

Guy Fox History Project Limited
Charity Registration #1119898
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Policy Statement

In fulfilment of its Mission Statement, the Guy Fox History Project will do everything within its power to uphold the rights of children and young people as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), The UK Children Act (1991), The Protection of Children Act (1999) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (DH 1999). Building on the guidelines, principles and standards set in this legislature, and in order to promote honesty, transparency and a protective culture, the Guy Fox History Project will:

- Protect children from, and prevent: discrimination, sexual, emotional and physical abuse, neglect, bullying, exploitation, injustice, violence and invasion of privacy
- Provide and create a secure and safe environment free from oppression
- Promote children's right to freedom of thought and expression, to have their views taken into account, and the right to take part in events going on around them
- Act in the best interests of children in their care and put the child's interests first
- Respect children as young people who have a right to be taken seriously
- Uphold children's right to develop abilities, personality and identity
- Promote diversity, inclusivity and respect for others
- Respect and promote the right of children to participate fully in cultural and artistic life
- Endorse equal opportunities
- Create a culture of openness and empowerment
- Promote children's rights to children, including their right to say "no" and where/who to go to if they have worries

All those employed by, working on behalf of (including contractors), or volunteering for The Guy Fox History Project have an obligation to comply with the policy statement and are bound by the Code of Conduct. They must take seriously the responsibilities intrinsic to relationships of trust, and regular staff training will be provided to disseminate understanding of their role and how to safeguard children from harm.

CODE OF CONDUCT

A relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work, or the nature of their activity; it is intrinsically unequal and responsibilities must be exercised as a consequence.

This code aims to protect both children from an unequal and potentially damaging relationship; and the person in a position of trust by preventing him/her from entering into such a relationship deliberately or accidentally, by providing clear and enforceable guidance on what behaviour is acceptable.

The following behaviour will not be tolerated under any circumstances:

- Physical, sexual, or emotional abuse including:
 - Bullying, shouting, racism, sexism
 - Defamatory remarks, improper language, sexual innuendo
- Favouritism and personal rewarding

In order to limit opportunities for abuse, Guy Fox representatives and employees must:

- Not touch children when no other adult is present except in cases of emergency and injury
- Avoid spending time alone with a child
- Not spend time with individual children outside the boundaries of the Guy Fox History Project
- Treat all children equally

- Be committed to actively preventing the exploitation and abuse of children
- Follow the procedures document and talk to the Child Protection Officer if they have concerns over a child's or member of staff's behaviour, or are unsure as to what constitutes acceptable behaviour

Key principles of good practice - Guy Fox representatives and employees must:

- Respect all individuals whatever their age, developmental stage, ability, sex, sexual orientation or ethnicity
- Place the safety and well-being of children first
- Help children reach their potential
- Promote self-confidence and empowerment
- Encourage children to be non-violent, sensitive and tolerant
- Encourage thoughtfulness and respect for others and their possessions
- Encourage children to trust their own feelings if they feel uneasy about someone
- Promote openness
- Form appropriate relationships with children based on mutual respect and trust and sincerity
- Carry out positive disciplining by encouraging good behaviour with attention and praise
- Create a safe, creative, oppression-free and trusting environment
- Be aware of and comply with the Guy Fox Policy statement

If any member of the Guy Fox History project is found violating the code of conduct he/she will be sanctioned accordingly:

1. Verbal warning
2. Suspension and investigation
3. Dismissal and appropriate legal action

In instances of suspected emotional, physical or sexual abuse suspension will be enforced.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE PROCEDURE

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. It is important never to assume that someone else will deal with a possible case of child abuse. This procedures document gives clear guidelines about how to act, what to do, and who to tell if you suspect a child is being abused.

Before looking at the possible scenarios in which you may find out about child abuse, always try and follow this basic checklist if you suspect child abuse:

- Name of the child
- Parent's/carer's details
- The child's address
- Relevant phone numbers
- What is said to have happened or what was seen
- When it occurred
- Who else, if anyone, was there?
- What was said by those involved
- What if any evidence or abuse can be recorded. E.g. bruises, bleeding, changed behaviour
- Who has been told about it
- Who was involved in the incident, and if possible record how they were involved?
- Was the child able to say what happened, if so how did s/he describe it?
- Whether the parent(s) have been advised.

