

**Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy and Procedures**

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**SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION**

The Bytes Project is committed to a delivery of service that promotes good practice and which protects children from harm.

Members and staff within the Bytes Project accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues that may cause children harm.

The Bytes Project will seek to protect the safety of children, young people, and vulnerable adults, and provide a safe environment by, employing people who are suitable for working with or have contact with children and young people, and by vetting the background of persons who are recommended for appointment to posts, which have substantial access to children. See **Section 8** for Recruitment and Selection guidelines on the employment of staff that have substantial access to children.

The Bytes Project will ensure that suitable and appropriate training is provided to all staff, including volunteers, to raise awareness of their role in recognising child abuse, including familiarity with the Bytes Project's Safeguarding policy.

**SECTION 2 - LEGAL BACKGROUND**

Obligations to safeguard children and young people and promote their welfare are contained in both international and domestic law. It is for each organisation and/or individual to be aware of the legislation and how it applies to them or can be used by them in their work to safeguard children and young people.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international human rights treaty setting out the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of the child. It provides the overarching framework to guide the development of local laws, policies, and services so that all children and young people are nurtured, protected, and empowered.

Each of the 41 Articles in the Convention detail a different type of right, all of which interact to form one integrated set of rights for children and young people. All Articles of the Convention are important and inter-relate to each other: those Articles with relevance for this policy include:

**Article 3 Best Interests of the Child** – The best interests of the child must be a primary consideration for all actions concerning children taken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies. This includes ensuring the child is given the protection and care necessary for their well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of others towards them. Organisations, services, and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children must conform to appropriately set standards.

**Article 4 Protection of rights** – Governments have a responsibility to take all available measures to make sure children’s rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled. This involves assessing their social services, legal, health and educational systems, as well as funding for these services. Governments must help families protect children’s rights and create an environment where they can grow and reach their potential.

**Article 12 Voice of the Child** – A child who is capable of forming his or her own views has the right to express those views freely in all matters which affect them, those views being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. This is particularly the case for any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting them. A child can either give their views directly, or have their views represented appropriately on their behalf.

**Article 19 Protection from all forms of violence** – Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and their right to be protected from harm and mistreatment is upheld.

**Article 20 Children deprived of family environment** – Children who cannot be looked after by their own family have a right to be looked after properly by people who respect their ethnic group, religion, culture, and language.

**Articles 34 and 36 Exploitation** – Governments should protect children from all forms of exploitation.

**Article 39 Rehabilitation of child victims** – Children who have been harmed should receive help to recover and reintegrate into society.

**The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (the Children Order)** is the principal statute governing the care, upbringing, and protection of children in Northern Ireland. It applies to all those who work with and care for children, whether parents, paid carers, or volunteers. The Children Order provides the legislative framework within which this policy operates. It covers the full range of safeguarding activity, including the promotion of a child’s welfare, assessment of a child’s needs, provision of support for children and families, protection of children, and powers to assume or secure parental responsibility for children when required. Each of these duties and powers is discussed more fully within this policy.

**The Human Rights Act (1998)** incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into UK legislation. State authorities must use their powers reasonably and proportionately to protect children and young people, and the ECHR holds them responsible for inhuman or degrading treatment inflicted within their jurisdiction. Professionals across all public authorities, including government departments, local councils, hospitals, schools and the police must respect the ECHR, as must private bodies in specific circumstances.

**The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007** as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 provides the legislative framework for the establishment of a Disclosure and Barring Service and requirements relating to individuals who work with children and vulnerable adults. This legislation defines ‘regulated activity’ with children and prevents persons on barred lists from engaging in regulated activity.

**The Children’s Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015** places a requirement on individuals and organisations providing children’s services to children to co-operate with each other to devise and implement cross cutting strategies. The Act is key to ensuring improved outcomes for children by supporting, enhancing, and encouraging co-operation so that services are integrated from the point of view of the child or young person.

**SECTION 3 – POLICY AIM**

The aim of the Bytes Project's policy on Safeguarding is two-fold, in that, it aims to demonstrate the Bytes Project's commitment to providing and maintaining a service that protects children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm, as well as protecting the organisation and our workers.

Embed a culture which recognises the child’s or young person’s fundamental right to be safe and promote their general welfare.

Establish clearly defined processes of reporting risk of harm toward children and young people which are well-understood and put in place.

Ensure responses to risks of harm are proportionate, timely, professional, legal, and ethical.

A further aim is to ensure that our staff and volunteers are carefully selected trained and supervised and are familiar with the Bytes Project's Safeguarding Policy.

To ensure that hirers of the Bytes Project's services are familiar with the Bytes Projects' Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. See **section 8.2** regarding Guidelines for hirers/volunteers of The Bytes Project Services.

Promote continuous learning and improvement by identifying and applying learning and assessing the effectiveness of its application.

**SECTION 4 - POLICY STATEMENT**

The Bytes Project confirms its commitment to making sure that children, young people, and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm while they are with staff and volunteers in this organisation. To this end we will endeavour to safeguard children, young people, and vulnerable adults by: -

* Adopting Safeguarding guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff. (See **10.1** for guidelines)
* Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice.
* Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involve parents, carers, and children appropriately.
* Providing effective management for staff through supervision, support, and training.
* Taking appropriate action to respond to safeguarding issues which occur on the Bytes Project's premises or involve its workforce. **(See section 14)**
* Appoint Designated Members of Staff to co-ordinate the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy.
* Safeguarding Designated Officer for the reporting of concerns is **Mark Clegg (N)** and **Michael Mulrine (NW)** in the absence of the Designated Officer then concerns should be raised with a deputy designated officer:
  + Nathan Lowry (North)
  + Aidan Quigley (North-West)

**SECTION 5 –** **PRINCIPLES**

The following principles are reflected in the Children Order and should underpin all strategies, policies, procedures, practice, and services relating to safeguarding children and young people.

* The child or young person’s welfare is paramount – The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration for the courts and in childcare practice. An appropriate balance should be struck between the child’s rights and parent’s rights. All efforts should be made to work co-operatively with parents, unless doing so is inconsistent with ensuring the child’s safety.
* The voice of the child or young person should be heard – Children and young people have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously, taking account of their age, and understanding. They should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions which may affect their lives and be provided with appropriate support to do so where that is required. Where feasible and appropriate, activity should be undertaken with the consent of the child or young person and, where possible, to achieve their preferred outcome.
* Parents are supported to exercise parental responsibility and families helped to stay together – Parents have responsibility for their children rather than rights over them. In some circumstances, parents will share parental responsibility with others such as other carers or the statutory authorities. Actions taken by organisations should, where it is in the best interests of the child, provide appropriate support to help families stay together as this is often the best way to improve the life chances of children and young people and provide them with the best outcomes for their future.
* Partnership – Safeguarding is a shared responsibility and the most effective way of ensuring that a child’s needs are met is through working in partnership. Sound decision-making depends on the fullest possible understanding of the child or young person’s circumstances and their needs. This involves effective information sharing, strong organisational governance and leadership, collaboration and understanding between families, agencies, individuals, and professionals.
* Prevention – The importance of preventing problems occurring or worsening through the introduction of timely supportive measures.
* Responses should be proportionate to the circumstances – Where a child’s needs can be met through the provision of support services, these should be provided. Both organisations and individual practitioners must respond proportionately to the needs of a child in accordance with their duties and the powers available to them.
* Protection – Children should be safe from harm and in circumstances where a parent or carer is not meeting their needs, they should be protected by the State.
* Evidence-based and informed decision making – Decisions and actions taken by organisations and agencies must be considered, well informed, and based on outcomes that are sensitive to, and take account of, the child or young person's specific circumstances, the risks to which they are exposed, and their assessed needs.

**SECTION 6 - DEFINITIONS**

This section provides definitions used within this policy document.

**Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and preventative activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection. Safeguarding refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm.

