

Introduction

It is the duty, under existing child protection legislation (including statutory and civil law) of BS3 Community Development (including the Members of the Board of trustees, employees and volunteers) to protect children and young people whom may come into contact with any form of harm or abuse. The Children Act 1989 provides the legislative framework for child protection in England. This is strengthened by the Children's Act 2004, which encourages partnerships between agencies and creates more accountability. Children have the right to be protected from harm. When reference is made to children and young people this includes anyone aged under 18 years and for those with a special education need or disability; aged under 25.

Where a third party is running a service from BS3 Community Development's premises they must have their own safeguarding policies in place or must sign-up and adhere to this policy. This policy works in conjunction with other policies, in particular Safeguarding Early Education & Childcare policy, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging policy, Recruitment policy and Disciplinary policy and our DBS procedure.

All new staff and volunteers will be made aware of this policy.

Policy

BS3 Community Development will ensure the following:

- The welfare of the child remains paramount at all times and any actions considered will have a child-centred approach and be in the child's best interest.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/ or sexual identity, have the right to be protected from harm.
- All children have access to a safe, caring and stimulating environment.
- That there is good communication and partnership when working between staff and families, as well as with external agencies and professionals in and around the area in regards child safeguarding concerns.
- That staff, especially senior staff, are knowledgeable on the range of family support services available in and around the area.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately, communicating with the individuals concerned in a non-judgemental and professional manner.
- All staff and volunteers at BS3 Community Development have a responsibility to report and record concerns/ incidents as soon as they come to their attention, and to inform the designated person.

What is abuse?

The Children's Act recognises four categories of abuse:

- Physical Abuse - is the actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering to a child).
- Sexual Abuse – is the actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent.
- Emotional Abuse – is the actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection, either by adults or other children.
- Neglect – is the persistent or severe neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation, or failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

Other forms of abuse which need to be taken seriously include:

- Peer on Peer Abuse - children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as peer-on-peer abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyber-bullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiating/ hazing type violence and rituals. (Source: Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2019, 2023).
- Historical Abuse - is when a child will disclose abuse (either sexual, physical, emotional, or neglect) which occurred in the past. This information will be treated in the same way as any other form of abuse. The reason for this is that the abuser may still represent a risk to children now.
- Domestic Abuse - is abuse caused within the home which may be physical, emotional, or due to neglect. Children experiencing this may demonstrate many of the symptoms below. Staff will need to treat them sensitively, record their concerns and consider informing Children and Young Peoples Service.
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) – is illegal in the UK and it is an offence to take UK nationals abroad to aid, abet, or carry out FGM. All agencies have a statutory responsibility to safeguard children from being abused through FGM. If you have any concerns with regards to a girl in our care being at risk of FGM then this is a child protection issue and must be documented and reported to Social Services or to the Police. Some warning signs include parents requesting extended leave, if a girl comes from a country that has high prevalence to FGM, mothers and other siblings have already undergone FGM, a girl may indicate that they are going away for a special event.
- Bullying – is abuse that is deliberately hurtful and is repeated over a period of time. Bullying includes verbal threatening, insulting and personal

- remarks. It also includes physical abuse e.g. hitting, kicking, pinching, punching etc. Bullying can also be done indirectly e.g. excluding individuals, talking inappropriately about others, etc.
- Radicalisation – is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism (Prevent Strategy, Home Office, 2011). In the context of this policy, it includes children and young people who may be vulnerable to being radicalised through exposure to extremist views. See appendix 3 on page 15.
 - Human Trafficking – involves an act of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring or receiving a person through a use of force, coercion or other means, for the purpose of exploiting them. If an identified victim of human trafficking is a child, the response will be coordinated under the Safeguarding process.

Any trustee, paid staff member, or volunteer has the responsibility to be vigilant to signs that all is not well with a child or young person. Not all concerns about children or young people relate to abuse; there may well be other explanations. It is important to keep an open mind and consider what one knows about the child and their circumstances. If any person has concerns it is not their responsibility to decide if it abuse. It is their responsibility to act on any concerns following the right procedures.

