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Detail

Introduction

Please note that the following policies and procedures have been developed by Hertsmere Leisure for internal use only.

Policy Statement

The range and quality of Sport, Leisure and Child and Family Services are a very important component of Hertsmere Leisure's services. Fundamental to this is the recognition that the welfare of children in the care of Hertsmere Leisure and of those that work with them, as well as parents and guardians, is of paramount importance.

Hertsmere Leisure's Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

The commitment by Hertsmere Leisure is to implement procedural directives and provide relevant information and support so as to meet both legal and moral responsibilities.

The welfare of children and their families, staff and volunteers will be addressed through the following mechanisms:

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- Promoting children's rights and working with parents.
- Promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by creating an environment in our setting that encourages children to develop a positive self image, which includes their heritage arising from their colour and ethnicity, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, cultural traditions and home background.
- Promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
- Promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by enabling children to have the self confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
- Helping children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers and with other adults.
- Working with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the principles of safeguarding all our children.

Legal Responsibility

Upholding a legal responsibility under the Children Act 1989, to protect children under 18 years of age.

Culture

Developing a culture, that encourages discussion and awareness of Safeguarding issues and does not shy away from confronting the issues when they arise. This can be achieved by cultivating a code of conduct, which encompasses qualities of honesty, openness and respect.

Recruitment, Registration and ISA

Implementing rigorous selection, recruitment and registration procedures, which will help prevent child abusers having access to children. This process will apply to all categories of staff who work with children whether paid or voluntary.

Induction

Implementing a comprehensive induction procedure, this will inform Staff of duties and responsibilities, in relation to the welfare of children in their care. Induction, in addition to training, underpins and supports the selection process, which is devalued if it stands alone.

Training and Support

Implementing a training and appraisal programme for relevant Staff, to raise awareness of their role in recognising, understanding and the procedures for Safeguarding. Support mechanisms for those involved with the reporting of cases and for those accused of suspected child abuse are set out in Section 9.

All staff who work significantly with children will receive refresher Safeguarding training at least every three years.

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Working with CSF

Referring, and not investigating, suspected cases of child abuse to recognised agencies, i.e. Children, Schools and Families (CSF) (call centre), who have the necessary expertise in child care and who are legally bound to safeguard the welfare of children.

Development Opportunities

Hertsmere Leisure will ensure that all initiatives such as grant applications, partnership projects and in-house developments incorporate Safeguarding policies and procedures. This will include confirmation of policy for future funding applications.

Public Awareness

Ensuring information on Safeguarding is freely available to members of the public, independent local organisations / clubs and is issued to parents / guardians when their children are participating in Hertsmere Leisure activities. Each Centre will display Hertfordshire's County Councils Safe Guarding Information and the public will be made aware of who the Designated Person is in each centre.

Partnership

All partner organisations involved and using the centres will need to supply the centres with their staff CRB numbers, e.g.: Sports Coaches, Health Visitors, Job Centre Plus, etc.

Complaints Procedure

Ensuring mechanisms exist to encourage suspicions of abuse to be reported at an early stage and for details of these procedures to be widely available.

Monitoring

Reviewing documentation in light of operational performance and legal requirements and monitoring patterns of behaviour across the business.

Liaison with other Professional Bodies

Hertsmere Leisure Children's Services work within the Local Safeguarding Children's Board guidelines: - website www.hertsdirect.org/safeguardingchildren (follow link to; - HSCB Child Protection Procedures March 2007 p3).

Starjumps

We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children.

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Hertsmere Leisure Nurseries will each have a Designated Person who oversees this work and staff are aware of whom to contact regarding safeguarding. Each childcare setting will display the name of the Designated Person on the staff notice board

The role of the Designated Person will be explained at staff induction and the Designated Person will attend specific Designated Person training.

We introduce key elements of Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children into our programme by promoting the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be 'strong, resilient and listened to' developing an understanding of why and how to keep safe.

