



## Safeguarding Children

PopSoc places the protection of children in its care as a major priority and responsibility and maintains that all children have the right to freedom from fear and the reality of abuse.

Playworkers will create a safe environment within the club. Supportive training may include areas such as Behaviour Management, which will teach them various ways and means of dealing with children sensitively and appropriately. Children will be encouraged to build their self-esteem, confidence and independence during their sessions at the club.

PopSoc recognises that the relationship between childcare staff and the children in their care can lead to the discovery of abuse and the subsequent protection of children. The club has a Child Protection Officer who will be primarily responsible for the reporting of child protection issues to the relevant agencies. The **Child Protection Officer** is **James Lawrence**.

The Child Protection Officer will pursue child protection training to the highest available level and will communicate with other agencies to ensure that the Child Protection Policy is consistently updated.

The Child Protection Officer will ensure that all other members of staff are fully qualified and are fully aware of the contents of the Child Protection Policy.

## Definition Of Child Abuse

The club is aware that child abuse can occur in many different forms as following:-

- ∇ **Physical Abuse** – This involves hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, suffocating or any other physical harm. Deliberately causing a child's ill health also constitutes physical abuse.
  
- ∇ **Sexual Abuse** – This involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The

activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. Showing children pornographic materials, sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways also constitutes sexual abuse.

- ∇ **Emotional Abuse** – Varying degrees of emotional abuse is present in virtually all child protection incidents, but can also constitute abuse in its own right. Emotional abuse involves persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or torture causing, or likely to cause, severe adverse effects on the emotional stability of a child. Such behaviour may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate, or making them feel unnecessarily frightened or vulnerable.
- ∇ **Neglect** – This is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical, emotional or psychological needs, such as is likely to have a severe impact on their health, development or emotional stability. Neglect may involve failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing for a child, or failing to adequately protect them from physical harm or ill-health. Neglect can also manifest itself in a failure to meet the basic emotional needs off a child.

### **Legal Framework**

PopSOC is fully aware of its responsibilities with regard to the legal framework surrounding child protection. The following Acts and organisations are important within this field:-

- ∇ The **Health & Safety At Work Act 1974** and its revision in 1992 dictate that the premises should be suitable for all of the people entering the club. Therefore PopSOC will ensure a physically safe environment for all users. Please refer to Health & Safety Policy.
- ∇ Within the remit of **RIDDOR** all serious injuries, diseases or dangerous occurrences must be reported. Therefore the club will ensure that all staff are aware of the importance of this. Please refer to Health & Safety Policy.
- ∇ The **Sex Discrimination Act 1975**, the **Race Relations Act 1976**, the **Race Relations (Amendment) Act 1995** and the **Disability Discrimination Act 1995** demand that all children are treated equally. Therefore PopSOC intends to provide an emotionally safe environment for children to play in, where they will be free from harassment and treated fairly. Please refer to the Equal Opportunities Policy.

- ∇ **Working Together 1988** (revised 1991) outlines the importance of safeguarding children, which involves protecting children from abuse and neglect and also preventing the impairment of their health and development. This Act also emphasises Promoting Childrens' Welfare which is to help them to achieve their potential, ensuring they grow up safe and adequately cared for.
- ∇ The **UN Convention On The Rights Of The Child**, incorporating the **Children Act (1989)**, adopted by the UN General Assembly, committed the UK government to protecting and ensuring children and young peoples' rights.
- ∇ **Safe From Harm 1993** is a code of practice for safeguarding the welfare of children in voluntary organisations in England and Wales (Home Office).
- ∇ **Protection Of Children Act 1999** requires safeguarding and promoting childrens' welfare including family and environmental factors, parenting capacity and childrens' developmental needs.
- ∇ The **Care Standards Act 2000**
- ∇ **The Children Act – Every Child Matters – October 2004**
- ∇ The **Data Protection Act 1984/1998** makes it necessary to ensure that all information is protected and kept confidential.

### **Staff Support & Training**

For the safety and well-being of children and staff PopSOC will ensure that:-

- ∇ Staff, volunteers and Management Committee members are carefully recruited and have verified references and enhanced Disclosure CRB checks.
- ∇ All staff awaiting such clearance will be supervised at all times and not given any opportunity to be left alone with children. Any adult who has not been fully vetted will not be left alone with children.
- ∇ Throughout the activities in PopSOC, children will be suitably supervised. There will always be a minimum of two members of staff on duty. Staff/child ratios will not fall below those laid down in statutory guidance.

