

## BOSP CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

**BOSP believes that children have the right to be completely secure from both the fear and reality of abuse and are committed to protecting all the children and young people in our care from harm.**



BOSP staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. Everyone who comes into contact with children, young people and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. To fulfil our responsibility, we consider at all times what is in the best interests of the child.

BOSP has two designated Safeguarding Leads, Activity Coordinator Emily Bell and CEO Jodie Connelly, trained to Level 3, who co-ordinate and oversee child protection and a Safeguarding Deputy, Sarah Pearce, Level 2. These members of staff have suitable experience, training and expertise, and are responsible for liaising with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, social services and Ofsted in any child protection matter. Dee Horton is our Safeguarding Trustee.

BOSP is committed to reviewing its Child Protection policy and procedures annually. The policy and its procedures are available via our website [www.bosp.co.uk](http://www.bosp.co.uk) and from The BOSP Office.

### Statutory Framework

BOSP works with key local partners to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of concern are identified and contributing to an inter-agency plan which provides additional support.

The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice in Essex are the responsibilities of the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB).

BOSP's Child Protection procedures comply with all relevant legislation, and all action is taken in accordance with the following guidance:

- Essex Safeguarding Children Board Guidelines – SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child protection procedures (ESCB October 2019)
- Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex (ESCB 2017)
- Essex LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) from the Children's Safeguarding Service 03330-139797

### Recognising Child Abuse

Child abuse manifests itself in a variety of different ways, some overt and others much less so. All staff and volunteers have child protection training and will be vigilant to signs and evidence of physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect. The four main types of abuse are:

- **Physical Abuse:** This can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, suffocating or any other physical harm. Deliberately causing a child's ill health also constitutes physical abuse
- **Sexual Abuse:** This involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve inappropriate looking or touching, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts and child sexual exploitation. Showing children pornographic materials, sexual activities, or

encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways also constitutes sexual abuse

- **Emotional Abuse:** Varying degrees of emotional abuse are present in virtually all child protection incidents but can also constitute abuse in its own right. Emotional abuse involves persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or torture, coercion, intimidation, cyber bullying or isolation, causing, or likely to cause, severe adverse effects on the emotional stability of a child. Such behaviour may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate, or making them feel unnecessarily frightened or vulnerable
- **Neglect:** Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional or psychological needs, such as is likely to have a severe impact on their health, development or emotional stability. Neglect may involve failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing for a child, or failing to protect them adequately from physical harm or ill health. Neglect can also manifest itself in a failure to meet the basic emotional needs of a child

Staff are also aware of environmental factors which may impact on a child/young person's welfare and safety, and understand safeguarding 'risks outside of the home' (formerly known as contextual safeguarding), responding to young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse.

**Child Criminal Exploitation** an example being county lines criminal activity when drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children to carry drugs and money from urban to suburban areas.

**Peer on Peer Abuse** which can include cyber bullying, physical abuse, hazing type violence and gender-based harassment.

Staff and volunteers are also aware of children/ young people becoming victims of abuse linked to faith or belief.

**Prevention of Radicalisation or Extremism** Youngsters can be targeted on-line, with video games or via Tiktok, texts. BOSP promotes the moral, spiritual, cultural and physical development of the children in its care and helps prepare them for the opportunities and experiences of life, promoting community cohesion

**Forced Marriage** is when entered into without the full consent of one or both parties.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** comprises of all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a duty on professionals has been introduced to notify the police of known cases if it appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 years of age or may about to be committed.

**Breast Ironing** as a means of preventing development

**Child Abuse linked to Beliefs in Spirit Possession, Witchcraft, Demons or the Devil** can lead to children being blamed for bad luck, and subsequently abused.

Staff are aware of the 'hidden harm' agenda concerning parents with drug and alcohol problems. It also considers other factors affecting parental capacity and risk, such as domestic abuse, mental or physical illness or a parent's learning disability that can put children at risk of harm, and understands behaviours linked to issues such as deliberately missing education and sexting, putting children in danger.

**Trafficking and Modern Slavery** examples include sexual exploitation or work with little or no pay

**Factitious Disorder** (formerly known as Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy) is when parents are saying their child has an illness or disorder when there is little evidence of this.

**Safeguarding in a Public Place** This is included in BOSP's activity risk assessments and as part of their skills 4 Life learning, where appropriate, BOSP's children and young people are taught about 'stranger danger' and other associated risks.

**Private Fostering** BOSP are obliged to inform ECC of arrangements by family members, that have evolved perhaps as a result of hidden harm within the child's home. Status needs to be determined, as Special Guardianship needs to be awarded to ensure the private fostering is safe.