We have additional policies to promote the welfare of children regarding bullying (Behavioural Policy and Equality and Diversity), health and safety / buildings / settings security (Health & Safety Policy, Outings Policy), medical needs / first aid (Accident / Incident, Medication, Missing Child & Emergency Policy, Special Educational & Additional Needs / Disability policy), drugs and substance misuse (Alcohol and Drugs Policy).

The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one to one situation without being visible to others.

The Nurseries will follow HCC guidance thresholds for referral to social care and where appropriate be involved in Common Assessments and Team Around the Child meetings.

Children's Centres

Hertsmere Leisure Children's Centres will each have a Designated Person who oversees this work and staff are aware of whom to contact regarding safeguarding. Each Children's Centre will display the name of the Designated Person on the staff notice board.

The role of the Designated Person will be explained at staff induction and the Designated Person will attend specific Designated Person training.

The Children's Centres will undertake a yearly Safeguarding Audit with staff, results of which will be used to support the development of extra guidance / training.

All visitors will be asked to sign in and out when entering the Children's Centre, they will be allocated a badge which must be worn, and this also includes contractors. All families attending activity sessions must sign in and out on the registers.

The Children's Centres will follow HCC guidance thresholds for referral to social care, and where appropriate be involved in Common Assessments and Team Around the Child meetings.

Crèche / Playschemes

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Hertsmere Leisure Centres will each have a Designated Person who oversees the work of the Crèche and Playschemes. The staff are aware of whom to contact regarding safeguarding. Each Centre will display the name of the Designated Person on the staff notice board.

The role of the Designated Person will be explained at staff induction and the Designated Person will attend specific Designated Person training.

All families will be asked to sign in and out when picking up or dropping of their children.

Documentation and Confidentiality

Ensuring all documentation is dealt with in accordance with policy and procedures and is treated with the strictest confidence. (see Confidentially/ Children's records. These records should be signed off by a senior member of staff)

Conclusion

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone who comes into contact with children be they carers, parents, Children's Centre Staff and the children themselves. It is vitally important that there is a commitment to the issue and a culture that enables the policy and procedures to be effective. Without this, the welfare of children is seriously undermined.

Section A: Guidance Notes

What is Safeguarding?

In its simplest terms 'safeguarding' can be defined as 'keeping children safe from harm, such as illness, abuse or injury'. The most widely used definition is taken from the 'Safeguarding Children: A Joint Chief Inspectors Report (2002):

All agencies working with children, young people and their families take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised, and When there are concerns about children and young people's welfare, all agencies take all appropriate actions to address those concerns, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies.

Our role in Safeguarding is:

- Developing child centred policies and procedures.
- Working in partnership with agencies, e.g. Home Safety, Fire Brigade.
- The Designated Person will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children at Nursery, or any abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises, and the action taken in respect of these allegations.

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- All staff has an up-to-date understanding of safeguarding children issues and be able to implement the safeguarding children policy and procedure appropriately.

What is Child protection?

- Making children's welfare a priority.
- A responsibility for all those who are directly or indirectly involved with children.
- Ensuring that all children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language or racial origins have the right to protection from abuse.
- Understanding what constitutes child abuse.
- Taking positive steps to prevent further abuse and dealing with all suspicions and allegations of abuse seriously and swiftly.
- Working in partnership with agencies qualified to address the issues i.e. CSF, Police, and NSPCC.

What is Child Abuse?

Abuse has been categorised into four different types:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Neglect
- Sexual

The four categories are however, not mutually exclusive – an abused child may well be suffering more than one type. The definitions and possible indicators are taken from "working together to safeguard children" the Hertfordshire definitions of abuse.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

It may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Possible Indicators of Physical abuse

- Physical observations
- Bruising especially on the trunk:
On face, upper arm, shoulders and neck consistent with gripping:
Finger tip bruising / finger marks
- Burns and scalds especially cigarette burns, burns caused by lengthy exposure to heat.
- Human bite marks
- Fractures, particularly spiral fractures
- Swelling and lack of normal use of limbs
- Any serious injury with no explanation or conflict explanations / inconsistent accounts.