Recognising abuse is one of the first steps in protecting children and young people. There could be signs or changes in behaviour that makes one feel concerned. All persons responsible for children at BS3 Community Development should be alert to the following types of behaviour:

- Becoming excessively aggressive, withdrawn or excessively clingy.
- Seeming to be keeping a secret.
- Personality changes – becoming insecure.
- Deterioration in a child's overall wellbeing.
- Unreasonable fear of certain people or places.
- Seeking of attention in negative forms.
- Acting out in an inappropriate way, perhaps with toys, objects or other children or adults.
- Comments made by the child which cause concern, e.g. inconsistent explanations of bruising, injuries or home life.
- Unexplained bruising, injuries or burns.
- Sexually explicit language or actions.

Staff should be equally vigilant regarding signs relating to disabled children and not automatically assume that any of the above relates to their impairment. Note also, the particular signs for immobile babies.

Child protection is the responsibility of all staff, trustees and volunteers at BS3 Community Development. All are responsible for ensuring the following

procedures and processes are put into place, failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Procedure if there are signs of concern or suspected abuse:

- Stay calm.
- If a child is making a disclosure, listen to what the child is saying and reassure them that they have done the right thing by disclosing.
- Whatever the situation, do not ask closed or leading questions. Ensure that any questions that are asked are for clarification purposes only. An example of an open question is 'Why are you upset?' An example of a leading question is 'Are you afraid to go home because your mum will hit you?'
- Do not promise the child that any information/ concerns can be kept a secret as subsequent disclosures could then lead to the child feeling betrayed. Explain to the child, no matter what age, that you are obliged to inform someone.
- Reassure the child that the people that are being informed will be sensitive to their needs and will protect and support them.
- The person who raises concerns/ suspects the abuse will discuss the concern confidentially with our Child Protection Safeguarding Officer, currently Kelly Murphy or the designated trustee, currently Elizabeth Normand, contact details Appendix 1.
- If appropriate, one or both should then raise the concern with the parent. If they (along with advice from senior staff) consider the parent's explanation to be adequate, the matter needs to be logged, but need go no further. Both parent/carer and staff member should fill in an incident form, acknowledging that the information sharing process has taken place, this will be kept on record and reported to the appropriate bodies if need be. All information protected by the Data Protection Act 1998 will be treated in-line with BS3 Community Development's Confidentiality & Data Protection policy, a copy of which is available on request.
- If the senior staff member feels that any child is at risk of any immediate danger, they have the right to contact the appropriate services without consent from the parent/ carer. Before any contact is made with any external agency the child must be informed that this action is being taken in the best way that is relevant to the child and their development stage. Parents/ carers will be informed of the concern and the actions taken as soon as possible.
- The senior staff member will contact First Response (0117 903 6444). First Response will ask various related questions and, from this, decide the best route for helping the child, young person and/ or family.
- It is of key importance that the person who has raised the concern logs all the facts, using any words used by the child, as soon as possible. Records should include:
 - The child's known details including name, date of birth, address and contact numbers.

- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times, specific factors, and any other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion, or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. If necessary, a diagram will be drawn to show the position of any bruises or marks the child or young person may have, with an indication of the size, colour, and shape.
- Any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incident(s), if any.
- The child's account if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Factual accounts from others, including colleagues and parents.

All records will be kept in a secure place and will be kept confidential. Parents/ carers have the right to see any records kept on their child. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis in order to protect the child from harm, but otherwise will be kept confidential. All information protected by the Data Protection Act 1998 will be treated in-line with BS3 Community Development's Confidentiality & Data Protection policy, a copy of which is available on request.

If any person is in doubt at any time with regards to what steps to follow, they must seek appropriate advice and guidance from the [Children & Young People's Care & Support Services](#) or [BAND](#) (Bristol Association of Neighbourhood Day-care).

The child's wellbeing is paramount at all times. The child must be reassured at all times whilst the concerns are being dealt with.

Code of conduct for working with children and young people – [Safeguarding and Protecting People for Charities and Trustees](#). This is a guide for adults working at BS3 Community Development about acceptable and desirable conduct to protect both adults and children.

Basic Principles

- The Child's welfare is paramount (Children Act 1989).
- All staff have a 'duty of care' to the children.
- Adults working at BS3 Community Development are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead a reasonable person to question their motivations or intentions.
- Adults working at BS3 Community Development must work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
- Adults should follow the Child Protection & Safeguarding policy for any incident that gives rise to concern.

