



POLICY - CHILD PROTECTION

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Every year many children under the age of 16 visit the Hospital of St Cross (“the Hospital”). The Hospital reserves the right to deny access to the Hospital of any child under the age of 16 who is unaccompanied. Many of these children visit as part of organised groups or with family and friends. While the primary responsibility for their welfare rests with the responsible adult of the party organising the visit (Responsible Adult), the Hospital’s trustees recognise a responsibility for ensuring the safety and protection of all children whilst they are on the Hospital’s premises.
- 1.2 The Clerk of the Hospital shall be responsible for the implementation of the Child Protection Policy.
- 1.3 The Hospital will refer any child protection issues to the appropriate agencies.
- 1.4 The Hospital’s trustees wish to protect its staff and its residents from unfair allegations.
- 1.5 The policy applies to all of the Hospital’s staff and residents. The requirements within the policy may be waived for visiting contractors where the risk is identified by the Clerk as being low.
- 1.6 For the purpose of this document the term “child” shall be any young person under the age of 16.
- 1.7 “Responsible Adults” are defined as people over the age of 18 who assume responsibility for children during the Hospital visit, e.g. teachers, parents and group leaders.

2.0 Child Protection Legal Framework

- 2.1 The Police Act 1977, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 provide an integrated system of child protection. Essentially, the legislation provides that individuals may be disqualified from working with children. It is a criminal offence for an employer knowingly to recruit a disqualified individual into a post working with children.

3.0 Policy Statement

- 3.1 The Hospital believes that:
 - a) the welfare of the child is vitally important;



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- b) all children have the right to protection from abuse;
- c) all suspicions and allegations of abuse should be properly investigated and dealt with expeditiously and appropriately;
- d) all staff shall be clear on appropriate behaviour and responses, failure by any member of the Hospital's staff or residents to maintain appropriate standards will be subject to the Hospital's disciplinary procedures.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Clerk is responsible for the implementation of the policy within the Hospital.

4.2 The role of the Clerk shall be to:

- a) assess information on an alleged abuse of a child promptly and to clarify or obtain more information about the matter as appropriate;
- b) consult with a statutory child protection agency, such as the local social services department, or the NSPCC helpline (0808 100 2524) to test out any doubts or uncertainties about the concerns;
- c) make a formal referral to a statutory child protection agency or the police as required.

4.3 It is not the role of the Clerk to decide as to whether a child has been abused or not. This is the task of the police. The NSPCC also has powers to investigate child protection concerns.

5.0 Staff Recruitment

5.1 All interviewees for a post at the Hospital or to become a resident at the Hospital are to be advised during the recruitment interview that the Hospital has a Child Protection Policy and that all allegations of abuse are investigated thoroughly.

6.0 Staff Awareness

6.1 The Hospital's trustees shall ensure that all staff and residents are made aware of the content of the Hospital's Child Protection Policy.

7.0 Interaction with Children

7.1 Hospital staff and residents shall avoid being alone with a child without the child's Responsible Adult being present.



8.0 Photographs of Children

8.1 The Hospital is aware that there is a danger that photographs of children taken for publicity and other purposes may be vulnerable to abuse by unscrupulous persons. Therefore, if a photograph of a single child or a group of less than 5 children is to be used for material which may be viewed by the public, written permission will be sought from the school or other responsible organisation or from the child's parents or guardians. For groups of 6 or more children, specific permission will not be sought.

8.2 Visitors and other members of the public who appear to be taking photographs in inappropriate circumstances should be challenged where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion.

9.0 Lost Children

9.1 If a child visiting the Hospital is reported as missing the Responsible Adult shall give the Clerk the following details:

- Name of the child
- Age and sex of the child
- Physical description of child
- Where child was last seen
- The time the child was last seen

9.2 Once a sufficient check of the Hospital's site has been made and the child has not been found the Responsible Adult shall inform the police.

10.0 Procedure to be Followed by Hospital Staff in the Case of Suspected or Alleged Child Abuse

10.1 Abuse may be neglect, physical, emotional or sexual. Possible sources of abuse include:

- Abuse by Hospital staff or residents
- Abuse by the public
- Parental abuse
- Self harm
- Child peer abuse (bullying). Such abuse should always be taken as seriously as perpetuated by an adult. A significant proportion of sex offences are committed by teenagers, and on occasion, by younger children. Adults should not dismiss such abusive behaviour as 'normal' between young people.



10.2 Any member of staff who:

- Suspects that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused; or
- Has a disclosure made to them; or
- Receives a complaint from a member of the public relating to child protection issues in the Hospital; or
- Has a direct allegation made against them;

should discuss the matter immediately with the Clerk.

10.3 The Clerk should assess the situation and take whatever action is appropriate to stop or prevent the abuse or potential abuse. It is important that all allegations are recorded fully and that the complainant's contact details are obtained.

10.4 If the child involved is part of an organised group, the Clerk should consult with the group's designated leader and will make every effort to agree an appropriate course of action.

10.5 If the child involved is with a family member or other Responsible Adult the Clerk will consult this person and will make every effort to agree an appropriate course of action.

10.6 Members of staff receiving an allegation of child abuse from a child shall:

- Show that they have heard what the child is saying and that the allegation is being taken seriously;
- Encourage the child to talk but not to prompt or ask leading questions;
- Explain the actions that must be taken in a way that is appropriate to the age and understanding of the child;
- Not promise that what has been told is secret;
- Write down what has been told, using the exact words if possible;
- Make a note of date, time, place and people who are present during the discussion with the child;
- Report concerns and details to the Clerk

10.7 All details of any alleged inappropriate behaviour shall be passed to the Clerk who shall liaise with the child protection agencies or police as necessary.

11.0 Policy Review

11.1 The policy and procedures contained within this document shall be reviewed at least every three years.



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Signed

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Jonathan Cooke
Chairman of Board of Trustees

Dated: ...21 December 2020.....