- Untreated injuries

Behavioural Observations

- Unusually fearful with adults
- Unnaturally compliant to parents
- Refusal to discuss injuries / fear of medical help
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Aggression towards others
- Wears cover – up clothing.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of her / his health and development.

It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical and emotional harm or danger, or the failure to access appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

Possible Indicators of Neglect:

Behavioural Observations

- Constant Hunger
- Constant tiredness
- Frequent lateness or non attendance at school
- Destructive tendencies
- Low self esteem
- Neurotic Behaviour
- No social relationships
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging

Physical Observations

- Poor personal hygiene
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation, pot belly, short stature
- Poor skin and hair tone
- Untreated medical problems

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non – penetrative acts.

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They may include non- contact activities, such as involving children in looking at / production of abusive images, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Possible Indicators of sexual abuse

Physical Observations

- Damage to genitalia, anus or mouth
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Soreness in genital area, anus or mouth
- Unexplained recurrent urinary tract infections and discharges or abdominal pain

Behavioural Observations

- Sexual knowledge inappropriate to the age of the child.
- Sexualised behaviour in young children.
- Sexually provocative behaviour / promiscuity.
- Hinting at sexual activity
- Inexplicable falling off in school performance.
- Sudden apparent changes in personality.
- Lack of concentration, restlessness, aimlessness.
- Socially withdrawn.
- Overly Compliant behaviour.
- Poor trust in significant adults.
- Aggressive behaviour, onset of wetting, day and night.
- Onset of insecure, clinging behaviour.

Indirect sexual abuse can involve:

- Genital exposure ('flashing')
- Using children in, or exposing children to, pornographic material
- Encouraging two children to have sex

While sex between adolescents under 16 is unlawful, it is not considered to be abuse if exploitation is not an issue, that is, if both parties were consenting, force was not used and there has been no misuse of power based on age difference (five years or more) or other form of authority.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that she / he is worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as she / he meets the needs of another person.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued in so far as they meet the needs of another person.

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It may feature imposing developmentally age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on the children.

It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in most types of ill treatment of children, though emotional abuse may occur alone.

Possible indicators of emotional abuse

- Physical, mental and developmental lags.
- Acceptance of punishment which appears excessive.
- Over – reaction to mistakes.
- Continual self – deprecation.
- Sudden speech disorders.
- Fear of new situations.
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations.
- Neurotic behaviour (such as rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking).
- Self – Mutilation
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression.
- Drug / Solvent abuse.
- Running away.
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging.

Please note that many of the symptoms in all four areas described above can be caused by a variety of other factors which are not related to child abuse.

It is your responsibility as an adult and as a Hertsmere Leisure employee to share your concerns with the appropriate person, following the procedures of your setting.

Terminology

Below is some important terms used, it is not important to remember them however it is important to understand the meaning of four key terms:

DISCLOSED ABUSE	This is when a child confides in you that he or she is or has been suffering abuse.
SUSPECTED ABUSE	When you observe symptoms such as unexplained injuries or changes in behaviour that give cause for concern.
REPORTED ABUSE	When someone tells you that a child is being abused or that they are abusing a child themselves.
REFERRAL	The facts of the case are reported to CSF or the Police.

Why you should make a referral

The greatest fear about reporting suspected child abuse cases is that it may be wrong and the resulting consequences bring about pain and suffering for children, their parents and those we accuse. In such situations it is worth remembering these points:

- Your first responsibility is to the welfare of the child.
- Many parents will recognise this and appreciate that you made the referral out of concern for the child.
- It is not your responsibility to make judgements – only to share your concerns.
- Any information you provide may be essential in building up a complete picture of an abused child or suspected abuser.