**Child in Need**

Article 17 imposes a general duty on HSCTs to provide a range of services for children in need within their area and states a child shall be considered to be ‘in need’ if:

* They are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services
* Their health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him of such services; or he is disabled.
* ‘Family’, in relation to such a child in need, includes any person who has parental responsibility for the child and any other person with whom he has been living.

In determining whether a child or young person is in need, consideration must be given to:

* What will happen to a child or young person’s development and health without services being provided
* The likely effect the services will have on the child or young person’s standard of health and development.

Article 18 of the Children Order requires HSCTs:

* To safeguard and promote the welfare of children within its area who are in need; and
* So far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of care appropriate to those children's needs. Fulfilling this duty is a key part of preventative safeguarding.

**The Concepts of Harm and Significant Harm**

The Children Order defines ‘harm’ as ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development. The Order states that ‘ill-treatment’ includes sexual abuse, forms of ill-treatment which are physical and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical; ‘health’ means physical and / or mental health; and ‘development’ means physical, intellectual, emotional, social, or behavioural development.

There is no absolute definition of ‘significant harm’, as this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Article 50 of the Children Order states that “where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health or development, his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child”.

Where a HSCT suspects that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, the HSCT has a duty under Article 66 of the Children Order to make enquiries, or cause enquiries to be made, to enable it to decide whether it should take any action to safeguard or promote the child’s welfare.

**Child in Need of Protection**

A child in need of protection is a child who is at risk of, or likely to suffer, significant harm which can be attributed to a person or persons or organisation, either by an act of commission or omission; or a child who has suffered or is suffering significant harm as defined in Article 50 of the Children Order.

**Types of Abuse**

Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol, and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse.

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and ongoing information sharing is key between professionals.

Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm. Harm can be caused by:

* Physical abuse
* Sexual abuse
* Emotional abuse
* Neglect
* Exploitation

**Physical Abuse** is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, or suffocating a child.

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child’s emotional development. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child the opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games, or mobile phones – by a child’s peers.

**Neglect** is the failure to provide for a child’s basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision, or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child’s health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse

**Bullying** although not defined as abuse within the Children (NI) Order 1995, a child or young person who is bullied may be suffering any type of abuse as defined. The UK Government defines bullying as behaviour that is repeated, intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally and often aimed at certain groups, e.g., because of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. See **Appendix 4** for further information on bullying and online bullying.

The definitions of abuse outlined above also apply to young people, also, to vulnerable adults where there has been a reduction in physical or mental capacity which has led to a reduced ability to protect themselves from assault, abuse neglect or bullying.

It is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or where it has already taken place. It is unlikely that staff will be experts and it should be stressed that in accordance with the Children (N.I.) Order 1995, the Health and Social Services have a statutory duty to ensure the welfare of a child.

**SECTION 7 – DESIGNATED OFFICERS**

The Bytes Project has appointed staff members as Safeguarding Designated Officers who have been trained in Safeguarding and are acutely committed to the principle of confidentiality. These are:

North Region:

* Mark Clegg
* Michelle McCann (Deputy DO)
* Nathan Lowry (Deputy DO

North-West Region:

* Michael Mulrine
* Aidan Quigly (Deputy DO)
  1. **DUTIES OF DESIGNATED OFFICER FOR CHILD PROTECTION**

It is the duty of the Designated Officer to:

1. Record a disclosure of abuse made by a child to a member of The Bytes Project's Staff. The alleged abuse could involve either an external person or The Bytes Project Staff or volunteers.
2. Record The Bytes Project Staff's suspicions of a child, young person or vulnerable adult being abused.

In 1 or 2 above, to seek advice from the relevant agencies and report, if appropriate. If the Disclosure/suspicions relate to The Bytes Project Staff or volunteers, to advise and liaise with the Project Director, if appropriate.

If a member of The Bytes Project staff has concerns about a colleague not fulfilling the Bytes Project’s Policy and Procedures on Child Protection, such concerns are to be taken to the relevant Line Manager in the first instance. When the matter is examined by the Line Manager, she/he may need to involve the Designated Officer, if it becomes apparent there is a Safeguarding issue.

Where the incident relates to a line manager not fulfilling The Bytes Project’s Policy and Procedures on Child Protection, such concerns are to be taken to the next relevant Line Manager in the first instance, or a Designated Officer.

It is the Designated Officers’ duty to:

* To record all action taken and advise the relevant Line Manager, other Designated Officers, and CEO, where appropriate.
* To ensure that if Designated Officers are not on site that:
  + Either a contactable phone number is always available; or
  + The Line Manager on duty is contactable
* To ensure all written records in relation to Safeguarding issues are securely and confidentiality filed.
* To establish contact with the Gateway Referral Team if:
  + Allegations of abuse against a child, young person or vulnerable adult have been made against a member of staff or,
  + A member of staff has been made aware of alleged abuse against a child, young person, or vulnerable adult by an external person
* To keep up to date with relevant Safeguarding legislation, good practice, and developments.
* To liaise on an ongoing basis with staff to ensure the ongoing implementation and review of The Bytes Project's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.
* To fulfil any other relevant duties, which may become apparent as the role of Designated Officer develops.

**SECTION 8 – RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYMENT OF STAFF AND PARTNER ORGANISATIONS WHO HAVE SUBSTANTIAL ACCESS TO CHILDREN.**

All job vacancies are advertised and all applicant’s complete application forms with references sought for successful applicants. Arrangements are in place for all new staff to have a pre-employment check carried out by Access NI, at the Department of Justice.

The recruitment of all posts in the Bytes Project is centralised at Head Office, which administers all recruitment exercises.

Applicants for posts with substantial access to children, young people, or vulnerable adults - whether permanent, temporary, full-time, or part-time, are required to have a Pre-employment check carried out which will be administrated by Head Office.

On completion of the interview’s pre-employment checks are requested after applicants have been recommended for appointment but before they are appointed to the post.

The Bytes Project Director and the Project Administrator are authorised to request and receive such information, and any results are returned to them. The information provided by the Police and Access NI is confidential.

The Project Director will decide with assistance, when necessary, from the Bytes Board of Trustees, as to the candidate's, suitability for working with children, taking into account only those offences which may be relevant to the post.

The Bytes Project has a legal duty to notify the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if they have withdrawn permission for a person to engage in regulated activity because the person has:

* Received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence.
* The harm test is satisfied

**SESSIONAL STAFF**

The Bytes Project ensures that any temporary staff covering posts with substantial access to children is required to carry out the necessary Access NI checks on the Bytes Project’s behalf to ensure the suitability of the Staff for working with children.

**VOLUNTEERS**

Where individuals volunteer to work in an unpaid capacity in The Bytes Project premises where there is substantial access to children or young people The Bytes Project is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate consent is obtained from the volunteers, and the necessary Police and Access NI checks are undertaken.

* 1. **EXTERNAL FACILITATORS, CONTRACTED ORGANISATIONS, AND DELIVERY PARTNERS**

The Bytes Project Safeguarding Policy does not apply to partner organisations as we expect all partners to have their own safeguarding policies and procedures which reflect the local context and legal framework.

We do however expect partners to be aware of our policy and to collaborate closely with it in all aspects of safeguarding while working in partnership with us.

In addition, all external facilitators, contracted organisations, and delivery partners will be asked to provide The Bytes Project with copies of their latest Safeguarding Policies.

Organisations and individuals must work both in partnership to ensure children and young people are safeguarded as effectively as possible

* 1. **GUIDANCE NOTES FOR HIRERS/VOLUNTEERS OF THE BYTES PROJECT SERVICES AND PROPERTY**

The Bytes Project wants to ensure that children, young people, and vulnerable adults are protected from harm while on site in any of its properties. In addition to its responsibilities The Bytes Project asks that Hirers/Volunteers exercise their own responsibilities and abide by the Bytes Project's Safeguarding policy.

