

## Child Protection Policy

### Child Protection policy statement

Every child or young person has the right to a safe and secure environment during his or her study time in the UK and be protected from any form of abuse. In this policy any form of abuse, means any kind of neglect, non-accidental physical injury, sexual exploitation or emotional ill treatment.

### The purpose of this policy

Our procedures and practice seek to ensure all students are protected and safe whilst in our care in the UK. It will be the duty of all staff and Host Families to share the organisation's commitment to child protection. Accordingly Brighter Prospects Guardians undertake the following:

- To raise awareness in the organisation, and beyond, of our statutory duty of care relating to young people and ensure good practice from all staff and Host Families.
- To have a key member of staff act as a Child Protection Coordinator who is fully conversant with the action required to receive complaints of abuse; to investigate those complaints; to record those complaints; and report them to the appropriate authority.
- To keep all information stored in a secure place with access limited to the Child Protection Coordinator in line with Data Protection Law.
- To ensure all reported allegations or suspicion of child abuse are investigated in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Child Protection policy of the Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students (AEGIS).
- To ensure staff and Host families understand the importance of and follow the company's child protection policy.
- To provide staff members and host families with appropriate Child Protection Training, which will include reinforcement of individual and organisational responsibilities.
- Implementation of appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures.

## **Employment of Staff and Host Families**

Brighter Prospects Guardians recognise that the abuse of children and young people can come from many sources. Through our employment processes we will ensure that the staff and the Host Families we use will prevent unsuitable people from working within the organisation.

- All staff and host families must provide at least two references, which must be reviewed and approved by the organisation before the commencement of duties.
- All staff and host families are required to have Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) enhanced checks before the commencement of duties.
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosures will be renewed every three years.
- All staff members will undertake appropriate Child Protection training on commencement and have regular refresher training.
- Child Protection training will include:
  - Signs and definitions of abuse
  - Familiarisation with Child Protection training paperwork
  - Safe working practices guidance
  - Incident response actions.

## **Incident handling procedures**

All staff and Host Families will be aware of what action they should take if they have concerns or encounter a case of alleged/suspected child abuse, i.e. the response action. These procedures apply to all staff and host families.

When staff or host families suspect a complaint of abuse they should report all allegations to the Child Protection Coordinator.

All staff and host families will be aware that the organisations Child Protection Coordinator is the first point of contact for all matters of child protection but is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred.

Staff and host families have a duty of care to the student and they undertake to report any suspicions they have to the Child Protection Coordinator. Once the Child Protection Coordinator has been informed of the allegations or complaints of abuse the member of staff or

volunteer suspecting or hearing of the abuse should continue to pass on any further information that comes to light. They should however not carry out any further investigations of the incident as this may prejudice the investigations of external agencies.

### **Staff or Host Families responsibilities**

Listen carefully to the student and keep an open mind. The member of staff should not take a decision as to whether or not abuse has taken place.

Not ask the student leading questions, i.e. a question that suggests its answer.

Reassure the student but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff or volunteer must explain that they need to pass the information to the Child Protection Coordinator who will ensure that the correct action is taken. N.B. giving information to others who have an obligation to receive the information for the purpose of protecting the child is not a breach of confidentiality.

Keep a record of any conversation regarding the suspected abuse. The record should include the date, time, place of the conversation, and the essence of what's been said and/or done, by whom and in whose presence. The record should be signed by the person making it and must use names not initials. The record must be kept securely and handed to the Child Protection Coordinator as soon as possible.

3

Attempt to safeguard and preserve all available evidence (for example notes, mobile phones containing text messages; clothing; computers). As soon as reasonably practical after contacting the Child Protection Coordinator the member of staff must complete a reporting form (which can be found at page 7).

Immediately provide a safe environment for the student if necessary.

### **Role of the Child Protection Coordinator**

- Coordinating child protection procedures within the organisation.
- In instances where it has been reported to the Child Protection Coordinator that a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering harm, or concludes on information received that the

child is in need, the concerns will be referred to the local Social Services Authority for the area in which the alleged offence has taken place.

- To keep the student's parents informed of action being taken under these procedures, in relation to their child, in consultation with the school and local Social Service Authority.
- If requested, to monitor records of a student who is subject to a Child Protection Plan. To ensure the plan is maintained and updated as notification is received. Maintain liaison with other professionals to ensure the student is appropriately monitored.
- The Child Protection Coordinator will establish with the reporting where the parents' permission should be sought.
- Where appropriate take part in child protection case conferences and reviews.
- Keep all records and reports in a secure place. Personal Information about referrers, including identified details, will only be disclosed to third parties (including the student's family and other agencies) with the consent of the referrers.
- Maintaining an on-going Child Protection Training programme for staff and host families.

### **Child Protection Coordinator reporting of Incidents**

4

If the Child Protection Coordinator considers that it is likely that a student has suffered harm, or that the student may be at risk of harm, a referral to the local Social Services will be made without delay (and in any event within 24 hours).

- If the initial referral is made by telephone, the Child Protection Coordinator will confirm the referral in writing to the local Social Services within 24 hours.
- If no response or acknowledgement is received within 3 working days, the Child Protection Coordinator will contact the services again.
- If there is room for doubt as to whether a referral to an external body should be made, the Child Protection Coordinator will consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on a no name basis without identifying the family.
- Wherever the Child Protection Coordinator decides not to refer the concerns to the relevant authorities, the person who raised the concern will be given a clear written statement of the reasons why Brighter Prospects Guardians are not taking action.
- The person will be advised that if they remain concerned they are free to consult with or to report to the relevant authorities directly.

- No disciplinary action will be taken against a member of staff for making such a report.