Ultimately, it is important to remember that “the consequences of reporting suspected abuse and being wrong can be difficult. The consequence of not reporting suspected child abuse could be fatal” (Protecting Children: NSPCC)

Disclosure of information by the child

If a child tells you that he or she is being abused, or another adult informs you of their concerns, adopt the following procedure:

DO

- Stay calm
- Listen to what is being said, without rushing or probing.
- Reassure the individual that he or she was right to talk to you.
- Do not promise confidentiality; explain that you will need to share the information with others who can help.
- Refer the information to your line manager / designated officer immediately.
- Record accurate information on your observation and discussions.

DO NOT

- Do not panic
- Do not keep the information to yourself. Instead, discuss the disclosure with your line manager.
- Do not investigate or probe by asking questions.

Allegations against Adults

If an allegation is received about members of staff or volunteer, it should be immediately reported to a Director (Who would act as the Designated Senior Manager - DSM). If it is the Director that is suspected, another Director would then take on the role of the DSM. Child Protection documentation should be completed e.g. **Staff Record & Child Protection Form**

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The criteria for an allegation against staff, is where a person who works with a child has:

- **Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child.**

Or

- **Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.**

Or

- **Behaved towards a child / children in a way that indicates 'unsuitability' to work with children.**

It is important not to further compromise the situation and a risk elimination exercise should be carried out. In order to achieve this, it may be necessary for the individual to be suspended pending an investigation on the recommendation from LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer). (There will be no loss of earnings during this time). CSF and not Hertsmere Leisure Staff will carry out this investigation. Hertsmere Leisure reserves the right to dismiss an individual on grounds of alleged gross misconduct at any point in the proceedings. An individual who is convicted of a crime will, likewise, be dismissed.

- All members of staff / volunteers will be denied access to children, pending a referral and investigation by CSF and the Police. If it is not practical to deny access to children, the individual will be suspended until the investigation is complete.
- In the case of a staff member, depending on the outcome of the investigation, the individual will be returned to full duties, reinstated or dismissed.
- A member of the public will be denied access to centre / or sites and banned from Hertsmere Leisure during the investigative period, pending the outcome.
- All individuals accused of child abuse will be given the opportunity to give their account of the circumstances.

LADO – Local Authority Designated Officer

The role of LADO is to be involved in the management and oversight of individual cases against staff. They offer advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations. They also liaise with police and other agencies and monitor the progress of cases to ensure they are dealt with as quickly as possible and are consistent with a thorough and fair process.

When an allegation comes to light the DSM must inform the LADO immediately and always within 1 working day. If there is any difficulty in communicating this to the LADO, allegations should be reported direct to the police. Consultation with the LADO must not delay any referral where the concern / allegation is clearly very serious.

Contact Details:

Frazer Smith: office 01992 556935 mobile 07920283106
E-mail: frazer.smith@hertscc.gov.uk

Mel Leicester – Evens: office 01992 556935 mobile 07795288271
E-mail: mel.leicester-evens@hertscc.gov.uk

What is our role in working with LADO

- To Clarify facts of the allegation (not investigate) before contacting the LADO.
- To work in partnership with the LADO
- To provide necessary information.
- To operate a through disciplinary process when appropriate
- To keep the LADO updated on the process and outcomes.
- To ensure a properly managed conclusion to process.

Sharing your Concerns with Parents

Staff should always consider the possibility that there is a reasonable explanation to account for observations. Concerns may wish to be shared with parents / guardians (unless this would put the child at further risk), in which case a great deal of sensitivity will be required. If a child is displaying aggressive, withdrawn or over-compliant behaviour, the parent may be able to suggest reasons such as conflict at home or a family bereavement. Likewise, if the child has bruises or injuries, there may be a logical explanation.

At this point it is important to note that there is a differentiation between a child in need and a child in need of protection. In the first instance, it is more appropriate to share concerns with parents / guardians. In the second, in some instances, alerting the parent/guardian of concern may hinder CSF's investigation. If in doubt, consult CSF.

