

Girls Assemble UK

Child Protection Policy

Keeping Our Children Safe

No one wants to hear about children being abused, neglected or unsafe and that sometimes makes it difficult to respond so....

Remember these 3 important messages:

1. All children have a right to be safe no matter who they are or what their circumstances.
2. Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility.
3. We all need to listen to children even though we may not always be comfortable with what we hear.

Who should you talk to if you have concerns about a child?

Sophia Medine

Girls Assemble UK Child Protection Officer

07927393954

STATEMENT

Girls Assemble UK is committed to safeguarding the welfare of the children who attend groups and has established this child protection policy and a staff code of practice.

DEFINITIONS

The law defines someone as a child until they are 18 years old. Child protection involves excluding known child offenders, preventing abuse and recognising and responding to the signs of abuse.

PROCEDURE

Girls Assemble UK aims to:

Ensure that all volunteers and staff undergo a formal application procedure looking at their professional and parenting experience. Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) Disclosure, will be sought when legally permissible.

All volunteers and staff will be given a clear established guidance agreement on how to refer concerns.

All volunteers and staff will reiterate personal parental responsibility at the start of each meeting.

Carry out evaluations to ensure that any problems are identified and addressed in the future.

Ensure that all volunteers and staff understand and have access to Girls Assemble UK's procedures and guidelines on Child Protection and that all staff and volunteers understand the principles and procedures including our different roles and responsibilities.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

Concerns for a child may come to the attention in a variety of ways through observation of behaviour, injuries or through disclosure. Anyone who has a concern for a child should discuss this with Girls Assemble UK's Child Protection Officer – Sophia Medine (Director) as soon as is practically possible.

We will report all incidences to the host groups and will assist in decisions as to whether the child should be referred to Social Services.

This may lead to consultation with Social Services for advice as soon as is practically possible. Concerns will in most cases be discussed with parents of the child. The exception to this is when it is inappropriate to do so for reasons of possible increased risk to the child.

RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES

If a child makes a disclosure of abuse to a member of staff or volunteer they will:

- NEVER promise to keep it a secret.
- Allow the child to make the disclosure at their own pace in their own way.
- Avoid interrupting except to clarify what the child is saying.
- Not ask leading questions or probe for information that the child does not volunteer.

- Reassure the child that they have been heard and explain what you will do next and to whom you report to.
- Report the conversation as soon as possible to the Child Protection Officer.

GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT

Members of staff and volunteers who work alongside children must ensure that they:

- Acknowledge the age group and capabilities of children in the group setting and allow for that accordingly.
- Does not use any foul or abusive language or untoward behaviour.
- Does not bully any children and that there is no bullying going on within the group (if there is, this must be reported at once).
- Shows respect and courtesy to the children at all times.
- Is always punctual and on time.
- Does not go into the toilet alone with the children.
- Does not meet alone with children outside organised activities.
- If on occasion privacy is required, a supervisory adult should be informed and at least one should be within earshot of the conversation. The door should be left open.
- Avoids unnecessary physical contact with children. When physical touch is required during moments of upset or an injury occurs or the children are distressed, the involved adult should explain to the children exactly what he or she is doing but only with the consent of the child and in full view of as many persons as possible.
- Be careful of extending hugs and celebrations where bodily contact is involved. This is important not only for the protection of the children but of other member of staff and volunteers.
- Records and reports the incident to another adult if a child touches them in an inappropriate place. While an incident could be purely innocent or horseplay, efforts should be made to inform the offending child that this behaviour is not acceptable – but in a manner that does not intimidate the child.
- Never keeps suspicions of abuse by a colleague to themselves. If there is an attempt to cover up they could be implicated by their silence. It is vital to inform the appropriate person, of their suspicions.
- Should never engage in sexually provocative manner or indulge in horseplay, which may be construed by children or adults in the wrong manner.
- Should never allow children to use foul language unchallenged.
- Never makes sexually suggestive comments about, or to the children, even in fun.
- Never lets allegations made by the children to go un-addressed and un-recorded.

ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING MEMBERS OF STAFF OR VOLUNTEERS

Any proven allegation of misconduct may result in the dismissal of the member of staff or volunteer or appropriate alternative disciplinary action.

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

SAFE CIC	01379 871091 www.safecic.co.uk
NSPCC	0844 892 1026 www.nspcc.org.uk
Children England	0207 833 3319 www.childrenengland.org.uk
Children in Wales	029 2034 2434 www.childreninwales.org.uk
Keeping Children Safe	www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk
GOV.CO.UK	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people/safeguarding-children-and-young-people#sources-of-further-information-and-support