

At Devas we believe that the safety and welfare of our young people are of the utmost importance. It is the duty of all our staff and volunteers to protect each child from abuse and to be alert to the possibility of abuse.

1.0 Definition of child abuse

A child under 18 years of age who has suffered from, or is believed to be at risk of physical injury, neglect, emotional abuse or sexual abuse.

2.0 Recognition

The first indication of concern about a child's welfare is not necessarily the presence of an injury. Concerns may be aroused by:

- Bruises or other marks on a child's body.
- Remarks made by the child, another child, a parent or another adult.
- Observations of the child's behaviour or reactions.
- Unexplained changes in the child's behaviour or personality
- Evidence of disturbance or explicit detail in a child's play, drawing or writing.
- Neglect

3.0 Designated persons for child protection

In Devas Lucy Pittaway, Senior Project Manager has the designated responsibility for child protection. Anyone who has a concern about a child should tell Lucy Pittaway immediately. If that person is not available, you should talk to whoever is deputising. The designated person will:

- Liaise with Devas Trustees, the Youth Service, Social Services Department or other agencies on individual cases of suspected or identified child abuse.
- Be responsible for co-ordinating action within Devas on child protection issues.
- Insure that (staff / volunteers) are familiar with this policy and procedure.
- Raise awareness about child protection and arrange training as appropriate.

4.0 The role of individual staff or volunteer

All staff and volunteers working in Devas must be aware that a child may be the victim of abuse. Concern about a young person must be discussed with the designated person immediately so that if necessary a referral can be made without delay. In urgent situations, referral must not be delayed.

Individual staff and volunteers should not investigate as this is the role of the statutory agencies. However, if a child does say something, it is vital to listen carefully, so that it can be reported accurately.

5.0 Concern about something the child or someone else says

Listen – do not ask questions or interrogate.

Remain calm - if you are shocked, upset or angry the child will pick this up and this may prevent them from talking further.

Reassure - the child has done nothing wrong - tell her/him it is alright to talk.

Do not promise to keep it a secret - Tell the child that what they have said cannot be kept secret and that you have to tell someone who can help.

6.0 Reporting

Concern may arise from observations of the child (e.g. injury, behaviour, appearance, nature of play or work produced) or as a result of something said by the child, another child or an adult. Tell the designated person or the person deputising as soon as you can.

If there has been a complaint or a belief that a child is at risk of physical injury, neglect, emotional abuse or sexual abuse, staff must fill in the reporting book that is kept in the general office.

The report must include:

- Name of the child:
- Parent's/ carer's details:
- The child's address:
- Relevant phone numbers:
- What is said to have happened or what was seen;
- When it occurred;
- Who else was there?
- What was said by those involved;
- Whether there is any actual evidence e.g. bruises, bleeding, changed behaviour;
- Who has been told about it;
- Who was concerned?
- Was the child able to say what happened?
- Whether the parents have been advised.

A copy of this framework will be found in the front of the book.

As soon as you can, write down your concerns. Record facts accurately, making clear when you are expressing an opinion and what that opinion is based upon.

These notes must be given to the designated person immediately and will help to ensure accuracy in recording events.

The Senior Youth Worker must be contacted immediately in the case of a serious concern.

7.0 Concerns about a member of staff or volunteer

Allegations or concerns about a member of staff or volunteer must be logged in the reporting book using the report contents as outlined above, and brought to the attention of the Senior Project Manager or Principal Youth Worker immediately.

Allegations or concerns about a Wandsworth member of staff or a volunteer should be immediately referred to Wandsworth Council Social Services Department and Personnel Section.

8.0 Confidentiality

Our young people have the right to expect that all staff and volunteers will deal sensitively and sympathetically with their situation. It is important that information remains confidential and only those with a 'need to know' should be privy to it.

Staff should not promise to keep secrets.

9.0 WHAT TO DO:

Early referral gives more time to help the child and family before the situation becomes severe or serious. When necessary, early referral gives more time for others to protect the child. The Senior Project Manager or The Principal Youth Worker may consult the Youth Service or Social Services Department.

If in doubt, consult. Do not ignore concerns, even if these are vague. Your first responsibility is to the child.

10.0 CONTACT WITH THE FAMILY

Before speaking to the child's family, you should talk to the Principal Youth Worker, or deputy who may consult outside Devas.

In cases where a physical injury causes concern, it may be appropriate to discuss this with the parent or carer. If the explanation suggests that the injury was non-accidental (or a failure to protect the child from harm), the parent or carer will be informed of the need to refer the matter to the Social Services Department.

In cases of possible neglect or emotional abuse, the concern is likely to have built up over a period of time. There may have been discussion with the family about sources of help (for example the Social Services Department), but if concerns persist, there must be a referral to the Social Services Department.

Where there are suspicions of sexual abuse, the designated person will seek immediate advice from the Social Services Department before discussing the matter with the family.

11.0 REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE BY OTHER AGENCIES

Youth groups are required to assist local authority Social Service Departments or the police when they are making enquires about the welfare of children.

Information about a child must therefore be shared on a “need to know” basis.

When such requests are received by telephone, **always** maintain security by checking the telephone listing before calling back.

Always advise the Senior Project Manager and Principal Youth Worker.

If staff are not sure about what information to pass on please refer them to the Senior Project Manager or Principal Youth Worker.

12.0 GENERAL ISSUES

The above policy must be observed by all staff and volunteers at all times.

<p>A service level agreement is in place for all Devas staff. DBS checks to be administered through Wandsworth Council</p>

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