HEYSHAM HOUSE

SAFE WORKING (CARING) PRACTICE POLICY

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HEYSHAM HOUSE

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Heysham House is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and requires all staff to act in the best interests of our children at all times.

1. Introduction


We also follow current DfE guidance Keeping children safe in education (2016), Working together to safeguard children (2015), HM Government advice What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board’s policies, procedures, guidance and protocols.

We will take immediate action where we believe an individual may be at risk, or it is alleged that a child is suspected of being abused. Our primary concern, at all times, is the welfare and safety of all members of Heysham House’s community including children, staff and visitors.

This policy and all associated procedures apply to all staff (including agency staff, volunteers and students on placement), children and visitors and should be read in conjunction with other safeguarding and employment policies including (not an exhaustive list):

- Administration of Medication Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Compliments and Complaints Policy
- Driver and Vehicle Policy
- Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- E-Safety and Multi-Media Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Management of Behaviour: Rewards and Sanctions Policy
- Off-Site Visits Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) Policy
- Runaway and Missing from Home, Care and Education (RMFHCE) Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy

Failure to comply with these policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action.

2. Making a professional judgement

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1 Updated February 2017 - Minor amendment to add the definition of child sexual exploitation.
Whilst every attempt has been made to cover a wide range of situations, this document cannot provide an exhaustive list of what is, or is not, inappropriate behaviour for staff in all circumstances. There may be occasions and circumstances in which you have to make decisions or take action, where no guidance exists. All judgements and actions, must be justified, reported and recorded as soon as reasonably possible (where appropriate).

Staff whose practice deviates from this guidance may bring into question their suitability to work with children.

You must, at all times:
- act in the best interests of the children in your care
- promote children’s privacy, safety, dignity and respect
- understand and follow our policies, procedures and guidance
- work and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way, acting in a manner that is warranted, proportionate, safe and equitable
- acknowledge and maintain professional boundaries
- monitor, review and reflect on your practice and take responsibility for your own actions and behaviour
- avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question your motivation and intentions
- discuss any uncertainties or confusion with your line manager or supervisor.

Where no specific guidance exists you must:
- discuss the circumstances that informed your action, or your proposed action, with senior staff, parents/carers and local authority, as appropriate
- report and record any actions which could be misinterpreted to senior staff
- discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with senior staff
- record discussions and reasons why significant actions were taken
- record any areas of disagreement about a significant course of action taken and if necessary referred to a higher authority.

3. Duty of care

You are accountable for the way in which you exercise authority, manage risk, use resources and safeguard children.

Duty of care is exercised through the development of respectful and caring relationships with children and personal behaviour which demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.

Under The Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Heysham House has a duty of care towards its employees and employees have a duty to take care of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions or failings.

You must:
- understand the duties and responsibilities associated with your employment role
- take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of children.

4. Confidentiality
The Data Protection Act 1998 governs the storing and processing of personal information about children.

You must:
- treat information you receive about children in a discreet and confidential manner
- be clear about when information can be shared and in what circumstances it is appropriate to do so
- seek advice from senior staff if you are in any doubt about sharing information
- report any concerns or allegations in accordance with policies and procedures.

You must not:
- use information to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass a child
- promise to keep secrets on behalf of a child
- ask a child to keep secrets on behalf of anyone else; especially an adult.

5. Power and positions of trust

The relationship between an adult and a child cannot be a relationship between equals. Your knowledge, position and authority means that you occupy a position of trust, power and influence over the children in your care.

You must not:
- use your position to gain access to information for your own or others' advantage
- intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children.

6. Propriety and behaviour

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in our ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children. You must maintain high standards of personal conduct in order to preserve the confidence and respect of the public in general and all those with whom you work.

You must:
- be aware that behaviour in your personal life may impact upon your work with children (e.g. misuse of drugs and alcohol or acts of violence)
- understand that the behaviour and actions of your partner (or other family members) may raise questions about your suitability to work with children
- follow national, local and organisational policies, procedures and guidance.

