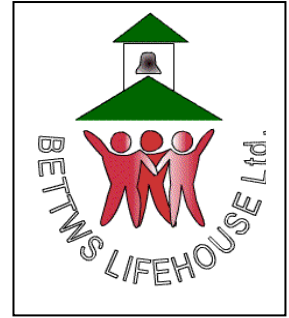


# Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children

**Date written: May 2007**

**Date of Last Review : March 2010**



## Aims and Objectives

The Lifehouse has a duty to be aware that abuse does occur in our society. This statement lays out the procedures that will be taken if we have reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to either emotional, physical or sexual abuse or neglect.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well being of all children in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents/main carers and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention.

The Lifehouse has a duty to report any suspicions around abuse to the Local Authority. The Children Act 1989 (Section 47(1)) places a duty on the Local Authority to investigate such matters. The Lifehouse will follow the procedures set out in the Local Authority Child Protection Documents and The All Wales Child Protection Policy and as such will seek their advice on all steps taken.

The Lifehouse has a designated member of staff with overall responsibility for child protection. This is at present Mrs Kay Jones. Mrs Jones will be responsible for ensuring all staff are trained and knowledgeable in issues of child protection. We currently ensure all our staff undergo a training programme promoted by the NSPCC. She will ensure awareness of this policy and the actions required in instances of suspected abuse.

Everyone who works at The Lifehouse should be aware of the principles contained in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'. The member of staff with responsibility for child protection, Mrs Kay Jones will:

- ✓ Treat the child's welfare as paramount
- ✓ Be alert to potential indicators of abuse and neglect
- ✓ Be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children
- ✓ Recognise when a parent or carer has problems that may affect their capacity as a parent or carer or which may mean they pose a risk of harm to a child
- ✓ Be aware of the effects of abuse and neglect on a child
- ✓ Contribute as required to whatever actions are needed to safeguard the child and promote his or her welfare
- ✓ Contribute as necessary at all stages of the child protection procedure

## Children's Rights

All children have needs and rights

- The need for physical care and attention
- The need for intellectual stimulation
- The need for emotional love and security
- The need for social contact and relationships
- The right to have their rights met and safeguarded
- The right to be protected from neglect, abuse and exploitation

- The right to be protected from discrimination
- The right to be treated as an individual

Our policy will ensure that the welfare of the child is paramount. All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. All staff have a responsibility to report concerns to the named lead child protection staff member. A written record will be kept of all incidents, events or conversations that may have implications for child protection. These records are kept secure.

## **CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

The Lifehouse will ensure that we have a lead member of staff who is trained and supported in their role. Every member of staff will know who this person is and what their role involves. All staff will be aware of their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and referring these to the lead member of staff. However, ALL staff should be aware that it is not their decision to make judgments.

The Lifehouse will provide induction training and will ensure that all staff have read and understood this policy.

Foundation training will be provided for staff periodically.

Parents should be made aware from the outset of our child protection policy and what our responsibilities are.

The Lifehouse will promote links with relevant agencies and co-operate with enquiries regarding child protection including participation at core groups or case conferences.

We will keep written records of any concerns about children even where there has been no need to refer the matter further in the first instance. Paragraph 2.1.2 raises the need to identify and act on concerns or suspicions' whether or not further action is then deemed necessary. All records will be kept secure. These are kept in line with paragraph 2.1.5. of The All Wales Child Protection Policy

Where an allegation has been made against a member of staff or a volunteer, we will notify the Local Authority immediately and follow our internal staff discipline procedure. Attention will be given to paragraph 4.5 and subsequently 4.5.1 and 4.5.2. of The All Wales Child Protection Policy . Directors may decide that immediate suspension of that staff member is required until the matter has been concluded.

There are a number of ways in which abuse becomes apparent.