**COVID-19** staff are aware that during lockdown the children we support have been very isolated, possibly exposing some to increased harm including; physical or sexual abuse, neglect or poverty, perhaps as a result of increased domestic or alcohol abuse, or due to the mental health of the parent/carer. Whilst there will be others who have avoided abuse during lockdown, but will face harm once again as they become back in contact with their wider family/community.

**Online safety** We recognise that during and following the pandemic many children/young people will have increased unsupervised access to digital platforms. Staff are made aware that children/young people are vulnerable to being bullied or groomed for abuse or radicalisation online. Staff will be vigilant to any signs that that this may be occurring and report any concerns in the usual way. We have provided parents with information on how to keep their children/young people safe online and resources to support them to do this, including; a Zoom participant guide and Parental Tool Kit – on-line safety which can be found on BOSP's website.

BOSP understands that children with special educational needs and disabilities face additional safeguarding challenges. Barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability, without further exploration
- That they are more prone to peer group isolation than others
- The potential to be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying without outwardly showing signs

### **Support Worker Support and Training**

BOSP is committed to ensuring that it meets its responsibilities in respect of Child Protection through the provision of support and training to staff/volunteers. Therefore, BOSP will ensure that:

- All staff, students and volunteers are carefully recruited in accordance to our 'Safer Recruitment Policy' (see separate BOSP policy); have verified references and have full and up to date Disclosure and Barring Service checks
- All staff and volunteers are made aware of the main indicators of child abuse and are aware of their statutory requirements in respect of the disclosure or discovery of child abuse

- All staff and volunteers are given a copy of BOSP's Child Protection Policy during their induction, and have its implications explained to them
- All Support Workers complete a health questionnaire to assess their mental and physical suitability to work at BOSP, and attend a trial day where they are paired with a 'buddy mentor' to risk assess their performance and suitability
- All staff and volunteers complete on-line safeguarding training with Senior Team staff who are Group Leaders/Supervisors trained to Level 2. This is then supplemented by regular supervision and group training in Child Protection issues, providing any relevant information and guidance
- All staff are provided with supervision and management support commensurate with their responsibilities in relation to Child Protection, and their requirement to maintain caring and safe relationships with children. Staff are reminded during session de-brief meetings that if they have any safeguarding concerns to speak to the Supervisor on duty/Child Protection Lead (not to be disclosed to the whole group)
- Staff are aware of procedures in place to record details of visitors to the setting and to ensure that BOSP has control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children
- Staff are encouraged to be courageous and exercise their 'professional curiosity' if they have any concerns, especially as many of BOSP's children are non-verbal and have complex learning needs
- Personal mobile phones are locked away during the session. Contact instead is made by walkie talkies between workers in different rooms, with the BOSP mobile retained by the Supervisor should parents wish to make contact or for emergency use. Photographs are only allowed to be taken using the BOSP camera in-line with parent/carers signed consent forms. The camera is kept in a locked cupboard when not in use and is regularly downloaded, with images being saved to a restricted file.

## **Safe Caring**

The staff/volunteers at BOSP understand the organisation's Child Protection procedures and have had appropriate training and guidance in the principles of safe caring. To this end:

- Every effort will be made to avoid or minimise time when members of staff, students or volunteers are left alone with a child. If staff are alone with a child, the door of the room should be kept open and another member of staff/worker should be informed
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- Staff/volunteers will never carry out a personal task for children that they can do for themselves
- Where this is essential, staff/volunteers will help a child whilst being accompanied by a colleague. Unless a child has a particular need, staff/volunteers should not accompany children into the toilet
- If a child makes inappropriate physical contact with a member of staff, student or volunteer, this will be recorded fully on an Incident Record
- Staff are aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. They will be mindful of how and where they touch children, given their age and emotional

understanding. Unnecessary or potentially inappropriate physical contact will be avoided at all times (as outlined in the Staff Handbook - Physical Touch Guidelines)

- We may on occasion request confirmation from a staff member/volunteer's GP that they are mentally and physically fit for work, to identify whether there are any causes for concern about an individual's health that might affect their suitability to look after vulnerable children or be in contact with children. To safeguard the children in our care, sessional work will not be offered to staff until this has been confirmed

### **When a Child/Young Person Makes an Allegation or Disclosure**

In circumstances where a child makes an allegation or a disclosure to a member of staff or volunteer, the member of staff/volunteer concerned will:

1. Listen fully to all the child has to say
2. Make no observable judgement
3. Ask open questions that encourage the child to speak in their own words
4. Ensure the child is safe, comfortable and not left alone
5. Not guarantee confidentiality, making promises that cannot be kept; such as promising not to tell anybody what they are being told

All staff and volunteers will follow BOSP's Child Safeguarding procedures in-line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board Guidelines.