If you have any concerns about approaching a parent / guardian, seek advice from the Designated Person.

Any information relating to such an observation should be recorded on Child Protection Form.

Employment

Recruitment

We are committed to ensuring that all children in our care are not exposed to unsuitable personnel. Applying a rigorous selection and recruitment procedure can prevent this. Whether the appointment is for part time, full time, casual or voluntary all procedures must be adhered to.

It is important that all adverts, job descriptions and pre-employment information, relating to posts that have access to children, depict Safeguarding as a high priority

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for Hertsmere Leisure. This will discourage any potential abusers from pursuing an application.

Therefore:

Job Descriptions for posts that require a Disclosure will stipulate that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act

Job Advertisements for positions where the employee will require a Disclosure will stipulate that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act

Job Application Forms will stipulate that the applicant must refer to the job description to ascertain whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and then to complete the Equal Opportunities form accordingly

Equal Opportunities Form requires the applicant to complete in confidence whether they have any convictions (spent or otherwise) under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act

It is important that all applicants, whether permanent or casual, should complete the Equal Opportunities Form along with their Employment Application form (both of which must be submitted to Head Office) This gives the applicant the opportunity to offer information in confidence on any past convictions. – This information will only be disclosed to the Centre Manager if it is deemed that it may potentially breach Hertsmere Leisure's Safeguarding Policy.

A CRB Disclosure form via Head Office should be completed for all appointments, whether paid or voluntary, where the employee has contact with children.

How to obtain a Disclosure on a member of staff:

A Disclosure application form may be requested from Head Office and completed by the applicant and the Line Manager and then resubmitted to Head Office for forwarding to the designated umbrella body. This process will be recorded on the Disclosure Application Control Sheet.

If you are in any doubt about the suitability of the applicant, seek advice from a Senior Manager.

If clubs are working with children within Hertsmere Leisure's facilities they must apply for a CRB disclosure via their governing body. All personnel that are commissioned in to undertake activities in Children's Centres must undertake an enhanced CRB disclosure.

Staff Induction

It is vitally important that all members of staff are made aware of Hertsmere Leisure's commitment to Safeguarding. Information where to find this policy must be provided in the staff handbook and referred to as part of the Induction process. Our

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Safeguarding Code of Practice for employees should be issued to all non Childcare staff upon induction.

Staff Training

It is vitally important that staff receive the necessary training to be able to make informed decisions about what they perceive to be child abuse. Training should include the following elements:

- How to recognise child abuse
- How to deal with a disclosure/referral (emotional and practice advice)
- Reporting procedures
- Recruitment
- Support mechanisms. (Counselling etc).
- Information on who is the Designated Person and what is their role.

As a minimum all staff should receive written documentation relating to child abuse in the workplace. Training will also need to be tailored to the needs of different operational levels within the organisation.

Photographic Images

Some mobile telephones and digital cameras have the ability to transmit images onto the World Wide Web. To protect our staff and children using our facilities, the following applies when using images of children for promotional activities.

The Risks:

- Images could be used to identify children, especially when they are accompanied by personal information, such as *"this is X who lives at X and is a member of the X gymnastics club, she likes Westlife"*. This information could be used to groom a child for abuse.
- The content of the photo could be used or adapted for inappropriate use.

In order to protect our organisation, our staff, the press and contractors from being accused of inappropriate use and transmission of photographic images while engaged in business on behalf of Hertsmere Leisure, the following guidelines are to be followed:

Reduce or control the risk

- Consider using models or illustrations where appropriate.

Information

- Avoid using the first name and surname of an individual in a photograph.
- If you use the individual's photograph, avoid using their name and vice versa.

Parental Consent

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Specific parental permission is sort by the use of a registration form parents are asked to give permission for the following.

- For their child's photograph to be used to advertise activities.
- To agree to photographic / video images of their child appearing on Hertsmere Leisure websites.

