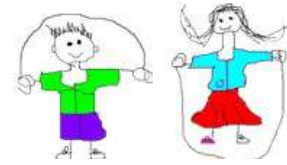




*Working Together
to Safeguard Children*



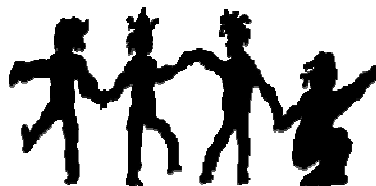
Bedfordshire Local Safeguarding Children Board

Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) Safeguarding Children Resource Pack

A resource pack for Voluntary and Community Sector providers of services to children, young people and families in Bedfordshire

Date agreed by LSCB: 16/10/07

Date to be reviewed: *October 2008*



VOC (CYP&F)

**(Voluntary Organisations Consortium -
Children, Young People & Families)**



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OVERVIEW

NOTE: The term child/children is used throughout this document and is to be read as meaning children and young people aged 0-19.

Bedfordshire is fortunate to have many voluntary agencies, community and faith groups that provide facilities for parents and children. The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the Voluntary Organisations Consortium for organisations working with children, families and young people (VOC) is committed to encouraging all such groups to provide services in a safe and vigilant manner. The community is enriched by the activities of such groups and in the main their work is done in an unproblematic and valuable way.

However, harm can happen to children in a variety of ways and it is important that areas of risk are identified and as much as is possible is done to minimise them. Bedfordshire LSCB & VOC encourages the voluntary and community sector to adopt a whole agency 'safeguarding' approach whereby safe practices are built into the structure of the organisation.

Harm can happen to children in a variety of ways. For example;

- through an accident
- through bullying by other users
- through misguided actions by staff and volunteers
- very rarely, through the deliberate actions of staff, volunteers or service users.. who are using the group to make contact with children in order to abuse them.

By adopting a 'safe organisation' approach it is possible for an organisation to demonstrate that it has considered the provision of safe services carefully and to minimise the possibility of harm coming to children when services are provided.

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 says that every organisation working with children and receives grant funding from a Statutory Organisation must show that they are run safely. Bedfordshire LSCB has produced a proforma to assist statutory organisations meet the section 11 requirements. This is attached as Appendix 1 (Section 11 Proforma) –If you do not receive grant funding from a Section 11 organisation it is recommended as good practice to consider the Section 11 Proforma.

Bedfordshire LSCB & VOC advises that:

- Organisations have a safeguarding children policy and procedure that clearly describes what individuals have to do in order to keep children safe. A sample policy and procedure is available in page 7.
- Every organisation should have a designated person, or champion, for safeguarding. The champion should be an individual whose responsibility is essentially to make sure that things written in the safeguarding children procedure really happen. See page 12.
- Selection and vetting of volunteers and staff should be rigorous and properly conducted. As a minimum this should include the rigorous checking of CVs and references and making appropriate Criminal Records Bureau checks. See page 17 (Criminal Records Bureau Process) and page 15 Selection and Recruitment of staff and volunteers).
- Each organisation should have a training and information plan whereby staff can be helped to be made aware of safeguarding children issues and to recognise when

something is wrong. It is important this is part of a new volunteer or staff member's induction.

(Further information regarding training organised by Bedfordshire LSCB can be found at: <http://www.bedfordshirelscb.org.uk/training.php>)

- Each organisation should have a Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers. See page 13(Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers)
- Each organisation should be familiar with Bedfordshire LSCB procedures and protocols. <http://www.bedfordshirelscb.org.uk/publications.php>

SUPPORTING THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

- Further information on Bedfordshire LSCB can be found at <http://www.bedfordshirelscb.org.uk>
- Local Infrastructure organisations can also offer support – visit the following to find your nearest: www.voluntaryworks.org.uk
- Contact the Family Network Officer – Mary Jurance at:

CVS Mid and North Beds.

43 Bromham Road

Bedford

MK41 9NT

Tel; 01234 354366

Email: mary@cvsmidandnorthbeds.org.uk

HOW TO COMPILE A SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN RESOURCE PACK

1: What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health and development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care

and undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

(Source: Paragraph 1.18, Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2006)

2: Why do we need a Safeguarding Children Policy?

It shows the group's commitment to protecting children, giving clear signals that the group takes safeguarding children seriously in all aspects of its activities. It also shows shared responsibility for safeguarding children. The development and implementation of clear and concise safeguarding children policies and procedures are a key requirement for any organisation working with children.

