

# FRIENDS OF DARWEN CEMETERY



## Child Protection

Friends of Darwin Cemetery (FODC) is a voluntary organisation committed to promoting the welfare of children and young people. Children are welcome to help on the Working Parties but must be supervised by a parent or guardian at all times.

The Management Committee is responsible for ensuring that effective child protection procedures are followed (Child for the purposes of these procedures is anyone under the age of 18 years of age).

All personal information about children, young people and their families should be treated as confidential, to be discussed only as necessary on a need to know basis.

Any disclosure of the confidential information to any other person may only be undertaken with expressed permission of the parents of the children and young people for the purpose of assisting them. Except where it is considered necessary for the welfare and protection of a child or young person when information shall be shared with the appropriate authority.

FODC has developed this position statement in order to provide clarity about how FODC carries out its commitment to protecting the welfare and safety of all children and young people supported.

Where there are concerns for the welfare of children and young people FODC will support and encourage the parents of the children and young people to seek additional support from relevant agencies to meet those needs.

Where concerns are more serious and/or may impact on the safety of a child or young person FODC will follow the steps outlined in this Policy and Practice Guide.

FODC Management Committee will ensure that all volunteers and other adults who are involved in the delivery of FODC activities with children / young persons are assessed for their suitability, including CRB Disclosures.

### Policy aims

The aim of the FODC Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

It will provide children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst attending FODC activities and allow all staff / volunteers & coaches to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

FODC Management Committee will ensure that all members /staff / volunteers / coaches involved in the delivery of activities to children / young people or vulnerable adults follow the good practice guide.

### **Good practice guidelines**

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate

#### **Good practice means:**

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Making activities fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it is provided openly.
- Keeping up to date with relevant laws, qualifications and insurance.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are involved in activities, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act *in loco parentis*, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent if group officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

#### **Practices never to be sanctioned**

The following should **never** be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun

- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

### **Incidents that must be reported/recorded**

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the appropriate officer and record the incident.

You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- If he/she seems distressed in any manner
- If he/she misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

### **Use of photographic/filming equipment**

There is evidence that some people have used voluntary events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled people. All groups should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Club Child Protection Officer.

**Videoring and photography:** Participants and their parents/carers should be made aware if photographs or video is going to be used to record the activity and their consent obtained. Any such records should be stored safely.

### **Support and Help**

FODC will help & support volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is not likely to result in allegations being made.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
- Work safely effectively with children.

### **Responding to allegations or suspicions**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in FODC, in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities. The responsibility to investigate lies with the statutory agencies, not with FODC.

FODC will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff / volunteer or coach there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation
- A child protection investigation
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.

#### **Action if there are concerns**

##### **Concerns about poor practice:**

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the FODC Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue and raise the matter with the groups committee / officers.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by FODC Child Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be dealt with by the group committee / officers, who will decide how to deal with the allegation.

##### **Concerns about suspected abuse:**

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to FODC Child Protection Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- FODC Management Committee will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- If FODC Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to another officer of the Management Committee who will refer the allegation to Social Services.

#### **Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The Club Child Protection Officer & Management Committee
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services/Police

Social Services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser (or parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

#### **Internal enquiries and suspension**

FODC Management Committee will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries FODC Management Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the FODC Management Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

### **Allegations of previous abuse**

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, FODC should follow the procedures and report the matter to the social services or the police.

### **In an Emergency**

If a child / young person is potentially seriously injured; ensure that the child has received or receives medical attention as soon as possible or is alone or someone is threatening to harm the child / young person ring 999 or the local police station. The police are empowered to act immediately to protect a child. Social Services are not empowered to act in the same way without a court order.

### **Recognising abuse**

All children, whatever their circumstances, have the right to expect protection from harm.

All parents have a right to receive help and support to prevent them from further harming their child.

There are different kinds of abuse. Some occur because of the way adults or children and young people behave towards a child; some happen because adults are failing or unable to provide the proper care for the children they look after.

One child may suffer different kinds of abuse at the same time.

It is important that action is taken straight away to help a child who is being abused.

The concept of significant harm was introduced by the Children's Act in 1989 as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children.

The Local Authority is under a duty to make enquiries where it has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

### **Definitions**

The Department of Health defines child abuse as:

- Physical injury
- Neglect
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse

### **Triggers of concern**

There are several triggers:

- Something you see on a child
- Something you observe about a child's behaviour
- Something a child or someone else tells you
- General concerns regarding parenting not allayed by supportive interventions.
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### **Potential Perpetrators within FODC**

Adults with a motivation to abuse children target activities, which bring them into contact with children and young people and provide opportunities for abuse. Any organisation which works with children / families is therefore vulnerable.

If organisers / coordinators or volunteers see or hear anything which causes them to suspect that a child is being abused by someone within FODC they should discuss the situation immediately with one of the following:

- The named person identified as Child Protection Issues Officer
- The Chairman or other member of the Management Committee
- The organiser /coordinator

Where concern exists it should always be brought to the attention of FODC Child Protection Officer. If this person is not available they should contact another member of the Management Committee.

Remember concerns about the safety of a child or young person should always be shared.

### **Action if bullying is suspected at FODC activities**

All forms of bullying should be taken very seriously

If bullying by staff / volunteers or coaches is suspected or observed the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

If bullying by a participant is suspected or observed staff / coaches or volunteers must:

- Take action to ensure the victim is safe.
- Report any concerns to the Designated Child Protection Officer.
- Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.

If the bullying is occurring outside FODC activities help the victim to speak out and tell the person charge / parents or someone in authority Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.

### **Action towards the bully(ies):**

Most 'low level' incidents should be dealt with at the time by coaches and volunteers.

- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully (ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour.
- Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Impose sanctions as necessary and inform the bully's parents of sanctions taken and reasons necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.
- Inform all staff / coaches/ volunteers involved in delivery of session what sanctions or action is taken so they aware of the incident and any potential recurrence.

However, if the bullying is severe (e.g. a serious assault), or if it persists despite efforts to deal with it, incidents should be referred to the designated Child Protection Officer who will take appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of the victim. In these cases a written record should be kept detailing the incident and action taken.

### **FODC Activities involving Children / Young people**

As well as following Good Practice and Policy when delivering activities: all staff / volunteers should ensure that they follow the Codes of Conduct & risk assessments set for each activity and ensure that they are adhered to by all participants & accompanying adults. A completed parental consent form & Photo consent form must have been received for each participant attending the activity. A participant should not be allowed to take part if no parental consent form has been received.

The FODC will appoint, at the Annual General meeting, a Designated Child Issues Officer which will be one of the four officials.

This Guidance and Procedure / Child Protection Policy and is duly adopted by FODC Management Committee.

Chairman.....

Secretary .....

Date: .....