You must not:
- behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question your suitability to work with children or act as a role model
- make, or encourage others to make, unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or which might be interpreted as such.

7. Dress and appearance

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, you must dress in ways that are appropriate to your role and responsibilities; and this may need to be different to how you dress when not at work. You must dress appropriately for the tasks and work you undertake.
Those who dress inappropriately could render themselves vulnerable to criticism, allegations and disciplinary action.

You must wear clothing which:
• is appropriate to your role and responsibilities.

You must not wear clothing which:
• is likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative
• is likely to distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding
• contains any political or otherwise contentious slogans
• is considered to be demeaning, discriminatory and/or culturally sensitive to protected/vulnerable groups.

8. Personal living space

Children must not be invited/permission to enter staff accommodation, your own home or that of a family member, colleague or friend under any circumstances.

You must:
• be vigilant in maintaining your privacy
• avoid placing yourself in vulnerable situations
• challenge any request for your accommodation to be used as an additional resource for work with children.

You must not:
• invite/permit children to undertake personal chores or tasks in:
  ▪ staff accommodation
  ▪ your own home or
  ▪ the home of a family member, colleague or friend.

9. Gifts, rewards and favouritism

Giving gifts and rewards to children is part of an agreed policy to:
• support and promote positive behaviour
• recognise particular achievements and
• celebrate special occasions, such as birthdays, Christmas etc.

Gifts and rewards are given to individuals and groups of children, as appropriate.

You must:
• ensure that all gifts received or given are reported and recorded, as appropriate
• exercise care when selecting children for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness
• wherever practicable, ensure that all selection processes are undertaken and agreed by more than one member of staff.

You must not:
• give rewards or gifts on the basis of favouritism
• accept gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value
• offer or accept any gift that might be construed as a gesture to bribe or groom a child; or lead the
giver to expect preferential treatment.

10. Infatuations

Occasionally, a child may develop an infatuation with an adult who works with them. These
situations must be managed sensitively and appropriately, in a manner that maintains the dignity
and safety of all concerned.

Such infatuations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted, so you must ensure that
your own behaviour is above reproach.

You must:
• report and record any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a child may have
developed an infatuation with an adult, in all and every circumstance.

11. Communication with children

Communication between children and staff, by whatever method, must take place within clear and
explicit professional boundaries.

You must:
• ensure all communications with children are transparent and open to scrutiny
• only make contact with children for professional reasons.

You must not:
• share your personal contact details with children including home or mobile telephone number,
  personal email address, social networking details etc.
• communicate with children by text or internet-based websites, social networking sites, blogs,
  bulletin boards, chatrooms and forums.

12. Social contact

Staff must not seek to have social contact with children or their families, without explicit permission
from the Registered Manager.

Where social contact is an integral part of work duties, you must maintain appropriate personal and
professional boundaries. The same applies to social contacts made through interests outside of work
or through family or personal networks.

If a child or parent/carer seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, you must
exercise professional judgement in your response and discuss the situation with your line manager
or supervisor.

While staff may support a parent/carer in particular difficulty, care must be exercised if the
parent/carer comes to depend upon the member of staff for support outside their professional role.
This situation must be discussed with senior staff and referrals made to the appropriate support
agency, where necessary.

You must:
• report and record any social contact with children or their families which may give rise to concern
• report and record any situation, which may place a child at risk or which may compromise the organisation or your own professional standing
• report personal communications e.g. birthday or faith cards, letters, postcards etc.
• be aware that social contact in certain situations can be misconstrued as grooming.

**You must not:**
• have secret social contact with children or their families.

13. **Sexual contact**

**You must:**
• ensure that your interactions with children clearly take place within the boundaries of a respectful professional relationship
• ensure that your attitudes, demeanour, conduct and language do not give rise to comment or speculation.