All Hirers/Volunteers shall:

* Make sure they have adequate staff supervision using the ratios as laid down by the Education Authority.
* Ensure that they always supervise the children/young people.
* Refrain from either verbally or physically abusing a child/young person ensure adequate insurance cover for the group and leaders.
* Inform their group of behavioural expectations while using the Bytes Project's facilities.
* Adhere to the Bytes Project's Safeguarding policy.

The Bytes Project wishes to remind all Hirers/Volunteers that the primary responsibility for the welfare of the children and young people always rests with them.

**Group behavioural expectations while using The Bytes Project facilities**

The Bytes Project always expects that its visitors/users of its services display courtesy and respect for others and The Bytes Project property.

Hirers/Volunteers should therefore not allow members of their group to:

* Make any sectarian, sexist, racist or other offensive remarks toward any person or other group.
* Vandalise The Bytes Project property.
* Leave litter in or around The Bytes Project property.
* Bad language.
* Smoke.
* Drink alcohol.
* Bully (verbally or physically).
* Use of threatening, abusive or violent behaviour.

If any of the above is not followed the Bytes Project reserves the right to refuse future requests to hire or use its facilities and/or ask the group to leave.

**SECTION 9 – SAFEGUARDING TRAINING**

All staff will receive awareness training in child protection, including familiarity with the Bytes Project's Safeguarding policy: this is to include all paid staff and volunteers.

Volunteer groups who use the premises are required to have a Safeguarding Policy within their organisation as a condition of use. Hirers who use the Bytes Project's facilities or provide a service on behalf of the Bytes Project will be asked if they have a Safeguarding Policy and if they provide training.

The Bytes Project will provide advice to these groups above that do not provide training in Safeguarding should they wish to avail themselves of this service. This would include familiarisation of The Bytes Project's Safeguarding Policy.

All staff, volunteers and board members are required to complete relevant Safeguarding training every 3 years.

Those working directly with children and young people must hold a valid certificate in a minimum of 6 hours Safeguarding Training.

* 1. **SAFEGUARDING TRAINING FOR STAFF & VOLUNTEERS**

The content of this course is based upon the "Keeping Safe" manual developed by the Volunteer Development Agency and Away from Home and Safe.

The training is provided through Youthnet, CiNI, Health & Social Care Trusts or City

Councils

The aim of the course is to increase the awareness and explore issues around the protection of children, staff, and The Bytes Project.

The content of the training course will be as follows:

**FULL LEVEL COURSE**

Who for: All Staff

Content:

* Awareness of Safeguarding issues:
  + What is abuse?
  + Who is the abuser?
  + Signs and Symptoms
  + Dealing with Disclosure
* Recruitment and Selection of Staff and Volunteers
* Supervision, Support and Training
* Code of Behaviour
  + Why a code of behaviour
  + Protecting children and workers
  + The use of a code of behaviour
* Awareness of residential issues
* Policy and procedures:
  + The Bytes Project's Policy
  + Reporting procedures
  + Development of a Policy
  + Dealing with concerns

**SECTION 10 – GENERAL SAFETY AND MANAGEMENT OF ACTIVITES**

Centre activities, events and residential:

The primary responsibility for the child, young person, or vulnerable adult rests with the parent/legal careers/Bytes’ staff.

A register should be kept of all those who attend on any given day:

* Name
* Address
* Emergency contact numbers

An accident report form should be in completed to record any untoward event or incident. See **appendix 5** for an Accident Report Form

Please refer to **section 10.2** regarding guidelines on taking photographs or other media.

* 1. **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR ON SAFEGUARDING FOR THE BYTES PROJECT STAFF**

The Bytes Project recognises that it is not practical to provide definitive instructions that would always apply to all situations whereby staff come into contact with children and to guarantee the protection of children and staff.

However, below are the standards of behaviour required of staff to fulfil their roles within The Bytes Project. This code should assist in the protection of both children and members of staff.

Staff must:

* Always implement the Safeguarding Policy and procedures.

Staff must never:

* Engage in rough, physical games including horseplay with children or young people.
* Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind.

The main principles of touch are:

* Touch should always be in response to the individual's need.
* Touch should always be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the individual.
* Touch should always be with an individual’s permission.

Physically restrain a child/young person unless the restraint is to:

* Prevent physical injury of the child/other children/visitors or staff/yourself
* Prevent damage to any property
* Prevent or stop the commission of a criminal offence

In all circumstances physical restraint must be appropriate and reasonable, otherwise your action can be defined as assault. Staff must never:

* Make sexually suggestive comments to or within earshot of a child, young person, or vulnerable adult.
* Make sexually suggestive comments about a child, young person, or vulnerable adult even if there are no children or vulnerable adults in sight or earshot.
* Do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves or that their parent/leader can do for them.

Staff do not, except in emergency situations:

* Have children/young people on their own in a vehicle. In the event of an extreme circumstance (e.g., medical emergency) parents must be notified and extreme caution taken. Parents should be notified of departure time and estimated time of arrival. A line manager or another member of staff will also be notified and the child/young person
* Should travel in the back seat. It is important that adequate business insurance is in place to cover the vehicle for transporting children or young people.
* Take a child or vulnerable adult to the toilet unless another adult is present or has been made aware (this may include a parent, group leader)
* Spend time alone with a child or vulnerable adult on his/her own. If you find you are in a situation where you are alone with a child or vulnerable adult, make sure that you can be clearly observed or seen by others.

**Implications for staff**

Staff who breach any of the above will be subject to the disciplinary procedure.

If an allegation against a member of staff has occurred, an investigation will be carried out in accordance with the procedure for dealing with allegations against a member of staff **section 14.2**.

A Designated Officer for Safeguarding is to clarify if she/he has any relevant records of any other safeguarding information in relation to the individual.

* 1. **GUIDELINES ON VIDEO AND PHOTOGRAPHY**

Since the introduction of the Data Protection Act in 1998, organisations must be very careful if they use photographs, videos, and webcams of clearly identifiable people. The following guidelines should be adhered to:

* Permission (verbal or written) should be obtained of all the people (children and adults) who will appear in a photograph, video, or webcam image before the photograph is taken or footage recorded.
* It should be made clear why that person’s image is being used, what use you will make of it, and who might want to look at the pictures.
* Children and young people should not be identified by name or other personal details. These details include email, phone, social media tags or postal addresses.
* When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures.
* Carefully consider location and pose.
* Do not insist that an individual participates.
* Establish the type of images that appropriately represent the organisation.
* Think about the level of consideration you give to the use of images of young people in publications, for example, the processes involved in choosing appropriate images for the Bytes Project website or publications.

**Rules to Remember**

* If the young person is named, avoid using their photograph.
* If a photograph is used, avoid naming the young person.
* Seek parental consent for under 18s for the use of all images for any medium before obtaining photograph.

**Guidelines for the Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment**

* Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour
* Issue the photographer with identification, which must be worn at all times.
* Inform young people and parents that photographer will attend an event and ensure they, or their parent if individual is under 18, consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs.
* Do not allow unsupervised access to young people or one to one photo sessions at events.
* Do not approve/allow photo sessions outside the events or at a young person’s home.
* If parents or other spectators are intending to photograph or video at an event, they should also be made aware of your expectations.
  1. **TECHNOLOGY, SOCIAL MEDIA**

In an increasingly complex world, the opportunities for child abuse are growing. Those who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults need to be aware of the opportunities for abuse through the misuse of the internet, text messaging, video, and other media. While good use of such media can be beneficial, we must be vigilant and alert to the possibilities of misuse and the consequent harm to young people that can result. An Acceptable Use of Bytes ICT facilities Policy is in place and should be adhered to. It is important that guidelines are followed to ensure that it is used for its correct purpose and that it is looked after properly.

**Using Computers**

Computers need to be secure with up-to-date virus checkers and appropriate filtering applied.

**The Internet and Social Media**

Whilst the development of the internet has revolutionised communication systems throughout the world and when appropriately used is an excellent resource, care in its application needs to be exercised so that the safety of a child, young person or vulnerable adult is not compromised.

