



# Child Protection Policy

and Procedures for HackTheMidlands

*For the purpose of this document, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.*

*From this point, HackTheMidlands will be referred to as **HTM**.*

This policy applies exclusively to EVENTS held and/or organised by **HTM**. This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers, paid staff volunteers, organisers, students or anyone working on behalf of **HTM**.

**HTM** believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

## The purpose of the policy:

- To protect children and young people who receive **HTM** services. This includes the children of adults who use our services;
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection;

## We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal 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
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and their agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

## We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

## Duty of employees, directors and volunteers:

Every employee and director of **HTM**, as well as every volunteer who assists in any events is under a general legal duty:

- To protect children and young people from abuse.
- To be aware of the **HTM's** child protection procedures and to follow them;
- To know how to access and implement the procedures, independently if necessary.
- To keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event
- To report any matters of concern.

## Legal Framework:

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children

## Procedure

### Purpose and aim of the procedures

This procedure is in place to ensure the safety of child, and make sure the necessary execution of any action is done correctly, with care and professionalism.

### The different categories of abuse

These are physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect.

#### Physical

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which involves any physical harm inflicted onto a person's body.

#### Emotional

Emotional abuse is any emotional harm caused to a person by another. It may include:

- Name calling
- Provocative and offensive comments
- Threats or threatening behaviour

#### Sexual

Sexual abuse involves the sexual exploitation or The activities may involve:

- The touching of a child at any point which makes them uncomfortable
- The touching of a child's genitals or private parts
- Using the child for personal sexual gain
- Exploiting the child by taking pictures or videos for sexual purposes.

#### Neglect

Neglect is the fail to care properly for a child. It may involve, but is not limited to, a parent or carer failing to provide:

- Sufficient Food & drink
- Shelter
- A safe home
- Physical, Medical and Mental care

## How to recognise the signs of abuse

Children who are abused may show signs such as:

- Talks of being left home alone or with strangers.
- Poor bond or relationship with a parent, also known as attachment.
- Acts out excessive violence with other children.
- Lacks social skills and has few if any friends.
- Becomes secretive and reluctant to share information.
- Is concerned for younger siblings without explaining why.

May not necessarily mean they are being abused

### Physical

- Bruises
- Burns or scalds
- Bite marks
- Fractures or broken bones
- Other injuries or health problems
- Refusal to expose arms, or other body parts normally exposed

### Emotional

- humiliating or constantly criticising a child
- threatening, shouting at a child or calling them names
- making the child the subject of jokes, or using sarcasm to hurt a child
- blaming, scapegoating

### Sexual

- they might avoid being alone with people, such as family members or friends
- they could seem frightened of a person or reluctant to socialise with them.
- a child might become sexually active at a young age
- they might be promiscuous
- they could use sexual language or know information that you wouldn't expect them to.
- anal or vaginal soreness
- an unusual discharge
- sexually transmitted infection (STI)
- pregnancy.

## Neglect

- be smelly or dirty
- have unwashed clothes
- have inadequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat
- untreated injuries, medical and dental issues
- poor muscle tone or prominent joints
- skin sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm
- thin or swollen tummy
- anaemia
- tiredness
- faltering weight or growth and not reaching developmental milestones (known as failure to thrive)
- poor language, communication or social skills.

## Online

- spend lots, much more or much less time online, texting, gaming or using social media
- are withdrawn, upset or outraged after using the internet or texting
- are secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone
- have lots of new phone numbers, texts or e-mail addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.

Any question or uncertainty surrounding signs of abuse should be resolved at the NSPCC

## How to respond to signs or suspicions of abuse

If you suspect the abuse of a child:

- Report any information to a senior officer or Child protection officer/ Youth Organiser

## How to respond to allegations of abuse within the group:

If you have suspicions that a member of staff or a volunteer is abusing a child:

- Any information must be reported to a senior officer, or if not applicable the child protection officer / Youth Organiser
- The member of staff or volunteer involved will be asked to leave the premises immediately.
- Members of staff must not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer.
- Members of staff must listen carefully to any allegation made with an open mind. It is not the staff's decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place.
- Members of staff must keep a sufficient written record of the conversation. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. The record should be signed by the person making it and should use names, not initials. The record must be kept securely and handed to a Senior Member of the **HTM** team
- The Child Protection Officer / Youth Organiser and Senior staff at **HTM** have the duty to report any allegations to the police.
- The Member of staff involved will not take part in any **HTM** event until further investigation has taken place.

## How to respond to a child telling you about abuse:

A member of staff suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse:

- Must listen carefully to the child/young person and keep an open mind. Staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place
- Must not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer.
- Must reassure the child/young person but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff should explain that they need to pass the information to the Child Protection Officer / Youth Organiser of **HTM** who will ensure that the correct action is taken.
- Must keep a sufficient written record of the conversation. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. The record should be signed by the person making it and should use names, not initials. The record must be kept securely and handed to a Senior Member of the **HTM** team.

## How to respond to a an allegation against a child:

A member of staff hearing a complaint or allegation against a child:

- Must listen carefully to the person making the complaint with an open mind. Staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place
- Must not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer.
- Must pass on the information to the Child Protection Officer / Youth Organiser or Senior Staff at **HTM**.
- Must keep a sufficient written record of the conversation (as above)
- A child/attendee against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be asked to leave the **HTM** event and may be forbidden from attending future **HTM** organised events.

## Necessary action after reporting signs of abuse:

- **HTM** will take advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on the investigation of such allegations and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all children involved including the child or children accused of abuse.
- If it is necessary for a student to be interviewed by the Police in relation to allegations of abuse, **HTM** will ensure that, subject to the advice of the LADO, parents are informed as soon as possible and that the student is supported during the interview by an appropriate adult.

## How information will be recorded

Child Abuse Concern Report

### Confidentiality policy

Privacy and confidentiality should be respected where possible but if doing this leaves a child at risk of harm then the child's safety has to come first.

- **HTM** believes the safety and security of a child is paramount, and overrides all confidentiality protocols when necessary.
- Information will not leave **HTM** unless necessary.
- Any information reported will only be given to the LADO, police, or Senior officers at **HTM**.
- Any action taken to relay sensitive information to any external authority will first be cleared by the Child protection officer / Youth Organiser at **HTM**.

## Implementation

This policy will be implemented as of the 02/08/2016

Cathryn Dunicliff, our Child Protection Officer, will be ensuring throughout our events that this policy is abided by at all times.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice before every event held by HTM.

This policy was last reviewed on:

09/07/2019 - Cathryn Dunicliff (CPO)

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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Cathryn Dunicliff". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'C'.

Cathryn Dunicliff, CPO