3: Organisational 'health check'

When formulating a Safeguarding Children Resource Pack use this as an opportunity to carry out an 'Organisational Health Check' in respect of safeguarding children. This should ensure that your organisation has:

- a safeguarding children policy and a procedure for what to do if there are concerns about a child's welfare
- a named person for dealing with concerns or allegations of abuse and step by step guidance on what action to take
- a rigorous recruitment and selection process for staff and volunteers who work with children
- a written code of behaviour which outlines good practice when working with children
- a training plan and regular opportunities for all those in contact with children to learn about safeguarding children and about health and safety
- information for children and for parents or carers about the safeguarding children policy and where to go for help
- a protective culture that puts children's interests first – children must feel confident that if they have concerns someone will listen and take them seriously
- guidance on specific areas relevant to your group and these may for example include: taking children away on trips, internet use, guidance on use of photographs, video, digital equipment and websites
- policies on bullying and on health and safety. You will need processes for dealing with complaints by children as well as adults and for taking disciplinary action where necessary. You may also wish to consider a whistle blowing policy.

4: Contents of a policy

A policy usually contains:

- a) Introduction

- b) Policy issues: definition of abuse, how to respond to abuse and selection of staff and volunteers
- c) Lists of good practices expected of staff and volunteers
- d) Contact details of designated safeguarding children champion

A) Introduction

This section can include the following:

- Contents page
- Definition of terms (glossary)
- Why you need a policy and who it covers
- Policy principles i.e. definition of a child, principles of treatment and value of children
- Acknowledgements for any help you have received in putting the policy together

B) Policy issues

This section can include the following:

- Your mission statement on safeguarding children
- Definitions of child abuse how you define child abuse and the symptoms it can cause
- Common forms and causes of abuse and a description of the typical type of abuse faced
- References to any applicable laws relating to protection for children
- Behavioural expectations for those that work with children to ensure children are safe and to ensure false accusations are avoided
- Guidelines on recruiting and screening workers and volunteers
- Ways of helping children report suspicions or allegations of abuse without fear of reprisal
- Guidelines of how to report abuse, and how to respond if allegations are made.
- Guidance on how to keep all information regarding abuse confidential

C) Good practices

This section can include the following:

- How to recognise child abuse
- What to do when a child talks about abuse
- Child discipline
- Bullying
- Storage of data, information and visual images of children
- Safe use of internet and email

MODEL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

We aim to safeguard the welfare of children participating in *(name of organisation)* activities. In order to give children protection from potential and actual abuse it is important that all concerned have a basic understanding of the issues involved and that procedures are in place that are understandable and easy to implement by anyone providing a service to children at *(name of organisation)*.

(name of organisation) is committed to creating an environment that enables children to learn, develop and express themselves in a safe, understanding and encouraging environment. Parents trust us to look after their children, to care for them, to give encouragement and to keep them safe. We need to ensure that we honour their trust.

(Name of organisation)'s Safeguarding children's policy arises from the following principles:

- The child's welfare is first consideration.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender or ethnic origin have a right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

2. BACKGROUND

Child abuse is a difficult issue and presents challenges to all that provide services for children, many people feel uncomfortable with the subject. It is not easily recognisable and individuals often fear reading too much into a situation. Many children experience minor accidents causing injuries, but there may be occasions where you are concerned over the nature and frequency of injury.

This document contains information on some of the signs that may give cause for concern. This document is based on the principle that:

"It is **not your responsibility as members of *(name of organisation)* to decide whether or not child abuse is occurring, but **it is your responsibility** to act on those concerns and do something about it."**

3. WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE

Do not ever think that you could never be placed in the position of reporting child abuse.

The generic term 'child abuse' is used to describe various ways in which children are harmed or mistreated. There are many different ways in which children can be harmed, all with a common factor that the child feels under-valued and worthless.

Abuse can happen anywhere, but research indicates that the perpetrators of such abuse are likely to be known and trusted by the child.

4. TYPES OF ABUSE

- **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms or deliberately induces illness in a child

- **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways

- **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve:

- Telling a child they are worthless, unloved or inadequate
- Valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child
- Overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning
- A child seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another
- Serious bullying
- Causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger
- Exploitation or corruption of a child

- **NEGLECT**

Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development. Neglect may occur:

- During pregnancy as a result of substance abuse
- Failure to provide adequate food and clothing
- Failing to provide shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment
- Failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger
- Failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers)
- Failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

- **DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE**

Discriminatory Abuse includes racist, religious and sexist abuse, plus abuse based on a person's disability.