- Adults should provide a good example and a positive role model to children.
- Adults should behave in a mature, respectful, safe, fair, and considered manner. For example:
 - Not making sarcastic remarks or 'jokes' that are personal, sexual, racist, discriminatory, intimidating or otherwise offensive.
 - Not embarrassing or humiliating children
 - Not discriminate favourably or unfavourably towards any child. For example:
 - Treating all children equally – never building 'special' relationships or conferring favour on particular children.
 - Not giving or receiving (other than token) gifts, unless arranged through BS3 Community Development.
 - Only touching children for professional reasons when this is necessary and appropriate for the child's wellbeing or safety.
 - Not behaving in a way that could lead a reasonable observer to question conduct, intentions, or suitability to care for other people's children.
 - Not making arrangements to contact, communicate, or meet with children outside work (this includes use of email, text and other messaging systems).
 - Not developing 'personal' or sexual relationships with young people (particular attention is drawn to the provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 which creates a new criminal offence of abuse of a position of trust when a person aged 18 or over is in a 'position of trust' with a person under 18 and engages in sexual activity with, or in the presence of, that child, or causes or incites that child to engage in, or watch sexual activity).

Procedures for children joining activities on site

This section applies to activities organised on site that are outside the childcare services offered through the BS3 Community Development nurseries, or other circumstances where BS3 Community Development takes explicit responsibility for children. It applies whether they are run by BS3 Community Development staff, or by third party facilitators.

Children under eight years old

When joining activities, or generally visiting the premises, children under eight years old must always be accompanied by an adult for the duration of the activity unless the activities are designed such that BS3 Community Development takes responsibility for those children. In such cases, places must be booked in advance of the session, and full contact details of parents and information about the child must be recorded.

If a child under eight years old is found alone on site, efforts will be made to find their parent or carer, and if this cannot be done, or is unsuccessful, an employee at BS3 Community may phone the police for the safety of the child.

Children aged eight years old and above

For children aged 8–17 years old (up to their 18th birthday people are still considered children) and for those with a special education need or disability; aged under 25. the procedure will vary depending on the nature of the activity.

Pre-booked activities

For pre-booked activities where parents may leave their children, the organisation must always have a contact number for the child's parent or carer. This will be used in case of emergency or should the child leave the activity prior to its end.

If a parent drops the child off and signs them into the activity (but does not stay with them), and the child chooses to leave early, we will call the parent to let them know they have chosen to leave. At that point we have discharged our responsibility to the parent.

If the child arrives without a parent to join a pre-booked activity, then we must obtain a contact number for their parent or carer and any other information that enables us to ensure the welfare of the child while they are taking part in activities. We may assume if they arrived by themselves that they are capable of leaving by themselves.

Drop-in activities

Many activities take place on-site (including general visiting) that are not pre-booked. It is neither practical nor desirable to attempt to collect contact details for all the children who may be present. In these circumstances, we cannot take additional responsibility for children over eighth years of age. They are in a public place, and it must be assumed that their parents are aware and responsible for their behaviour (whether present or not).

Leaders of activities on site (including all staff in the case of general visiting) should ensure that children are engaged in activity that is age appropriate and should intervene if children appear to be engaging in behaviour that places them at risk of harm. Specific activities run, or hosted, by BS3 Community Development, must be risk assessed in advance to ensure that they are appropriate.

Recruitment

BS3 Community Development is committed to promoting diversity and equality of opportunity for all staff, job applicants and volunteers. We aim to create a working environment in which all individuals can make the best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, where individuals are respected, treated fairly and able to give their best, and where all decisions are based on merit.

Please refer to the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging policy and the Recruitment policy for further information.

BS3 Community Development will take all appropriate steps to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. As most staff and volunteers are likely to have regular contact with, or encounter children (which might include regular processing of information), appropriate checks into their eligibility will be required. Such processes will be compliant with the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging policy.

Employees in direct contact with children are subject to undergo an enhanced DBS check and will have restricted duties until the DBS check is complete.

Volunteers will be subject to an enhanced DBS check only where they are in a position of responsibility. Volunteers who have not completed a DBS check will be restricted in their activities, for example, will not be left alone with children.

All staff and volunteers who work directly with children will receive training in safeguarding, which will be regularly refreshed.

When there is a need to 'recruit' individuals or contractors for any maintenance work that needs to take place, where possible they will be vetted, and supervised where children are present.