And before any photo goes on the website or on publicity then consent will be doubled checked with a parent or guardian.

Content of image

- Only use images of individuals in appropriate dress.

Policy on Photographic images

Hertsmere Leisure endeavour to protect, as far as is reasonably practicable, all children using their facilities from being exposed to potential abuse via the inappropriate taking and transmission of photographic images.

Hertsmere Leisure restrict the use of all cameras and other equipment with the capacity and capability to take photographic images in their centres or grounds, by implementing a robust system of control.

Hertsmere Leisure stipulate on all appropriate booking forms the necessity to obtain permission from management to use photographic equipment on our premises

The following must be adhered to within each facility

- A notice to be displayed in the reception area clearly stating that photography and the recording of images of any kind is only allowed with written authorisation of the centre management
- Prohibitive signs must be displayed prominently within the centre stating that the use of mobile telephones and photographic recording equipment is not permitted.
- The procedure for obtaining permission to use photographic recording equipment should be written down on the photography / recording images clearing form and recorded. The form contains the following details:
 - The name address and telephone number of the person using the camera.
 - The name/s of the subject
 - The relationship of the photographer and subject
 - The reason or use the images are being intended to be put to (e.g. family record)
 - A signed declaration that the information is valid and that the images will be used only for the reasons given
- The person will then be issued with a red badge which contains the persons name, date of activity, time of activity and the activity the person is allowed

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to photograph which they need to wear to avoid challenge by supervisory staff.

- The person given approval must be made aware that if any customer complains or expresses concern they must respect the rights of other people and stop taking photographs
- The Line Manager will inform all relevant staff that a red pass has been issued
- The Centre Management reserves the right to withdraw permission for photography/recording at any time.
- For Block bookers and Parties, the lead person will need to complete the process stated above and will, by doing so, accept responsibility for the images taken.

Support Mechanisms

For Employees

If an individual is involved with a suspected child abuse case and need to discuss their concerns, there are a number of options to pursue.

- Talk to the Line Manager.
- Contact the Designated Person.
- Contact a Director
- Contact Care First, the employees' counselling service on 0800 174319.

Dealing with a suspected case of child abuse or being accused of such an act, can be a very emotional and disturbing time for all concerned. It is important that Staff are aware of support services within the organisation. Confidentiality is the key element to ensure that what is offered is effective and therefore, both internal and independent external assistance is required.

Monitoring

All completed **Child Protection Forms / monitoring forms (Staff Record & Child Protection Form and Family Record Front Sheet Parent / Carer record Sheets and Child Record Sheet)** should be copied promptly to the Designated Person for monitoring purposes.

Personnel

All completed forms should be submitted to Head Office promptly. It is the responsibility of the centre's Designated Person to monitor trends relating to the alleged accused. Any identified trends i.e. reoccurring names, should also be formally shared with Senior Management. It is then the responsibility of the Senior Management to inform relevant staff, of the potential problems (where it is alleged) and of any convictions once confirmed. It should be noted that in the case of an alleged abuse case, the information is highly sensitive and should be dealt with accordingly.

Children Schools and Families (CFS)

CSF will monitor trends relating to the victims and investigate accordingly. It is not the responsibility of Hertsmere Leisure to investigate any such trends but as a duty of care, Hertsmere will notify CSF of any identified trends.

Records

- Registration and other associated records should be kept for two years.
- **Staff Record & Child Protection Form and Family Record Front Sheet Parent / Carer record Sheets and Child Record Sheet** should be kept for a period of 21 years 3 months and marked '*Strictly Confidential*' along with all other associated documentation.
- Information should be kept in a secure facility and access to information should be strictly limited.
- Data protection must be a prime consideration.

Operational Procedures

Reporting Procedures

Who is responsible?

All staff are responsible for the welfare of children in the care of Hertsmere Leisure. It therefore, follows that all staff are responsible for reporting incidents of suspected child abuse.

How do you report your suspicions?