As well as the prevalence of online grooming, children can often be the victims of cyber bullying. Bullying through the use of social media can be more intense and more difficult to escape than bullying children experience within the playground or school. Further information on issues pertaining to safeguarding and the internet can be accessed through:

CEOP (Child Exploitation Online Protection)

Website: www.ceop.police.uk.

Tel: 0870 000 3344

Staff must not be ‘friends’ to, or communicate with, students/clients on ‘Facebook’, ‘Twitter’ and other social network or similar websites from personal sites. Any social networking communication to students/clients must be done through an approved Byes site. This site will be subject to all Bytes polices and will be reviewed for content during regular and ad hoc audit checks.

It is worth noting that everything posted on the internet – comments, opinions and photos – can potentially be seen and copied by anyone else using the internet. Social networking sites have privacy settings for this reason and these limits what any other person, whom you have not accepted as a friend, can view.

Comments made on the internet should be considered the same as if they were made in a public place. If a child, young person, or vulnerable adult discloses something via a social networking site, a chat room, or any other public domain publishing method, then the disclosure must be dealt with by following the reporting process **(see section 14).**

If a staff member is concerned about something that a young person communicates to him or her via the internet, he or she should encourage them to talk to a suitable adult about it or arrange to meet with them (within the usual safeguarding parameters).

Obscenities/Pornography is not to be written, published, and searched for, bookmarked, accessed, or downloaded by anyone using a Bytes device.

The accessing of inappropriate and indecent materials from the internet or via e-mail may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Illegal downloading of material may contravene copyright law. Bytes has a legal responsibility to ensure that all material and software used must comply with licensing regulations

Instant Messaging Services, such as MSN/Yahoo/ICQ/Facebook Messenger are permitted for occasional use, and you are trusted to make reasonable personal use of them as long as this does not:

* Interfere with job performance
* Give rise to additional cost
* Interfere with the activities of other users
* Support any work other than that of Bytes
* Breach any rules relating to content

**Mobile Phones**

Staff need to be aware of the opportunities for abuse through the misuse of mobile phone and text messaging. While good use of such media can be beneficial, staff must be vigilant and alert to the possibilities of misuse and consequent harm that can result to young people.

Staff must also take care to protect themselves and should not have phone numbers for Bytes clients on their personal mobile phone.

Staff should not give out their personal phone numbers to Bytes clients.

**SECTION 11 – DATA PROTECTION**

Under the Data Protection Act (1998) registered organisations should be aware that they must be careful when handling personal data belonging to children and leaders e.g., names, phone numbers, addresses and medical information.

Personal Information of children, young people and vulnerable adults should be handled confidentially and kept secure.

Bytes must only hold data, which is adequate, relevant, and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which it is held.

Staff must ensure that client’s personal data is accurate and where necessary, kept up to date.

Staff must do what they can to prevent unauthorised or accidental access to personal data. Appropriate password systems should be in place in relation to data storage to increase security.

**SECTION 12 – GENERAL AND PARENTAL COMPLAINTS**

The Bytes Project is committed to taking general/parental complaints and concerns seriously, at the earliest stage, in the hope of keeping the number of formal complaints to a minimum and without needing formal procedures. However, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may wish or be asked to follow the organisations formal complaints procedure.

The Bytes Project promises that it will pursue actively any complaints received in connection with its services, staff conduct or organised activities. This procedure sets out what will be done to make sure this happens.

Employees and volunteers will take responsibility to own “problems” and deal with them through the complaint’s procedure. An important test of good service is that whoever the complainant happens to contact first must ensure that they are sympathetic and listen to the concerns with the aim of resolving the complaint at this first opportunity. Dealing with complaints is the responsibility of everyone. Staff will be trained, where appropriate, in appropriate skills and behaviours. This is to make sure the approach to complaints is consistent, of a high standard, and always addressed with a “client first” ethos.

**The aim is:**

* To enable all employees and volunteers to understand the importance of a speedy and effective response to a complaint.
* To ensure a consistent approach to all complaints.
* To help identify recurring problem areas so that improvements can be made.

**Responsibility**

The Head of Projects is responsible for the development and monitoring of this policy and making sure all employees/volunteers know and understand their responsibilities. He/she will also make sure that complaints are recorded, monitored, and satisfactorily resolved and reported.

**Definition**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with a service or the organisation or its employees or volunteers that needs a response.

**Procedures**

All complaints are logged and recorded by the employee or volunteer who receives the complaint.This will show the following:

* Date and time of complaint
* Name of staff member completing the record
* Short description of complaint #
* Action taken
* Outcomes

**Complaints can be received by:**

* Letter
* Email
* Telephone
* Face to face

The Youth Worker/Staff Member who logs the complaint is responsible for informing the Head of Projects this has happened and making sure the information is accurate and logged as soon as possible.

This recording is vital in making sure the parent/complainant is not repeatedly asked for information again, should the complaint be escalated.

Outcomes are recorded when the complaint has been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant.

The aim is to resolve all complaints as swiftly as possible. All complaints will be acknowledged via letter/email within 5 working days of receipt. Complainants will be advised in this communication of the complaint procedure and details of who they can speak to about it. This will be supplied at all stages.

There are three stages to the complaint procedure:

**Stage 1 - Resolve at the first point of contact – Youth Worker**

All attempts should be made to resolve the complaint immediately by the person who receives the complaint, at this first point of contact. It is envisaged that the majority of complaints will be resolved at this stage.

If the complainant decides they are not satisfied, or the member of staff is unable to resolve the issue, then the complaint moves to Stage Two.

**Stage 2 - Head of Projects**

It is envisaged that all complaints should be resolved and dealt with satisfactorily from the viewpoint of the complainant at this stage. The complaint will be reviewed by the Head of Projects who will investigate and respond to the complainant within 10 working days.

If the complainant is not satisfied, they have the right for their complaint to be dealt with by the CEO/Deputy CEO.

**Stage 3 - Escalated Complaint to CEO/Deputy CEO**

Complaints at this stage are considered to be very serious. The complaint is passed to the CEO/Deputy CEP to deal with. He/she will investigate the complaint and after gathering all evidence will give an appropriate written response to the complainant within 5 working days. If this is not possible the complainant will be kept updated regularly on progress whilst the complaint is being investigated.

It is the intention that all complaints will be resolved at this point.

**Complaints about the CEO/Deputy CEO**

If the general/parental complaint is about the CEO or Deputy CEO, complainants will be invited to complain to the other Trustees. In these instances, it is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to resolve the issue. A representative from the Board will send the Complainant/Parent a full written response within two days of its meeting.

**SECTION 13 – PREVENTATIVE PRACTICE**

Many children, young people are unable to recognise abusive or unsafe behaviour or identify who/what poses a threat to them, and they may not know how and where to seek help.

Preventative education can give children the knowledge and skills they need to keep themselves safe and it can also help to disclose safeguarding issues earlier.

The Bytes Project delivers preventative and early intervention work to support children, young people and vulnerable adults to take steps to safeguard themselves from harm or risk of harm.

Preventative work that The Bytes Project Delivers to Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults include, but are not limited to:

* Positive Relationships
* Mental and Emotional Well-being
* Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
* Cyber Bullying
* Keeping Safe Online
* Drugs and Alcohol Awareness
* Young People and Youth Justice
* Anti-Social Behaviour Awareness
* Physical and Mental Health Awareness
* Promoting Resilience in Children and Young People

Bytes Preventative Practice and Early Intervention Work is bespoke; designed and delivered to meet the needs of the target group. Parental consent is sought before Awareness Raising and Keeping Safe workshops are delivered, and background information on the participants to establish individual needs of everyone.

The Bytes Project delivery staff and/or external facilitators deliver a full brief prior to each session to make participants aware of the content and delivery materials, to avoid any triggers in young people who are victims of abuse, CSE, or addictions.

