lately.

What to do if you suspect Domestic abuse - Firstly click the following link to download a checklist www.safelives.org.uk/ then contact Sandwell Safeguarding Children Information for further guidance

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The following definition of sexual exploitation taken from Statutory Guidance on Safeguarding Children and Young People from Child Sexual Exploitation 2009:

“sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive ‘something’ (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition. For example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person’s limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.”

Possible Indicators

There are a number of key indicators that may suggest a child is being sexually exploited.

The list is not exhaustive but includes:

- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late;
- Regularly missing school or education or not taking part in education;
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- Contracting sexually transmitted infections;
- Mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing;
- Drug and alcohol misuse;
- Displaying overtly sexualized behavior;
- Involvement in gang activity.

Radicalisation

Radicalisation happens when a person's thinking and behaviour become significantly different from how most of the members of their society and community view social issues and participate politically. Only small numbers of people radicalise and they can be from a diverse range of ethnic, national, political and religious groups. As a person radicalises they may begin to seek to change significantly the nature of society and government. However, if someone decides that using fear, terror or violence is justified to achieve ideological, political or social change – this is violent extremism.

The UK Government's National Counter Terrorism strategy aims to reduce the risk to the UK - and its interests overseas - from international terrorism.

All Police forces in England and Wales run an on-going operation.

counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk

The protection of staff and volunteers is equally important.

To avoid allegations staff and volunteers should never:

- Engage in rough physical activities, even when playing;
- Engage in sexually proactive activities;
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
- Allow children to use inappropriate language;
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child;
- Let a child's allegation go either unchallenged and/or unrecorded;
- Do things of a personal nature for a child. If you do have to do things of a personal nature for a child e.g. take to the toilet, support, lift, etc. particularly if they are very young or a child with additional needs, then you should

obtain the full consent of their parents and permission from your line manager or person in charge. In an emergency situation, which requires this type of help, parents and your line manager, should be fully informed as soon as is practicable;

- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control; and
- Undertake any tasks involving children for which you feel inadequately trained or have concerns about.