

## **Safeguarding Children**

### **1.1 Safeguarding children and child protection**

(Including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff)

#### **Policy statement**

This policy applies to all staff, trustees, and volunteers of Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity (DVLCC). DVLCC works with children, parents and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Safeguarding children is of the utmost priority and is the responsibility of all DVLCC staff, trustees and volunteers.

Our child safeguarding and protection policy is aimed at:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring the children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

The very ethos of our service is to respect and ensure the emotional and physical welfare of children. We work very closely with parents and safety is paramount at all times. All activities are risk assessed and policies are in place to support this work.

All service team staff, fundraisers, trustees and volunteers are DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) enhanced checked and all have regular training in safeguarding children.

**Ours is a busy service and we would like to emphasise to all parents and carers that other parents, family members and visitors will not necessarily be DBS checked.**

Each parent, carer and family member attending with their children is directly responsible for their child's well being whilst attending the service. If you are momentarily popping out of the room without your child, please notify a team member before leaving the group.

**Whilst accessing Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity Service, all parents / carers remain responsible for their children at all times. If you have any queries or need any help please ask a member of the team.**

**This policy should be read alongside our policies and procedures on:**

- **Recruitment, induction and training**
- **Role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer**
- **E-safety**
- **Health and Safety**
- **Mobile phone and camera use**
- **Guidelines with respect to medication administration and illness, eating and drinking plans.**

### **Procedures**

We carry out the following procedures to ensure we meet the three key commitments.

#### *Key commitment 1*

Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity is committed to building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its service delivery.

#### *Staff and volunteers*

- Our designated person (member of staff) who co-ordinate child protection issues are:

**Pilar Cloud**

- Our designated officer (a committee member) who oversees this work is: The Chairman of DVLCC who has ultimate responsibility.

**Steve Flory**

- We ensure all staff, parents, trustees and volunteers are made aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Applicants for posts within DVLCC are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before posts can be confirmed.
- Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and DBS checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works for DVLCC or has access to the children.

- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We abide by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to DVLCC.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into DVLCC so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

#### *Key commitment 2*

DVLCC is committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG March 2015).

#### *Responding to suspicions of abuse*

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, psychological, sexual, material as well as neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual, material or psychological abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.
- Where such evidence is apparent, the session Lead makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with DVLCC Head of Service or Executive Manager who is acting as the 'designated person'. The information is stored on the child's confidential file.
- We refer concerns to local Customer First 0808 800 4005 and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation.  
N.B. In some cases this may mean the police or another agency identified by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.
- We take care not to influence the outcome either through the way we speak to children or by asking questions of children.

#### *Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures*

- Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that gives cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff observes signs or signals that gives cause for concern, such as significant changes in behaviour; deterioration in general well-being; unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect, then that member of staff:
  - listens to the child, offers reassurance and gives assurance that she or he will take action;

- does not question the child;
- makes a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes:
  - the date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
  - the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible;
  - the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and
  - the names of any other person present at the time.
- These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's confidential file which is kept securely and confidentially.

#### *Making a referral to Customer First*

- When making a referral to Customer First, we follow four simple steps,
  - Do not delay; Do not investigate; Speak to your Safeguard Lead; Make a careful recording of what we are told or have observed; using the Record for Concern form and body map where necessary.
- We keep a copy of this document and follow the detailed guidelines given.
- All members of staff are familiar with DVLCC's Child Protection Record and follow the procedures for recording and reporting.

#### *Informing parents*

- Parents are normally the first point of contact.
- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board does not allow this.
- This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

#### *Liaison with other agencies*

- We work within the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.
- We have a copy of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' for parents and staff and all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
- We notify the Local Safeguarding Children Board of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children.
- Contact details for the local National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are also displayed on the parent's notice board.

- If a referral is to be made to the local authority social care department, we act within the area's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

#### *Allegations against Staff and Volunteers*

- It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a person who works with children and young people including those who work in a voluntary capacity are dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.
- It also caters for cases of allegations that might indicate that the alleged perpetrator is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. This may be due to concerns about the person's conduct in their personal or professional life that might indicate their unsuitability to work with children. It should be used in respect of all allegations that are consistent with the guidance in Working Together i.e. cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:
  - behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
  - possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child; or
  - behaved in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

#### *Reporting procedure for Allegations*

- All allegations should be reported immediately, at least within one working day, to the Safeguarding Officer.
- We follow the Managing Allegations and Concerns Procedures about a member of staff/volunteer Flow Chart located on the office notice board
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children's social care in conjunction with the police
- Where the management committee and children's social care agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, the chairperson will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer, for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff as well as children and families throughout the process

### *Disciplinary action*

- Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from DVLCC because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the Independent Disclosure and Barring Board administrators so that the name may be included on the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Barred List.

### *Key commitment 3*

DVLCC is committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout its training and learning programmes for adults. It is also committed to empowering young children, through its early childhood curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

### *Training*

- We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in DVLCC to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and that they are aware of the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines for making referrals.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns at DVLCC.

### *Planning*

- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

### *Curriculum*

- We introduce key elements of keeping children safe into our programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be *strong, resilient and listened to* and that they develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
- We create within DVLCC a culture of value and respect for the individual, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the children.

### *Confidentiality*

- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

### *Support to families*

- We believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- We make clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local children's social care team.
- We will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to any alleged abuse.
- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the child's social care worker in relation to DVLCC designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the Confidentiality and Client Access to Records procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

### **Legal framework**

#### *Primary legislation*

- Children Act (1989)
- United Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991)
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Protection of Children Against Sexual Offences Act (2012)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- The Children Act (Every Child Matters) (2004)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Protection of Freedoms Act (2012)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0 to 25 years (HMG 2014)
- Equality Act (2010)

### **Further Guidance**

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (revised HMG 2015)
- What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG 2015)
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (DoH 2000)
- The Common Assessment Framework (2006)

- Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (HMG 2007)
- Information sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (HMG 2015)

This Policy was adopted by Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016

Date to be reviewed

September 2017

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee

Name of signatory



Trustee