* 1. **INDICATORS AND EFFECTS OF ABUSE**

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. It is unlikely that staff will be experts and it should be stressed that in accordance with the Children (NI) Order

1995, the Health and Social Services have a statutory duty to ensure the welfare of a child.

The onus of The Bytes Project is to provide a safe environment by employing people who are suitable for working with or to have contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults, by having effective and clear procedures for reporting any suspicions through their own structures to the relevant Health and Social Services Board and by working with hirers who will be required to produce evidence of their own Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and also adhere to The Bytes Project’s Safeguarding Policy.

Indications that a child may be abused include:

* Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
* An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
* The child, young person or vulnerable adult describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her
* Someone else – a child or adult, expresses concern about the welfare of another child, young person, or vulnerable adult
* Unexplained changes in behaviour over time e.g., becoming very quiet, withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
* Inappropriate sexual awareness
* Engagement in sexually explicit behaviour in games or activities
* Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship will normally be expected
* Difficulty in making friends
* Prevented from socialising with other children
* Displays variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite
* Loss of weight for no apparent reason
* Increasingly dirty or unkempt appearance.

This list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is stressed, however, that it is not the responsibility of managers to prove that abuse is taking place but is their responsibility to act upon any concerns, by reporting these to the Designated Officer.

**13.2 EFFECTS OF ABUSE**

Abused children, young people and vulnerable adults can suffer changes in normal behaviour and can suffer long-term damage that may follow them into later life.

The main effects of abuse on children, young people or vulnerable adults are as follows:

* Potential increased risk of death.
* Pain and distress.
* Behavioural difficulties, like becoming angry and aggressive.
* School related problems.
* Developmental delay -physically, emotionally, and mentally.
* Low self-esteem.
* Depression, self -harm -sometimes leading to suicide.
* Difficulty in forming relationships as adults.
* Sometimes, if untreated, abusive relationships with others.
* Permanent or temporary injury.

Factors that might increase the likelihood of risk:

* Children, young people, or vulnerable adults who might have difficulty telling others.
* Disabled children or adults who might have difficulty communicating or accessing people to tell.
* Children or vulnerable adults who are already experiencing some form of discrimination (e.g., racial harassment) as they are more isolated from other adults/children.
* They may also perceive the abuse as a part of the ongoing discrimination.
* Poor relationship between a child, young person or vulnerable adult and parents/carers.
* High levels of stress.
* History of violence in the family.

**SECTION 14 – SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS, COMPLAINTS AND DISCLOSURES**

There are two elements under this section, those where allegations of child abuse have been made against staff or volunteers, and those where workers become aware of or suspect a case of child abuse.

* 1. **GUIDANCE ON DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE OR WHERE A MEMBER OF STAFF IS AWARE OF OR SUSPECTS A CASE OF CHILD ABUSE.**

Anyone who knows or suspects that a child has or is being harmed or is at risk of harm has a duty to record the suspected incident and convey this concern to his or her line manager or a Designated Officer within The Bytes Project.

Managers who have been informed of an alleged incident then have a duty to report the incidence directly to The Bytes Project's Designated Officer rather than to continue through line management as this would delay proceedings and lead to loss of confidentiality. For reasons of confidentiality, the level of information passed to the line manager will depend on his or her direct involvement in the workplace and will be at the discretion of the Designated Officer.

It is essential that suspicions be reported to the line manager or Designated Officer. The consequences of failing to report an allegation or suspicion could far outweigh the risk of being wrong and might even be fatal for the child concerned. It is essential that the welfare of the child must always be the priority.

There is a legal responsibility to report the allegation or suspicion as withholding evidence regarding a criminal action is an offence.

Concerns should be discussed in the first instance with the Designated Officer, either through the employee involved or via their line manager. The Health and Social Services should be contacted to discuss the suspected abuse with the parents as they have the expertise to deal with the situation.

The Designated Officer will advise regarding discussion of the suspected abuse with parents/carers. In situations where the parent/carer is potentially responsible for the abuse, the child, young person, or vulnerable adult might be placed at greater risk where such suspicions are discussed. In these cases, it may be better suited for the Health and Social Services to discuss the suspected abuse with the parents/carers as they will have the expertise required to deal with the situation.

Once a worker becomes aware or suspects a case of abuse s/he should ensure in so far as possible that the child, young person, or vulnerable adult is protected from the situation of danger. The worker has no power to intervene directly where the alleged abuser is the parent or carer of the child unless advised by the Designated Officer. In this latter case it is imperative that the next step is taken as quickly as possible.

The worker should discuss the case as early as possible with their line manager or a Designated Officer. In certain situations, where the line manager is the suspected to be the abuser, contact should be made directly with a Designated Officer. Sharing in this matter means that the worker has an opportunity to discuss and assess their concerns in a responsible way as well as sharing some of the load with someone outside the situation.

Once reported, the line manager should report the matter to a Designated Officer, who in turn will report the alleged incident to Social Services. The Designated Officer will have received relevant training and have guidelines as to reporting to the appropriate authorities.

Discussion should not take place with anyone else within the line management structure as this impedes investigation and affects the confidentiality of the situation. It is up to the discretion of the Designated Officer, as to who else is to be informed of the situation, including incidents where a member of staff may be the alleged abuser.

Staff should not initiate an investigation, including discussion of the potential abuse with other professionals (e.g., schools, health workers, community workers), as this is assuming the responsibility of the Social Services. By doing so s/he could complicate an already sensitive situation and perhaps contaminate evidence, which could have negative consequence for subsequent legal proceedings.

A flow chart relating to reporting procedures is included below.

Once a worker becomes aware of or suspects a case of abuse it is important that they make a record of observations, happenings and discussions that are relevant. This record should be factual and not include opinions or personal interpretations of the facts presented.

The record should be made within 24 hours of the suspicion arising, with each recording dated, signed, and stored in a secure place. Records are to be made on the relevant form as provided in **appendix 1**.

To assist members of staff on how to deal with a situation where a child, young person or vulnerable adult has made a disclosure of Child Abuse, we have provided some guidance below on the Do's and Don'ts on how to react.

**DO**

* Stay calm
* Recognise your own feelings
* Receive the information
* Reassure
* Listen
* Record immediately after the conversation
* Report to Designated Officer
* Get support for yourself

**DON’T**

* Promise confidentiality
* Probe for more information/investigate
* Panic
* Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily
* Use leading

**Remember: how you react may mean the child/young person/vulnerable adult telling or not telling his/her story. It may be the beginning of the healing journey for the individual.**

Where a member of staff or a volunteer observes possible signs of abuse, this should be reported to their line manager to observe and verify the signs and/or symptoms. Extreme discretion must be taken so as not alarm the individual concerned. Where an observation takes place, this should be recorded in a Disclosure of Abuse form **appendix 2** and filed confidentially.

Where a child, young person or vulnerable adult discloses possible abuse, it is unlikely to be appropriate to involve another staff member or the line manager in the conversation as the disclosure itself will likely already be a traumatic experience for the individual concerned. Notes of the discussion should be made after the conversation has taken place. If a member of staff has observed, this should be reported in a Disclosure of Abuse Form **appendix 2** to be submitted to the line manager and filed confidentially.

Decisions to refer to the Social Services will be taken by the Designated Officer, who will report the alleged incident directly.

Issues of Self Harm and Suicide are also a concern with children, young people, and vulnerable adults, **appendix 3** contains further guidance in this area.

All reports of a safeguarding nature in Northern Ireland are dealt with by either PSNI or by a local Gateway Team located within the Health & Social Care Trusts, who provide integrated health and social care services across Northern Ireland.

Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland website <https://online.hscni.net>

If you are concerned about a child or young person, who is not already known to Social Services, the first point of contact should be made to the Referral Gateway Team.

Referral Gateway will respond promptly by gathering information and will pass the referral to the local gateway team, should it be determined that a social work assessment is required.