- A child discloses abuse
- Someone else discloses that a child has told him/her or the he/she strongly believes a child is being abused
- A child may show signs of physical injury for which there seems to be no satisfactory explanation
- A child's behaviour may indicate that it is likely that he/she is being abused
- A member of staff's behaviour or in the way he/she relates to a child causes concern

## **Definitions of child abuse and neglect**

The specific terms to which we reference can be found in paragraphs 1.2 through to 1.2.4 in The All Wales Child Protection Procedures policy. A short definition for abbreviated reference within this document is as listed below.

Procedure is also aware of paragraph 3.3.2 which comments on the need to notify parents prior to discussing with social services or any other outside agency. The **welfare of the child** must always be duly considered and so that is why our policy states that we will take the advice of the local authority on the timing of notification to parents.

### **1. Physical Abuse**

This is where someone physically hurts or injures children by hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent feigns the symptoms of or deliberately causes ill health to a child for whom they are caring.

Action will be taken under this heading if any member of staff has reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning, where there is definite knowledge, or a reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

#### *Procedure*

- a. Any sign of a mark/injury to a child when they come to The Lifehouse will be recorded.
- b. The incident will be discussed with the Director with Child Protection Responsibility who will then make a written record and notify the duty officer at the local authority.
- c. They may then advise that she discuss the report with the parent/main carer and we will be guided on the appropriateness.
- d. Such discussion will be recorded and the parent/main carer will have access to such records.
- e. If there is already involvement of the Local Authority, they will be informed of further concerns.

### **2. Sexual Abuse**

This is where girls and boys are abused by adults or other children (both male and female) who use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could involve full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing children pornographic material (books, videos, pictures) is also a form of sexual abuse. Action will be taken under this heading if the staff team have witnessed occasions where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing or had an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour.

#### *Procedure*

- a. The observed instances will be discussed with the Director with Child Protection Responsibility.
- b. The matter will be referred to the Local Authority/ police

- c. If there is already involvement of the Local Authority, they will be informed of further concerns.

### **3. Emotional Abuse**

This is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectation being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger by constantly being shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child very nervous and withdrawn. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child. Action will be taken under this heading if a member of staff has reason to believe that there is an adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection.

#### *Procedure*

- a. The concern will be discussed with the child protection director who will inform the duty officer of the Local authority.
- b. They may then advise that she discuss the issue with the parent/main carer and we will be guided on the appropriateness of this action.
- c. Such discussion will be recorded and the parent/main carer will have access to such records.
- d. If there appear to be any queries regarding the circumstances, the Local Authority will be told.
- e. If there is already involvement of the Local Authority, they will be informed of further concerns.

### **4. Neglect**

This is where adults fail to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs and is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development (e.g. failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to adequate medical care or treatment). It may also include refusal to give children love, affection and attention. Action will be taken under this heading if the staff team have reason to believe that there has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation) which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

#### *Procedure*

- a. The concern will be discussed with the child protection director who will inform the duty officer of the Local authority
- b. They may then advise that she discuss the issue with the parent/main carer and we will be guided on the appropriateness of this action.

- c. The concern will then be discussed the parent/main carer if appropriate.
- b. Such discussion will be recorded and the parent/main carer will have access to such records.
- c. If there appear to be any further queries regarding the circumstances the Local Authority will be notified.
- d. If there is already involvement of the Local Authority, they will be informed of further concerns.

## REFERRALS WILL BE MADE IN COMPLIANCE WITH PARAGRAPH 2.1.3 OF THE ALL WALES CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### Ensuring The Continued Compliance With Child Protection

It is the responsibility of the lead member of staff to continually monitor legislation in respect of child protection and to update this policy with the relevant information. They also have responsibility to cascade this information to ALL other members of The Lifehouse staff through various means. Child Protection training will always be prioritized.

New members of staff will all be subject to CRB checks and then be trained in issues regarding child protection during their initiation. Further training will be sought if the employee is particularly inexperienced in such areas. However, staff are always chosen for their innate suitability to work at The Lifehouse and in its community.

