

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Statement of Purpose

This Safeguarding Children Policy underpins the fact that Berecroft Residents Association is determined to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect the children and young people who take part in the community bus sessions, from harm. This policy, establishes the responsibilities of Rainbow Services, and clarifies what is expected from everybody involved within the individual projects of Berecroft Residents Association and the wider organisation. It clearly highlights the importance placed by Berecroft Residents Association in the protection of the children and young people who use any of our services.

Every child and young person who participates in the activities of Berecroft Residents Association should be able to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm and abuse. This is the responsibility of every adult in the association. Berecroft Residents Association recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

This policy is written in line with Essex Safeguarding Children's Board (ESCB) Child Protection Procedures and conforms to the SET (Southend, Essex & Thurrock) procedures for safeguarding children. It also take form Rainbow Services and adapted for the Berecroft Residents Association.

Berecroft Residents Association will ensure that:-

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All members (paid/unpaid) working within Berecroft Residents Association have a responsibility to report concerns to Zulqar Cheema (Chair Berecroft Residents Association) who is the named safeguarding lead for the organisation.

Key Principles

Berecroft Residents Association will take responsibility for:-

- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children and young people
- Recruiting, training, screening and supervising all volunteers to adopt best practise to safeguard and protect children and young people from abuse
- Inducting, all volunteers to adopt and abide by the appropriate codes of conduct and the Child Protection Policies and Procedures outlined within this document
- Document all member's who have read the policy on a separate sheet with signature
- Responding to any allegations appropriately
- Regularly review the policy

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

Promoting Good Practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, is a highly emotive situation which can change individuals and affect organisations but we will not allow emotional conflict to interfere with our judgement about any appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including home, school and the supporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. There are a number of people in this organisation who will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. Any suspicious cases or poor practice should be reported to Zulqar Cheema (Chair Berecroft Residents Association) who is the named safeguarding lead for the organisation) and the guidelines in this policy should be followed.

Good Practice means:-

- Always working in an open environment, where possible, avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication
- Treating all young people with respect and dignity and with equal concern
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with service users (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children to share in decision making
- Keeping up to date with training, qualifications and insurance
- Make sure any new members have read this policy and signed a form to confirm it
- Involving children/young people/carers wherever possible
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not using any foul language, smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people
- If and where appropriate securing parental consent (in writing) to act in loco parentis, if the need ever arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given
- Requesting written parental consent if Berecroft Residents Association members are required to transport young people in vehicles for whatever reason (members must have a valid driving licence and adequate insurance).
- Requesting written parental consent for Berecroft Residents Association to take part in activities the taking off photographs, video footage of children engaging in Berecroft Residents Association projects/activities for the purpose of publicity material. This can also be done as a one off request fro all activities when children attend activities.

Named person for child protection

If you are concerned about a child, the named contact for Berecroft Residents Association is Zulqar Cheema or a member of the committee if unavailable.

What should you do if a young person reports abuse to you:-

If someone discloses that they are being abused, whether in the home or another setting, you should:-

- React calmly
- Reassure the child that they were right to tell you, and they are not to blame
- Take what the child says seriously
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. Don't ask about explicit details
- Reassure but do not promise confidentiality, which might not be feasible in the light of any subsequent developments
- Inform the child/young person what you will do next
- Make a full and written record of what has been said/heard as soon as possible and don't delay in passing on the information to Zulqar Cheema or a member of the committee if unavailable
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The report will include the following:-

- The child's name, age and date of birth
- The child's home address and telephone number
- 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 and special factors, plus any other relevant information
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- Details of witnesses to the incidents
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any of their bruising or other injuries occurred
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
- Where possible a referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded

If there are concerns about sharing the above information with a colleague you can contact Essex Social Services, the Police, or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000.

What Berecroft Residents Association will do next:

It is not the responsibility of Berecroft Residents Association to decide whether abuse has taken place or not, however we will pass on the information to the appropriate authority.

We will write down all of the information so that if we are asked at a later time we can produce a written report.

We will report severe and obvious cases of abuse immediately.

Services for Children and Young People and Children's Social Care, have a statutory duty under The Children Act of 1989 to ensure the welfare of a child. When a child protection

referral is made, they have a legal responsibility to investigate and all agencies have a duty to co-operate with those investigations. This may involve talking to the child and their family, and gathering information from other people who know the child. Enquiries may be carried out jointly with the police. Any concern must not be taken lightly.

The protection of children is paramount and if we have any concerns about a child being abused or neglected we will contact:-

Essex Social Services,
Schools Children and Families Directorate
Childrens Community Social Work Team
Willowfield House
Tendring Road
Harlow, CM18 6SE

Telephone 0845 603 7634 or out of hours 0845 606 1212

Types of Abuse and Neglect

Signs/indicators of abuse and neglect are helpful if they are used with some caution. They are not necessarily evidence of abuse or neglect. However, if you are concerned about a child or young person they can help you think about why you have that concern.

Signs that may suggest physical abuse:

- Any bruising to a baby – pre-walking stage
- Multiple bruising to different parts of the body
- Bruising of different colours indicating repeated injuries
- Fingertip bruising to the chest, back, arms or legs
- Burns of any shape or size
- An injury for which there is no adequate explanation

Signs of possible sexual abuse:

- Something a child has told you
- Something that a child has told someone else
- A child who shows sexualised behaviour in their play or with other children
- A child who seems to have inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age
- A child who may be visiting or being looked after by a known or suspected sexual offender

Signs which may suggest emotional harm:

The following signs may be present in children whose parents are over-critical and emotionally distant, or who are unable to meet their child's emotional needs:-

- Children whose behaviour is excessive. For example, excessive bedwetting, over eating, rocking, head banging.
- Children who self harm. For example, they may cut or scratch themselves or overdose
- Children who attempt suicide
- Children who persistently run away from home
- Children who show high levels of anxiety, unhappiness or withdrawal
- Children who usually seek out or avoid affection

Signs which may suggest neglect:

- Squalid, unhygienic or dangerous home conditions

- Parents who fail to attend to their children's health or development needs
- Children who appear persistently undersized, or underweight
- Children who continually appear tired, or lacking in energy
- Children who suffer frequent injuries due to lack of supervision

Please note that these lists are possible indicators of abuse, any signs of abuse have to be considered in context.

Positive ways of protecting children

What do children need?

- To feel safe and secure
- Health and happiness
- Appropriate affection
- Lots of smiles
- Praise and encouragement
- To be able to talk to someone
- To be listened to
- New experiences
- Respect for their feelings
- Rewards and treats

What to do if you are worried

If you are unsure that a child may be suffering but are worried, please contact Essex Social Services on 0845 603 7634.

If you are concerned that a child has suffered harm, neglect or abuse, please contact the same number.

In an emergency outside normal office hours, please contact Essex Emergency Services on 0845 6061212 or the Police on 01279 641212.

References

Rainbow safe guarding policy,

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Berecroft Residents Association
www.berecroft.co.uk



