



## Safeguarding Policy

CompSoc believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognise their responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people attending their events by a commitment to practice which protects them.

For the purpose of this document, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of children is paramount.
- All children, regardless of age, body size, disability, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, level of experience, nationality, personal appearance, race, religion, or sexual identity and orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Working in partnership with children, their parents, carers and their agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

The purpose of the policy is:

- to provide protection for the children and young people who receive CompSoc services, including those running the events.
- to provide organisers, staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

This policy applies to all staff, including organisers, volunteers, paid workers, sponsors and anyone working on behalf of CompSoc.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.

- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made. All adult staff and volunteers who may be left alone with children must be DBS or PVG checked.
- sharing information about our child protection policy and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers.
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice before and after every event.

## Procedure

### Purpose and aim of the procedures

The purpose of these procedures is to ensure any incidents or concerns for the welfare of any child attending one of CompSoc's events is dealt with appropriately. It applies for every organiser, paid member of staff, volunteer, sponsor and attendee of any age.

### The different categories of abuse

These are physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect.

#### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve:

- hitting
- shaking
- throwing
- poisoning
- burning or scalding
- drowning
- suffocating
- a parent or carer fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately inducing, illness in a child
- otherwise causing physical harm to a child

#### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may include:

- conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- not giving the child opportunity to express their views
- deliberately silencing them

- mocking what they say or how they communicate
- age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children
- interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability
- overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning
- preventing the child participating in normal social interaction
- seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- serious bullying (including cyberbullying)
- causing the child to feel frightened or in danger
- exploitation or corruption of the child
- blaming/scapegoating
- humiliation

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child though it may occur alone.

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve:

- assault by penetration (e.g. rape, oral sex)
- non-penetrative acts (e.g. masturbation, kissing, rubbing, touching outside of clothing)
- involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images
- watching sexual activities
- encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including online)

It can be perpetrated by adults (of any gender) and by other children.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide:

- adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protection from physical or emotional harm or danger
- adequate supervision (including use of inadequate care-givers)
- access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- a child's basic emotional needs
- an education

## Recognising the signs of abuse

Children who are abused may show signs such as:

- being withdrawn
- suddenly behaving differently
- being anxious, depressed or aggressive
- problems sleeping or nightmares
- eating disorders
- soiling clothes
- risky behaviour
- acting older/younger than they are
- obsessive behaviour (including towards people)
- use of drugs or alcohol
- self-harm or thoughts about suicide

These signs don't necessarily mean that a child is being abused. Some children are naturally quiet and others may have challenging behaviour. Sometimes it can take a long time for the symptoms to show, but you should look out for any behaviour that seems out of character for a child.

## Physical abuse

- Bruises
  - commonly on the head but also on the ear or neck or soft areas – the abdomen, back and buttocks
  - defensive wounds commonly on the forearm, upper arm, back of the leg, hands or feet

- clusters of bruises on the upper arm, outside of the thigh or on the body
- bruises with dots of blood under the skin
- a bruised scalp and swollen eyes from hair being pulled violently
- bruises in the shape of a hand or object.
- Burns or scalds
  - can be from hot liquids, hot objects, flames, chemicals or electricity
  - on the hands, back, shoulders or buttocks; scalds may be on lower limbs,

both arms and/or both legs

- a clear edge to the burn or scald
- sometimes in the shape of an implement, (e.g. a circular cigarette burn)
- multiple burns or scalds.
- Fractures or broken bones
  - multiple fractures or breaks at different stages of healing
- Other injuries and health problems
  - scarring
  - effects of poisoning such as vomiting, drowsiness or seizures
  - respiratory problems from drowning, suffocation or poisoning

Emotional abuse

- use language, act in a way or know about things that you wouldn't expect them to know at their age
- struggle to control strong emotions or have extreme outbursts
- seem isolated from or scared of their parents or other familiar adults
- lack social skills or have few, if any, friends

