



# Ashton United in the Community

## Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures

### Policy Statement

Every child or young person who joins or visits Ashton United in the Community should be able to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from abuse. This is the responsibility of every adult involved with Ashton United in the Community.

Ashton United in the Community recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect and bullying. It is determined to meet its obligation to ensure that in providing recreational, education and many other sessions it does so to the highest possible standard of care. These procedures apply to anyone in Ashton United in the Community.

A member of staff or volunteer, in whatever capacity, may have regular contact with children or young people and can be a very important link in identifying cases where a child needs protection.

Ashton United in the Community recognises that it has a responsibility to:

- Safeguard and promote the interests and well being of children with whom it is working.
- Take all reasonable practical steps to protect them from harm, discrimination, or degrading treatment.
- Respects their rights, wishes and feelings.

### DBS Policy

All staff and volunteers are subject to enhanced DBS checks and are also asked for references. These will be carried out as soon as possible but must be carried out prior to lone working with children and young people..

### Child Protection procedures can:

- Offer safeguards to the children with whom Ashton United in the Community works and to the staff and volunteers within the organisation.
- Help to maintain the standards of practice, which are associated with Ashton United in the Community.

Ashton United in the Community recognises that any procedure is only as effective as the ability and skill of those who operate it.

Ashton United in the Community is committed to sound recruitment, the provision of support, appropriate training and adequate supervision of all concerned so that together with parents/carers and other organisations it can ensure that the needs and welfare of children remains paramount.



# Ashton United in the Community



## Principles

The child's safety and welfare is paramount.

All children whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse and neglect.

All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously; and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Anyone under the age of 18 years should be considered as a child for the purposes of this document.

Working in partnership with children and their parents/carers is essential for the protection of children. Ashton United in the Community recognises the statutory responsibility of Children's Services to ensure the welfare of children and is committed to working together with the local Children's Services and Social Care and to comply with its procedures.

## What is Child abuse?

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults and sometimes by their peers. Often these are people they know and trust. It refers to the damage done to a child's physical, emotional or mental health. Children can be abused within or outside their family, at school, during sporting or recreational activities. Abusive situations arise when adults or peers misuse their power over children.

## The four main forms of abuse

**Physical Abuse** includes situations where adults;

- Physically hurt or injure children, e.g. by hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or burning.
- Give children alcohol, cigarettes, inappropriate drugs or poison.
- Attempt to suffocate or drown children.

**Sexual Abuse** includes situations in which adults/peers use children of both sexes to meet their own sexual needs through;

- Full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, fondling or anal intercourse
- Showing them pornographic books, photos or videos or taking pictures of them for pornographic purposes.

**Emotional Abuse** includes situations in which;

- There is a persistent lack of love, affection or attention shown to the child
- Children are overprotected preventing them from socialising
- Children are frequently shouted at or taunted

**Neglect** includes situations in which;



# Ashton United in the Community



- A child's basic physical needs, i.e. food and warm clothing, are not met
- Children are consistently left alone and unsupervised

## **Recognition of Abuse**

It must be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place. All children will suffer cuts, bruising and grazes from time to time, and their behaviour may sometimes give cause for concern. There may well be reasons for these factors other than abuse. If, however you are concerned about the welfare of a child **YOU MUST ACT!** Don't assume that somebody else will.

**Indications** that a child may be being abused include;

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising cuts or burns, particularly if situated on parts of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- Any injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- The child describing what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her
- Someone else, a child or adult, expressing concern about the welfare of another child.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour - e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn, or sudden outbursts of temper.
- Sexual awareness inappropriate for age.
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour in games.
- Mistrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would be expected.
- Difficulty in making friends.
- Prevention from socialising with other children.
- Variations in eating patterns.
- Loss of weight for no reason.
- Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.

It is not the responsibility of those working at Ashton United in the Community to decide that child abuse is occurring, but it is their responsibility to **act on any concerns.**

This list is by no means exhaustive and complete as to the indications of abuse.

## **Procedures**

The following action should be taken by anyone who has concerns about the welfare of a child;

- If there has been a disclosure of abuse
- If there are suspicions or concerns of abuse

### **These actions should be taken if;**

- The setting is within Ashton United in the Community.
- The setting is within the home or other settings.