Allegations against a person working in the charity

- The concerns must be reported to Human Resources (if the child is part of the nursery the concerns are reported to the Head of Early Education & Childcare). If the concerns regard anyone on the HR/ Operations Team, they should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer. Concerns could include:
 - Behaviour that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
 - Criminal activity against, or related to, a child.
 - Inappropriate behaviour towards a child which may indicate that he or she is unsuitable to work with children.
- A written account of the allegation or suspicion must be submitted to the HR/ Operations Team, or appropriate person, within one day of it being reported.
- The HR Manager will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to ask for advice and how to proceed, and to give details of the concern within one day of it being received. This can be done by phone, details below and must also be followed-up with a-completed Allegation Referral Form. The advice of the LADO will be followed. The current LADO can be found on www.bristolsafeguarding.org. See appendix 1 for contact details.
- The HR Team, or appropriate manager, will talk to the individual against whom allegations have been made to state the situation. The individual

- will either be under strict supervision for the rest of the day, or suspended, depending on the severity of the allegation, whilst the allegations or suspicions are investigated further.
- The HR Team, or appropriate manager, will contact and inform the Chief Executive Officer and, if appropriate, the designated Board Member, Elizabeth Normand, who is responsible for child protection, informing them of the allegation. See appendix 1 for contact details.
 - The issues surrounding the allegation must not be discussed with any colleague. If this is found to be the case the Disciplinary procedure will be followed.
 - If an allegation is made against the HR/ Operations Team, the Chief Executive Officer must inform the designated Board Member who is responsible for child protection, Elizabeth Normand. See appendix 1 for contact details.
 - The staff member will only be able to come back to work once the allegations have been investigated and senior management deems it appropriate to do so.
 - Serious incidents must be referred to the Charity Commission (appendix 1).

Recognising inappropriate behaviour in staff, volunteers, and other adults

As a community organisation that involves children, it is sometimes necessary for staff members to have physical contact with them for reasons of safety (e.g. holding hands when outside), hygiene (e.g. toilet trips) and emotional support (e.g. comforting upset children). Staff are encouraged to make such contact and should not fear allegations of inappropriate contact being made where the circumstances demand it. Note that in some circumstances it could be considered neglectful not to provide physical contact as a comfort to a child.

To minimise the risk of allegations being made against staff, they are discouraged from spending long periods alone with children, frequently repeated contact (particularly with the same child) and from gestures of intimacy (e.g. kissing the child) particularly where comforting is not required.

Further signs of inappropriate behaviours may include:

- Paying an excessive amount of attention to a child, or groups of children, providing presents, money, or having favourites.
- Seeking out vulnerable children, e.g., disabled children.
- Trying to spend time alone with a particular child, or group of children, on a regular basis.
- Making inappropriate sexual comments.
- Sharing inappropriate images.
- Mistreating a child.
- Being vague about where they have worked, or when they have been employed.
- Encouraging secretiveness.

There may be other signs of concern. If you are concerned about another staff member or volunteer's behaviour you must discuss this with a member of the senior management team.

Dealing with child protection issues can be upsetting for all those involved in supporting the child and the family. It is important that any persons dealing with any issues relating to child abuse express their feelings through talking with either the HR/ Operations Team, or a member of the senior management team. They will endeavour to provide the right support and signposting.

Parents/ carers will be made aware of this policy prior to their children joining activities at BS3 Community Development, ensuring they are aware of procedures followed by the charity when concerns are raised.

All employees will be encouraged to familiarise themselves with this policy on induction and will also be provided with regular access to the most up-to-date version.

For further information about Inter-Agency working please see the Working Together to Safeguard Children document at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism

It is the duty of BS3 Community Development (including the members of the Board of trustees, staff and volunteers) to guard against radicalisation and extremism as outlined below. Extremists of all persuasions aim to develop destructive relationships between different communities by promoting division, fear and mistrust of others based on ignorance or prejudice. As a community-based organisation we have a role, in partnership with statutory bodies, in countering such activity.

BS3 Community Development is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its service users and recognises that safeguarding against radicalisation and extremism is no different to safeguarding against any other vulnerability in today's society. Below we set out our strategies and procedures to protect vulnerable individuals from being radicalised or exposed to extremist views.