- ∇ No child will ever be left in a one-to-one situation of a sensitive nature with a member of staff.
- ∇ All staff and volunteers are given a copy of the Child Protection Policy during their induction period and the Manager will ensure they are aware of the implications of the Policy.
- ∇ Every member of staff is aware of child protection issues and is aware of the key indicators in child abuse. Every Playworker will be expected to endeavour to undertake formal basic child protection training. This should be refreshed every 3 years.
- ∇ Playworkers who take a supervisory role within the club, i.e. the Manager, Deputy and any acting Deputy, will endeavour to undertake advanced child protection training. Those Playworkers who do not currently undertake a supervisory role but wish to train to the advanced level in child protection will be encouraged to do so.
- ∇ All staff will follow the procedures outlined in the Procedures document.
- ∇ All staff are provided with supervision and management support commensurate with their responsibilities in relation to child protection, and their requirement to maintain caring and safe relationships with children.
- ∇ All staff, students and volunteers are instructed to report the disclosure or discovery of abuse to the Child Protection Officer.
- ∇ Staff are aware of the delicate nature of child abuse and therefore only discuss concerns with the Child Protection Officer.
- ∇ PopSOC will take appropriate action in relation to the findings of any investigation regarding allegations of abuse, consistent with its duties to protect the safety of children and uphold fair processes for staff, students and volunteers.
- ∇ If a child abuse allegation is made against a member of staff, the Police, Social Services and OFSTED will be informed. The member of staff will be suspended, effective immediately, pending a full investigation. All allegations and concerns will be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within the same working day. The LADO will decide what action to take. The LADO for York is **Joe Cocker** and can be contacted on **01904 555695** OR **joe.cocker@york.gov.uk**. If the allegation is proved to be untrue the

member of staff will be given the opportunity to recommence their employment with the club.

### **Safe Caring**

Staff should ensure that they are familiar with the principles of safe caring. In this regard:-

- ∇ Every effort will be made to avoid or minimise time spent alone with a child. Should this be absolutely impossible to avoid, then the member of staff will ensure that every effort is made to make this as public as possible, i.e. leaving doors wide open and ensuring other members of staff are aware of their whereabouts and can repeatedly discreetly make observations.
- ∇ Any incidents whereby children make inappropriate contact with Playworkers or volunteers will be written down in the Incident Record Book.
- ∇ Staff will be mindful of how and where they touch children, given their age and emotional understanding. Unnecessary or potentially inappropriate physical contact will be avoided at all times, though members of staff should respond appropriately to play cues.
- ∇ Children are required to undertake any tasks of a personal nature themselves unless they are unable to do so. Staff should only lend assistance when this is absolutely necessary and should take certain precautions in doing so. If entering the toilets with a child, there should always be two Playworkers. Staff should be aware that this and other activities could be misconstrued.
- ∇ All allegations made by a child against a member of staff will be fully recorded, including any actions taken, in the Incident Record Book. In the event of there being a witness to an incident, they should sign the records to confirm this.

### **Dealing With An Allegation**

The club is dedicated to ensuring that all allegations are treated sensitively and seriously, being aware that the protection of the child is paramount. Any allegations of abuse will not be investigated by the club itself but will be reported by the Child Protection Officer, in conjunction with the Chairperson of the Management Committee, to the local statutory child protection agencies.

The following principles will govern the reporting of any allegations of abuse:-

- ∇ Where actual or suspected abuse comes to the attention of staff, they will report this to the Child Protection Officer at the earliest possible opportunity.
- ∇ Full written records of all reported incidents will be created and maintained. Information recorded will include full details of the alleged incident, details of all the parties involved, any evidence or explanations offered by interested parties, relevant dates, times and locations and any supporting information or evidence from members of staff. PopSOC will demonstrate great care in distinguishing between fact and opinion when recording suspected incidents of child abuse. The Child Protection Officer will be responsible for ensuring that all written records are dated and signed.
- ∇ If an allegation is made against the Child Protection Officer, the Chairperson of the Management Committee will be informed immediately.
- ∇ If a member of staff has suspicions about the Child Protection Officer then they are to inform the Chairperson of the Management Committee.
- ∇ Playworkers are to ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times and that every case is treated with sensitivity.

Playworkers are trained to deal appropriately with disclosures made by the child. In this way the Playworkers will:-

- ∇ Listen fully to all the child has to say
- ∇ Make no observable judgement
- ∇ Ask open questions that allow the child to use their own words to describe the situation, taking care not to influence what the child is saying or make suggestions about events
- ∇ Ensure that the child is accompanied at all times and make every effort to provide an environment where the child feels comfortable and not distressed
- ∇ Make no promises that they cannot keep. Ensure that the child is fully aware that any disclosure needs to be acted upon. Playworkers will do this in a sensitive and caring way.

Staff will be made aware of the Department Of Health booklet “What To Do If You Are Worried A Child Is Being Abused” (2006) and its recent guidance on protecting children from harm.

### **Referring Allegations To Child Protection Agencies**

If the Child Protection Officer believes that he or she has reasonable grounds for believing that a child is being abused, or is at very high risk of being abused, then the following actions will be taken:-

- ∇ Contact will be made, at the earliest possible opportunity, with the local Social Services department, using the referral route map (on display in the club).
- ∇ The Manager or Child Protection Officer will communicate as much information about the allegation and related incidents as is consistent with advice given by Social Services and the police.
- ∇ At all times the safety, protection and interests of the children concerned will take precedence. The Manager and staff will work with and support parent/carers as far as they are legally able.
- ∇ PopSOC will assist the Social Services and the Police, as far as it is able, during any investigation of abuse or neglect. This will include disclosing written and verbal information and evidence.
- ∇ OFSTED will be informed of any allegations of abuse against a member of staff, student or volunteer, or any abuse that is alleged to have taken place on the premises or during a visit or outing.

Before their child attends PopSOC, parents will be issued with a Parent Pack which will include details of the club’s Child Protection Policy. In this section, parents will be invited to look at the club’s set of policies including the full Child Protection Policy if they desire.

Policy written January 2009

Policy agreed