Contact the Child Protection Officer straight away with as much information as you have:

020 7407 4785
info@guyfox.org.uk

If for whatever reason the Child Protection Officer is not available contact the Referral and Assessment Team at the Southwark Social Services on the appropriate number:

South Southwark: 020 7525 1042/1044
North Southwark: 020 7525 1921/1929

Alternatively you can call the NSPCC child protection helpline (24 hour) 0800 800 5000, or email help@nspcc.org.uk , who will be able to provide advice.

Remember the first rule is never to keep suspicions to yourself and to act swiftly.

IF YOU SEE SIGNS OF ABUSE

Child protection training provided as part of your Guy Fox induction programme will enable you to identify possible signs of abuse.

If you are worried about a child's behaviour or injuries but the child may not have said anything to suggest they have been abused, you may feel it is better not to do or say anything. This only perpetuates the cycle of abuse and it is your duty to act.

If you see, hear, or are told something that makes you concerned about a child's welfare record it using the checklist and report it to the Child Protection Officer.

Knowing how to act on suspicions can be very difficult for you. You can help by:

- Being available and prepared to listen
- Not keeping things to yourself
- Not relying on someone else to take action

In general it is best to tread carefully, sharing your concerns and involving the parents and carers where possible. This may seem strange but research shows that the provision of support for parents and families is often key to preventing further neglect or abuse. Talking with parents or carers may reveal that there is a perfectly innocent reason for the child having changed. If you are still unhappy about the situation, or if the explanations that you have been given do not ease your concerns, or they simply do not add up, immediately inform the Child Protection Officer.

It is not appropriate to discuss your concerns with the child's parents when you believe that you might put the child at greater risk, or when you suspect that physical abuse or sexual abuse is occurring and that the parents may be responsible. In this case contact the Child Protection Officer immediately.

In some circumstances you may have good reason to believe that the child is at immediate and serious risk. In these cases, the child's safety must come first, regardless of the impact your action may have on the child's parents or carers. If you are in any doubt about how to act, contact the Child Protection Officer.

IF A CHILD CONFIDES IN YOU

It can take a great deal of courage for a child to talk to another adult about their abuse, because the child is 'telling on' someone who is more powerful than they are. The child learns to be very good at covering up the abuse and is able to give plausible explanations for what has happened. The child may have to betray a person who is not only close to them, but also loved by them and they are risking a great deal in the hope that you will believe what they say.

If a child confides in you:

- React calmly, remain accessible and receptive
- Listen carefully, without interrupting
- Be aware of your non-verbal messages
- Make it clear that you are taking them seriously
- Keep responses short, simple, slow, quiet and gentle
- Don't interrogate the child; observe and listen but don't probe; use active listening techniques
- Acknowledge their courage and reassure them that they are right to tell
- Tell the child they are not to blame and have done the right thing by telling you
- Avoid criticising the alleged perpetrator personally
- Let them know that you are going to do everything you can to help them and what may happen as a result; be honest but make no promises
- Make a note of what was said and who was present – use the child's actual words wherever possible.
- Do not end the conversation abruptly.

What to avoid:

- Do not allow your shock or distaste to show
- Do not probe for more information than is offered
- Do not speculate or make assumptions
- Do not ask leading questions
- Do not make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Do not make any promises that you cannot keep, such as promising that 'everything will be alright'
- Do not agree to keep the information a secret

The next step:

- Contact the Child Protection Officer with all the details, using the checklist.

"OPEN DOOR POLICY" AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Guy Fox History Project Policy statement promotes a culture of openness. This Open Door Policy enables adults and young people to voice concerns about abusive or unethical conduct.

It takes courage to challenge inappropriate behaviour by colleagues and the Open Door Policy operates in total confidentiality to act on people's concerns.

Anyone (children, parents, workers) who has the slightest concern about the behaviour of either a Guy Fox employee or a child can contact the Child Protection Officer, the details for whom are posted on the information board, to talk through their worries, or make an official complaint.

Those working for Guy Fox are bound by the code of conduct to contact the Child Protection Officer if they have concerns about a child's welfare. If anyone is found to be keeping information secret disciplinary action will be taken according to the sanctions list.

STAFF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

This section deals with how to recruit all would-be paid staff and volunteers for any position involving contact with children.