### **Brighter Prospects Guardians - Child Protection Coordinator**

**Mrs Anya Inderbitzin-Stone (Company Director)**

**Emergency contact number: 07778 819 969.**

**Email: [anya@brighter-prospects.com](mailto:anya@brighter-prospects.com)**

### **Other contact details**

The Children's Access Point (CAP) for West Sussex Children Services main helpdesk

CAP direct line: 01403 22 99 00      Email: [cap@westsussex.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:cap@westsussex.gcsx.gov.uk)

ChildLine: 0800 1111

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 01325 953 795

NSPCC: 01983 294 873

## **Appendix 1: Signs and Definitions of Abuse**

Types of abuse can include:

- Emotional abuse e.g. rejection and denial of affection
- Physical abuse e.g. beating or punching
- Sexual abuse e.g. sexual assault or encouraging a child to view pornographic material
- Neglect e.g. failure to provide appropriate care including warmth or medical attention.

Possible signs of abuse include (but are not limited to):

- The child or young person says he or she has been abused or asks a question which gives rise to that inference
- There is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a child or young person's injury; the injury is unusual in kind or location; there have been a number of injuries; there is a pattern to the injuries
- The child or young person's behaviour stands out from the group as either being extreme model behaviour or extremely challenging behaviour; or there is a sudden change in the child or young person's behaviour
- The child or young person's development is delayed
- The child or young person loses or gains weight
- The child or young person appears neglected, e.g. dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed
- The child or young person is reluctant to go home or back to the host family home, or has been openly rejected by his or her parents, guardians or host family.



### **Appendix 3: Safer Working Practices Guidance**

The vast majority of people who work with children and young people aim to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and best outcomes for the children and young people in their care. However it is recognised that in this area of work tensions and misunderstandings can occur. It is here that the behaviour of staff and host families can give rise to allegations of abuse being made against them. Allegations may be malicious or misplaced. They may arise from differing perceptions of the same event, but when they occur they are inevitably distressing and difficult for all concerned. Equally it must be recognised that some allegations will be genuine and there are people who will deliberately seek out, create or exploit opportunities to abuse children and young people at risk. It is therefore essential that all possible steps are taken to safeguard children and young people at risk and ensure that the staff and host families working with them are safe to do so. Concerns have been raised about the potential vulnerability of staff and host families who work with children and young people in their roles. It has been suggested that there is a need for clearer advice about what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered as misconduct. It is advised that all staff and host families familiarise themselves with the Safer Working Practices guidance from the 'Department for Children schools and families'. A copy of the document can be found at <http://www.childrenengland.org.uk/>

Staff and host families should be diligent at all times regarding people using cameras or videos within company services and at events or activities which involve children and young people. Consent must be sought from parents when cameras and other image recorders are used to picture children and young people

Staff and host families are advised to keep physical contact with the child or young person to a minimum and not engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind. By their nature many activities, particularly sports, require a degree of physical contact between adults and young people. Physical contact can be used appropriately to instruct, encourage, protect or comfort. In line with recommendations of the Sussex Sports Partnership's Child Welfare Policy, physical contact between adults and young people should only be used when the aim is to:

Develop sports skills or techniques - Treat or prevent an injury - Safety reasons.



## **Appendix 4: Child protection: information sheet for children and young people**

### **Introduction**

We are aware that from time to time you may be worried or upset about something. This policy tells you about various people available to help you, so that you can choose someone you feel you can trust. The experience of many children and young persons is that no matter how bad the problem may seem to be, it is almost always a great help to talk about it.

Is something worrying you? Here are some examples of the kinds of thing which can be worrying for young people:

- You think you may be ill and are too afraid or embarrassed to tell anyone,
- You feel very depressed, or that life is not worth living,
- You or a friend are being bullied or treated unkindly by another child or young person,
- You think that another child is not eating properly, or may be harming them self,
- You are worried, angry or hurt about something happening at your host family's home,
- You think that another child has done, or is about to do, something wrong or dangerous,
- You are in a situation you do not know how to deal with e.g. with alcohol, money or sex,
- You feel you are being treated unfairly simply because you are a girl or boy, or because of your colour or religion, or because you have a disability or learning difficulty,
- You feel that a staff member from the Guardianship agency or a host family member has treated you unfairly e.g. in a punishment given, or in favouring other child,
- You feel that you are not given enough privacy or independence.

### **What should you do?**

If any of these things are happening, please talk to someone about it, even if you feel you can handle the situation. It may be that what's going on affects other people, or that you are unaware of all the different ways a problem can be tackled.

There are a number of different people who will be very happy to talk to you and to help you try to find a solution to the problem. It may help to talk first with another child or young person who is a trusted friend. However sometimes you may also need the help and support of an adult or professional, for example a staff member at the Guardianship Agency or a host family member who you feel most comfortable and safe talking to.

We would expect one of these to be the first person you speak to if you have any concerns.

However, if you do not feel able to speak to your Guardian or host family member, other people to talk to are:

- Your parents or other relatives
  - Adults in a position of authority at your school, e.g. School Chaplain or Doctor
  - An older child or young person at the school you attend or an older child who is also allocated a host family through the Guardianship Agency
  - Your social worker or social services
  - ChildLine: telephone 0800 1111
- If you prefer, you can write to one of the people mentioned, although this does sometimes slow things down.

### **Who else needs to know?**

We understand that you may wish to talk about a problem only if it is kept secret. In many cases, this is possible, but you should be aware of the following exception:

- Where you may have been at risk of significant harm we will need to pass this information to a designated person within the Guardian company to ensure that the correct action is taken. Depending on the severity of the allegations, the Child Protection Co-ordinator may need to refer the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer.

However, please do not let this stop you from raising complaints or saying when you are worried or upset. Most young people who speak up say afterwards that it helped them and that the problem did not seem quite as bad once they had a chance to talk it through with someone experienced and helpful. **We are here to help you.**