**You must not:**
• have any form of sexual relationships or interaction with children
• have any form of communication with a child which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts, physical contact that could be perceived as intimate
• make sexual remarks to, or about, a child
• discuss your own sexual relationships or experience with, or in the presence of, children.

14. **Physical contact**

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate for staff to have physical contact with a child in their care. However, not all children feel comfortable about physical contact, and you must not make the assumption that it is acceptable to use touch as a means of communication. Permission must be sought from a child before any physical contact is made.

When physical contact is made with a child this must be:
• conducted in a safe and open environment i.e. one easily observed by others
• in response to their needs at the time
• of limited duration and
• appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child.

You must use your professional judgement at all times, observe and take note of the child’s reaction or feelings and so far as is possible - use a level of contact and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.

Physical contact must never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of trust or authority.

Occasionally, a child may initiate inappropriate physical contact. These situations must be managed.
sensitively and appropriately, in a manner that:
• deters the child and avoids exploitation
• helps them understand the importance of personal boundaries and
• maintains the dignity and safety of all concerned.

When a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to some actions being misinterpreted.

You must:
• only touch children in ways that are appropriate to your professional role
• treat children with dignity and respect and avoid contact with intimate parts of the body
• always explain to a child the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take
• consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a child might misinterpret contact
• report and record any inappropriate contact initiated by a child
• report and record any contact that may give rise to misinterpretation or concern
• be aware that physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described
• be aware of gender, cultural or religious issues that may need to be considered prior to initiating physical contact.

You must not:
• touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent or intimate
• engage in any type of play-fighting or tickling with children at any time.

15. Children in distress

There will be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance and this may involve physical contact. Young children, in particular, may need immediate physical comfort, for example, after a fall, separation from a parent/carer etc.

You must use your professional judgement in comforting or reassuring a child in an age-appropriate way, whilst maintaining clear professional boundaries.

If you have a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance, or you are concerned that an action may be misinterpreted, you must discuss the matter with your supervisor or line manager.

You must:
• be cautious in offering physical reassurance in one to one situations
• record and report situations which may give rise to concern from either party.

You must not:
• assume that all children seek or want physical comfort, if they are distressed.

16. Intimate care

The nature, circumstances and context of intimate care must be part of a formally agreed plan, which is regularly reviewed. The additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical or learning disability must be taken into account and be recorded as part of an agreed care plan. The emotional
responses of any child to intimate care must be carefully and sensitively observed, and where necessary, any concerns passed to senior staff and parents/carers.

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of a physical or intimate nature is required and depending on their abilities, age and maturity should be encouraged to act as independently as possible.

The views of the child must be actively sought when drawing up and reviewing formal arrangements. Agreements between the child, parents/carers and the organisation must be negotiated and recorded.

**You must:**
- be suitably trained before administering intimate care
- make other staff aware of any intimate care task being undertaken
- explain to the child what is happening
- consult with senior staff and parents/carers where any variation from an agreed procedure/care plan is necessary
- record the justification for any variations to the agreed procedure/care plan and share this information with senior staff, parents/carers etc.
- ensure that any changes to the agreed care plan are discussed, agreed and recorded.

17. **Personal care**

Children are entitled to respect and privacy at all times and especially when in a state of undress, changing clothes, bathing or undertaking any form of personal care. There are occasions where there will be a need for an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard children and/or satisfy health and safety considerations. This supervision must be appropriate to the needs and age of the children concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

**You must:**
- avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress
- avoid any visually intrusive behaviour
- announce your intention to enter any form of toilet or changing room
- encourage children to undertake self-care tasks independently, wherever possible.

**You must not:**
- get dressed or changed in the same place as children
- shower or bathe with children
- assist with any personal care task which a child can undertake by themselves.

18. **One to one situations**

One to one situations have the potential to make a child more vulnerable to harm by those who seek to exploit their position of trust. Staff working in one to one situations may also be more vulnerable to unjust or unfounded allegations being made against them.