The job description ought to set out a commitment to the prevention of abuse and their duty to abide by the organisation's rules.

Applicants will be asked to sign an application form including:

- Their full name, current and recent addresses and date of birth
- Details of previous experience, voluntary or paid, of working with children, if any
- Permission to contact, in writing and in person, at least one person who has experience of their work or contact with children and who may be asked for a reference
- Details of any convictions for criminal offences against children, including any 'spent' convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- In appropriate cases permission to check for any police criminal record either through a police check or using the criminal records bureau

References

We need to be clear as to what might constitute an acceptable reference for any post. A referee might imply that an applicant is a gay man or lesbian woman, or have some information about some minor financial misdemeanour - these matters are not relevant to the prevention of child abuse. We must use any information gathered in this way carefully and avoid unfair or unlawful discrimination.

Interviews

As well as using this to ascertain skills and experience, use interviews to explore the applicant's experience of working or contact with children as a means of preventing abuse. We should do this with paid and voluntary staff.

One or more interviewers should ask applicants about their working, voluntary and personal relationships with children, using the information given in the written application. Applicants may also be asked about their ability and commitment to fulfil the duty to prevent the abuse of children, set out in the job description or outline of tasks.

Should anything in an applicant's responses leave the interviewer(s) in any doubt as to his/her suitability to work with children, these areas of uncertainty should be explored further through searching follow-up questions.

This information should only be used to prevent the abuse of children, ensuring we apply the principles of equality of opportunity and adhering to our policy.

Form of identification

At some point before, or immediately, following the interview, we should see some form of identification, which gives the applicant's full name, date of birth and current address together with his/her signature or photograph (e.g. driving licence or passport). This should be compared against the written application form to ensure that the applicant is not assuming a false identity.

Convictions for criminal offences against children

Only a small percentage of incidents of abuse against children is reported and results in conviction. Therefore trying to ascertain whether or not an applicant has any conviction for offences against children is not the most efficient way to prevent abuse.

Applicants should be told clearly, preferably in writing, that the positions for which they are applying involve work or contact with children and are therefore exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. All convictions however old must be declared. Applicants will be assured that this information will be dealt with confidentially and will not be used to discriminate against them unfairly.

A convicted abuser may lie. As well as all the other safeguards we should ask applicants for paid posts to explain any lapses in their employment record, as these might be periods when a convicted abuser was serving a jail

sentence. Also where a volunteer appears to have moved from one voluntary group to another on a number of occasions, we should find out whether there is a good reason for this.

The names of prospective paid staff and volunteers must be checked using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). In order to access the CRB we must register with an umbrella organisation that has a 'membership' with the CRB. We cannot go directly to the CRB without being affiliated to an umbrella body that must counter-sign all our requests for checks. I am currently trying to register Guy Fox with an umbrella body.

All our criminal record checking must be done in the strictest of confidence and this needs to be made clear. We should also explain that we operate an equal opportunities policy and we do not want to deter the majority of people who commit minor offences unrelated to children from applying. Not only should we be promoting equal opportunities policy, but acknowledge that the experiences of these people may be valuable in their work with children and young people.

Probation periods

We should consider making appointments of both paid and voluntary staff conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period. The length will be dependent on the job position but could be between 3 months and a year. A firm date for the review of a probationary period should be set on appointment.

Those positions such as voluntary helpers, may involve appointments that are shorter than a reasonable probationary period and therefore they should be supervised as if they were undertaking a probationary period.

During the probationary period it is advisable for the line manager or supervisor (probably Kourtney) to hold supervision meetings on a more frequent basis than normal, and to take special steps to observe the work of the new staff member regularly

The supervisor must have no doubt as to the staff member's ability and commitment to prevent the abuse of children, as set out in the job description or outline of tasks, before confirming the successful completion of the probationary period.

Induction and training

To uphold our policy statement and commitment to preventing child abuse, we must provide inductions including child protection training, and all members of staff will have clear roles and responsibilities, which should include:

- The person to whom they will be accountable for their work (their line manager or supervisor)
- The person(s) whose work they will supervise (if any)
- A description of the work they will undertake with children, with reference to any relevant guidelines produced by the organisation for safeguarding the welfare of those children
- The duty to prevent the abuse of all children in contact with the organisation, and reference to the action to be taken if abuse is discovered or disclosed.