**Referral Gateway Team**

Oriel House, 2-8 Castle Street, Antrim, BT41 4JE

Telephone: 0300 1234 333 or 028 9442 4459

Email - [SPOE.Referrals@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:SPOE.Referrals@northerntrust.hscni.net)

**Regional Emergency Social Work Service**

After 5pm weekdays, weekends, and public holidays

Telephone: 028 9504 9999

**Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI)**

Within the PSNI, it is the Child Abuse Investigation Units (CAIU) that deals with issues relating to children, young people, and vulnerable adults. They are part of the overarching Public Protection Unit; there is one CAIU in each of the 8 policing districts. They are made up of male and female detectives who work in plain clothes and are specially trained to investigate all alleged and suspected cases of child abuse.

Contact the non-emergency number on 101, or in the event of an emergency phone 999.

**OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS**

Stop It Now! – 0808 1000 900

NSPCC – 0808 800 5000

Parents Advice Centre – 0808 8010 722

Child line – 0800 1111

Child Exploitation Online Protection – 0870 000 3344

**Diagram

Description automatically generated**

* 1. **PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF**

Allegations of child abuse can potentially be made about any member of staff (especially those in contact with the public, children, young people, and vulnerable adults).

Abuse does occur outside the family setting and although a very sensitive and difficult issue, abuse has occurred within institutions and organisations that support children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.

It is critical that all relevant staff are aware of such issues and how to deal with any allegations appropriately. Allegations may come from another member of staff or a member of the public.

In all circumstances, an allegation should be reported to the relevant line manager. If however, the allegation involves the manger a report should be made to either the next level of line management or The Bytes Project's Designated Officer.

**DEALING WITH CONCERNS**

As a result of any allegation being received the matter will immediately be subject to a preliminary investigation.

Following the preliminary investigation consideration will be given to:

* Seeking legal advice as to whether the employee/s should be suspended from work while a full investigation is carried out.
* Whether or not there is a need to fully investigate concerns into the allegation/s.
* Whether or not social services and/or police should be informed.

Should there be no innocent explanation in respect any allegations, and these constitute possible acts of gross misconduct the employee/s will be suspended from work pending an enquiry.

The Bytes Project will seek advice from social services and/or police in respect of the allegation/s and whether to appoint independent investigating officers to complete a full, formal investigation. A report will be given to the Board of Trustees on completion of any investigations carried out and as to whether any allegation/s has been substantiated.

**DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

Based on the investigating report, and, in accordance with The Bytes Project's disciplinary procedure, disciplinary action may take place, which may include dismissal.

In addition to the Bytes Project’s disciplinary investigation the police may be informed of the concerns pertaining to the employee/s concerned immediately following the alleged incident being reported.

Should a police investigation, or a social services investigation take place the Bytes Project will seek information from these parties. Any information provided to the Bytes Project will be checked with the employee contract and advice will be sought from the Bytes Project Legal Advisors before any disciplinary action is taken against the employee.

Where staff are disciplined or dismissed because of inappropriate behaviour in regard to children or vulnerable adults, information will be passed onto the Department of Health and Social Services.

**Appendix 1**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Safeguarding Information Sheet** | |
| This document gives you information about where to find safeguarding information and resources | | | |
| **Name of service:** | **The Bytes Project** | | |
| **Sources of safeguarding information, advice, and referral at this service/this area:** | | | |
| Where to find Bytes’ Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy and Guidance | | |  |
| Where to find Bytes’ Whistleblowing Policy and Guidance | | |  |
| Where to find the Bytes’ Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and procedures | | |  |
| Where to find copies of the Safeguarding Concerns Form | | |  |
| Where to find copies of the Disclosure of Abuse form: | | |  |
| Designated Officer(s) & Contact Details | | |  |
| Deputy Designated Officer(s) & Contact Details | | |  |
| Centre/Project Manager: | | |  |
| Contact details for police: | | |  |
| Contact details for Referral Gateway Team: | | |  |
| Contact Details for Regional Emergency Social Work Service: | | |  |
| Nearest Accident and Emergency Dept: | | |  |
| Where to find next of kin or advocate contact details for people supported: | | |  |

**Appendix 2**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | | **Safeguarding Concern Form** | | | | | |
| *Use this form to record any safeguarding concern, however trivial. Forward it* ***immediately*** *to the Programme Manager or Designated Officer. Answer every question; continue on a blank sheet if necessary.* | | | | | | | | |
| **Details of person at risk** | | | | | | | | |
| Name of person |  | | | | | DOB: |  | |
| Group/Centre |  | | | | | | | |
| **About You (the person filling in this form)** | | | | | | | | |
| Your name |  | | | | | Job title |  | |
| Group/Centre |  | | | | | Date |  | |
| **About the safeguarding concern** | | | | | | | | |
| If this incident/concern has also been reported on an Incident/Accident Report, attach the Report | | | |  | | | | |
| Are you reporting your own concern, or one raised by someone else? | | | |  | | | | |
| If you are raising a concern made by someone else, please provide their full name, status and contact details | | | |  | | | | |
| Please provide details of the concern you have including dates, times, descriptions of events, full names and whether the information is first hand or the accounts of others  **Note: If you have already reported this information on an Incident/ Accident Report, simply write ‘See attached Incident/Accident Report’** | |  | | | | | | |
| The person at risk’s account (if applicable). ***Include what they want the outcome to be*** | |  | | | | | | |
| Provide details of the person causing harm (if known) | |  | | | | | | |
| Provide details of any witnesses to the concern | |  | | | | | | |
| Provide details of any previous incidents or concerns relating to this person (if known) | |  | | | | | | |
| **Actions:** Please state the immediate actions you took in response to the concern: | | | | | | | | |
| **Note: If you have already reported this information on an Incident/Accident Report, simply write ‘See Incident/Accident Report’** | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | |
| **People contacted** | | | | | | | | |
| *You must pass this form* ***immediately*** *to your Line Manager or Designated Officer. The manager will then inform external people as necessary. You should only contact people outside of Bytes to deal with an immediate emergency (for example, police or ambulance service).*  **Give details below of any people outside Bytes that you have communicated this concern to – give name, position, contact details, and the date and time that you contacted them:** | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | |
| **Declaration:** I have completed all sections of this form to the best of my knowledge | | | | | | | | |
| Signature: |  | | | | Date: | | |  |

**Appendix 3**

**BYTES REPORT FORM DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Private and Confidential**  **Please make sure all sections of this form are completed and all questions are fully answered. This form must be filed in a confidential and secure location.** |
| **Centre:** | |
| **Address:** | |
|  | |

|  |
| --- |
| **Name of individual concerned:** |
| **Age and DOB:** |
| **Parent/ Carer Name(s):** |
| **Home Address:** |
|  |
|  |
| **Home Number:** |
| **Mobile Number:** |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Please complete the box below if a child has disclosed to you about the abuse. If the child has not provided any information, please state NOT APPLICABLE.*** | | |
| **When was the disclosure made (dates and times)?** | | |
| **Where was the disclosure made?** | | |
| **What were the immediate circumstances leading to the disclosure?** | | |
| **Who was the disclosure made to?** | | |
| **Were there others present at the time of disclosure?** | | |
| **YES**  | **NO**  | **DON’T KNOW**  |
| **If YES, please state who (name and position) and what role did they play**? | | |
| **Please detail your specific concerns:** | | |
| **What feelings were expressed by the young person before, during and immediately**  **after the disclosure?** | | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SIGNS** | |
| **Describe any signs of physical injury evident on the individual:** | |
| **Describe any signs of behaviour changes of the individual**: | |
| **Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser?** (If so, please record details) | |
| **Did you and the individual agree to any future course of action?** | |
| **Any additional information:** | |
| **Signed:** | **Date:** |
| **Referred to Line Manager:** | **Date:** |
| **Referred to Designated Officer:** | **Date:** |

**Appendix 4**

**SUICIDE AND SELF HARM GUIDELINES**

In 2004 the Royal College of Psychiatrists observed, ‘Deliberate self-harm is a term used when someone injures or harms themselves on purpose. Common examples include “overdosing” (self-poisoning), hitting, cutting, or burning oneself, pulling hair, or picking skin, or self-strangulation. It can also include taking illegal drugs and excessive amounts of alcohol. Self-harm is always a sign of something being seriously wrong.”2 Disclosure of any self-harm should never be ignored; it is a clear sign that someone needs help, and that self- esteem is low. Care should always be taken in how this problem is managed and advice should always be sought.