It is not realistic to state that one to one situations should never take place. However, there are occasions where you will need to undertake a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of one to one work.
You must:
- ensure that when lone working is an integral part of your role, full and appropriate risk assessments have been conducted and agreed by any other professionals involved with the child
- inform other colleagues about one to one situations beforehand (where possible), assessing the need to have them present or close by
- always report and record any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry
- carefully consider the needs and circumstances of the child/children when in one to one situations.

You must not:
- use 'engaged' or equivalent signs to deter entry when lone working - this may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy
- meet with a child in remote or secluded areas
- meet with children outside agreed working hours/arrangements without the expression permission of the Registered Manager.

19. Home visits

A comprehensive risk assessment must be conducted prior to all home visits and include an evaluation of any factors regarding the child, parents/carers and others living in the household. Risk factors such as hostility, child protection concerns, complaints or grievances can make you more vulnerable to an allegation. Specific consideration must be given to visits outside of office hours or in remote or secluded locations. Where little or no information is available, visits must not be made alone.

You must:
- agree the purpose for any home visit with the Registered Manager, unless this is an acknowledged and integral part of your role
- ensure homes visits are made by appointment only, wherever possible
- carry some evidence of identity e.g. ID card
- adhere to agreed risk assessment and management strategies
- make detailed records of home visits including arrival/departure times and work undertaken
- ensure any behaviour or situation which gives rise to concern is discussed with your supervisor or line manager and, where appropriate action is taken.

You must not:
- enter private residences if there is any form of resistance to the visit
- visit a child in their own home outside agreed work arrangements.

20. Access to inappropriate images and internet usage

You must:
- take all practicable steps to ensure that children are not exposed to unsuitable material while under your care or supervision
- report and record the discovery of any indecent images or unsuitable material
- not attempt to investigate the matter, continue to view the image(s) or evaluate the material yourself (as this may lead to evidence being contaminated)

You must not:
- access, possess, store or distribute indecent images of children
• use company equipment to access adult pornography; or bring personal equipment, containing these images or links, on to company premises.

21. Implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review

The designated senior member of staff with overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Safe Working (Caring) Practice Policy is the Registered Manager.

The designated member of staff is also responsible for ensuring that all children, staff, parents/carers and placing local authorities are aware of our policy and know what to do if they believe that a child is being abused. Additional support would also be provided to any parent or significant person, wishing to know more about the policy and procedures outlined above. A copy of this policy document is available for inspection on the premises during office hours and an electronic copy is posted on our website https://kedlestowngroup.com.

This policy document will be reviewed and publicised in writing, at least annually and, if necessary, more frequently in response to any significant incidents or new developments in national, local and organisational policy, guidance and practice.

The proprietor, Kedleston Group Ltd, is represented by a board of executive and non-executive directors who include the Chief Executive Officer, Finance Director and Chief Operations Officer. The Board has direct responsibility for all aspects of operations in all Kedleston settings including health, safety and child protection. The Board is supported by a Management Team which comprises of the following:

• Chief Executive Officer
• Finance Director
• Chief Operations Officer
• Group Head of Day Schools
• Group Head of Human Resources
• Group Head of Safeguarding and Governance Lead
• Group Head of Social Care
• Group Head of Strategic Partnerships
• Group Health, Safety and Estates Manager
• Group Marketing and Communications Manager
• Group Quality Assurance Manager (Education)

The proprietor, Kedleston Group Ltd, will also undertake an annual review of the home's policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, and ensure that all duties have been discharged in accordance with current legislation, regulations and statutory guidance; as well as local authority procedures and practice including the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board(s).

The proprietor stringently holds senior leaders to account for all aspects of the children’s home's performance through robust systems of governance, reporting and monitoring.

22. Acknowledgement of sources

This document contains extracts from DCSF Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Young people January 2009.