

# On The Hill Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

## *Part 1. Introduction*

It is the policy of On The Hill to ensure that every young person who is involved with the organisation is provided with a safe and supportive environment and that they are protected from physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect whilst on any On The Hill program or under the supervision of any On The Hill staff or volunteers.

### **1.1 Key principles underwriting this policy**

1. The Children Act 1989 and the UN Convention on the Rights Of The Child state that 'a person is a child until their 18th birthday'. Throughout this policy, a child / children will also be referred to as 'a young person'/'young people'. throughout this policy, use of the term 'staff' will include everyone who works for On The Hill, whether paid or in a voluntary capacity and whether or not they are residential at On The Hill.
2. The child's / young person's welfare is paramount. All young people, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and / or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse and neglect.
3. All suspicious incidents and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
4. All incidents and allegations will be logged and stored in a confidential place.
5. The Child Protection Policy also protects adults working with young people who will be made aware of best practice so they can be protected from wrongful allegations.
6. On The Hill recognises the statutory responsibility that a school has for its pupils and is committed to working with schools to ensure full communication and reporting in compliance with On The Hill and school procedures.
7. On The Hill recognises the statutory responsibility of Social Services to ensure the welfare of young people and it is committed to working with the appropriate Child Protection agencies and to complying with their procedures.

### **1.2 Policy review**

It is agreed that this Child Protection Policy will be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Lead and the Assistant Safeguarding Lead and an updated copy presented to the On The Hill Directors. This review will take place in January of each year. The next Child Protection Policy Review will be completed by the end of January, 2019.

## ***Part 2. Guidelines, policies and procedures***

On The Hill has created several policies and procedures designed to ensure safeguarding and to prevent abuse from taking place on any of their programs and on the site of On The Hill. These include:

1. Enhanced Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check for all staff.
2. Careful procedures for the selection, training and supervision of staff and volunteers.
3. Staff Safeguarding / Child Protection training to be attended by all volunteers and any member of staff who leads programs or works with children and young people, to be repeated annually. All new staff receive Safeguarding / Child Protection training as part of their induction to the role. Safeguarding / Child Protection training is given by a designated Safeguarding Officer.

4. Procedure for visitors to On The Hill. When there are programs involving children at On The Hill, it is the responsibility of anyone who is hosting visitor/s to ensure that all their visitors have an understanding of On The Hill's Child Protection policy. This includes procedures for reporting abuse / neglect.
5. There will be no post-visit/residential contact with young people for staff or volunteers, either face to face or through email or social media, except through official On The Hill channels.
6. When On The Hill is working with children in partnership with other organisations, On The Hill's Child Protection procedures will be shared with that organisation. On The Hill staff and Volunteers working on such programs will pay due attention to the Child Protection / Safeguarding Policies and procedures of our partner organisations.

## **2.1 Enhanced DBS check**

All On The Hill Staff, Volunteers, and Employees (except short term volunteers and guests) are required to have an Enhanced DBS check – this check may be registered with an associated educational organisation, for example, Embercombe, but must be recent (e.g. within the last three years). All visiting facilitators must supply a copy of their Enhanced DBS certificate to On The Hill. In the rare circumstance that a member of staff / volunteer does not have an Enhanced DBS check, they will be accompanied when with children by a member of staff/volunteer who does. It is the responsibility of schools and other partners who attend programmes to ensure that all accompanying staff have a current Enhanced DBS check.

## **2.2 Team training Onsite**

Safeguarding / Child Protection training for the On The Hill Team and other assistants and volunteers who work with On The Hill on a regular basis is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead and Assistant Lead. This will include:

- Induction on the Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy and procedures in relation to the work in education.
- Regular review of Safeguarding / Child Protection incidents that occur on programs, including scenarios/role plays.
- Training on writing up incident reports.
- A clear understanding of reporting procedures.
- Training by the Safeguarding team on how to train others in dealing with and reporting on safeguarding incidents, including safe, confidential storage of reports.

## **2.3 Staff / Volunteer Code of Conduct regarding Children / Young People**

All Staff and volunteers are required to follow a code of conduct whilst working on a On The Hill program:

### **2.3 a. Behavior towards young people**

- No sexual contact with children or young people.
- Rule of three or more (never be alone with a child or young person out of sight of another person).
- Not to show favouritism to any one child or young person.

