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**Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

This child protection policy was written: July 2017

Date Ratified by Governing Body:

Review date: July 2018

Ready Steady Read has a responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people they come into contact with. The need for guidelines and procedures is important to ensure that this is done with understanding and clarity.

**The person with lead responsibility for safeguarding within the organisation is: Mrs Joanne Walker**

**The lead for safeguarding has completed additional training to fulfil this role.**

All staff and volunteers have been made aware of this policy and the process for reporting concerns as part of their induction process.

Ready Steady Read provides on-going support and training to ensure that volunteers, staff and trustees are competent to carry out their responsibilities for protecting and safeguarding the welfare of children, and feel comfortable about raising concerns

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1. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

Defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

* protecting children from maltreatment;
* preventing impairment of children's health or development;
* ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
* taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

2. Child protection

Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

3. Children

Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

4. Early Help

It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address risk and prevent issues escalating.  Therefore, we aim to ensure that volunteers and staff are alert to any emerging issues and that any concerns are shared appropriately and promptly

5. Definitions of harm

**Abuse**

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

**Physical abuse**

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse**

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities 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 of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

**Radicalisation and Extremist behaviour**

We aim to assist our children to become more resilient to the messages of violent extremists through creating an environment where all young people learn to understand others, value and appreciate diversity and develop skills to be able to debate. Should any concerns of radicalised or extremist behaviours be identified, these will be brought to the attention of the relevant school.

**Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

CSE occurs when a child or young person or another person, receives 'something' (eg food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of the child or young person performing sexual activities, or another person performs sexual activities on a child or young person.

The presence of any significant indicator for sexual exploitation should be immediately brought to the attention of the relevant school

**Significant indicators**:

* Having a relationship of concern with a controlling adult or young person (this may involve physical and/or emotional abuse and/or gang activity)
* Entering and/or leaving a vehicle driven by an unknown adult
* Possessing unexplained amounts of money, expensive clothes, or other items
* Frequenting areas known for risky activities
* Being groomed or abused via the internet and mobile technology and,
* Having unexplained contact with hotels, taxi companies, and fast food outlets

**Refer to HSCB guidance for practitioners**

**Female Genital Mutilation**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

There is a statutory duty upon teachers to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. In addition, it is illegal for someone to arrange for a child to have this procedure. Therefore, any concerns about the possibility of this taking place should be reported to the relevant school**.**

This is not an exhaustive list and it must be recognised that it is not the role of staff / volunteers to make an assessment of whether children or young people have suffered harm. Staff / volunteers / child protection co-ordinators do have a duty to report any concerns about harm in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children Board, Guidelines and Procedures.

6. Recognition of harm

The harm or possible harm of a child may come to your attention in a number of possible ways;

* Information given by the child, his/ her friends, a family member or close associate.
* The child’s behaviour may become different from the usual, be significantly different from the behaviour of their peers, be bizarre or unusual or may involve ‘acting out’ a harmful situation in play.
* An injury which arouses suspicion because;
  + It does not make sense when compared with the explanation given.
  + The explanations differ depending on who is giving them (*e.g.,* differing explanations from the parent / carer and child).
  + The child appears anxious and evasive when asked about the injury.
* Suspicion being raised when a number of factors occur over time, for example, the child fails to progress and thrive in contrast to his/her peers.
* Contact with individuals who pose a ‘risk to children’ relates to an individual that that has been identified as presenting a risk or potential risk of harm to children. This can be someone who has been convicted of an offence listed in Schedule One of the Children and Young Person’s Act 1933 (Sexual Offences Act 2003), or someone who has been identified as continuing to present a risk to children.

7. Role of Child Protection Co-ordinators

The Child Protection Co-ordinator in each school is responsible for:

* Monitoring and recording concerns about the well being of achild or

young person.

* Making referrals to the Local Authority Children’s Services.
* Liaising with other agencies.
* Arranging training for staff / volunteers.

The Child Protection Co-ordinator, after receiving a referral, will act on behalf of the academy in referring concerns or allegations of harm to Local Authority Children’s Social Care or the Police Protecting Vulnerable People Unit.

Each school will have their own Child Protection Policy which will identify the Child Protection Coordinators within the school, and the requirements and procedures for safeguarding the welfare of children.