The definitions used in the Home Office 'Prevent Strategy', 2011, are adopted.

- Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.
- Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our

definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

Procedure for children

Radicalisation is a safeguarding issue in the context of children and vulnerable adults. There several behaviours which may indicate a child is at risk of being radicalised or exposed to extreme views. These include:

- Spending increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists.
- Changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group.
- Day-to-day behaviour becoming increasingly centred on an extremist ideology, group, or cause.
- Loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology, group, or cause.
- Possession of materials or symbols associated with an extremist cause.
- Attempts to recruit others to the group/ cause.
- Communications with others that suggests identification with a group, cause, or ideology.
- Using insulting to derogatory names for another group.
- Increase in prejudice-related incidents committed by that person.

Other factors or circumstances may also give cause for concern, for example behaviour of other family members. Staff, Board Members and volunteers should be aware of these behaviours and circumstances and feel confident in reporting them to their immediate manager, the CEO, if they have a concern.

Online Safety

The Online Safety Bill, November 2023, is a set of laws in the UK designed to protect both children and adults online. All services within the scope of the bill must implement measures to prevent illegal activity on their platforms and promptly remove any illegal content that appears. BS3 Community Development is working alongside SHARP IT to ensuring web filtering restricts the illegal activity.

Sharing Information

We have a duty to keep personal information about the families attending our services confidential. In some circumstances we may be obliged to share information. Staff should refer to our Data Protection policies before responding to any requests from external agencies for information.

BS3 Community Development also has a Whistleblowing policy, allowing staff and volunteers to have a way to report any concerns that they may have.

As an organisation we understand that we have a duty of care for all the children and young people on our premises and know to contact First Response, or Children & Young People's Care & Support Services, with any concerns that we

may have, including on-going absences where we cannot get hold of any named persons, etc.

In our registered childcare services, we aim to work in partnership with all our families and, therefore, will request all relevant information concerning that child. This will include persons that are, and are not, allowed to collect their child, as well as other professionals that the family may be working with.

Emergency Action

In some cases, staff may need to protect a child immediately. In these situations, the police will be contacted. The police are the only agency with statutory powers for the immediate protection of children.

It is not BS3 Community Development employee's responsibility to decide whether abuse has taken place or not; however, it is our responsibility to pass on information to the appropriate authority immediately.

The policy works in conjunction with other policies, in particular Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging, Recruitment and Disciplinary policies and our DBS procedure. It also draws on external publications such as 'Tackling Extremism in the UK' 2015

(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263181/ETF_FINAL.pdf).

Appendix 1

Contact Details

Child Protection Safeguarding Officer: Kelly Murphy, Head of Early Education & Childcare; Phone: 07531 025532; Email: kelly.murphy@bs3community.org.uk

Postal address: BS3 Community, The Southville Centre, Beaufort Road, Bristol, BS3 1QG

Board Member responsible for Child Protection: Elizabeth Normand; Phone: 07931 552479; Email: elizabeth.normand@bs3community.org.uk

Postal Address: BS3 Community, The Southville Centre, Beaufort Road, Bristol, BS3 1QG

Our designated whistleblowing trustee is: Sarah Hughes; Phone: 07855 439799; Email: sarah.hughes@bs3community.org.uk

Postal address: BS3 Community, The Southville Centre, Beaufort Road, Bristol, BS3 1QG

HR/ Operations Team contact: Aimee Wentworth
Senior Staff Member: Becca McDougall and Emmeline Rodman
CEO: Simon Hankins

Referral Agencies

First Response – 0117 903 6444

Children's Social Care Referral and Assessment Teams:

South Bristol – 0117 9031414/0117 3532200

North Bristol – 0117 9038700

East/Central Bristol – 0117 9036500

Disabled Children's Team – 0117 9038250

Out of office hours (Emergency Duty Team) – 01454 615165

e-mail (Bristol) - childprotection@bristol.gov.uk

Police Child Protection Team – 0117 9454320

Designated LADO's contact numbers: 0117 903 7795

Charity Commission: 0300 066 9197

Support and Advice

Southwest Child Protection Procedures (online guidance);

<https://swcpp.trixonline.co.uk>

Childline – 0800 1111 (open 24 hours)

National Association for the prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) – 0800 800 500

Bristol Safeguarding Children Board (training) – 0117 9224626