**Non-action is not an option to take in Child Protection.**



# Ashton United in the Community



## **Actions if there has been a disclosure**

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child.
- Tell the child that they were right to tell and that they are not to blame.
- Take what the child says seriously.
- Ensure the safety of the child.
- Keep questions to the minimum necessary to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- Re-assure the child but do not make promises of confidentiality or outcomes, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
- Parents or carers should be contacted to help clarify initial concerns, except in circumstances where the child might be placed at greater risk or sexual abuse is disclosed. If in doubt consult with Children's Disability Services or the NSPCC Freephone Helpline: 0808 800 5000 or the designated Child Protection Person within Ashton United in the Community.
- Make a full record of what has been said, heard and or seen as soon as possible.
- Inform the person in charge, unless the allegations are about him or her, in this case you must contact a Director.
- Remember that it can be difficult for some children to disclose abuse.
- Disabled children will have to overcome additional barriers before feeling that they can disclose abuse. They may rely on the abuser for their daily care and not know of alternative sources of care or residence. The abuse may be the only attention or affection they have experienced. There may be communication difficulties and they will almost certainly have to overcome prejudices that block our willingness to believe that they may be abused and to use their medical condition to explain away indicators which in an able bodied child would cause concern to us.
- These groups of people need us to be vigilant and to give extra thought as to how we will respond, if necessary.

**Ashton United in the Community will support anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.**

## **Recording of information, suspicions or concerns**

Information passed to Children's Services or the Police must be as helpful as possible and may be used in any subsequent legal action. Therefore it must be as detailed as possible. The report should contain the following information

- The child's name address and date of birth.
- The name/s of the child's parent/carer.
- Details of the concern and any relevant observation and any other history
- A description of any visible injuries.
- Your knowledge of and relationship to the child i.e. if you are a volunteer or employee and whether the child has any special disabilities or needs.



# Ashton United in the Community



Whenever possible, referrals to Children's Services should be made as soon as a disclosure / observations is made and confirmed in writing within 24 hours. Keep a record of the name and designation of the member of Children's Services or Police Officer to whom concerns were passed and record the time and date of the call, in case of follow up. Keep in a secure place. All referrals must be notified to the Board of Directors including any outcomes that may emanate from any investigation.

## **Allegations of Abuse against Members of Staff and Volunteers**

(This includes anyone working with children in a paid or voluntary capacity)

Child abuse can and does occur outside the family setting. Although it is a sensitive and difficult issue, child abuse has occurred within a public setting and is rarely a one-off event. It is crucial that Ashton United in the Community members of staff, volunteers and those associated with the organisation are aware of this possibility and that all allegations are treated seriously and the appropriate action is taken. When the person in charge is informed of the situation but is unsure whether the situation is of abuse then a consultation should take place with Children's Services or the NSPCC and the recommendations made should be followed through. It is vital that any concerns for the welfare of the child arising from abuse or harassment by a member of staff or volunteer should be reported immediately.

If it is found that after a Social Service or Police investigation that the allegation is about poor practice then the person in charge has to deal with it. If the allegation is about the person in charge or where the matter has been handled inadequately then a referral has to be made to a Member of the Board of Directors. *Certain allegations against staff or volunteers may need internal investigation prior to any action being taken against them.*

## **Promoting Good Practice to reduce the likelihood of abuse by members of staff.**

All children have a right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. False allegations of abuse are rare, but certain basic guidelines will help safeguard both children, staff, volunteers and the organisation concerned. These are listed below.

## **GOOD PRACTICE IN THE CARE OF CHILDREN**

You can reduce situations for the abuse of children and help to protect staff and volunteers by "Promoting good practice". The following are more specific examples of care, which should be taken when working with children and young people.

- Always be publicly open when working with children
- Avoid situations where an adult and individuals are completely unobserved
- Where any form of physical support is required this should be provided openly.
- Where classes have to be supervised in rooms always ensure that staff/volunteers work in pairs.
- Encourage an open environment e.g. no secrets.
- Where mixed groups are away from home, a male and female member of staff should always accompany them.



# Ashton United in the Community



**Everyone should be aware that it does not make sense, as a general rule to:**

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Take children alone in a car, on journeys, however short.
- Take children to your home where they will be alone with you.

Where cases arise where it is unavoidable that these things do happen, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of the organisation, or the child's parents or carers.

## **Never ever:**

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a room with a child.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching in any form.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child even in fun.
- Let allegations a child makes go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves.
- Have children stay at your home with you unsupervised.

It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or have a disability. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and prior consent of parents or carers and the children involved. There is a need to be responsive to a child's reactions - if a child is fully dependent upon you, talk to him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact or lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities.

If you accidentally hurt a child, he or she seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague and make a brief written note of it. Parents and carers should be informed of the incident.

## Contact:

AUITC Safeguarding Lead is: Jill Tichborne

Telephone: 07484243710

Email: [jill@ee-enterprise.org.uk](mailto:jill@ee-enterprise.org.uk)