



Dundrum Arch Club

GOOD PRACTICES and PRINCIPLES

FOR ARCH CLUBS

CHILD / VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY

Arch Federation Child Protection Policy

Guidelines based on 'National Youth Federation Child Protection Guidelines' for Adult Workers and Young People in the Youth Work Sector

`Children First', National Guidelines for the Protection of Children

`Our Duty of Care' Principles of good practice for the protection of children and young people.

For the Purpose of these Guidelines, a 'Child' means an unmarried person under the age of 18 years or a vulnerable adult.

Chapter One

Introduction

Children / Vulnerable Adults with disabilities are people first, with additional needs. They have the same hopes, fears and aspirations as children and adults without additional needs.

The National Disability Act defined Disability as *"a Substantial restriction in the capacity of a person to participate in economic, social or cultural life on account of an enduring physical, sensory, learning, mental health or emotional impairment."*

Children / Vulnerable Adults with Disabilities can be more at risk of abuse because they may experience

- Sensory and communication difficulties
- Dependence on others for assistance including intimate care
- Limited understanding of sexuality or sexual behaviour
- Contact with numerous carers and helpers
- Fear of not being believed
- Perceived unreliability as witnesses.

All Staff/Volunteers involved in the day to day running of their Arch Club should be alert to the possibility of Child/Vulnerable Adult abuse. They need to be aware of their obligations to convey any reasonable concerns or suspicions to the HSE and to follow the correct reporting procedures contained in this policy for doing so.

WHAT ARE ARCH CLUBS?

Arch Clubs provide a secure social environment for people with special needs, their siblings and friends to learn, form friendships and above all have fun.

AIMS AND BENEFITS OF ARCH CLUBS:

To provide a social outlet for people with special needs.

To develop the members' social skills, self-esteem and quality of life through a dynamic range of activities.

To provide support, information and respite for parents and families.

To influence public policy toward those with special needs, through contact with statutory agencies.

CHILD PROTECTION STATEMENT

We in the Arch Federation want to make sure that Children / Vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm while they are with Staff/Volunteers in their Arch clubs.

We are fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of our members.

Volunteers should, at all times, show respect and understanding for their rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the Arch Federation.

Chapter Two

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is about managing sensitive information that arises in a trusting relationship and doing so in a manner that is respectful, professional and purposeful.

Youth Work is based upon trusting relationships, and the sharing by young people to youth workers of personal information and problems is not uncommon. Anyone, (club member or adult), disclosing information in this context needs to know in advance the limits of confidentiality and the responsibilities attached.

In matters of child abuse, a volunteer can never promise to keep secret any information that is divulged. A youth worker should explain to the person disclosing why s/he cannot keep this information secret and also explain to the young person what s/he intends to do with it. Every effort should be made to get the person to understand this strategy and consent to it. Those working with a child and a family should make this clear to all parties involved.

All information regarding concern or assessment of child abuse should be shared on a "need to know" basis in the best interest of the child/vulnerable adult. The giving of information to relevant others, for the protection of the child/vulnerable adult, is not a breach of confidentiality. It must be clearly understood that information which is gathered for one purpose must not be used for another without consulting the person who provided that information.

Chapter Three

DEFINITION OF CHILD / VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE

1. Neglect

Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well-being and/or development are severely affected.

2. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a care-giver and a child, rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms. Examples of emotional abuse include:

- 1 the imposition of negative attributes on children, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
- 2 conditional parenting;
- 3 emotional unavailability by the child's parent/carer;
- 4 unrealistic, inappropriate expectations of the child;
- 5 failure to show interest in or provide age-appropriate opportunities for the child's cognitive and emotional development;
- 6 unreasonable or over-harsh disciplinary measures;
- 7 exposure to domestic violence.

The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interaction dominates and becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/carer.

3. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from willful or neglectful failure to protect a child. Examples of physical abuse include:

- 1 shaking;
- 2 use of excessive force in handling;
- 3 deliberate poisoning;
- 4 suffocation;
- 5 Munchausen's Syndrome by proxy where an adult may fabricate stories of illness about a child so as to cause physical signs of illness.

4. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others. Examples of sexual abuse include:

- 1 exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of the child;
- 2 intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child, whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;
- 3 masturbation in the presence of a child;
- 4 sexual intercourse with a child;
- 5 sexual exploitation of a child.

