

Firstsite

Safeguarding Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults

Useful contact numbers

Contacts

Firstsite Designated Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer

Sue Hogan

01206 713 707

Staff members with training in Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

Beth Hull

01206 713706

Essex Children and Families Hub

(Available Mon–Thurs 8:45–5:30pm and Fri (8:45–4:30pm))

0345 603 7627

Essex Children and Families Hub Out of Hours Service

0345 606 1212

Firstsite Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy including Lost Child policy

Policy Statement

Firstsite is committed to a practice which protects children¹ and vulnerable adults² from harm.

Firstsite accepts and recognises the responsibility to develop awareness of the issues which cause harm to children.

Firstsite is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults through the following means:

- **Awareness:**
Ensuring relevant staff and others are aware of abuse and the risks facing children and vulnerable adults.
Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- **Prevention:**
Ensuring through awareness and good code of practice, that staff and others minimise the risk facing children and vulnerable adults.
Carefully following the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff, artists and volunteers.
- **Reporting:**
Ensuring that all staff and others involved in our work are clear what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children and vulnerable adults.
- **Responding:**
Ensuring action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

Firstsite is also committed to reviewing its policy and good practice at regular intervals.

Child Protection Procedures

Procedures

Firstsite endeavours to safeguard children and vulnerable adults by:

- Recognising that all children and vulnerable adults have a right to freedom from abuse.

¹ Throughout this policy, when reference is made to a *child* or to *children*, it is assumed that young people up to the age of 18 are included.

² Throughout this policy, a vulnerable adult is defined as anyone aged 18 years or over; who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

- Ensuring that all our staff and volunteers are carefully selected and that those in regular contact with children and vulnerable adults have relevant and current Disclosure and Barring Service Checks.
- Seeking written permission around issues such as photography and film, ensuring that all staff and freelancers are trained accordingly.
- Actively discouraging bullying, violent and degrading behaviour and taking measures to deal with such incidents should they arise.
- Responding swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and providing parents/carers and children/vulnerable adults with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have.
- Disallowing children from consuming alcohol, drugs or smoking and carrying offensive weapons.
- Providing effective management for relevant staff and volunteers in Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection matters through supervision, support and training.
- Appointing a dedicated member of staff who will take specific responsibility for Children and Vulnerable Adults' safety and act as the main point of contact for parents/carers, children/vulnerable adults, outside agencies and staff.
- Ensuring access to confidential information is restricted to the Firstsite Designated Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer, to others on a "need to know" basis and to the appropriate external authorities.
- Sharing information about children and vulnerable adults' protection and good practice with children, vulnerable adults, parents and carers, staff and volunteers and agencies who need to know.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy and activities each year at department level.

Guidelines for the board of trustees, staff, freelance staff, artists and volunteers:

- The board, staff, freelance staff, artists and volunteers should not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children, away from others.
- Meetings with individual children should take place as openly as possible in a public place where possible.
- If privacy is needed, the door should be left open and other staff members informed of the meeting.
- The board, staff, freelance staff, artists and volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with children.
- There are however, occasions where physical contact may be unavoidable, such as providing comfort and reassurance for a distressed child or physical support during physical activities such as dance workshops etc. In all cases, physical contact should only take place with the consent of the child or young person i.e. 'Is it ok if I.....?'
- It is not good practice to take children in a private car on journeys. Where this is unavoidable, it should be with the full knowledge and written consent of the parents and the Director or Head of Programme at Firstsite.
- The board, staff, freelance staff, artists and volunteers should not meet with children outside organised activities, unless it is with the knowledge and written consent of parents and Director or Head of Programme at Firstsite.

Photography, Film and Web Site Images

Photography and film are sometimes part of media coverage or events at Firstsite. The use of digital cameras and mobile phones present the opportunity for misuse of images.

- Commissioned professional photographers or the media must be clear about expectations of them in relation to child protection and will be advised by Firstsite staff in regard to this.
- Provide a clear brief for photographic, video, online and film work about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour.
- Introduce professional photographer, media to the entire group and explain their role, where relevant.
- Inform participants, carers and parents that a photographer/media will be in attendance at an event and ensure that they consent to both the taking and publication of videos/film or photographs. Ensure that the consent form contains the following details:
 1. The name of the subject.
 2. The name and contact details of the parent/carer of the subject.
 3. The reason or use the images are being intended to be put to, with options for parents/carers to identify which they consent to.
 4. A signed declaration that the information provided is valid and that the images will only be used for the reasons given.
- Do not allow unsupervised access to participants or one to one photo sessions at events.
- Do not approve photo sessions outside the event.
- Photographic and recording equipment including mobile phones is forbidden under all circumstances in any changing areas.