### Risk Assessments

Each teaching situation and activity will have a risk assessment for child protection completed by two members of staff. This will be filed and kept in the administration office.

### Guidelines for Good Staff Practice

Staff should always act in a professional manner that maintains trust in the teaching profession. They should have knowledge of, and maintain the key principles, contained in The Professional Standards, Codes and Guidance, issued by the teaching council.

Staff should recognise staff:pupil boundaries, and the negative impact that breaches of these boundaries have upon pupils and the confidence of the public.

With regard to inappropriate relationships, staff should:

- Appreciate fully that the onus is upon staff and not the pupil to distance oneself from any potential inappropriate situation;
- Avoid sexual contact with, or remarks towards, a pupil, regardless of the age of the pupil or apparent consent;
- Not attempt to establish an inappropriate relationship with a pupil by means of: communication of a personal nature, inappropriate dialogue through the internet, emails or text messages to pupils of a personal nature.

As a member of staff, one must:

- Not discuss your own private and personal relationships with pupils;
- Avoid becoming personally involved in student's personal affairs;
- Be aware of the potential dangers of being alone with a child in a private or isolated situation;
- Exercise extreme caution in connection with social networking sites.

Staff should avoid working one to one with pupils wherever possible. If this is necessary make sure the environment is 'open' perhaps by leaving a door open. If it is felt necessary to conduct a confidential meeting then it should be clear why that is taking place and there should be another adult nearby with whom vocal contact could easily be made. Visual access is beneficial even if audio confidentiality is maintained. Staff should never make gratuitous physical contact with a child. We are aware at The Lifehouse that there are times when students may be distressed and turn to staff for appropriate physical comforting. It would be wrong to refuse this but staff must always be conscious of the purpose of the contact. We are also aware that because of the nature of our community, children may not be as aware of boundaries and we must use discretion and our trained skills to keep contact within propriety.

Children should all be treated with respect and dignity. Staff should protect children from any discrimination and challenge any behavior that does not support this. Activities should be designed to include all children and to promote positive attitudes towards differences.

Staff should be clear about the objectives of each activity and always put the welfare of the child first before winning or achieving goals. We should build balanced relationships built on mutual trust. This relationship should empower children to become part of the decision making process.

We must be aware of abuse between students and be watchful of inappropriate proximity or body language, verbal inappropriateness particularly when in the guise of humour.

Staff should always be an excellent role model and always show by example, even if not in direct contact with students. When you are at The Lifehouse you are within its expectations of behaviour.

Never use physical force with a student unless it constitutes reasonable restraint to protect him/her from themselves, another person or to protect property. If it is necessary to restrain a student because they are in immediate danger to themselves or others or to property then the minimum force should be used for the minimum amount of time. Remain calm and gain the support of another staff member as soon as possible. The incident should be recorded in writing with a witness statement wherever possible.

**Never** use physical punishment.

Written records should be kept of any accident and treatment provided and parent/carer informed. Parental consent should have been obtained in the initial contract.

**Always** refer any suspicions or concerns to the child protection lead member of staff.

Question any unknown person on the property and verify their purpose. Make sure they are

signed in to the visitor's book

### Practice that will Never Be Sanctioned

Engaging in rough play or provocative games including 'horseplay'

Engaging in any form of inappropriate touching

Children's inappropriate language or behaviour. This should always be challenged.

Sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.

Reducing a child to tears as a form of control

Allegations made by a child left to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.

Do things of a personal nature for a child that they can do for themselves ( eg apply sunscreen)

Invite children back to your home or arrange meetings off campus.

### Photographs

Written consent to take photographs should be obtained prior to taking them. Photographs should only be taken with The Lifehouse camera and never with your own personal mobile phones or other devices. Parents should be aware of the type of photos and how they will be used.

A COPY OF THE ALL WALES CHILD PROTECTION DOCUMENT IS HELD IN THE OFFICE  
AND IS AVAILABLE FOR REFERRAL TO AT ALL TIMES.

All staff are requested to familiarise themselves with this document.