5. EFFECTS AND INDICATIONS OF ABUSE

The effects of child abuse can be devastating, especially if children are left unprotected or do not have the support to cope with that abuse.

Indications that a child may be being abused include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him or her.
- Someone else (child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour or emotions such as becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness,
- Engaging in sexual explicit behaviour, sexually explicit talk inappropriate to the child's age.
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Difficulty in making friends.
- Uncharacteristic eating disorders, depression and suicide attempts.
- The child may become withdrawn, introverted and depressed and have low self esteem and lack of confidence.

6. WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE IS TAKING PLACE?

If any member of an organisation is concerned that abuse may or has occurred they must refer the matter immediately to the safeguarding children champion who will decide whether or not to report the matter further. If it is felt that further investigation is necessary in order to protect the child, the matter must be referred to Social Services.

In the event of referral to Social Services, copies of all relevant correspondence, notes of dialogue, diagrams of any injury witnessed must be passed to the co-ordinator for filing.

It is very important that any concerns on a child's safety are logged. A sample logging concerns about a child's safety or welfare is included on page 10, which can be used if any doubt over a child's welfare exists.

(NB All reports relating to Safeguarding Children should be completed in black ink)

LOGGING CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD'S SAFETY AND WELFARE

Name of child		Date of birth	
Date form completed		Time form completed	
Your name (please print)		Signature	
Your Organisation		Your position	
Reasons for recording incident			
Please record the following as factually as possible	Who?		
	What?		
	Where?		
	When?		
Offer an opinion where relevant (how and why this may have happened)			
Substantiate the opinion. Please note the action taken, including the names of anyone to whom information was passed.			

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PROCEDURE

1. There will be a named person for safeguarding children who will be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the safeguarding of children. This person is currently [insert name].
2. All staff and volunteers will be carefully selected and vetted to try and ensure they do not pose a risk to children. Those staff and volunteers having contact with children will be checked through the Criminal Records Bureau at the appropriate level.
3. All staff and volunteers will receive information and basic training in safe conduct and what to do if they have concerns about a child. This will include information on recognising where there are concerns about a child, where to get advice and what to do if no one seems to have taken their concerns seriously.
4. We will endeavour to make this organisation a safe and caring place for children to be by having a code of conduct for all staff, volunteers and users. This will be given to all staff, volunteers and users and they will be expected to comply with it.
5. Any information given to users about activities of the organisation will include information about the safeguarding children policy and procedure. Parents and carers of any children using supervised activities for children will be given specific information about the safeguarding policy and procedure.

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN CHAMPION

1. This organisation will have a dedicated person to take responsibility for safeguarding children matters. This person is (insert name and position). *
2. They will be selected by (organisation to insert how they will be selected and by whom).**
3. Because of their key role in keeping children safe enhanced level CRB checks will be undertaken and 2 references taken up.
4. Their role is to;
 - Ensure the organisation's safeguarding children policy and procedures are followed.
 - Ensure they know how to make contact with social services and police staff responsible for dealing with safeguarding children concerns both during and after office hours.
 - Report any concerns to social services or the police. (N.B. Urgent concerns should be reported immediately by those aware of them even if the designated person is not available, and it is the role of the Safeguarding Champion to ensure all staff and volunteers know how to do this.)
 - Act as a source of advice on all safeguarding children matters and seek further advice and guidance from Bedfordshire LSCB as needed.
 - Ensure that a record is kept of any concerns about a child or adult and of any conversation or referrals to statutory agencies. (See page 10)
 - Ensure that any such record is kept safely and securely.

** You may also consider having a deputy designated safeguarding children champion to cover in case of sickness, leave and other absences and a trustee/ director as a champion.*

*** They should ideally be someone with some knowledge or expertise in the field of safeguarding children. If the organisation does not have a person who already has this knowledge s/he should be given specialist training as quickly as possible to undertake the role. Training may be available from Bedfordshire Local Safeguarding Children Board.*

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Always remember that while you are caring for other people's children you are in a position of trust and your responsibilities to them and the organisation must be uppermost in your mind at all times.

