



friends on the hill

safeguarding children policy

1 introduction

1.1 at friends on the hill we want all parents to be confident that their children attend activities at the club in a safe and secure environment with appropriate support and supervision from the adults present and appropriate behaviour from other children. this policy addresses the key steps we take to ensure a safe and secure environment and how we will respond in the case of what we hope will be a 'never event' in which a child, parent or staff member has serious concerns about safety.

2 safeguarding concerns

2.1 safeguarding children concerns can take a range of forms from obvious physical or sexual abuse from others, to more subtle neglect or coercive controlling behaviour. the concerns can arise between an adult and child or between children.

2.2 some types of safeguarding concerns are below:

2.2.1 abuse in intimate personal relationships between children

2.2.2 harmful sexual behaviour, which can include:

- inappropriate sexual language, such as name-calling or sexual comments
- consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images or videos
- accessing age-inappropriate sexual material online
- sexual activity without consent
- sexual violence, such as rape or sexual assault
- upskirting

2.2.3 activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group

- 2.2.4 extremism and radicalisation
- 2.2.5 sustained emotional abuse including repeated criticism or threats including statements that are racist, misogynist, homophobic or about other protected characteristics
- 2.2.6 neglect of emotional, social or physical health needs such as frequently left alone for long periods at home below the age of 10 years
- 2.2.7 bullying or harassment by threat or actual violence, emotional or social means either in person or online
- 2.2.8 witnessing domestic abuse
- 2.3 some signs of safeguarding concerns are:
 - withdrawn, timid or nervous of others
 - aggressive or threatening toward others
 - a marked change in behaviour can indicate an incident has recently occurred
 - consistent signs may suggest more long-term sustained abuse or neglect
- 2.4 safeguarding allegations may be made about the actions of a parent/guardian or other adult or child outside the club or about an adult or child during the club.

3 staff responsibilities

- 3.1 all staff make a commitment that under no circumstances will they subject any child to harm. this includes obvious harm such as physical, sexual or aggressive verbal abuse and more subtle forms of harm such as neglect or coercive control or cyberbullying.
- 3.2 all staff make a commitment to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the children attending the club do not experience harm in any form from other adults or children whilst attending the club. to support this, the manager will ensure regular risk assessments and risk management plans are completed to minimise risks.
- 3.3 all staff have a responsibility to be alert to signs of the full range of safeguarding concerns – from bullying to neglect and abuse - and to be confident and informed in how to respond to any concerns.
- 3.4 all staff have a responsibility to respond to unacceptable behaviour, particularly behaviour that may harm, with clear and firm boundaries about what is

acceptable. this may mean a child or adult are immediately suspended from the club if they are a serious risk to others.

- 3.5 all staff have a responsibility to act and share any concerns that they have or have been reported to them as detailed later in this policy. to support this they will ensure their mobile phones are fully charged and with them at all times in case of emergency
- 3.6 a range of pre-employment checks will be carried out by friends on the hill with contracted staff before they are able to start work at the club in accordance with its staffing policy. this will include reference checks including one recent employer in a relevant role and an enhanced DBS check (with barred list) for working with children. in exceptional circumstances, a temporary DBS waiver may be completed that allows staff to start work prior to receiving an up to date DBS. examples where this will be considered is if the candidate is in a proven existing role working with children such as in a Teaching Assistant role in a state school.
- 3.7 all members of contracted staff and the management committee will complete a level one safeguarding children course accessed via <https://www.lambethsaferchildren.org.uk> at least once every two years. The manager and the Safeguarding lead and deputy will complete level three safeguarding children training at least once every two years.
- 3.8 all staff will have contact at least every quarter with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the welfare of each child and to consider any safeguarding issues. staff will be aware that they can contact the safeguarding lead(s) via the main email address hello@friendsonthehill.com or via the safeguarding lead(s) direct number in an emergency or at any other time to raise and discuss any possible concerns. if a staff member is concerned that a child is at immediate and significant danger of harm then they should consider calling 999. quarterly meetings will provide an opportunity for staff to raise issues, identify solutions, identify training needs and receive support and coaching.
- 3.9 the safeguarding lead is Ellen Cockerill. Rosalind Holbright acts as deputy. the lead practitioner is responsible for liaison with local statutory children's services agencies, and with the LSP (Local Safeguarding Partners).
- 3.10 the safeguarding lead can be contacted via safe@foth.com

