



**South Manchester**  
**Down's Syndrome Support Group**  
*Fulfilling Potential*

**Child  
Protection Policy**

Approved at AGM October 2011

Updated July 2015 with change of name of contact and phone number for  
Manchester Contact Centre

Updated June 2019 with contact name in all appropriate places

## Statement of Purpose

SMDSSG is determined to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect from harm, those children who participate in activities organised by SMDSSG. This policy establishes SMDSSG's position, role and responsibilities and clarifies what is expected from everybody involved in SMDSSG. It very clearly highlights the importance placed by SMDSSG in the protection of children.

Every child who participates in the activities of SMDSSG should be able to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from abuse. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in this organisation. We recognise however, that child abuse is a very emotive and difficult subject. It is important to understand the feelings involved but not to allow them to interfere with our judgement about any action to be taken. SMDSSG recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying. It is determined to meet its obligation to ensure that SMDSSG provide opportunities for children to do so, with the highest possible standard of care.

SMDSSG will ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff (paid/unpaid) working in this organisation have a responsibility to report concerns to Julie Frost - 07944 259 188.

## Key Principles

SMDSSG will take responsibility for:

- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children.
- Recruiting, training and supervising all volunteers and staff members to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse.
- Training all employees and volunteers to adopt and abide by the appropriate codes of conduct and the Child Protection Policies and procedures outlined within this document.
- Responding to any allegations appropriately.
- Regularly reviewing the policy.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

## Promoting Good Practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children in order to harm them. There are some people in this organisation who will have regular contact with children and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported to Julie Frost (07944 259 188) and the guidelines in this policy should be followed.

#### Good Practice means:

- Always working in an open environment, where possible, avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication.
- Treating all children equally with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with service users (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children to share in decision making.
- Keeping up to date with training, qualifications and insurance.
- Involving children/young people/parents/carers wherever possible
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent if group officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

#### Named person for child protection

The named contact for SMDSSG is Julie Frost contact: 07944 259 188.

#### What should you do if a young person reports abuse to you?

If someone discloses that they are being abused, whether in the home or the sport setting, then upon receiving the information you should:

- React calmly.
- Reassure the child that they were right to tell and that they are not to blame and take what the child says seriously.
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. Don't ask about explicit details.
- Reassure but do not promise confidentiality, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
- Inform the child/young person what you will do next.
- Make a full and written record of what has been said/heard as soon as possible and don't delay in passing on the information.

The report will include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times and special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.

- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

If there are concerns about sharing the above information with a colleague you can contact Social Services, the police, or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000.

### **What SMDSSG will do next**

It is not our responsibility to decide whether abuse has taken place or not, however we will pass on the information to the appropriate authority.

Write down all of the information so that if we are asked at a later time, we can produce a written report. Severe and obvious cases of abuse will be reported immediately.

Services for Children and Young People, Children's Social Care, have a statutory duty under The Children Act 1989 to ensure the welfare of a child. When a child protection referral is made, they have a legal responsibility to investigate and all agencies have a duty to co-operate with those investigations. This may involve talking to the child and their family and gathering information from other people who know the child. Enquiries may be carried out jointly with the police. Clearly then concerns about children must not be taken lightly.

The protection of children is paramount and if we have any concerns about a child being abused or neglected, we will contact Manchester Children's Services via the Adults and Children's Social Care Contact Service: Manchester Contact Centre: 0161 234 5001

### **Types of Abuse and Neglect**

Signs/indicators of abuse and neglect are helpful if they are used with some caution. They are not necessarily evidence of abuse or neglect. However, if you are concerned about a child or young person they can help you think about why you have that concern.

Signs that may suggest physical abuse:

- Any bruising to a baby - pre-walking stage.
- Multiple bruising to different parts of the body.
- Bruising of different colours indicating repeated injuries.
- Fingertip bruising to the chest, back, arms or legs.
- Burns of any shape or size.
- An injury for which there is no adequate explanation.

Signs of possible sexual abuse:

- Something a child has told you.
- Something a child has told someone else.
- A child who shows worrying sexualised behaviour in their play or with other children.

- A child who seems to have inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age.
- A child who may be visiting or being looked after by a known or suspected sexual offender.

Signs which may suggest emotional harm - the following signs may be present in children whose parents are over-critical and emotionally distant, or who are unable to meet their child's emotional needs:

- Children whose behaviour is excessive. For example, excessive bedwetting, overeating, rocking, head banging.
- Children who self-harm. For example, they may cut or scratch themselves or overdose.
- Children who attempt suicide.
- Children who persistently run away from home.
- Children who show high levels of anxiety, unhappiness or withdrawal.
- Children who usually seek out or avoid affection.

Signs which may suggest neglect:

- Squalid, unhygienic or dangerous home conditions.
- Parents who fail to attend to their children's health or development needs.
- Children who appear persistently undersized or underweight.
- Children who continually appear tired or lacking in energy.
- Children who suffer frequent injuries due to lack of supervision.

Please note that these lists are possible indicators of abuse, any signs of abuse have to be considered in context.

### **Positive ways of protecting children**

What do children need?

- To feel safe and secure.
- Health and happiness.
- Appropriate affection.
- Lots of smiles.
- Praise and encouragement.
- To be able to talk to someone.
- To be listened to.
- New experiences.
- Respect for their feelings.
- Rewards and treats.

### **What to do if you are worried**

If you are worried about a child and think they may be a victim of neglect or abuse, please call:

Manchester Contact Centre on 016 234 5001 (24-hour service)

NSPCC Child Protection helpline on 0808 800 5000 (free 24-hour service)

Childline 08001111 (a free 24-hour helpline for children)

If a child is at immediate risk please contact the police on 999

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