POSSIBLE PHYSICAL and BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE

Neglect

- 1 Frequent minor or serious injuries
- 2 Untreated illness
- 3 Hunger, lack of nutrition
- 4 Tiredness
- 5 Inadequate and inappropriate clothing
- 6 Lack of supervision
- 7 Low self esteem
- 8 Lack of peer relationships

Emotional

- 1 Unreasonable mood and/or behavioural changes
- 2 Aggression, withdrawal or an 'I don't care' attitude
- 3 Lack of attachment
- 4 Low self esteem
- 5 Attention seeking
- 6 Depression or suicide attempts
- 7 Persistent nightmares, disturbed sleep, bedwetting, reluctance to go to bed
- 8 Fear of adults or particular individuals, e.g. family member, baby-sitter, or indeed excessive clinginess to parents/carers
- 9 Panic attacks

Physical

- 1 Frequent bruising, fractures, cuts, burns and other injuries
- 2 Torn clothing
- 3 Bite marks, burns or welts
- 4 Bruises in places difficult to mark, e.g. behind ears, groin
- 5 Undue or unnecessary fear
- 6 Aggressiveness or withdrawn
- 7 Absconding frequently from home

Sexual

- 1 Over-affectionate or inappropriate sexual behaviour
- 2 Age/understanding inappropriate sexual knowledge given the child's age level, which is often demonstrated in language, play or drawings
- 3 Fondling or exposure of genital areas
- 4 Hints about sexual activity
- 5 Unusual reluctance to join in normal activities which involve undressing, e.g. games/swimming

The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- a specific indication from a child that (s)he was abused;
- a statement from a person who witnessed abuse;
- an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse;
- a symptom which may not in itself be totally consistent with abuse, but which is supported by corroborative evidence of deliberate harm or negligence;
- consistent signs of neglect over a period of time

Chapter Four

REPORTING PROCEDURES

Volunteers may be afraid of being thought insensitive, afraid of breaking confidence or afraid of being disloyal if they report suspected child abuse to the HSE or An Garda Síochána. However, early intervention may reduce the risk of serious harm occurring to a child/vulnerable adult in the future. Persons uncertain about the validity of their concerns may discuss them with a HSE social worker or public health nurse. This may enable them to decide whether or not to make a formal report. In accordance with the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998, providing information to others for the protection of a child, does not constitute a breach of confidentiality.

Responsibility to Report

Any person who suspects that a child/vulnerable adult is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, has a responsibility to report their concerns to the HSE. This responsibility is particularly relevant to professionals such as teachers, child care workers and health professionals who have regular contact with children in the course of their work. It is also an important responsibility for staff and volunteers involved in sports clubs, parish activities, youth clubs and other organisations catering for children.

The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- (i) a specific indication from a child that (s)he was abused;
- (ii) a statement from a person who witnessed abuse;
- (iii) an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse;
- (iv) a symptom which may not in itself be totally consistent with abuse, but which is supported by corroborative evidence of deliberate harm or negligence;
- (v) consistent signs of neglect over a period of time

Chapter Seven

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR STAFF/VOLUNTEER

Inappropriate Behaviour

- 1 Volunteers must be sensitive to the risks involved in participating in some contact sports with children/vulnerable adults.
- 2 They should at all times exercise particular caution in areas such as swimming pools.
- 3 Jokes of a sexual nature may be offensive to others and should never be told in the presence of children/vulnerable adults.
- 4 Touching a child/vulnerable adult unnecessarily should be avoided.
- 5 Workers should never physically punish or in any way be verbally abusive to a child/vulnerable adult

Disruptive Behaviour

Sufficient help should be available to ensure that

- Disruptive behaviour on the part of a child/vulnerable adult can be anticipated and/or controlled.
- Activities are organised in such a way as to ensure maximum fun, learning, safety and participation.
- Where possible, more than one worker is present.
- When dealing with a disruptive individual/s, instances of disruptive behaviour which require the intervention of a youth worker and which put at risk the safety and well-being of themselves or others should be documented in a report book set aside for this purpose.

This book should be available to other workers involved with the group.

- The report book should record:
 - i) what happened
 - ii) who was involved

- iii) where and when it happened
- iv) what was said, if significant
- v) any injury to person or property

Trips away from Home

- When taking children/vulnerable adults away on trips, workers should always be attentive to matters such as
- Safety - activities - buildings - transport.
- Insurance - ensure it is adequate to cover all aspects of the trip.
- Parental/Guardian Consent - should be sought from parents and/or guardians before taking children/vulnerable adults away on trips.
- Medical information which might be relevant, e.g. allergies, medication, dietary requirements.
- Sleeping arrangements - sleeping areas for males and females should be in separate and supervised quarters and should be supervised by two (if possible) workers of the same sex as the group which they are supervising.
- Maintaining standards and good youth work practice in the relaxed atmosphere of a trip away from home may be difficult and boundaries and standards of behaviour can be crossed over.
- Experience indicates that many of the cases of alleged child abuse within the youth work setting occur during trips away.

Arch Anti-Bullying Policy

What is Bullying?

Repeated aggression, be it verbal, psychological or physical, by an individual or group against others.

This includes

- Teasing
- Taunting

- Threatening
- Hitting
- Extortion behaviour by one or more children against a victim

Some Effects

- Mental anguish
- Lowered self esteem
 - Self blame
 - Isolation
 - Insecurity
- Overly cautious
 - Emotional scars
- Depression

Dealing with bullying behaviour in general is the responsibility of the Arch Club where it is taking place.