**Suicide**

Whilst self-harm does not always lead to suicide, nor do those who attempt suicide self- harm, suicide can at times be seen as the ultimate act of self-harm.

If a young person does disclose that they have suicidal thoughts, then this should be treated as a safeguarding issue and thus the reporting process followed.

**Signs of potential suicide risk**

* Withdrawing from friends and family
* Loss of interest in usual activities
* Signs of sadness, hopelessness, and irritability
* Making negative remarks about themselves
* Talking or writing about suicide
* Putting their affairs in order
* Giving away personal items
* A sudden change from extreme depression to appearing to cope and being calm

These signs are not definitive but are possibly some of the signs displayed by someone who is suicidal. Others may show no sign of their pain at all. The only way to address our concern is to ask.

**What to do if you think or know that a young person is suicidal?**

* Listen to how they feel
* Take them seriously
* Offer your support
* Encourage them to seek further help i.e., a doctor, professional counsellor, family member or friend
* Follow the reporting process **(section 14)**
* If they appear acutely suicidal and unable to talk, it may be necessary to seek immediate help through hospital casualty department in consultation with a Line
* Manager or Designated Officer

**Appendix 5**

**Guidance on Bullying including Online Bullying**

**What is bullying?**

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening, or undermining someone.

It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.

**Types of Bullying**

Bullying can take different forms. It can include**:**

* Physical bullying:
  + Hitting,
  + Slapping
  + Pushing someone
* Verbal bullying
  + Name calling
  + Gossiping
  + Threatening someone
* Non-verbal abuse
  + hand signs
  + text messages
* Emotional abuse
  + Threatening
  + Intimidating
  + Humiliating someone
* Exclusion
  + Ignoring someone
  + Isolating someone
* Undermining
* constant criticism
* spreading rumours
* controlling or manipulating someone
* making silent, hoax or abusive calls

**The following types of bullying are also hate-crime:**

* racial, sexual, transphobic, or homophobic bullying
* bullying someone because they have a disability.

**What is cyberbullying?**

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying offline, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming, and mobile phone.

Cyberbullying can include:

* sending threatening or abusive text messages
* creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
* trolling – the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
* excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
* shaming someone online
* setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
* encouraging young people to self-harm
* voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
* creating fake accounts, hijacking, or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name
* sending explicit messages, also known as sexting
* pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations.

**Signs of bullying**

No single sign will indicate for certain that your child's being bullied, but watch out for:

* belongings getting 'lost' or damaged
* physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises
* being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school
* not doing as well at school
* asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever's bullying them)
* being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn
* problems with eating or sleeping
* bullying others.

**Effects of bullying**

The effects of bullying can last into adulthood. At its worst, bullying has driven children and young people to self-harm and even suicide.

Children who are bullied:

* may develop mental health problems like depression and anxiety
* have fewer friendships
* aren't accepted by their peers
* are wary and suspicious of others
* have problems adjusting to school, and don't do as well.

All children who are affected by bullying can suffer harm – whether they are bullied, they bully others or they witness bullying.

**Who's at risk**

Any child can be bullied for any reason. If a child is seen as different in some way, or seen as an easy target they can be more at risk.

This might be because of their:

* race or ethnic background
* gender
* sexual orientation.

Or it could be because they:

* appear anxious or have low self-esteem
* lack assertiveness
* are shy or introverted.

Popular or successful children are also bullied, sometimes because others are jealous of them. Sometimes a child's family circumstance or home life can be a reason for someone bullying them.

Disabled children can experience bullying because they seem an easy target and less able to defend themselves.

**Support for parents and carers:**

You might experience a huge range of emotions if you discover a child's being bullied. Whether it's a child in your care or someone you know, we have tips to help you cope.

**Talk to them about bullying and cyberbullying**

If you suspect your child is being bullied, explain to them what bullying is, and ask if anything like that has happened to them. Keep calm and listen carefully to what they say.

They may feel really scared, embarrassed or ashamed that they’re being bullied, and they may be worried about what will happen if they tell anyone.

Once you know your child is being bullied, remember to check in with them regularly. Remind them that they can talk to you about how they’re feeling whenever they want.

**Let them know who to ask for help**

If they don’t want to talk to you, suggest they have a chat with another trusted adult, such as a teacher or family member.

You could also suggest they contact Childline, where a trained counsellor will provide a listening ear.

They don’t have to give their name and they can talk about anything that’s worrying them.

**Help them relax and take a time out**

Children and young people may lack confidence because of bullying. Help them find things to do that make them feel good, like listening to, or playing, music, or doing sport. Give them opportunities to help build their confidence.

Remember to reassure them that it’s not their fault and that they’re loved and valued.

**Report bullying on social media and online gaming (Tab content hidden)**

As well as supporting your child emotionally, there are practical steps you can take if the bullying has taken place on an online platform, such as a social media app or online gaming chat room.

Don’t stop them from using the internet or their mobile phone. It probably won’t help keep them safe, it may feel like they’re being punished and could stop them from telling you what’s happening.

Make sure your child knows how to block anyone who posts hateful or abusive things about them on each app or online service they use. You can usually find details of how to do this in the help or online safety area, under Settings.

Report anyone who is bullying your child to the platform that’s carried the offending comments, audio, image or video. Follow these links to contact some of the most popular social media platforms and learn more about blocking and reporting:

* Instagram
* Snapchat
* WhatsApp
* Facebook
* Skype

Thinkuknow has advice on online safety for young people that’s suitable for different age groups. The website shows children how to contact social media sites if they believe someone has posted something upsetting about them.

Block’em is a free app for Android users that blocks unwanted calls and text messages from specified numbers. Its website also provides advice for iOS users.

Worried about how to support a young person who has had a sexual image or video of themselves shared online? If they’re under 18, they can use Childline and the Internet Watch Foundation's discreet Report Remove tool to see if it can be taken down. Young people can get support from Childline throughout the process.

**Report bullying videos shared online**

Get in contact with the site the video's been shared on as soon as possible. Social networks are more likely to take the video down if the child involved in the video or their parents make the report. Depending on their terms and conditions, they may be able to remove it from the site.

**Report Hate Crime**

Bullying someone because of their gender, gender identity, sexuality, religious beliefs, race, skin colour or because they have a disability, is hate crime and against the law.

If this is happening to your child or a child you know, you or the child can report it online. You or your child can also contact the police by phone. Call 999 in an emergency or 101 at other times.

Citizen's Advice has further information about types of hate crime and discrimination you may find helpful. Children and young people can get advice and support from Childline.

**Talk to your child’s school or club**

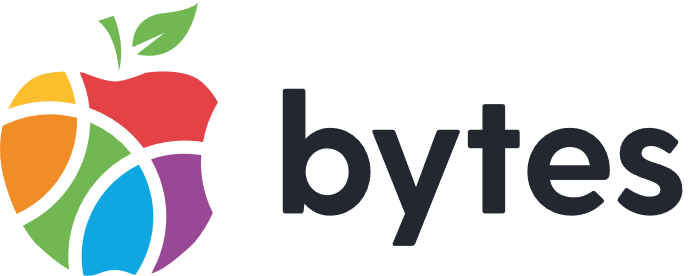
If your child is being bullied, you can talk to their school or club. It doesn't matter whether the bullying is happening on the premises, outside or on the internet. All schools and clubs have a responsibility to protect their children and young people from bullying.