4 what we will do to keep your child(ren) safe

- 4.1 all children will be assigned a key person within their first week. their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents and/or carers. they should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate
- 4.2 we will ask you as part of your registration with the club if your child may need help with toileting or feeding either regularly, occasionally or in exceptional circumstances. if this is needed regularly the manager (with the support of the Safeguarding Lead(s) where needed) will agree a care plan with you and put this in writing. if this is occasional or in exceptional circumstances staff will always give the child the choice about receiving their help; telling them each action they will take and asking them if that's ok prior to carrying out the action. if staff do help a child in occasional or exceptional circumstances then the parent/guardian will be informed on collection if this has been necessary.
- 4.3 we will ask you as part of your registration with the club if your child has any additional needs and will discuss these with you to agree relevant support plans
- 4.4 if your child needs medication administered to them we will ask you to complete a medication form. the health & safety policy contains further details about administration of medication
- 4.5 we will take steps to ensure there is no access to the internet during the club without constant adult supervision
- 4.6 we will take steps to ensure that personal mobile phones or cameras are not used by children during the club. If a child continues to use their phone/camera following three warnings in one week to keep their phone on silent and in their bags and/or not to use their camera then they will be asked to give it to staff on arrival at club and it will be returned when they leave until the end of the following week. wearable technology, such as smart watches, will be permitted to be worn, although if staff believe that technology is being used inappropriately they will follow the same process as for phones/cameras above
- 4.7 staff will generally use personal mobile phones only for the purposes of contacting parents or in the event of personal emergencies. staff will not use phones or other devices to record images, video or audio in the setting without parental consent.
- 4.8 whenever there is an incident or a complaint made the manager will consider if there is any reason to be concerned about safeguarding as part of the concern

- 4.9 at registration we ask you to let us know who is permitted to collect your child and if there is anyone about whom there are concerns who may try to collect your child from the club
- 4.10 the size and shape of the venue allows us to observe all children unless in the bathrooms and so if more than one child/adult are seen to spend longer than a couple of minutes in the bathroom at the same time a staff member will check they are okay.
- 4.11 in the highly unlikely event that a staff member uses physical intervention to ensure the safety of staff members and children, staff will keep a detailed record of the incident and inform the parent/carer on the same day or as soon as reasonably possible

5 our safeguarding response

- 5.1 any child may share concerns with any staff member at any time. they may do so directly – by spoken disclosure – or indirectly by changes in behaviour (eg using highly sexualised language or acting in a violent or withdrawn way) or there may be visible signs of harm (eg bruises or malicious text messages).
- 5.2 staff will take all indications of concern seriously. if a child indicates they have experienced harm then it is important that the staff member stays calm and acknowledges that the child is telling them something important. It is not staff's responsibility to conduct a full interview with a child but to encourage the child to talk so they can understand enough about what has happened so they can make a judgement about the risk of immediate harm. it is key that staff do not use leading questions (eg "did they touch you there?") but use open questions ("where did they touch you?"). it is also important the staff member does not interrupt or ask the child to repeat their experience.
- 5.3 it is important that the child knows that the staff member needs to share what they have been told to help ensure the child is safe. they may ask the child what they think will help them be safe. if there are observable signs of a safeguarding concern eg bruises or an image or message then this should be sensitively photographed as evidence.
- 5.4 parents may also raise concerns with any staff member at any time although they are encouraged to speak to the manager or the safeguarding leads. it is important that parents are aware that any serious concerns will need to be shared and acted upon
- 5.5 staff may also raise concerns, for example, if they observe incidents of concern during the club.

- 5.6 it is important the staff member immediately records exactly what they have been told or observed by whom, at what time, date, location and with who else present.
- 5.7 the staff member will immediately share their concern with the manager (or their deputy for that day) in the first instance. when a safeguarding concern is identified by the manager, or if the staff member prefers, the concern will be immediately raised with the safeguarding lead(s) by email or phone depending on urgency.
- 5.8 if it's safe to do so then the manager of the safeguarding lead(s) will make the parent(s) or guardian aware of any concerns. this may include sharing concerns that a child's behaviour is leading to concerns about the safety of others.
- 5.9 if a safeguarding incident has occurred at the club then the manager (with the support of the safeguarding lead(s)) will put in place a plan to address this. parents/carers will be involved in the development of the plan whenever possible.
- 5.10 the safeguarding leads may take advice from the local safeguarding children team. this can be done anonymously in the first instance.
- 5.11 the Lambeth safeguarding children team and Ofsted will always be consulted by the safeguarding lead(s) if an allegation has been raised about a member of staff. notification must be made as soon as practical but at least within 14 days of the allegation being made. Ofsted will also be notified of the outcome of any allegation.
- 5.12 if there is a concern about a current staff member then the manager and the safeguarding lead(s) will consider if it is appropriate for the staff member to be present in the club whilst the concerns are investigated and a staff member may be suspended on full pay until an investigation is complete.
- 5.13 if a safeguarding alert is required then the safeguarding lead(s) will contact the Lambeth Safeguarding Children team and Ofsted. whenever it is safe to do so, the decision of the safeguarding leads to share identifying details with the local authority will be discussed with parent(s) or guardian(s) prior to the alert or referral to the team.
- 5.14 if an investigation upholds a safeguarding concern against a member of staff then they may be dismissed from their role. the safeguarding lead will notify the DBS of relevant information leading to the dismissal for the safety of others.

5.15 if a child is thought to be at immediate risk of significant harm then the police will be contacted via 999.

6 escalation & notification

if the situation is not resolved satisfactorily by friends on the hill then anyone can escalate safeguarding issues by:

- calling the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000
- contacting the Lambeth Safeguarding Children team via Lambeth's Integrated Referral Hub on: 020 7926 3100 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm) 020 7926 5555 (after office hours)

7 legislation

this policy is designed to meet the requirements under section 39(1)(b) of the Childcare Act 2006.

last updated 7 september 2024