DO NOT:

- Use any kind of physical punishment or chastisement such as smacking or hitting.
- Smoke in front of any child.
- Use non-prescribed drugs or be under the influence of alcohol.
- Behave in a way that frightens or demeans any child.
- Use any racist, sexist, discriminatory or offensive language.
- Invite a child to your home or arrange to see them outside the set activity times.
- Engage in any sexual activity (this would include using sexualised language) with a child you meet through your duties or start a personal relationship with them, this would be an abuse of trust.
- Engage in rough or physical games, including horseplay.
- Let allegations a child makes go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Rely upon good nature to protect you or believe "it could never happen to me".
- Give children presents or personal items. *

**(Exceptions to this could be a custom such as: buying children a small birthday token or leaving present, help to a family in need such as equipment to enable them to participate in an activity. Both types of gift should come from the organisation and from a professional capacity and be agreed with the named person for safeguarding children and the child's parent/carer. Similarly do not accept gifts yourself other than small tokens for appropriate celebrations, which you should mention to the activity leader.)*

DO:

- Exercise caution about being alone with a child. In situations where this is unavoidable, ensure another worker or volunteer knows what you are doing and where you are.
- Ensure that any physical contact is open and initiated by the child's needs, e.g. for a hug when upset or help with toileting. Always prompt children to carry out personal care themselves and if they cannot manage ask if they would like help.
- Talk explicitly to children about their right to be kept safe from harm.
- Listen to children and take every opportunity to raise their self-esteem.
- Work as a team with your co-workers/volunteers. Agree with them what behaviour you expect from children and be consistent in enforcing it.

- Remember if you have to speak to a child about their behaviour you are challenging 'what they did', not 'who they are'.
- Make sure you have read the Safeguarding Children Procedure and Policy and that you feel confident that you know how to recognise when a child may be suffering harm, how to handle any disclosure and how to report any concerns.
- Seek advice and support from your colleagues and your designated champion for safeguarding children.
- Be clear with anyone disclosing any matter that could concern the safety and well being of a child that you cannot guarantee to keep this information to yourself.
- Seek opportunities for training.
- Where possible encourage parents to take responsibility for their own children.
- Make sure you are up to speed with your organisations confidentially policy and Bedfordshire LSCB Information Sharing Protocol.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEER SELECTION AND TRAINING

The process

The aim of any process of selecting staff and volunteers is to make sure people are suitable for the role and understand what is expected of them. You need to be able to demonstrate through records that you have followed the procedure, in case of complications later on.

You need to decide who is responsible for the process; responsibility should be shared so no one person can be accused of acting corruptly. It would make sense for the safeguarding champion to be involved but their exact role will depend on the size of the organisation.

You also need to consider privacy and confidentiality. If people are going to share personal information they will want to know who will have access to this and where the information will be kept. You have a duty to keep personal information safe and make sure as few people as possible have access to it. People may not want to be interviewed by people with whom they socialise. It is important the interview panel understand their professional responsibilities around confidentiality.

Remember: A perfect Safeguarding Procedure is no good if you do not put it into practice

The exact process will have to feel 'right' for your organisation. Below is a suggested outline that reflects best practice for paid staff and volunteers. Children see all adults as safe and trustworthy and will not differentiate between paid staff and volunteers; therefore it is important that organisations apply the same vetting procedures to recruiting volunteers as they would any other member of staff. Volunteers carry out a wide range of roles involving children, and a common sense approach should be adopted. It would not be practical to go through stringent interview and selection procedures for a volunteer who may be attending as a one off visit but would be appropriate for a volunteer who would have regular contact or be working in an area with children and young people.

Minimum requirements

- Asking them to complete an application form
 - Checking their identity and work history
 - Taking up two references
 - An interview
 - Appropriate level CRB check

Suggested Outline Recruitment Procedure for Staff & Volunteers

1. It is important that the whole interview and selection process is completed BEFORE any staff and/or volunteers take up their duties.
2. Job descriptions and person specifications will be prepared for all paid roles and volunteers. These should make clear what personal qualities are required specific to the role. These should be given to anyone interested so they can see what will be required. It should be stated that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
3. It is recommended that 3 people are on the interview panel, (there must be at least two people on any selection panel but preferably no more than three). This may include a member of your management committee/board, a young person, the manager of the organisation, the line manager for the post or the safeguarding champion.