* If your child is being bullied at a school or club, talk to the person in charge.
* Arrange a meeting with their teacher or club leader
* Take another person along with you for support if you feel it will help you.
* Take a notebook so you can jot down what’s said at the meeting.
* Bring any evidence you have of the bullying, such as text messages, a record of incidents, or screenshots if the bullying is happening online.
* Tell them what effect the bullying is having on your child, and make it clear you expect them to respond.
* Ask for a copy of the school or club’s anti-bullying policy, behaviour policy and complaints procedure. These may be available to you before the meeting on the school or club’s website.
* Ask the teacher or organiser what action they’re going to take, making sure you all agree on what they propose to do.
* Arrange a date to speak to them again so you can see what progress has been made.
* The school or club may inform the Police if the bullying involves ongoing harassment and intimidation, or a hate crime, such as racism or homophobia.

**If the bullying continues**

* Write a letter of complaint to the head teacher or club chairperson and arrange to meet them to discuss your concerns.
* Continue to keep a record of incidents with as much information as you can including:
  + photographs of any physical injuries or damaged property
  + the date, location, and approximate time of each incident
  + any contact (letters, emails etc) you’ve had with the school.
* If that doesn’t resolve it, you will need to follow different advice depending on the type of school or club your child goes to.
* If your child goes to a maintained/state school
  + Write to the chair of governors at the school address. The school office will be able to provide you with the chair’s name if it’s not on the school website.
  + Explain the situation and include copies of letters between you and the school, as well as any evidence of the bullying.
* If the bullying still isn’t dealt with, you can then make a formal complaint to the Education Authority (EA) in the area where the child goes to school.
* For further advice contact the Department for Education.

**Appendix 6**



ACCIDENT/incident REPORT FORM

This form should be completed by the youth worker/staff on the scene at the time of any accident or incident, and as soon after the event as possible. The report should then be handed to (PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR HEALTH & SAFETY/ACCIDENT BOOK/DESIGNATED OFFICER) as well as reporting to the team leader/manager asap to complete the subsequent and follow up on action taken section.

Date, time, and location of accident/incident:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Name and role of person completing form:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Name of injured/affected person:

Address of injured/affected person:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Nature of incident/injury and extent of accident/injury

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Give details of how and precisely where the incident/accident took place:

(Describe what activity was taking place if any e.g., football, chopping food)

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Give full details of action taken or any first aid treatment and the name(s) of first aider(s)

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Were any of the following contacted or notified?

Parents/Carers Y/N Details :

Police  Y/N  Details :

Ambulance  Y/N  Details :

Other:

Who was the accident/incident reported to in the group?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

What happened to the injured person following the incident/accident

|  |
| --- |
|  |

All the above facts are a true record of the accident/incident

Signed:

Date:

Name:

Subsequent action taken:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

No action taken:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Signed:     Date:      Name:

**Appendix 7**

**DAY TRIP/RESIDENTIAL PLANNING CHECKLIST**

**Centres Involved:**

**Date/Dates of Visit:**

**Venue:**

**Staff member responsible:**

**Other staff members involved:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **YES** | **NO** |
| Centre cover has been arranged by management |  |  |
| The nature of the visit has been established |  |  |
| The target group has been identified |  |  |
| All the relevant information regarding the proposed visit has been  presented to management e.g. destination, itinerary, timescales etc |  |  |
| Management has approved the proposed visit |  |  |
| A risk assessment has been undertaken for all aspects of the visit(s) and appropriate control measures have been put in place and recorded:  Full health and safety (first aid, fire safety, recording and consent etc) |  |  |
| • Hazards have been identified |  |  |
| • People who may be at risk have been identified |  |  |
| • Evaluation of the risk has been identified |  |  |
| • Additional safety and/or control measures have been established |  |  |
| • Information has been disseminated to all relevant persons and  Appropriate records maintained. |  |  |
| Where residual risks (inherent in all visits) still prevail an appropriate Contingency/emergency plan has been put in place and disseminated to all relevant persons |  |  |
| The number of leaders has been agreed: |  |  |
| • A group leader has been identified |  |  |
| • Accompanying staff have been identified |  |  |
| • ACCESS NI checks have been undertaken |  |  |
| • Correct gender and ratios have been organised |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **YES** | **NO** |
| Leaders are fully aware of: | |  |  |
| • Their roles and responsibilities | |  |  |
| • The standard of conduct required of them during the visits | |  |  |
| Young people and parents (as appropriate) have been informed/briefed and understand the implications of their participation in the visit | |  |  |
| Parents/guardians have given written consent for under 18s to participate | |  |  |
| List of contact details for young people and parents has be given to line  manager for emergency purposes | |  |  |
| All relevant information (medical, dietary and contact details) pertaining to the young people participating in the visit (s) has been obtained, recorded and appropriate action taken where necessary. | |  |  |
| The transport arrangements for the group are appropriate for the nature or type of journey planned | |  |  |
| Adequate insurance is in place to cover all aspects of the visit, including transport | |  |  |
| Where a residential visit is planned, the overnight accommodation has been assessed as appropriate in terms of: | |  |  |
| • Its suitability for the group | |  |  |
| • Its compatibility with the objectives of the visit | |  |  |
| • Safeguarding reporting procedures | |  |  |
| Where the visit involved outdoor or adventurous activities, management and group leader are satisfied that: | |  |  |
| • Appropriate management structures and systems are in place in relation to child protection/health and safety | |  |  |
| • Staff are competent to provide the activities | |  |  |
| • All relevant checks have been undertaken to ensure the above are In  Place | |  |  |
| Management has approved the operational arrangements for the visits | |  |  |
| **Signed (staff member): Date:** | **Signed (line manager): Date:** | | |

**Appendix 8**

**CONSENT FORM FOR RESIDENTIALS AND OUTINGS**

Anything written on this form will be held in confidence. The leaders need to know these details in order to meet the specific needs of your child.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **THE BYTES PROJECT** | **CENTRE:** |
| Location of Trip |  |
| Dates of Trip |  |
| Cost of Trip |  |
| Contact Name & Number for Trip |  |
| Other useful trip information |  |

I give permission for my child to attend the organisations which I have marked above at their usual meeting places and participate in all their activities

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Young Person’s Name | |  | | |
| Name usually known by | |  | | |
| Date of Birth |  | | Age on date of trip |  |
| Address |  | | | |
| Postcode |  | | | |
| Phone  number |  | | | |

**Emergency Contact Information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Emergency Contact |  |
| Relationship to Young Person |  |
| Mobile Phone Number |  |
| Home Phone Number |  |
| If unavailable, contact: |  |
| Home/Mobile Phone Number |  |
| Please indicate any known medical conditions, special needs, allergies or dietary  Requirements |  |

In the event of illness or accident, having parental responsibility for the above-named young person, I give permission for first aid to be administered where considered necessary by a first aider, if available, or medical treatment to be administered by a suitably qualified medical practitioner. In the event of a medical emergency, leaders will endeavour to contact you as soon as possible using the contact telephone numbers given.

During the trip, photographs or video may be taken for general Bytes Project purposes and publicity and for this we need your permission. On signing this form, we will assume that you have given permission for your child’s photograph to be taken unless otherwise informed.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **I confirm the above details are accurate to the best of my knowledge** | | | |
| **Signed** |  | **Date** |  |

**Appendix 9**

**CONTACT INFORMATION FORM FOR RESIDENTIALS AND OUTINGS**

To be completed prior to a residential or outing with a Designated Officer.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Trip Details** |  | | |
| **Contact Staff Member** |  | **Phone Number** |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Emergency Contact** | **Relationship** | **Mobile** | **Home Phone** | **Alternative Contact** | **Contact number** |
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**Appendix 10**

**Risk Assessment Template**

**A screenshot of a cell phone

Description automatically generated**

**Completed by:** **Date:** **Review Date:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Hazard** | **To Whom** | **Severity** | **Likelihood** | **Risk** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Existing Precautions** | | **Additional Precautions** | **Who** | **When** |
|  | |  |  |  |

**Completed by:** **Date:** **Review Date:** Ongoing