



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Reviewed and adopted December 2017

SIGNAL Family Support ('SIGNAL FS' or 'the Group') provides a limited range of services for children and adults with autism spectrum disorders who are resident in the London Borough of Lewisham and their families. SIGNAL FS currently offers swimming and trampolining classes for children and young adults. Qualified and experienced personnel supervise these activities. The Group also organises day trips and outings for families where the children and young people are supervised by their parents/carers. Officers and volunteers of the Group do not themselves take responsibility for, or work directly with, children and young people.

SIGNAL FS is administered by a Management Committee ('the committee') which is elected annually.

At SIGNAL FS we aim to encourage practice which protects children from harm and we acknowledge our responsibility to safeguard the interests of young people and adults in a SIGNAL FS family.

To meet our responsibilities we have adopted this policy which includes:

- *child protection guidelines administered through a Code of Behaviour for volunteers and employees*
- *guidance about child protection and good practice*
- *procedures for investigating and reporting suspected abuse*
- *guidelines for the appointment of service providers who may be working directly with our young people*

A person designated by the committee will have responsibility for dealing with all concerns expressed concerning the behaviour of a young person or of volunteers or service providers in relation to the young people in their care.

The following people are to hold current enhanced DBS certificates:

- Members of the management committee
- The Designated Person (Safeguarding Officer)
- Employees and sessional workers
- Volunteers who come into contact with children as part of their role

It is the responsibility of the Chair, in conjunction with the Designated Person to ensure that DBS checks have been done for all those who need them.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually in Committee. This policy was reviewed and re-adopted in December 2017.

SIGNAL FS's Child Protection Policy it is available on the SIGNAL FS website.

Definitions:

- The term 'young person' includes children and young people up to the age of 25 and vulnerable adults.
- The term 'carers' includes the parents or other responsible adults who, at the relevant time, have care and control of the young person.
- The term 'service providers' means the persons appointment by the committee to provide a regular structured activity for the benefit of our young people.
- The term 'the committee' means the management committee of SIGNAL FS.
- The term 'volunteers' means unpaid members of the Group who may or may not be members of the committee who have been appointed by the committee to perform a supportive function, administrative or otherwise, on a regular basis.
- The term 'employee' means a person employed, whether directly or through an agency, either on a contract of employment or on an hourly paid basis.

- The 'Designated Person' or 'Safeguarding Officer' shall be the person chosen by the committee to be responsible for Child Protection matters within SIGNAL FS.

The Designated Person/Safeguarding Officer is Lesley Hutton, Chair of Trustees, of 24 Jasmin Court, Woodyates Road, Lee, London SE12 9HP.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR VOLUNTEERS AND EMPLOYEES

SIGNAL FS believes that:

- All young people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Young people should be listened to.
- Young people should be respected as individuals.
- Young people, where appropriate, should be involved in decision-making.
- Young people should be praised and encouraged.

Service providers and volunteers should **NEVER**:

- Use physical force upon a young person (save for restraint).
- Engage in bullying or intimidatory tactics towards a young person.
- Engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horseplay – apart from structured sports activities.
- Allow young people to use inappropriate language or behaviour unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a child, even in fun.
- Let allegations of physical or sexual abuse made by a young person go without being addressed.
- Do things of a personal nature for young people that they can do themselves unless with the prior knowledge and explicit consent of the young person's carer or, in exceptional circumstances, with the consent of a volunteer.

Meetings with Young People

Volunteers and employees should **not** spend time alone with a young person save where this is required for the instruction and/or safety of that young person or other people, and then only for the minimum period of time required to achieve that aim. This should be with the knowledge and approval of the young person's carer or, in the absence of such carer, with the knowledge and approval of a volunteer or other service provider.

Meetings with individual young person(s) should take place as openly as possible and the carer of the young person should be advised as soon as practicable of the action taken and why. If privacy is needed the meeting should take place within the view of other service providers and/or volunteers although not necessarily within ear-shot.

Volunteers and employees **must not** take young people alone in a car or on any other form of transport other than with the full knowledge and consent of the carer and only when the vehicle has adequate insurance cover.

Volunteers and employees **should not meet** with any young person outside of organised activities save in the presence of, or with the prior knowledge and consent of, the young person's carer.

Physical Contact

Employees and volunteers **must not** make unnecessary or inappropriate physical contact with young people.