All Ready Steady Read volunteers will be required by their school to familiarise themselves with, and follow these requirements and procedures

**What to do if you have concerns about a child’s welfare**

If you suspect that a child may be at risk of physical or sexual abuse, emotional harm, neglect, bullying or radicalisation, or a child discloses it to you, it is your duty to report

You must pass on any concerns to the school’s Child Protection Coordinator or other named person (in accordance with the school’s policy). DO NOT investigate it yourself.

**Managing a disclosure**

If a child tells you they are being abused or neglected you should do the following; (See also guidance in the Safer Working Code of Practice)

* Let them speak without interrupting and take what they say seriously
* Be understanding and reassuring, but don’t comment or give your opinion
* If necessary, ask **only** open questions (or repeat the words the child has said back in the form of a question) to check understanding. Do not ask probing or leading questions designed to get the child to reveal more.
* Tell them you must pass on the information, but only to the one person who will know best what to do to help them
* While things are fresh in your mind, note down a few key facts
* Tell the school’s Child Protection Coordinator or other named person (in accordance with the school policy) immediately
* If required, write careful notes of what was said , using the child’s actual words as much as possible (usually the school will give you a form on which to do so)
* Contact Ready Steady Read to let us know. A ‘Notification of Safeguarding Issue’ must be completed and sent to Joanne Walker as soon as possible

If you have a concern about a child’s safety or wellbeing you should do the following;

* While things are fresh in your mind, note down a few key facts
* Tell the school’s Child Protection Coordinator or other named person (in accordance with the school’s policy) immediately
* If required, write careful notes of what was said , using the child’s actual words as much as possible (usually the school will give you a form on which to do so)
* Contact Ready Steady Read to let us know. A ‘Notification of Safeguarding Issue’ must be completed and sent to Joanne Walker as soon as possible. This is attached to this policy and further copies can be requested from Joanne Walker.

8. Allegations against staff members / volunteers

Everyone has the right to report concerns or suspicions about another person involved with Ready Steady Read, or the school within which they are helping, in confidence and free from harassment

You must pass on any concern to the appropriate person. DO NOT investigate it yourself

Any volunteer who has concerns about the behaviour or conduct of another individual working within the school must report the nature of the allegation or concern to the Headteacher immediately. The volunteer who has a concern or to whom an allegation or concern is reported should not question the child or investigate the matter further.

The Headteacher will report the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

In the case that the concern or allegation relates to the Headteacher the Chair of Governors should be contacted. The Chair of Governors will report the matter to the LADO.

In cases where there is an immediate risk to any child or young person, the information must be passed to Local Authority Children’s Social Care or the Police, as soon as possible.

An allegation is defined as where:

It is alleged that a person who works with children has:

* Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
* Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
* Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

**Responding to a complaint or an allegation**

**The person to whom an allegation or concern is reported should not question the child or investigate the matter further and should:**

* Treat the matter seriously,
* Avoid asking leading questions and keep an open mind,
* Communicate with the child (if the complainant) in a way that is appropriate to the child’s age, understanding and preferred language or communication style,
* Make a written record of the information (where possible in the words a child used), including
* When the alleged incident took place (time and date)
* Who was present (witnesses)
* What was said to have happened,
* Sign and date the written record,
* Report the matter immediately to LADO.

**N.B. Children/young people must not be asked to produce or sign any statement. This could undermine any potential investigation.**

Ready Steady Read adheres to the Department for Education, *Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2016.*

In cases where there is an immediate risk to any child or young person, the information must be passed to Local Authority Children’s Social Care or the Police, as soon as possible.

9. Confidentiality and Information sharing

We expect staff and volunteers to respect the privacy of everyone, children and adults, they come across, and hold in confidence all private matters that come to their attention whilst volunteering. Volunteers are expected to treat information they receive about pupils and families in a discreet and confidential manner.

Volunteers should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or her/his family for their own, or others advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the child.

Confidential or personal information should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis.

There are some circumstances in which a volunteer may be expected to share information about a pupil, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a responsibility to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated safeguarding responsibilities.

In situations where the safety of a child is believed to be at risk, confidential information may be disclosed to other bodies in accordance with Ready Steady Read child protection and safeguarding procedures and in line with NSPCC guidance on information sharing.

Concerns/allegations/disclosures must not be discussed with people other than those with safeguarding responsibilities. The child/young person and family have a right to confidentiality with only people who ‘need to know’ sharing the information.

Personal and/or sensitive information about the children we support is not routinely recorded or stored by Ready Steady Read.