Raising an awareness of bullying among the staff/volunteers can help in its prevention.

Peer Abuse

In some cases of abuse the alleged perpetrator will also be a child/vulnerable adult.

In these situations, the child protection procedures should be adhered to for both the victim and the alleged abuser.

If there is any conflict of interest between the welfare of the alleged abuser and the victim, the victim's welfare is of paramount importance.

All Arch Clubs are urged to adopt the Arch Federation Anti-Bullying Code

- Our Arch Club is a place where every member can feel secure
- Our Arch Club is a place where bullying is not acceptable
- Our Arch Club is a place where name calling is not tolerated
- Our Arch Club is a place where no one suffers abuse of any nature
- Our Arch Club is a place where no one is victimised
- Our Arch Club is a place where each member is supported and listened to
- Our Arch Club is a place where each member is treated equally

Chapter Eight

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about the quality, lack of, or refusal, of a service that the person complaining is entitled to use.

Who is entitled to complain?

All children/vulnerable adults receiving our service in an ARCH CLUB (or others acting on their behalf) should be expressly provided with a right to complain.

The main object of a good complaints system is to find ways of resolving a child's/ vulnerable adult's sense of being treated unfairly.

What do people who complain want?

- For their complaint to be taken seriously
- An explanation of what went wrong
- An apology or expression of regret for what has happened to them
- Reassurance that there will be no repeat

The handling of complaints in a positive way to children/vulnerable adults is the exercising of their rights.

Respect for children's/vulnerable adults' rights, in particular their right to make complaints are key to good safeguarding and child/vulnerable adult protection practice.

DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

The Arch Federation strives to ensure that the experience of the child/vulnerable adult in their Arch Club is a happy and productive one. In the event of a child/vulnerable adult disclosing an incident of abuse, it is essential that this is dealt with sensitively and professionally by the staff member/volunteer involved.

The following are guidelines to support the worker/volunteer in this:

- 1 React calmly;
- 2 Listen carefully and attentively;
- 3 Reassure the person that they have taken the right action in talking to you;
- 4 Do not promise to keep anything secret;
- 5 Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions;
- 6 Check back with the child/vulnerable adult that what you have heard is correct and understood;
- 7 Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser;
- 8 Record the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible.
Sign and date the record;
- 9 Ensure that the child/vulnerable adult understands the procedures which will follow;
- 10 Pass the information to the Child Protection Officer or Duty Social Worker in local HSE, the numbers of which you will find in the appendix of this policy. Do not attempt to deal with the problem alone;
- 11 Treat the information confidentially.

DEALING WITH ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with, but should not be ignored. In all cases, the safety and welfare of the child/vulnerable adult is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Child Protection Officer. This information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner. Any such complaints relating to Child Protection concerns should be handled in accordance with the procedures outlined in this Code.

If an allegation is made against a person working in your Arch Club,

everyone involved must get a proper response.

Two separate procedures are followed.

The reporting procedure in respect of the child/vulnerable adult.

The procedure for dealing with the worker.

Chapter Ten

Accident - Incident - Procedure

Each Arch Club should have an accident, incident procedure to best suit the needs of their club. In this regard, The Arch Federation would ask all clubs to include The Federation's guidelines when formulating a set procedure.

- Ensure that your club has a first aid box fully stocked.
- All clubs should have a designated person trained in first aid.
- Emergency numbers should be displayed and to hand.
- Have up-to-date contact numbers for parents/carers/staff.
- Details of any accident/incident, no matter how minor, should be recorded in an incident book and should include:
 - Name
 - Nature of accident/incident
 - Date and time of accident/incident
 - Location
 - Names of those involved
 - Details of injuries, if any
 - Action taken
 - Record if contact was made with home emergency contact person
 - Record of witnesses' names

All relevant details should be written down as soon as possible, whilst still fresh in the memory.

Hospital Visit

In the event a visit to a hospital is required, ensure the person is accompanied by one of the staff/volunteers and that the remainder of the group is safe. Establish what further action is needed, if any.

Arrange contact with parent/carer of casualty, so as to minimise confusion, anxiety and misinformation.

Activity Centres

When visiting activity centres on day trips, weekends or longer, Clubs should check insurance details, and assess risks if any.

Attention should be given to the following before embarking on the trip.

- Safe methods of transport (has your bus seat belts fitted?)
- Insurance to cover all aspects of the trip
- Written parental consent
- Any information about child / vulnerable adult which might be relevant to staying away overnight, like allergies, medical problems, special needs.
- Appropriate and well supervised sleeping arrangements
- Respect for the privacy of child / vulnerable adult in dormitories, changing rooms, showers and toilets.

Accompanying staff/volunteers should have the knowledge / skills to ensure the safety of child / vulnerable adult in their care.

Please take note of the Activity Centre Risk Check List included in the appendix of this policy and incorporate it into any club trip.