



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND GUIDANCE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of all users of FCA premises (FCA members, Affiliated Group members and any other users of FCA Premises) in relation to the protection of children from abuse.

All users of FCA premises have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of children.

It is the policy of FCA to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from all forms of abuse including physical, emotional and sexual harm.

FCA is committed to creating a safe environment in which young people can feel comfortable and secure while engaged in any of activities related to FCA.

FCA members, Affiliated Group members and all other users of FCA premises should at all times show respect and understanding for individual's rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the ethos and principles of FCA.

The FCA expects all Affiliated Groups and all other users of FCA premises providing activities for children and young people to

- Identify who might be at risk and how.
- Draw up a code of practice if needed, specific to the activity of the group.
- Consider the risks involved in their activity and mitigate against them as appropriate.
- Ensure that members and other users are aware of the relevant policies.

For the purposes of this document a child or young person is someone under the age of 18.

The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people.

The NSPCC definition of child abuse is:

“Any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can just as often be about a lack of love, care and attention. Neglect, in whatever form, can be just as damaging to a child as physical abuse.”

It is the responsibility of all users of FCA premises to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect, to consult the good practice guide, and to pass on their concerns to a responsible person/agency.

Designated Child Protection Person: For reasons of confidentiality the only person who needs to know this information is the following Designated Child Protection Person: TBD, so at present please contact any member of the Executive Committee.

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Designated Child Protection Person.

ACTION IN THE EVENT OF AN INCIDENT OR OF DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE OR OF AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE:

This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a vulnerable adult has been abused.

Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information.

This should include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the child who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.

The person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional adult protection agencies, following a referral from the designated Child Protection Officer.

The nominated Executive Committee member shall telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local social services duty social worker.

A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority adult social services department within 24 hours.

DO

- Make sure the individual is safe
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen
- Offer support and reassurance
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Follow correct procedure
- Explain areas of confidentiality; immediately speak to the Designated Child Protection Person for support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for ongoing support.

DON'T

- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Assume Information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation
- Elaborate in your notes
- Panic

In any case where an allegation is made, or someone in FCA or an Affiliated Group has concerns, a record should be made. Details must include, as far as practical:

1. Name of child or young person.
2. Age.

3. Home Address (if known).
4. Date of Birth (if known).
5. Name/s and Address of parent/s or person/s with parental responsibility.
6. Telephone numbers if available.
7. Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns, or passing on those of somebody else? If so, record details.
8. What has prompted the concerns? Include dates and times of any specific incidents.
9. Has the child or young person been spoken to? If so, what was said?
10. Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, record details.
11. Who has this been passed on to, in order that appropriate action is taken? e.g. school, designated officer, social services etc.
12. Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.

The Designated Person will inform the relevant outside organisation of the incident: social services, police, NSPCC, ChildLine.

NSPCC Help line Tel: 0800 800 500 – 24 hours, Freephone

RECORD-KEEPING

All records, information and confidential notes should be kept in separate files in a locked drawer or filing cabinet.

Only the Designated Persons will have access to these files.

DISCLOSURE

1. Never guarantee absolute confidentiality, as Child Protection will always have precedence over any other issues.
2. Listen to the child, rather than question him or her directly.
3. Offer him / her reassurance without making promises, and take what the child says seriously.
4. Allow the child to speak without interruption,
5. Accept what is said – it is not your role to investigate or question.
6. Do not overreact.
7. Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement
8. Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you must pass the information on.
9. Explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell.
10. Record the discussion accurately, as soon as possible after the event, Use the child's words or explanations – do not translate into your own words, in case you have misconstrued what the child was trying to say.
11. Contact the FCA Designated Persons for advice / guidance.
12. The Designated Person may then discuss the concern / suspicion with the relevant organisation, and, if appropriate, make a direct referral.
13. If the Designated Person is not available, or it is inappropriate to approach them, the person with the concern should make direct contact with the relevant organisation themselves.
14. Record any discussions or actions taken within 24 hours.

FCA CHILD PROTECTION GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by –

1. Adopting child protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for members and Affiliated Groups.
2. Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, members and Affiliated Groups.
3. Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.
4. Following carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of members and Affiliated Groups' members
5. Providing effective management for members and Affiliated Groups through supervision, support and training

We are committed to a practice that protects children from harm.

Members and Affiliated Groups in FCA accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of issues that cause children and young people harm.

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice at regular intervals.

ATTITUDES

1. Members and Affiliated Groups should be committed to Treating children and young people with respect and dignity.
2. Always listen to what a child or young person is saying.
3. Value each child and young person.
4. Recognise the unique contribution each individual can make.
5. Encourage and praise each child or young person.

BY EXAMPLE

Members and Affiliated Groups should endeavour to:

1. Provide an example that we would wish others to follow.
2. 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.
3. Respect a young person's right to privacy.

ONE TO ONE CONTACT

Members and Affiliated Groups should

1. Not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children, away from others.
2. 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.
3. If privacy is needed, ensure that others are informed of the meeting and its whereabouts.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

FCA Members and Affiliated Groups should never:

1. Engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horseplay.
2. Allow, or engage in, inappropriate touching of any kind.

3. 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, FCA members and Affiliated Groups should seek a parent, a member of school staff, or leader of the youth organisation to deal with such an incident.

GENERAL

Members and Affiliated Groups should:

1. Understand that someone might misinterpret their actions no matter how well intentioned.
2. Never draw any conclusions about others without checking the facts.
3. Never allow themselves to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking situations such as tantrums or crushes.
4. 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 ABOUT CHILD PROTECTION AND GOOD PRACTICE WITH CHILDREN, FCA MEMBERS AND AFFILIATED GROUPS

Good communication is essential in any organisation. In FCA 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 Executive Committee to ensure that information is available to, and exchanged between, all those involved in FCA activities. Some information is confidential and should only be shared on a strictly need- to-know basis.

Children and young people

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

When sharing information, FCA members and Affiliated Groups 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

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.

FCA achieves this by:

1. Ensuring that all Affiliated Groups and other users are fully aware of the FCA relevant policy and procedures.
2. Publishing the named Designated Child Protection Person(s) and how to make a complaint on the FCA website.
3. Publishing a full copy of the Child Protection Policy on the FCA internet site.

Members and Affiliated Groups

As an organisation that provides facilities for and has Affiliated Groups with members who are children and young people, it is imperative that members of FCA are aware of their responsibilities under the Child Protection legislation and have a working knowledge of FCA's procedures.

Other Bodies. A copy of our Child Protection Policy will be made available to any other appropriate body.