



## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

The protection, care and welfare of all children and young people attending Impetus events are our main concerns. We are committed to working with all parents, carers, staff and volunteers to ensure that every child and young person receives the best care and protection, and is free from any suffering and harm. Impetus is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children and young people who it has direct or indirect contact with. Impetus staff and volunteers must, at all times, show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of all children and young people, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles, ethos and values of the organisation.

This Statement sets out a policy which requires the organisation, and all adults involved in Impetus, to accept the duty to safeguard the welfare of children and young people, to prevent physical, sexual and emotional abuses and neglect of all children with whom they come into contact.

### **1 What Members and staff can expect.**

- 1.1** We will protect children, young people, support workers and adults through the following measures:
- 1.2** We will not tolerate any form of physical violence or abuse, whether committed by adults or young people.
- 1.3** We will not tolerate verbal insults or destructive criticism, including racist, sexist and homophobic comments. We encourage respect for the background, appearance, personality, abilities, opinions and preferences of others.
- 1.4** We will not tolerate inappropriate touching by adults and support workers. They should ensure that touching and physical contact is not exploitative or open to misunderstanding.
- 1.5** Adults and support workers will accept responsibility to exercise due care in all activities, so that young people are not exposed to risk from adult negligence or incompetence.
- 1.6** All workers and volunteers over 18 are required to complete a police disclosure form with the Criminal Record Bureau to discover whether they hold criminal convictions which involve abuse of children.

**1.7** At least two adults or an adult with a support worker on every activity should supervise any group of children or young people. In exceptional circumstances where a worker may be alone with a child for a short period, then other adults should be aware and support this action.

**1.8** Confidential data that is collected on children, including addresses medical condition, criminal convictions etc. should be treated in confidence and with respect and should be shared between adults and support workers only on a need to know basis.

**1.9** Impetus requires that all adults and support workers involved with young people should create a safe and open environment where social relationships can be confidently discussed and in which all members of the organisation can grow.

**1.10** New artists, volunteers and support workers must sign the child protection agreement.

## **2 We will also protect adults and support workers from misunderstandings and false accusation of abuse. We are committed to procedures and policies which will promote the good reputation of Impetus.**

### **2.1 Staff or volunteers representing Impetus can help protect themselves from false accusations by not:**

- Spending time alone with young people away from others;
- Contacting young people outside the activity or the project in which they meet them.

### **2.2 Staff and volunteers should never:**

- Engage in rough, physical, or sexually provocative games;
- Allow, or engage in, inappropriate touching of any form;
- Allow young people or other staff and volunteers to use inappropriate language;
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even in fun;
- Show favouritism to any individuals;
- Rely on just their own or the organisation's good name to protect them.

### **2.3 Staff and volunteers should always:**

- Treat everyone with respect;
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy;
- Plan activities so that at least one other member of staff or volunteer is present;
- Recognise that special caution is required when dealing with topics of a sensitive nature to young people.

## **3 Suspecting abuse or dealing with disclosure**

**3.1** If a person is suspicious that someone is being abused they should immediately tell the person in charge of running that particular event or the Impetus coordinator, recording any facts which support the suspicions.

**3.2** If a young person discloses that they have been, or are being, abused by someone else, Impetus staff or volunteers must immediately explain to the person it is not possible to keep such information confidential and that information will need to be passed the duty Child Protection Officer (being drawn into confidentiality/secretcy can be dangerous and inappropriate.)

**3.3** When a child is at risk of significant harm there is a legal duty to notify the relevant authorities.

**3.4** If the person would like to make a full disclosure then it is important the member of staff or volunteer listens without interrupting, looking to alleviate any feelings of guilt or isolation and passing no judgement. A document recording the facts must be made as soon as possible.

**3.5** All information must be passed directly on to the duty Child Protection Officer on site who will respond in the best manner.

**3.6** If there is a disclosure by a child, young person or support worker this must be reported to the Impetus coordinator immediately. The coordinator will report it immediately to the Chair of the Management Committee so that a decision can be made on appropriate action to be taken.

### **Responding Appropriately to a Child 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.
- Tell the child that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
- Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace.

- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Reassure the child 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 the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.
- It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies, following a referral from the designated child protection person in the organisation.

#### **4 Report from a member of staff suspecting abuse or neglect of any child and procedures.**

**4.1** In this event s/he must make an immediate decision (within one hour) as to whether it is appropriate to inform the parents of the situation. If the parents are informed then they should be asked to meet with the duty Child Protection Officer to agree on any further action.

**4.2** If the duty Child Protection Officer considers it appropriate to involve the Social Services Department the parents shall be advised of that. The duty Child Protection Officer shall consult the Social Services Department in the presence of the parents to agree a common way forward.

**4.3** The duty Child Protection Officer shall make a written, detailed report of each case together with the written note from the member of staff raising the matter and any additional appropriate comments from any statutory or voluntary authorities.

**4.4** If the duty Child Protection Officer does not consider it appropriate to inform the parents (this may be the case where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is a serious injury which may have been caused non-accidentally), the Police and the relevant Social Services Department must be informed forthwith.

**4.5** All suspected abuse or neglect of any child must always be reported to the duty Child Protection Officer.

**4.6** A member of staff may become concerned of a suspected abuse or neglect of any child, or receive such information from a parent or third party. In this event s/he must immediately (and within one hour) inform the duty Child Protection Officer and make a written note of both the time and nature of the concern and also the time the duty Child Protection Officer was informed.

**4.7** A situation may arise where a member of staff is suspected of abusing, neglecting or mistreating a child. In this case, Impetus coordinator shall suspend that member of staff and bring a report to the Management Committee who will consider appropriate action based on the evidence presented to that committee.

**5.1** All staff and volunteers representing Impetus at any event will have had this policy explained to them at their induction and will have agreed to abide by it fully, and sign the policy to state they understand it.

**5.2** All staff authorised to work with children during Impetus events will be up-to-date with appropriate training enabling them to detect any concerns relating to child protection issues. This training is to enable staff to sense signs of abuse or neglect through sudden changes of behaviour, worrying marks, bruising or children talking about experiences that give cause for concern. This includes an awareness that child abusers may be other (older) children, strangers, other members of staff or parents

If the child who has disclosed abuse is not satisfied with the action taken they can take their concern to a local independent person. Adults should re-assure the young person that they are not to blame.

The duty Child Protection Officers are the designated people with the day-to-day responsibility relating to all child protection issues affecting any of the children attending projects and are the designated link persons for liaison with the Police and the Social Services Department.

**Date approved by Board: 29 March 2011**

**Next Review Date: March 2012**

This policy is the Cultures Club Child Protection Policy as adopted by Impetus.

**I have read Impetus Child Protection Policy. I understand and agree to support the policy and inform the coordinator if I have any concerns.**

Signature .....

Please print your name .....

Date .....