

# **Heads Together Productions**

## **Child Protection Policy Statement**

***Designated Child Protection Worker: Linda Strudwick***

“We at Heads Together Productions are committed to practice which protects children and vulnerable adults from harm. Staff and volunteers in this organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause harm to children and vulnerable adults.”

We will endeavour to safeguard children and vulnerable adults by:

- ◆ Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- ◆ Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, vulnerable adults, parents and carers, staff and volunteers
- ◆ Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- ◆ Following carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers
- ◆ Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice at regular intervals”

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### Key Principles

- The overriding consideration is the welfare of the young person
- All young people whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to *swiftly and appropriately*
- Staff at Heads Together are not specifically trained to deal with situations of child abuse or have the specialised knowledge to decide if abuse has occurred. However, **all staff have a responsibility to report any concerns, suspicions and/or allegations. Please refer to 'Action to take if you suspect Child Abuse'.**

### Training

It is recognised that appropriate training and support must be available to all staff who are involved in working with children/young people and vulnerable adults.

### Definition of Child / Young Person

Anyone under the age of 18 years should be considered as a child/young person. [Children Act 1989]

## **Definitions of Abuse**

The definition of different forms of abuse, used in "Working Together" is as follows:

### ***Physical Abuse***

Physical abuse 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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as fictitious illness by proxy or Munchausen syndrome by proxy.

### ***Emotional Abuse***

Emotional abuse is 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 conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they met the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve 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 ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

### ***Sexual Abuse***

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person 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 (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in inappropriate ways.

### ***Neglect***

Neglect is 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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate

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

***(From: Leeds ACPC Procedures Document)***

## **Recognising Abuse**

Child abuse is not always easy to recognise and it is understood that most employees will not be expert in such recognition.

In some cases, a child's disturbed behaviour or an injury may suggest that a child may be subject to abuse. In many situations, however, the signs will not be clear-cut.

## Code of Conduct

<b>You must:</b>	<b>You must not:</b>
➤ treat all children and young people with respect	➤ have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people
➤ provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow	➤ allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour
➤ ensure that whenever possible there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others	➤ make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people
➤ respect a young person's right to personal privacy	➤ jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
➤ encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like	➤ either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
➤ remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned	➤ show favouritism to any individual
➤ be aware that even physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted	➤ rely on your good name or that of Heads Together to protect you
➤ recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people	➤ believe 'it could never happen to me'
➤ operate within the Heads Together principles and guidance and any particular procedures of the company	➤ take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach
➤ challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspensions of abuse	

## Responding to a child, young person or vulnerable adult, making an allegation of abuse

- **stay calm**
- **listen** carefully to what is said
- find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – **do not promise to keep secrets**
- **allow** the child/young person/ vulnerable adult to continue at his/her own pace
- **reassure** them that they have done the right thing in telling you
- **tell** them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared
- **record** in writing what was said using the child's own words as soon as possible – note date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated

### **REMEMBER:**

**It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is the task for the professional child protection agencies following a referral to them of concern about a child or young person.**

## **Child protection Premises Checklist.**

When working with children in other premises, look at the area where children and young people will have access and consider the following:

- Who is supervising them?
- Are they with teachers, group leader or parents?
- Who is responsible for them?
- Who else has access to the area or activity session?
- What are the expectations put upon staff re supervising clients in general?

### **Staff need to consider the following areas and look at the level of risk to children and young people.**

1. Layout of the building - are there any areas which are out of supervising staff's view and would provide opportunities for children to be at risk.
2. Are there adequate safety procedures i.e. security coded doors, clearly labelled areas that are no entry to members of the public?
3. Do you have a designated area for lost children and a procedure in place?
4. Are all the staff wearing clearly labelled ID badges or name badges so children know who staff are?
5. Do you have clear statement policies for the public on display explaining what to do in the event of losing a child?
6. Do you have clear statement policy on display which explains to the public Heads Together's expectations with regard to supervising children and young people?
7. Are all the staff who are working with children and young people aware of what to do in an emergency regarding children going missing or being lost?
8. Does the lead worker know how to assess areas of risk with regard to child protection?
9. Do you have clear up to date child protection policies and procedures?
10. Where are the facilities for children in relation to where they do the activity i.e. toilets or changing rooms. Do children have to go a long way from the lead worker or supervisor, on their own?
11. What is the child/adult ratio?

12. Are staff aware of what they do if they see a colleague behaving inappropriately with children or young people or if they have any worries about colleague's behaviour?
13. Do all staff understand about good practice and how they need to protect themselves and not make themselves vulnerable to allegations when working with children and young people?

## **Recruitment**

Care and attention should be paid to the recruitment and selection of paid staff, freelancers and volunteers.

- Advertising – All advertising for posts, freelance contracts or volunteering should include a statement about how employment / volunteering is subject to suitable child protection checks.
- Application process – Ensure that the application form, CV and references correlate and there are no gaps
- CRB Disclosures – All staff working with Heads Together who come into contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults will be required to have an up to date CRB Disclosure. 'Up to date' means less than 2 years old.