### **Dealing with Allegations of BOSP's Workforce**

Further to this, the following principles will govern any suspected or reported case of abuse:

- Where actual or suspected abuse comes to the attention of staff/volunteers, they will report this to the Supervisor or the Child Protection Lead at the earliest possible opportunity
- Staff/volunteers are encouraged and supported to trust their professional judgment and if they suspect abuse has, or is taking place, to report this
- All allegations made by a child against a member of staff/volunteer will be fully recorded, including any actions taken, on an Incident Record form and BOSP's Safeguarding Incident Log.
- Information recorded will include full details of the alleged incident; details of all the parties involved; any evidence or explanations offered by interested parties; relevant dates, times, locations and body maps, if required. In the event of there being a witness to an incident, they should also complete an Incident Record Form
- The Supervisor and the Child Protection Lead will be responsible for ensuring that written records are dated, signed and kept confidentially
- If an allegation of abuse is made against the Supervisor, the incident should be reported to the Child Protection Lead. If the allegation is against one of the Child Protection Leads,

the second Child Protection Lead will then assume responsibility for the situation and BOSP's Safeguarding Trustee will also be informed.

- BOSP will take appropriate action in relation to the findings of any investigation into allegations of abuse, consistent with its duties to protect the safety of children and uphold fair processes for staff, students and volunteers
- Any member of staff, a student or volunteer under investigation for the alleged abuse of a child, will be subject to the provisions of the Staff Disciplinary Policy
- BOSP's Safe-Guarding Lead will discuss allegations with LADO if doubts of any situation arising. Telephone 03330 139797.
- Ofsted will be informed of any allegations of abuse against a member of staff, worker, student or volunteer, or any abuse that is alleged to have taken place on the premises or during a visit or outing within 14 days on; 0300 1234666 or online at:  
[https://ofstedonline.ofsted.gov.uk/ofsted/Ofsted\\_Early\\_Years\\_Notification.ofml](https://ofstedonline.ofsted.gov.uk/ofsted/Ofsted_Early_Years_Notification.ofml)

(If in doubt as to whether the incident is an Ofsted 'Reportable Incident' or not, report anyway, for Ofsted to decide)

- Essex Short Breaks are to be informed of Reportable Incidents

We will notify the Disclosure and Barring Service of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of a child protection concern

### Referring Allegations to Child Protection Agencies

BOSP is committed to ensuring that it meets its responsibilities in respect of child protection by treating any allegation seriously and sensitively. BOSP will NOT carry out any investigation itself into a suspected child abuse incident. If the Supervisor or the Child Protection Lead has reasonable grounds for believing that a child has been, or is in danger of being subject to abuse, the following procedure will be activated:

Contact will be made, at the earliest possible opportunity with:

**Essex - Child & Family Hub helpline**

0345 603 7627

Monday to Thursday: 8:45am to 5:30pm

Friday: 8:45am to 4:30pm

**If risk of significant immediate harm, ask for priority line, or call the police on 999**

**Out of Hours contact:** 0345 606 1212

Monday to Thursday: 5.30pm to 9.00am

Friday & Bank Holidays: 4.30pm to 9.00am

A request for service can also be made via the online portal:

[www.essex.gov.uk/report-a-concern-about-a-child](http://www.essex.gov.uk/report-a-concern-about-a-child)

**Havering Child – MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)**

01708 433 222

[TriageMASHandAssessment@havering.gov.uk](mailto:TriageMASHandAssessment@havering.gov.uk)

Essex Police contact number 101 or 01245 491491 Out of Hours contact: 01708 433999

- The Supervisor or the Child Protection Officer will communicate as much information about the allegation and related incidents as is consistent with advice given by social services and the police
- At all times, the safety, protection and interests of children concerned will take precedence. The Supervisor and staff will work with and support parents/carers as far as they are legally able
- BOSP will assist the social services and the police, as far as it is able, during any investigation of abuse or neglect. This will include disclosing written and verbal information and evidence
- BOSP's safeguarding policy is reviewed annually with Safeguarding and Incident Log records audited on a quarterly basis by BOSP's Safeguarding Trustee

### **Whistleblowing**

Please see BOSP's separate whistleblowing policy. We want everyone at BOSP to feel able to report any child protection/safeguarding concerns. However, members of staff/volunteers who feel unable to raise these concerns internally can call the NSPCC whistle blowing helpline 0800 0280285 8:00am to 8:00pm or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

### **Confidentiality**

Staff will ensure that all concerns, allegations and investigations are treated with sensitivity and confidentiality, and only shared with those who need to know. Any information shared is shared under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and in-line with GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018.