Sexual abuse

- they might avoid being alone with people, such as family members or friends

- they could seem frightened of a person or reluctant to socialise with them.
- a child might become sexually active at a young age
- they might be promiscuous
- they could use sexual language or know information that you wouldn't expect them to.
- anal or vaginal soreness
- an unusual discharge
- sexually transmitted infection (STI)
- pregnancy

#### Neglect

- be smelly or dirty
- have unwashed clothes
- have inadequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat
- seem hungry or turn up without having breakfast
- untreated injuries, medical and dental issues
- repeated accidental injuries caused by lack of supervision
- recurring illnesses or infections
- not been given appropriate medicines
- missed medical appointments such as vaccinations
- poor muscle tone or prominent joints
- skin sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm
- thin or swollen tummy
- anaemia
- tiredness
- faltering weight or growth and not reaching developmental milestones (known as failure to thrive)
- poor language, communication or social skills.
- taking on the role of carer for other family members

#### Online abuse

- spend lots, much more or much less time online, texting, gaming or using social media
- are withdrawn, upset or outraged after using the internet or texting
- are secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone
- have lots of new phone numbers, texts or e-mail addresses on their electronic device.

## Responding to abuse

### **How to respond to signs or suspicions of abuse**

If you suspect the abuse of a child:

1. Immediately go to the Safeguarding Officer
2. Write detailed notes on what you witnessed, heard, or were told (direct quotes if possible), on a Child Abuse Concern Report which will be given to you
3. Submit the document to the Safeguarding officer
4. If the Safeguarding Officer feels there is sufficient cause for concern, the police and local authorities will be called
5. Try to ensure that no situation arises that may cause further concern.

The same procedure applies if you have suspicions that a member of staff or a volunteer is abusing a child.

### **How to respond to a child telling you about abuse**

If a young person tells you about abuse:

1. Allow the young person to speak without interruption, accepting what is said. Seek clarification by using open questions to ensure that you are not leading the child i.e. "That bruise looks nasty, what happened?", rather than "Did ??? give you that bruise?". Do not turn it into an interrogation.
2. Offer immediate understanding and reassurance, while passing no judgement.
3. Advise that you will try to offer support but that you must pass the information. Do not promise to keep a secret. However, reassure them that whatever they say will not get them into trouble.



4. Immediately tell the Safeguarding Officer.
5. Write careful notes of what was said (use direct quotes wherever possible) on a Child Abuse Concern Report.
6. Submit the document to the Safeguarding Officer.
7. Ensure that no more situations arise which could cause any further concern.

### **How information will be recorded**

Information concerning the welfare of a child will be recorded on a Child Abuse Concern Report. A new report should be used for each incident.

As soon as the form is completed, it should be submitted to the Safeguarding Officer. Ideally, this should be within half an hour of the person learning of the information.

### **Confidentiality policy**

Privacy and confidentiality should be respected where possible but if doing this leaves a child at risk of harm then the child's safety has to come first.

Remember:

- Legally, we recognise information may need to be shared to ensure the safety of a child, however, this information should only be disclosed to the relevant authorities (e.g. our Safeguarding Officer, the police, children's services).
- Not everyone needs to know when a concern or worry is raised. This respects the child's, family's and/or staff's rights to privacy. So only people who need to know should be told about it. Otherwise, there might be gossip and rumours.

## Implementation

This policy will be implemented as of 2016-03-19 (the date on which the event begins).

The Safeguarding Officer will be ensuring throughout our events that this policy is abided by at all times.

For this event, we may struggle to DBS/PVG check every single volunteer, however, this will be a target for future events.

We will review our child protection policy before and after every event to ensure it is still effective and relevant.

### The Safeguarding Officer

The safeguarding officer is Joe Nash. He can be contacted in person at the event, by calling [07730605305](tel:07730605305), or by emailing [joe@mlh.io](mailto:joe@mlh.io).

Additionally, incident reports can be sent anonymously to [incidents@mlh.io](mailto:incidents@mlh.io).