There have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on web sites. Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children when they are accompanied with personal information. This information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to start to “groom” that child for abuse. Secondly the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use and there is evidence of this adapted material finding its way onto child pornography sites.

- Consider using models or illustrations if you are promoting a project
- Avoid the use of the first name and surname of the individuals in a photograph.
- Only use images of participants in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.
- Photographic and video material must be stored on the shared drive, not on the personal devices of the board, staff, artists or volunteers.

What is Abuse?

Abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. It commonly occurs within relationships of trust or responsibility and represents an abuse of power and/or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a child or vulnerable adult regardless of their age, gender, disability or race.

Definitions of Abuse

Physical Abuse

Physically hurting or injuring a child. This can involve:

- Hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating.
- Munchausen Syndrome by proxy, (whereby a parent/carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health in a child/vulnerable adult).
- Giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison.

Sexual Abuse

This involves forcing or enticing a child/vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. It may involve physical contact, penetrative or non-penetrative acts.

Emotional Abuse

Persistent emotional ill treatment which is likely to cause serious harm to the child's emotional development or harm and distress to a vulnerable adult.

Emotional Neglect

The persistent failure to meet basic emotional needs, which is likely to result in serious impairment to health or development. This may include the failure of the parent/carer to supply food, shelter or clothing or a failure to protect from physical harm and danger, or allow access to medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to basic emotional needs, such as:

- Persistent lack of love and affection.
- Constant overprotection which prevents children from socialising.
- Children are frequently being shouted at or taunted.
- Bullying, neglect, physical or sexual abuse.

Contextual Safeguarding

The risks presented by social conditions, that exist outside of familial relationships, and are not related to the capacity of parents/carers, such as:

- Peer on peer relationship abuse.
- Criminal exploitation (including County Lines).
- Sexual exploitation/online abuse.
- Risks associated with gangs/groups.
- Radicalisation.
- Trafficking and modern slavery.

Signs and Indicators of Abuse and Risk:

- Unexplained or untreated bruising or injuries.
- Suffering continual stomach pains or other physical ailments without any medical explanation.
- Aggressive or withdrawn behaviour and refusal to talk about injuries.
- Unexpected fear of an adult and flinching when touched.
- Sexually explicit behaviour and language.

- Unaccounted for sources of money.
- Unaccounted for access to new equipment/clothing etc.
- Fear of going home to parents or carers or of them being contacted.
- Changes over time in manner and appearance such as losing weight, becoming dirty and dishevelled, being constantly tired and always hungry.
- Telling you about being asked to 'keep a secret' or dropping other hints or clues about abuse.

Responding to signs or suspicions of abuse

All staff and freelancers have a duty to refer cases where abuse is known to have happened or is suspected.

Be alert for signs of abuse. However, even if a child or vulnerable adult is displaying some or all of these signs, it does not necessarily mean they are being abused – there may be other causes. Also, none of these signs may be present – you may just feel that there is something wrong. If you are worried about possible abuse it is your responsibility to put the interests of the child or vulnerable adult first and report it immediately. You should report it to the Firstsite Designated Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer. If your concerns are about this person, you should report it to their line manager, the Director of Firstsite, or if this is impossible go directly to the police or social services.

Do not initiate a conversation with the child or vulnerable adult to ask them about your concerns.

If you are working in a setting such as a school or residential establishment this setting should have established procedures in place regarding suspicions or allegations of abuse. You should follow their procedures but also inform the Firstsite Designated Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer.

Guidelines – Responding to disclosures of abuse

If a child or vulnerable adult discloses abuse to you, you should inform the Firstsite Designated Children and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer as soon as possible. You should:

- Let them know that it is right to tell someone of their worries.
- Listen attentively.
- Stay calm.
- Make sure that they know that they are not to blame for what has happened.
- Explain that you will have to tell someone else about the abuse, you cannot keep this secret, even if this discourages them from disclosing further.
- Only ask factual questions to establish what has happened.
DO NOT ASK LEADING QUESTIONS.
- Make a note of what the child/vulnerable adult has said, together with the date and time of your conversation, sign it and immediately tell the Firstsite Designated Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer. Try to use the language which was used in the disclosure not your own language.
- Do not share this information with anyone other than the Firstsite Designated Children and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer, or those members of staff with responsibility for safeguarding. A list of relevant staff members is available at the front of this document. Do not contact or approach the parents or carers about the conversation or any person suspected of abuse.