All Facilities must have:

Family Record Front Sheet, Parent or Carer record Sheets and Child Record Sheet – To be used to record discussions and observations that do not result in a referral to CSF.

In addition, if a member of staff finds them self in a situation that could be misinterpreted at a later date, details of the situation should be discussed and recorded on the Staff record & Child Protection Form.

Child Protection Form — To be used to document referrals to CSF and Police. In both instances recorded information should be treated in strictest confidence. It is vitally important that the recording of information concentrates on fact and not opinion. Inaccurate information can seriously hinder the investigation.

Methods of Reporting

The method of reporting suspected child abuse:

- Informal discussions with the Line Manager

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- All concerns should be discussed with the Designated Person and recorded in the Family Record Form.
- Telephone CSF and ask to speak to the Duty Officer dealing with child protection issues. Always record your actions in the Family Record Form.
- Formal Referral

A formal referral should be made promptly by the Designated Person to CSF. This should be done by telephone and then followed up by forwarding the **Child Protection Form** to CSF and other internal distribution points as described previously.

In some cases it may be necessary to inform police, particularly when individuals are in immediate danger. Once again **Child Protection Form** must be completed.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The reporting and recording of information relating to suspected child abuse should be conducted in a place where privacy and confidentiality can be assured. Not only is the information sensitive, but the individuals involved may need some initial counselling.

Making a referral to CSF

Initial Contact

It is the responsibility of the Designated Person to make a referral to CSF. Ensure **Child Protection Form** is completed when making the referral by telephone so that as much information as possible can be given.

Call 0300 123 4043 and ask to be put through to client services. When put through to client services make a note of their name.

Do not leave messages with switchboard / Receptionists.

It is not necessary to make contact with the police unless there is an immediate risk of an offence being committed or it is a clear case of assault. CSF will contact the Police. Where emergency medical help is required arrangements should be made for the child to be taken to hospital. A referral must then be made to CSF immediately.

Investigation

If the situation is serious or potentially life threatening, the social worker may visit the referral source and the child immediately. However, it is more likely that the investigation team will make other enquiries to help them build up a full picture. This may involve speaking to the individual who made the referral, the child's school, health visitor or doctor, parents or carers.

If someone calls the centre asking for information in connection with a child protection investigation and they are not known, ask for their name and telephone

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number and tell them the Designated Person will call them back. This way a check can be made as to who they are and information is not given out inappropriately.

Assessment and Case Conference

When the investigation team have made their assessment they will decide what action is necessary. There may be a case conference, to which a Hertsmere Leisure representative may be asked to attend. The case conference is a forum for exchange of information and discussion about alleged or suspected abuse.

The outcome of the conference will decide if the child should be placed on the child protection register, what support is needed for child and family, and what further assessment or review is needed.

Feedback to Hertsmere Leisure

Generally, there is no formal feedback beyond the initial recommendations made at the referral stage. However if this happens then feedback should be documented on the Child Protection Form.

Review:

- This procedure will be reviewed annually.

Internal Forms:

- Child Protection Form
- Family Record Front Sheet (Children's Centres & Nursery)
- Parent or Carer Record Sheet (Children's Centres & Nursery)
- Child Record Sheet
- Staff Record & Child Protection Form
- Photography/Recording Images Clearing Form
- Disclosure Application control sheet
- Photo pass

Sources of Information:

- The Institute of Sport and Recreation Management (Hard Copy available)
- National Coaching Foundation's Code of Ethics for Sports Coaches (Hard Copy)
- Guidance to Employees on completing a CRB Disclosure Application Form
- Child Protection Employee Code of Practise
- Working Together (2006)
- Safeguarding Children and Safer recruitment in Education
- Hertfordshire's Child Protection Procedures (2007)

Links to Every Child Matters

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- Helping children to be healthy
- Protecting children from harm and neglect and keeping them safe
- Helping children to achieve well and enjoy what they do
- Helping children make a positive contribution
- Organisation