Staff and volunteers are instructed not to make *any* notes that allow the identification of the child.

Where staff or volunteers are given confidential information by a third party that has an actual or potential impact on the provision of Ready Steady Read services, that information should only be passed to an appropriate member of staff.

Records relating to the reporting of a concern or allegation must be kept securely and in a separate file by the Chair of Trustees

10. Recruitment and selection

Ready Steady Read’s recruitment policy will ensure potential staff and volunteers are screened for their suitability to work with children and young people.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps us make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children.

A person who is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults will be breaking the law if they work or volunteer, or try to work or volunteer with those groups. If Ready Steady Read knowingly employs someone who is barred to work with those groups they will also be breaking the law. If there is an incident where a member of staff or volunteer has to be dismissed because they have harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or would have been if they had not left, Ready Steady Read will notify the DBS.

**Childcare Disqualification Requirements 2009**

Staff and volunteers working within a school are not protected by the *Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974* and are accordingly required to disclose any convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings which would not be filtered in line with current DBS guidance within two weeks of the offence

In circumstances where staff or volunteers would be covered by the legislation, Ready Steady Read follows the statutory guidance from the Department of Education on the application of the *Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009* and related obligations under the *Childcare Act 2006* in schools;

* Volunteers engaged in early years provision (ie supporting a child up to and including reception age) in nursery and school settings, both during and outside of school hours
* Volunteers engaged in later years provision (ie children above reception age but who have not attained the age of 8) in school settings and outside of school hours

Where applicable the volunteer will need to complete a Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 declaration.

11 .Induction

When new staff or volunteers join Ready Steady Read they will be informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They will be given a copy of our Child Protection policy, DfE guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2016, and told the name of the Child Protection Coordinator in the relevant school(s)

Every new member of staff or volunteer as part of their induction period will receive essential safeguarding information. The programme will include basic safeguarding information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, how to record, and issues of confidentiality. The induction will also remind them of their responsibility to safeguard all children within the relevant school(s) and the remit of the role of the Child Protection Coordinator.

12. Training

All Ready Steady Read Trustees, staff and volunteers have basic child protection training that equips them to recognise and respond to child welfare concerns. Ready Steady Read maintains a record of child protection training, and such training will be refreshed every three years.

13. Ready Steady Read Safer Working Code of Practice

At induction, all volunteers will be made familiar with the Ready Steady Read Safer Working Code of Practice which must be followed at all times

When in direct contact with children, at all times;

**Do** treat all children as being of worth and in a way that is respectful of them as individuals

**Do** treat all children equally

**Do** act as a role model – set an example through your own behaviour for children to follow

**Do** respect a child’s right to personal privacy

**Do** allow children to take care of needs of a personal nature themselves, or ask the appropriate person (eg teacher) to assist them

**Do** encourage children to challenge attitudes or behaviour they are uncomfortable with

**Do** allow children to talk about concerns they may have

**Do** work in a suitably open area with more than one other adult present, or at least within regular sight or hearing of others

**Do** avoid being drawn into inappropriate behaviour from the children, for example tantrums or crushes

**Do** set appropriate boundaries, both physical and emotional

**Do** **not** form an inappropriate relationship with a child that is an abuse of your position of trust

**Do not** seek or agree to any form of contact with a child outside the agreed setting of your volunteering role

**Do not** take a child away from the agreed space for your volunteering without first checking with an appropriate person that it is acceptable to do so, and **never** off the premises

**Do not** give a child any kind of gift; do not allow a child to take anything from a session without first checking with an appropriate person that it is acceptable to do so

**Do not** engage in inappropriate behaviour with the children

**Do not** make inappropriate remarks or threats to, or in front of, a child, even in fun

**Do not** use any resources that are inappropriate to a child’s age or stage of development

**Do not** use any personal technology in sessions

**Do not** photograph or video a child

**Do not** initiate or maintain inappropriate physical contact with a child

**Remember** actions and statements can be misinterpreted; no matter how innocent. Do not rely just on your good name to protect you

**Always** consider if what you are saying and doing would pass the ‘reasonable person’ test

**Mobile phones and cameras**:

Ready Steady Read staff or volunteers must not use mobile phones in rooms where children are present, including those where children are cared for.

They must not use their personal mobile phone, camera (still or moving images) or other devices to take, edit or store images of children from their school.