4. All staff and volunteers will be required to fill in an application form. They will be required to provide, at least, two referees who can vouch for their character and suitability to be in a position of responsibility for children. They will also be required to complete a declaration of any criminal offences or matters of concern.
5. The interview panel will check the application and if the applicant is to be invited for interview references will be taken up.
6. The applicant will then be interviewed.
7. If the person is thought to be suitable for the role they will be asked to complete a CRB application form and their identity checked.
8. Once CRB clearance is obtained, if there are no adverse reports the person can start their duties. As an integral part of their induction they will be given a copy of the safeguarding children procedure, policy and the code of conduct and asked to sign for them.
9. If a CRB disclosure reveals a criminal record that would not automatically ban the person from working with children but causes concern, an organisation should discuss the offence with the applicant and take into consideration the circumstances of the offence, type of offence, when committed, pattern etc and assess fairly thus ensuring fair appointment and selection.
10. The manager and/or safeguarding champion will meet with the person to explain their duties and any key points from the code of conduct specific to their role, (e.g. staff in a crèche will need advice about dealing with toileting issues, for a youth club volunteer issues around meeting young people outside the session, swearing, smoking etc. may be more relevant.)
11. All staff and volunteers will serve a probationary period, there will be a two way meeting half way through this period. This meeting should be a positive experience with a chance to discuss areas for development.

Remember: Many current and potential perpetrators will not possess criminal records thus a CRB check in isolation is not enough. The best way to prevent the abuse of children is through good management practice and the continuous provision of support, guidance and supervision of staff and volunteers.

THE CRIMINAL RECORDS BUREAU PROCESS

What is it?

The Criminal Records Bureau is an executive agency of the Home Office. It offers a one stop shop service for checking paid employees and volunteers against three main data bases for the purpose of finding out whether there is information about them on these data bases that would suggest they may be unsuitable to work with children. Remember a positive CRB clearance does not mean the person is suitable to work with children; you still need to try and assess that. You can also track the progress of your request at the website below.

For further information look at the CRB website www.crb.gov.uk

Are there different types of check?

There are two levels of check available at present, standard and enhanced. The most thorough is the Enhanced Disclosure, which would reveal information on police records even if a person has not been convicted. For example when they have been accused of harming a child but no charges have been brought. This is the level that should be used for those having substantial unsupervised contact with children.

Standard Disclosure

Standard Disclosures contain the following;

- details of all convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings held on the Police National Computer (PNC);

and if the position involves working with children and the relevant boxes have been marked on the application form to indicate this:

- information from the Protection of Children Act List (PoCA);
- Information from the Protection of Vulnerable Adults List (POVA); and
- Information held by the DfES under Section 142 of the Education Act 2002 of those considered unsuitable for banned from working with children.

Enhanced Disclosure

Enhanced Disclosures are for posts involving a far greater degree of contact with children. In general, the type of work will involve regularly caring for, supervising, training or being in sole charge of such people. Examples include a Teacher, Scout or Guide leader

Enhanced Disclosures contain the same information as Standard Disclosures but with the addition of local police force information considered relevant by Chief Police Officer(s).

Who should be checked?

Anyone who is coming into contact with children must be CRB checked; anyone working unsupervised must have an enhanced disclosure.

What do I have to do?

Only registered organisations can apply for CRB checks. Organisations that are not registered will need to use the services of an 'umbrella organisation'. (Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) is a local provider of this service.) If you are affiliated to any national organisation, they may be registered and be able to process your checks.

What does it cost?

The CRB charges £29 for a standard disclosure and £34 for an enhanced disclosure. Checks on unpaid workers (volunteers) are free.

The umbrella organisation will probably make a small administrative charge on top.

CONTACTS AND USEFUL INFORMATION

Contacts:

- **Bedfordshire LSCB:**

<http://www.bedfordshirelscb.org.uk>

- **VOC:**

Contact the Family Network Officer – Mary Jurance at:

CVS Mid and North Beds.

43 Bromham Road

Bedford

MK41 9NT

Tel; 01234 354366

Email: mary@cvsmidandnorthbeds.org.uk

- **Local Infrastructure organisations:**

Also offer support – visit the following to find your nearest: www.voluntaryworks.org.uk

- **Criminal Records Bureau:**

www.crb.gov.uk

- **Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC)**

www.bedsrcc.org.uk

(01234 838771)

Publications:

- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused

Download full guidance or summary at:

www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications

- Working Together:

Download at: www.bedfordshirelscb.org.uk

(Hard copies available from Mary Jurance (see above))

- Bedfordshire safeguarding children

Download from: www.bedfordshirelscb.org.uk

(Hard copies available from Mary Jurance)

- Standards And Audit Tool – section 11

www.voluntaryworks.org.uk/Portal/LSCB.asp

- Positively Safe: a guide to developing safeguarding practices (NCVCCO)

Download at:

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files/E598C5775CD2F671BBA7C30A9249F1C7.pdf