



## **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure**

### **Statement**

STEP believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard all children and young people and promote their welfare, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

STEP is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers and students to share this commitment.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

### **Purpose of this document**

- To provide protection for the children and young people who receive STEP services.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child, or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of STEP.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks including DBS checks are completed.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff, volunteers, agency staff, and students.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children and young people appropriately.
- Providing effective management for staff, volunteers and students through supervision, support and training.

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

## **GENERAL GUIDANCE**

### **Attitudes**

Staff and volunteers are committed to:

- Treating children and young people with respect and dignity.
- Always listening to what a child or young person is saying
- Valuing each child and young person
- Recognising the unique contribution each individual can make
- Encouraging and praising each child or young person

### **By example**

Staff and volunteers will endeavour to:

- Provide an example, which we would wish others to follow
- Use appropriate language with children and young people and challenge any inappropriate language used by a young person or child or an adult working with young people.
- Respect a young person's right to privacy

### **One to one contact**

Staff and volunteers will:

- Not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children, away from others. Staff should try to always be visible to others in their contact with children.
- In the unlikely event of having to meet with an individual child or young person make every effort to keep this meeting as open as possible.
- If privacy is needed, ensure that other staff are informed of the meeting and its whereabouts

### **Physical contact**

Staff and volunteers should never:

- Engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horseplay
- Do things of a personal nature for a child or a young person that they can do for themselves. If such an incident arises, for example, where a child or young person has limited mobility, Swindon STEP staff should seek a member of staff or colleague to support with such an incident
- Allow, or engage in, inappropriate touching of any kind

### **General**

Staff and volunteers should:

- Be aware that someone might misinterpret our actions no matter how well intentioned
- Never draw any conclusions about others without checking the facts
- Never allow us to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking situations such as tantrums or crushes
- Never exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues or make suggestive remarks or gestures about, or to a child or young person, even in fun

## **Sharing Information**

Good communication is essential in any organisation. In STEP every effort will be made to assure that, should individuals have concerns; they will be listened to and taken seriously.

It is the responsibility of the management to ensure that information is available to and exchanged between all those involved in this organisation and its activities. Some information is confidential and should only be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis.

## **Children & Young People**

Children and young people have a right to information, especially any information that could make life better and safer for them. STEP will act to ensure they have information about how, and with whom, they can share their concerns, complaints, and anxieties.

When sharing information, STEP personnel will be sensitive to the level of understanding and maturity, as well as to the level of responsibility, of the people with whom they are sharing.

## **Parents and carers**

Parents / persons with parental responsibility are ultimately responsible for their children's welfare at all times, and they should be assured that their children are involved with a credible organisation.

We achieve this by:

- Publicising information on all our initial communications and correspondence (Including Social media)
- Publishing the named Designated Child Protection Person:

Paul Dobson  
Director  
Telephone: 01793 209180  
Mobile: 07545 897065  
Email: [PDSTEP@outlook.com](mailto:PDSTEP@outlook.com)

- publishing how to make a complaint on all initial communications and correspondence (Including Social media)
- Publishing a full copy of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure on our website

## Procedures for reporting allegations and suspicions of abuse

- 1) Any member of staff, volunteer or student who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that abuse may have occurred must report it immediately to the designated person for child protection or senior manager on duty. In the absence of either of the above, the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff on duty. This person will need to question *'is this a child protection case or not?' 'does this child or young person need help and, if so, which service is*
- 2) The designated person will discuss the case with MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) by telephone.

**Telephone number: 01793 466903**

**Out of hours telephone number: 01793 436699**

**Disabled Children Team Tel: 01793 464020**

- 3) On the advice of the Duty Worker at the MASH, STEP will either support the family within the community as part of an Early Help Plan to include where appropriate call a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting

**or**

Make a referral to children's social care input by completing a Child Protection Referral Form (RF1) [https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/downloads/download/6/referral\\_form\\_-\\_rf1](https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/downloads/download/6/referral_form_-_rf1) within a maximum of 48 hours, ideally 24-hour, with a copy to the designated person for child protection – or senior manager on call in their absence. A copy should be kept in uploaded documents on Charitylog with restricted access to Senior Management Team.

Essential information will include: The child's name, address, date of birth, family composition, and reason for referral, name of person receiving the referral and any advice given. This written confirmation must be signed and dated by the worker.

Confidentiality must be maintained and information relating to individual children and young people/families shared with staff on a strictly need to know basis.

### **Alleged Abuse by Staff, Managers, Volunteers or Trustees**

When an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, then the allegation must be passed to your designated person for child protection or the senior leadership team, or, if the allegation concerns them both, direct to the Local Authority Designated Officer (see below).

Your designated person for child protection should contact one of the Local Authority designated officers for consultation:

- Local Authority Designated Officer, on 01793 466849
- Head of Safeguarding on 01793 464366.

The designated officer contacted will record a note of the consultation and will advise on the appropriate action that needs to be taken.

## **Travel**

- Children and young people should only be carried in staff's private motor vehicles in exceptional circumstances where staff have been authorised to do so as part of their job description, and where no other form of transport is available.
- The employee is responsible for ensuring that their motor insurance policy includes cover driving for work and for the transportation of children and young people
- Staff can only use their car to transport children and young people to group activities as part of the service provided by STEP; Children and young people must not be offered a lift where this is not part of our service provision e.g. after a home visit when the member of staff is returning to the office and the child or young person would like a lift into town to go shopping
- Staff must ensure that any passenger wears a seatbelt including when sitting in the back of the vehicle
- Staff must not accept any money or gift e.g. petrol money in return for transporting a service user; reimbursement should be claimed in accordance with the Travel and Expenses Policy, acceptance of money / gift may invalidate the motor insurance policy.
- Any travel outside of planned journeys included in the service provision must be authorised in advance and only with the express permission of the Senior Management Team

## **Record Keeping**

- Any member of staff, volunteer or student receiving a disclosure of abuse, or noticing possible abuse, must make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen, putting the event into context, and giving the date, time and location. All records must be dated and signed.
- All hand-written records will be retained, even if they are subsequently typed up in a more formal report.
- Written records of concerns about children should be kept and uploaded to Charity Log, even where there is no need to make a referral immediately.
- All records relating to child protection concerns will be kept in a secure place and will remain confidential.

## **Internet Safety and Electronic Communication**

Children and young people are skilled in using computers, mobile phones and gaming machines such as the Wii or PlayStation Portable (PSP). New Information and Communication Technology (ICT) offers opportunities and knowledge but also new risks and challenges, particularly for children and young people.

STEP have the same duty of care in keeping our children and young people safe when using social media as we do in any other aspect of our work. The use of social media, text messaging and email has become part of our working practices, and all staff must ensure that they record all communications with children and young people on Charity Log.

## **Training**

Staff will take part in a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare.

All staff will have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they improve over time. This includes the identification of any additional child protection and safeguarding training required to carry out their role and ensure their child protection training is kept up to date.

## **Role of the Trustees**

The Trustees will nominate a link Trustee for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, who will remain up to date with relevant legislation and STEP Policies and Procedures.

**Policy Updated:** March 2025 by Tracey Dobson – Operational Manager

**Signed Chair of Trustees - Bob Barrett:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bob Barrett', written over a horizontal line.

**Date:** 30/04/2025