- Avoid physical contact that may be misinterpreted. (Give an A-frame hug; and only hug under the initiation of the young person)
- Do not allow child or young person into their staff/volunteer sleeping space.
- Staff and volunteers are required to refrain from changing in the shared space in the bathroom or any other shared space.
- Children and young people may bring up discussion about sex and sexuality/drug use/mental health or other sensitive issues. Staff/volunteers are to respond sensitively and with discretion. Staff/volunteers are to share any such conversations with a Safeguarding Officer and give the Safeguarding Officer a written record on the same day. This is for the protection of the staff and the young people in case this develops into a bigger issue. If the Safeguarding Officer has concerns, then this information is passed to the school and a copy is securely stored.
- In your language and behaviour, always act in a way that maintains the adult/child relationship. If something happens that might be seen as not meeting this standard, report it to the Safeguarding Officer on the day it occurs, even if it seems minor, e.g. if you swear; or if you sense that a young person is not understanding appropriate adult/child boundaries.
- Share appropriately in circles. This is often a balance between being authentic and not burdening the young people with our own trauma.
- When children or young people are dressing, staff and volunteers are to avoid looking at, taking pictures or commenting on the children's or young people's bodies.
- Use and model appropriate limit-setting for affection.
- Use informal monitoring. Staff to inform Safeguarding lead if another staff member or volunteer is exhibiting suspicious or inappropriate behaviour.
- Don't keep secrets with children or young people.
- No personal contact with young people by phone, email or social networking sites or meeting up outside of the On The Hill programme remit.
- Do not take photographs of young people.
- Do not give lifts to young people in your car (unless agreed by the On The Hill programme holder or Safeguarding Officer).
- Establish a caring but professional set of boundaries with young people.
- If you witness anything that leads you to suspect that bullying is happening, report it to the safeguarding officer for the programme.

### **2.3 b. Personal Behaviour**

- Don't swear.
- No alcohol to be consumed while working with children or young people.
- On The Hill does not allow use of illegal drugs or legal highs.
- Dress appropriately – no excessive revealing of skin for men or for women and no offensive remarks on t-shirts.

## **2.4 Sending people home from residential programmes**

It is our policy to give children / young people support to self-manage their behaviour. Our behavioural policy is dynamic and dependant on the needs of the individual child / young person, the group and the needs of staff / teachers. However, in some extreme circumstances, such as violence, drug use or psychosis, we may either ask that a child / young person is sent home or call the Police. It is the prerogative of the On The Hill programme holder, in consultation with the rest of the team and a Safeguarding Officer to decide whether a child should be sent home. We will accept any school decision to send a child / young person home, because the school has the direct duty of care for their pupils.

## **2.5 Visitors to residential programmes**

Normally, children and young people will not receive visits from family or friends during a programme. On occasion, the programme holders may invite families to join us for an activity, e.g. to eat a meal with the programme. In particular circumstances, e.g. for a health or emotional reason, a visit from a family member can be negotiated with the programme holder.

## **2.6 Post programme contact between staff and youth**

It is not appropriate for staff / volunteers to develop long term relationships with any children or young people, who have visited On The Hill, except through On The Hill related activities. On occasion, children or young people may contact an On The Hill volunteer or staff member with a specific request or communication. Staff may only communicate through On The Hill email addresses. With written communication, correspondence may only be sent to schools via the teachers. Staff and volunteers are not to have contact with any child or young person through any social media.

## **2.7 Inappropriate Relationships**

It is an offence for an adult to abuse his/her position of trust by entering into a personal relationship that undermines the rights of a child. The government defines a position of trust as being a "relationship in which one party is in a position of influence over the other by virtue of their work or nature of their activity". (Dept. of Health). We must also be aware that an inappropriate relationship may be sought after by the child, by making what they see as reasonable advances in an inappropriate situation. In both cases, it is the responsibility of the adult to report the incident and prevent the situation arising again.

## **2.8 Discipline**

Staff must not use any physical punishment, nor practices that humiliate or frighten participants, or any threats of these punishments.

## **2.9 Volunteers / Staff under 18**

If a young person under the age of 18 is accepted as an On The Hill volunteer, an adult member of staff / volunteer at On The Hill will be designated as being *in loco parentis*. This adult will take full parental responsibility for the safety and well-being of that person. This will be done with the consent of the child's parents and agreed by the safeguarding team.