Guidelines on Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

The identification and confirmation of alleged or actual abuse should be left to the appropriate professionals.

For the guidance of volunteers and service providers [Appendix One](#) sets out some common signs and symptoms of abuse.

Any concerns expressed by volunteers and/or service providers must be dealt with through the following procedures:

- The concerns must be brought initially to the attention of the Designated Person who, together with the person expressing the concern, must document the concerns providing the information required under [Appendix Two](#).

- The Designated Person shall consult with, as appropriate, the service provider(s), other volunteers and any other persons who may have knowledge of any incident reported.
- If the Designated Person meets with the young person involved this must be in the presence of, as appropriate, a carer and/or service provider and a record must be made of all relevant comments made by the young person.
- The Designated Person shall then document any further information which may have been revealed in his or her investigations.
- In the case of a serious allegation or if a young person is deemed to be at immediate risk of harm the Designated Person must decide what further action is necessary in consultation with the Chair of the management committee.

Guidance for the Selection of Service Providers

When SIGNAL FS works with other organisations to provide services for our young people we will ensure the safety of our young people by:

- Requiring written confirmation from the provider that any of their employees or volunteers have had an enhanced DBS check.
- Requiring a copy of the service provider's own child protection policy be provided and that the management committee be satisfied that this procedure is suitable.
- It is recognized that the decision to appoint a service provider is the responsibility of SIGNAL FS as an organisation and not of any one individual within it.
- Where another organisation offers a service specifically for SIGNAL FS members, without SIGNAL FS directly appointing or arranging this service, SIGNAL FS will not promote this activity to our members unless that organisation provides written confirmation that anyone working with our young people has appropriate DBS clearance and provides a copy of their child protection policy.

Guidance for the Selection of Employees

SIGNAL FS's recruitment procedures for service providers include the following provisions:

- Making contact with experienced and qualified persons either through personal recommendation, word of mouth or, if necessary, through advertising in the appropriate media.
- All applicants will be requested to supply information in writing which will include personal details, past and current work/volunteer experience and any relevant qualifications. They will also be asked to sign a declaration of any, or no, past criminal record.
- Written references will routinely be taken up.
- Disclosure Information (formerly known as Police Checks) will be sought from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This will include sight of documentation to confirm identity (passport, driving license, birth certificate).
- All shortlisted applicants will be met and interviewed by volunteers appointed by the committee before being offered any kind of contract.
- Any person appointed to a post working with young people will be required to read this policy document and to sign a declaration in the form set out in [Appendix 3](#).

It is recognized that the decision to appoint an employee is the responsibility of SIGNAL FS as an organisation and not of any one individual within it.

Provision of Training for Committee Members, Volunteers and Employees

The following people are to have safeguarding training at least every 2 years:

- Members of the management committee who come into contact with SIGNAL FS children as part of their role.
- The Designated Person(s).
- Employees and sessional workers.
- Volunteers who come into contact with children as part of the volunteering activity.

APPENDIX ONE

SIGNS of ABUSE attached document

APPENDIX TWO

Information to be documented in the event of concerns/a complaint

- name of young person
- home address and telephone number
- full name of carer(s)
- names of any siblings living with the young person
- description of any disability of young person
- names and addresses of person(s) making this report and details of service offered by the Group
- details of the concerns/complaint including locations, dates and times and identities of persons involved
- details of any physical, behavioural signs which may have prompted concerns
- details of any comments made by the young person (when, where, what was said, who was present)
- if the carer is involved, any comments made by the carer (if not a party to this document)
- is carer aware of this concern/complaint?
- details of GP / Health Visitor / other consultant involved with the young person if known
- religion of young person (if known)
- ethnicity of young person (if known)
- sign and date the document when completed.
- annex to the document details of any further action taken, eg, referral to social services or the police.

Local contacts

Lewisham Safeguarding Children Board
Kaleidoscope, 32 Rushey Green, SE6 4JF **020 7138 1446**

Lewisham Borough Police Switchboard **101**

NSPCC Helpline and advice for adults **0808 800 5000**

APPENDIX THREE

Declaration for all employees and management committee members

I hereby declare that I have been provided with a copy of the Child Protection Statement and Guidelines of SIGNAL FS. I have read and understood this document and I/we agree to adhere by the practices and values of this policy.

Print Name

Details of Service provided to SIGNAL FS (eg, trampolining or swimming instructor)

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Signed.....

Dated.....