

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY

Policy Statement

Purpose

Orwell maintains a zero tolerance to abuse and promotes that all children and young people have the right to be safeguarded from all forms of abuse and recognise that the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children's Act (1989 & 2004).

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers, the Board, paid staff and volunteers or anyone working on behalf of Orwell – Safeguarding vulnerable people is everyone's business.

This policy will make clear the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding children.

Legal Obligations

The Children's Act (2004) Places duties on a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Working Together to safeguard children (2018) Places statutory duties on the Police, Local Authorities and Health to safeguard children. The document recognises the contribution of voluntary and private sector organisations to safeguard children.

Principles

For the purpose of safeguarding a child is anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. However, there are special circumstances where the age is extended beyond this, eg for children with disabilities and Looked After Children.

Orwell recognises that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises it has a responsibility to prevent abuse by ensuring safe environments that promote the welfare and safety of children and young people.

Every child who participates in Orwell activities should be able to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.

Orwell recognises that all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to safeguarding from all types of harm.

Concerns about the safety or well-being of a child will be paramount and action will always be taken to protect them from harm.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing the views and contribution of children and young people and will always listen to, respect and take seriously their views and concerns.
- Ensuring our recruitment reflects its commitment to safeguarding by ensuring that all required checks are undertaken and that interviews are undertaken to explore the values of candidates are consistent with our own.
- Recognising that it is vital to have good working relationships with all statutory and voluntary agencies working with children.
- Orwell staff and volunteers working within services that accommodate children and young people will receive mandatory safeguarding children training. For staff working within services where children and young people are supervised by a parent or guardian, we will ensure that staff are able to recognise and report abuse.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for children, young people and adults by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely and sharing concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents and carers appropriately.
- Ensuring that we have an effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Recognising that working in partnership with other organisations, communities and individuals helps prevent abuse that might otherwise be undetected.

What is abuse or neglect?

There are four defined categories of abuse consisting of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or by others (eg via the internet). Children may be abused by an adult or adults potentially operating as an organised gang, or another child or children.

- **Physical abuse** – Physical abuse is deliberately hurting a child causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts. It is not accidental - children who are physically abused suffer violence such as being hit, kicked, poisoned, burned, slapped or having objects thrown at them. Shaking or hitting babies can cause non-accidental head injuries (NAHI). Sometimes parents or carers will make up or cause the symptoms of illness in their child, perhaps giving them medicine they do not need and making the child unwell – this is known as fabricated or induced illness.

- **Sexual abuse** - A child is sexually abused when they are forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities. This does not have to be physical contact, and it can happen online. Sometimes the child will not understand that what is happening to them is abuse. They may not even understand that it is wrong; or they may be afraid to speak out.
- **Emotional abuse** - Emotional abuse is the ongoing emotional maltreatment of a child. It is sometimes called psychological abuse and can seriously damage a child's emotional health and development. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare or humiliate a child or isolating or ignoring them. Children who are emotionally abused are often suffering another type of abuse or neglect at the same time – but this is not always the case.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** – Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and is the most common form of child abuse. A child may be left hungry or dirty, without adequate clothing, shelter, supervision, medical or health care. A child may be put in danger or not protected from physical or emotional harm. They may not get the love, care and attention they need from their parents. A child who is neglected will often suffer from other abuse as well. Neglect is dangerous and can cause serious, long-term damage; even death.

Beyond the four main categories of abuse the following types of abuse are also used to describe the abuse of children.

- **Domestic violence** - including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse. A child who is witness to domestic violence should be considered as abusive and harmful to the child.
- **Child Sexual Exploitation** - Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.
- **Child Trafficking** - Human trafficking involves men, women and children being recruited, harboured or brought into a situation of exploitation through the use of violence, deception or coercion and forced to work against their will. It is a form of modern slavery. When children are trafficked, no violence, deception or coercion needs to be involved: simply bringing them into exploitative conditions constitutes trafficking and as abuse.
- **Bullying & Cyberbullying** - Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere: at school, at home or online. It is usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Bullying that happens online, using social networks, games and mobile phones, is often called cyberbullying. A child can feel like there is no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night.

- **Female Genital Mutilation** - Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is also known as female circumcision or cutting. Religious, social or cultural reasons are sometimes given for FGM. However, FGM is child abuse. It is dangerous and a criminal offence. There are no medical reasons to carry out FGM. It does not enhance fertility, and it does not make childbirth safer. It is used to control female sexuality and can cause severe and long-lasting damage to physical and emotional health.

Responding to Abuse

Child abuse and neglectful behaviour can and does happen to children from any background, culture, class, ethnicity or faith and can be physical, sexual or emotional. It is important that everyone involved in recognising the signs of child abuse, understand the physical indicators and symptoms.

A child may decide to disclose information that may indicate they are experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect. A child chooses to speak to an adult because they feel that they will listen and that they can trust them. The adult needs to listen to what the child has to say and be very careful not 'lead' the child or influence in any way in what they say.

Children might be scared that the abuser will find out and be worried that the abuse may get worse. They might think that they will not be believed or that there is no one who will listen. Sometimes children do not realise that what is happening is abuse.

Where a member of staff has knowledge or a suspicion of abuse taking place, this will be shared with their line manager at the earliest opportunity. Where this is not possible, they may choose to either report their concern to a line manager within Orwell or directly report their immediate concern to the local MASH team (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub), safeguarding team or Police.

Where a referral has been made concerning serious harm, the Safeguarding Lead shall be advised as soon as possible of the concerns and immediate actions undertaken. The Safeguarding Lead will ensure the senior executive team are advised at the earliest opportunity, who in turn will appraise appropriate board members.

All appropriate information must be recorded clearly including dates and times when events took place. Facts and opinion should be clearly differentiated.

Referrals should be made using the appropriate format recommended by the relevant safeguarding team or MASH. A timely record of the referral should be made and reported to the line manager at the earliest opportunity.

Orwell will always take action with regard to all suspicions and allegations, responding suitably and appropriately (see contact information below for guidance and local policy and procedure).

Orwell will share information about any concerns they have with a child or young person's safety with agencies who need to know, and involve parents, children and young people appropriately.

Orwell will centrally record and review all referrals regularly and annually report these, our actions and outcomes to our governing board.

Reporting Concerns

If the concern places the child or adult in immediate danger, you must use 999 to summon an immediate response.

Where the concern is not immediate, advice should be sought as soon as possible either from a line manager or the Children's Safeguarding team MASH.

Norfolk

Alerts can be made on 0344 800 8020

or online <https://online.norfolk.gov.uk/socialcareenquiry/>

Suffolk

Alerts can be made on 0808 800 4005

or online <http://www.suffolkscb.org.uk/working-with-children/how-to-make-a-referral/>

Cambridge

Alerts can be made on 0345 045 1362

or online <https://www.cambslscb.co.uk/report-a-safeguarding-concern/>

Essex

Alerts can be made on 0345 603 7627

or online <https://www.esccb.co.uk/working-with-children/concerns-about-the-welfare-of-a-child/>

Dissemination

All staff will be appropriately trained to perform their duties safely and competently and those staff who need to use specialist equipment will be fully trained and supervised while they are developing their competency.

For further information and guidance related to protecting children and young people from abuse the NSPCC website is an excellent source of support and can be accessed www.nspcc.org.uk.