## **2.10 Staff/Participants Ratio**

Suitable ratios for specific activities are given within the risk assessments. Staff, volunteers or contractors should ensure that they are never alone with a child or group of children.

## **2.11 Phones and Other Technology**

We will make ourselves aware of the school's policy on photos and videos. We will make the schools aware of our policy. We request that schools agree to and enforce a no phones policy for the students. Use of cameras by students is with the permission of the school. Any exceptions to this rule should have been agreed in advance with the school staff. Photos/Videos of school groups should only be taken with the express permission of those in charge of the group. In the event that On The Hill wishes to use videos/photos for training or marketing purposes, written authority will be first obtained from the school.

## **2.12 Risk Assessments / Health and Safety**

The programme holder and the activity lead will have a clear understanding of the potential risks of an activity. This involves reading or creating a Risk Assessment. Existing Risk Assessments for activities are available on the On The Hill website and in the Oxen Park farm office. The programme holder insures that there is a member of Staff/Volunteer who is First Aid trained onsite.

## **2.13 Medicines and Accidents**

No medicines will be administered by On The Hill staff or volunteers. If there is an accident, then an accident form must be filled in. The form must be photocopied. The original is given to the On The Hill Manager responsible for Health and Safety. The duplicate given to the teacher responsible.

## ***Part 3. Dealing with suspected abuse/neglect***

At On The Hill, children/young people often want to talk about issues they face in their lives. Through talking, they gain new perspective and support for making positive changes and choices. It's very important for staff to understand that confidentiality is one aspect of a child or young person's right to privacy.

On The Hill recognises that the following exceptions apply and that On The Hill staff / volunteers have a legal responsibility to report the school, partner organisation or Social Services.

1. When a child/young person is at risk of harm to themselves or others.
2. When a child/young person is being abused, neglected, or exploited.

In the case of abuse against a young person, the Safeguarding Lead will seek advice from the local/appropriate Social Services department.

## **3.1 Youth disclosure procedure**

If a young person makes such a disclosure, the following procedure must be followed:

1. If a child or young person discloses information that raises possible concern, the adult receiving the information should talk to a named Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible, and definitely within 24 hours.
2. The Safeguarding Officer should ask the receiving adult to record the disclosure, using the words used by the child as far as possible, taking care not to add information or interpretation and including all details, as it may not be clear at that point what will later turn out to be relevant.
3. The Safeguarding Officer will pass on this information to the lead school teacher on the programme and the Safeguarding Officer of the school, copied into the head teacher; and request electronic acknowledgement that the information has been received. This will be done within 3 days of the incident. In urgent cases, a verbal report will be delivered within 24 hours so that immediate action can be taken.

4. If an incident of child harm or maltreatment comes to the attention of the management or staff of On The Hill, a referral will be made to Social Services on the same day by the Safeguarding Officer.
5. The On The Hill Safeguarding Officer should inform the child if the information disclosed has been passed onto the school.

### **3.2 Recognising types of child harm**

Children and young people can be harmed or injured by another person at home, school or whilst they are attending community activities. This can involve any of the following:

**(a) Physical abuse** occurs when a child or young person is physically hurt by another adult.

This would include situations when a young person is:

- Hit, shaken or thrown.
- Burnt, scalded or bitten.

**(b) Emotional harm** occurs when an adult adversely affects the emotional development of a young person. This can occur if they:

- Persistently fail to give them love or affection.
- Continually reject or criticise them.
- Convey a message that the young person is worthless or inadequate.
- Place age-inappropriate demands upon them or leave them feeling frightened or in danger.

**(c) Neglect** occurs when there is a failure to meet a child's basic needs. This could involve situations when an adult:

- Fails to provide them with adequate food or warm clothing.
- Does not protect them from physical harm or danger.
- Inappropriately leaves a child alone and unsupervised.

**(d) Sexual abuse** occurs when an adult or another young person forces, manipulates or coerces a person under the age of sixteen years to take part in sexual activities to meet their own needs. This might be through:

- Sexual harassment such as sexual remarks or innuendos.
- Making the young person watch pornographic literature or videos.
- Involving the young person in the production of child pornography.
- Physical contact, including getting the child to touch them in a sexual manner or touching the child in a sexual manner (including full sexual intercourse).