Firstsite staff and freelancers are not professionals in child protection. Wherever possible it is their duty to report any of their own observations/disclosures to the person responsible for child protection when working in offsite locations. Where possible they should avoid recording disclosures themselves.

Process for recording concerns

- Ensuring that the Firstsite Designated Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer maintains a log book in which to record the details of any specific concerns or incidents in relation to child/vulnerable adults protection. This log book will contain the following information: child/vulnerable adult's name, parent/carer's details, child/vulnerable adult's address, phone numbers, what happened, when, who else was there, what was said, any evidence, who has been told, who was concerned, did the child/vulnerable adult say anything, have the parents/carers been advised.
- Information shall be passed to the relevant authorities and agencies immediately by the Firstsite Designated Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer.

Lost Child procedure

As soon as a child is thought to be missing, notify the Duty Managers immediately.

Duty Managers will begin an immediate search of the building.

If necessary, staff members should be called away from other duties to assist with the search.

All staff involved in the search should remain in radio contact.

The artist or leader of session should stay with their group, to ensure the safety of other children at the session.

Once the child is located, they should be returned to the session.

If necessary, the Duty Managers can administer First Aid.

Parents/carers should be informed of the incident, and a clear understanding of the risks going forward should be discussed.

The incident needs to be reported to the Firstsite Designated Children & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer.

Risk assessments will need to be reviewed and updated as necessary by the Firstsite Designated Children & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer and other relevant staff.

If the child is not located inside the building the police must be contacted using 999 / 101 or PCSO by the Duty Managers.

The police would want to know the following information:

- Where you are (address of setting/venue).
- The next of kin of the child.
- A detailed description of the child, including age and gender, working down from head to toe including as much clothing description as possible.
- The circumstances of the incident, including anything that may have triggered the disappearance, how long have they been missing, where were they last seen, was there an argument or disturbance.
- Who is looking for the child, where are they, do they have a mobile with them, what is the number?

The police will require all information on the incident so far, including any prior conversations and advice from the police.

Contact the parent/carer using contact details held. **It is very important that class registers are kept up to date and in a safe location.** Continue calling until contact is made. Duty Managers or the Firstsite Designated Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer will be responsible for this.

Staff should continue to search (until advised otherwise by the police). Always consider the requirement for the children still at the setting.

If any safeguarding concerns are raised by the incident, the procedures set out in the Firstsite Safeguarding Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults should be followed.

This policy is updated and reviewed on an annual basis.

May 2019

Key Highlights – Firstsite Safeguarding Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults

Some common signs of abuse/safeguarding concerns to look out for

- Unexplained or untreated bruising or injuries.
- Suffering continual stomach pains or other physical ailments without any medical explanation.
- Aggressive or withdrawn behaviour and refusal to talk about injuries.
- Unexpected fear of an adult and flinching when touched.
- Sexually explicit behaviour and language.
- Unaccounted for sources of money.
- Unaccounted for access to new equipment/clothing etc.
- Fear of going home to parents or carers or of them being contacted.
- Changes over time in manner and appearance such as losing weight, becoming dirty and dishevelled, being constantly tired and always hungry.
- Telling you about being asked to 'keep a secret' or dropping other hints or clues about abuse.

Procedure to follow if you have a safeguarding concern when at work

If you see something that concerns you:

- Do not ask leading questions or try to elicit a disclosure
- Take as many detailed and factual notes as you can as soon after your concern as possible
- Report immediately to:
 - a) Sue Hogan (Designated Safeguarding Officer) 01206 713707
 - b) Beth Hull 01206 713706
 - c) Frances Jones 07928 020664
 - d) Any senior member of staff

If a member of staff shares a safeguarding concern with you:

- Report immediately to Sue Hogan (Designated Safeguarding Officer) 01206 713707
- If Sue is unavailable, call the Essex Child and Family Hub on 0345 603 7627 and ask for advice