### **3.3 Responding to a child/young person who reports that they have been harmed**

#### **3.3 a. Responding to a direct allegation**

If a young person tells a member of staff directly that another adult or young person has harmed them, it is important that the allegations are taken seriously. It is not the responsibility of the person receiving the information to make a decision as to whether or not the allegations are true. Under these circumstances they should:

Report the allegations immediately to the Safeguarding Officer.

### **3.3 b. Indirect concerns about a child or young person**

Staff / Volunteers might also become concerned about a young person in other ways. This could include a report from another adult or young person or their own observations of a child's behaviour or presentation. Some of the main ways in which a member of staff / volunteer could become concerned that something might be wrong include:

- The child has an injury which they try to hide or which looks suspicious.
- The child appears anxious or uncomfortable in the company of a particular adult/s or young person/people.
- The child keeps seeking opportunities to talk to a member of staff and they suspect they may have a problem they wish to share.

If the behaviour or presentation of a child leads a member of staff to suspect that they may have been harmed or are at risk of harm, they should report their concerns to the Safeguarding Officer.

Any suspicions should not be discussed with the person suspected of harming the child, the parent or carer, or anyone else other than the Lead or Assistant Safeguarding Officer, the programme holder, or the lead school member of staff (if the On The Hill Safeguarding Officers are not available) prior to a referral to Social Services.

### **3.4 Allegations against a staff member**

If a disclosure implicates On The Hill staff or volunteers, the verbal report of the disclosure should immediately come to a named On The Hill Safeguarding Officer and lead member of school staff jointly. A written report of the disclosure should be made immediately and handed to the Safeguarding Officer and the lead member of the school/partner staff.

If the disclosure implicates a named On The Hill Safeguarding Officer, the verbal report of the disclosure should immediately come to the programme holder or visiting school staff.

If the disclosure implicates a member of school staff, it should be reported to a named On The Hill Safeguarding Officer.

Any allegations (or concerns) of abuse against a staff member, volunteer or young person are taken extremely seriously and are reported straight away to the On The Hill Safeguarding Officer. In the case of an allegation of abuse against a staff member the Safeguarding Officer will discuss the case with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and will be instructed on how to proceed further.

If the allegation is made against the person designated as the Safeguarding Officer, then the issue must be discussed with the programme holder, or an On The Hill Director.

### **3.5 Appropriate responses to children and young people**

Any member of staff who is told by a child that they have been harmed or maltreated should:

- Try to create a safe environment by staying calm.

- Primarily, it is your job (if someone discloses) to listen to what the young person has to say and encourage them to speak in their own words.
- Reassure the child or young person that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell someone who could help them to stay safe.
- Keep questions to a minimum and avoid asking direct or leading questions or those which can be answered “yes” or “no”.
- Use the TED model (Tell, Explain, Describe) to elicit more/clearer information, but only if you are unsure whether or not the child is making a disclosure and need to become clearer to decide whether there is anything to report.
- Try not to panic or rush into any activity in response to a disclosure that might be inappropriate.
- Do not make any promises that you cannot keep, for example by telling the child that you will keep what they say confidential. It is your duty (legal and moral duty) to pass that information on to the Safeguarding Officer.
- Tell the child that you are going to talk to someone who will know how to help.

### **3.6 Confidentiality**

You can not promise the child secrecy because of our duty of care for children /young people. You can say that this information will only be shared with adults who need to know in order to keep young people safe. You can reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you.

It is likely that the Safeguarding Officer will ask you to write down exactly what was said and email it to them directly. If you are unsure whether or not a child made a disclosure then speak to a Safeguarding Officer anyway. If a child makes a disclosure about a Safeguarding Officer, then speak to the programme holder, or an On The Hill Director.

Whatever the nature of the disclosure it will be kept confidential (on a ‘need to know’ basis) and not shared with other members of staff or children/young people. You can reassure the child/young person about this. All staff have been advised that they must not discuss a disclosure with any individual or party, other than those identified in the above procedures.

Allegations of abuse will be kept securely on file with On The Hill for the period of 6 years following the date of the allegation.

**Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Jo Clark

**Assistant Safeguarding Lead:** Lewis Winks