

## Safeguarding Policy

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Other DEx safeguarding policies and procedures to be read and observed in conjunction with this:

- Accident and first aid policy
  - Anti-bullying policy
  - Anti-bullying procedure
  - Babysitting policy
  - Behaviour code for adults working with children
  - Child protection policy statement
  - Dealing with abuse, threats and violence towards DEx team members
  - Procedure for children at possible risk of abuse
  - Mobile telephone, camera and photography policy
  - Reporting of contagious and notifiable diseases procedure
  - Reporting of contagious and notifiable diseases procedure
  - Safe touch policy
  - Sickness and exclusion policy
  - Training policy
  - Whistleblowing policy
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It is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and Downright Excellent recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

### Purpose of this policy

The purpose of the Downright Excellent safeguarding children policy is to ensure that procedures are in place so that every child and young person who attends is safe and protected. This policy will give clear direction to team members, volunteers, members of the Board, families, carers and visitors about how concerns are managed.

### Introduction

Downright Excellent recognises the importance of protecting children from harm and supporting and promoting the welfare of all children and young people who attend. The key elements of our policy are prevention, protection and support. The Children Acts 1989 and 2004 state that a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, therefore, when this policy uses the word 'child' or 'children' it is referring to 'children and young people' up to the age of 18.

This policy applies to all team members, volunteers, members of the Board, families, carers, visitors and children.

### Our Ethos:

Downright Excellent promotes an ethos where children attending feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened to. We recognise that many of the children attending are particularly vulnerable because they have special educational needs and many are completely dependent on adult support for all aspects of care which includes intimate care.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness abuse may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth or to view the world in a positive way. For such children attendance at Downright Excellent may be one of the few stable, secure and predictable components in their life. Other children may be vulnerable because they have a disability or are in care. We seek to provide all our children with the necessary support to keep them safe and build their self-esteem and self-confidence.

We want children who attend Downright Excellent to feel able to talk freely to any member of the team and volunteers if they are worried or concerned about something.

All members of the team and volunteers will, through induction and training, know how to recognise concerns about a child and know how to manage a disclosure made by a child.

We will not make promises to a child we cannot keep and we will not keep secrets. Every child will be told, by the adult they have chosen to talk to what will happen next.

Downright Excellent will endeavour to provide activities and opportunities within its structure that will equip children with the skills they need to stay safe. This will also be extended to include material that will encourage children to develop essential life skills.

At all times we will work to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers and colleagues from other agencies.

## **Induction**

When new members of the team, board and volunteers join Downright Excellent they will be informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They will be given a copy of this policy and told who the Safeguarding Team consists of and their roles.

The induction programme will include basic safeguarding information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage disclosure from a child, when and how to record a concern about welfare of a child.

When new families join Downright Excellent, the parents and/or carers will be informed of our safeguarding arrangements and given a copy of this policy. Families and carers will be informed who the members of Downright Excellent's safeguarding team are, their roles and how they can be contacted. Families and carers will also be informed of our legal duty to assist our colleagues in social care with child protection enquiries and what happens should we have cause to make a referral to another agency.

## **Safeguarding children training**

The Department for Education's (DfE) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2013 document states that those 'in regular contact with children and young people or with adults who are parents and carers' should have access to basic safeguarding children training.

All members of the team who are in regular contact with children must attend basic safeguarding children training and update this every 3 years – currently, we require each member of the DEx team, which includes volunteers, to complete the NSPCC's Safe Network on-line training. Members of the safeguarding team, who have particular responsibilities, will attend more comprehensive training at a higher level provided by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

## **Recording and reporting concerns about the safety and welfare of a child**

All members of the team, Board and volunteers have a responsibility to take prompt action if they are concerned about the safety and welfare of a child.

If a child is suffering or likely to suffer 'significant harm' action must be taken immediately (see appendix A for definitions of abuse).

All concerns about safety and welfare of a child must be taken seriously.

**Any members of the team, board or volunteers with concerns about the safety of a child should:**

- Record the concern, using Downright Excellent's Reporting Concerns about a Child form, which is kept in the locked filing cabinet at Golden Lane.
- Speak to Downright Excellent's Designated Safeguarding Officer or the person who acts in their absence (see Appendix B).
- Agree with this person what action should be taken, by whom and when it will be reviewed.
- At this point, the concern has been referred to the proper officer. The person making the referral will be reassured that the appropriate and compliant action is being taken but, for reasons of confidentiality/safety, should not expect ongoing details of the case.

**Non-urgent or low level concerns**

All concerns about a child should initiate some form of action.

Concerns that are of a non-urgent or low-level nature but that do not reach the threshold of 'significant harm' must still be recorded centrally using Downright Excellent's Incident Report system. Recording and action upon low level or non-urgent concerns about a child is important in order to recognise the cumulative effect of some types of abuse. Parents or carers should be informed of the concern, **unless** informing them might put the child at risk of harm.

**Informing parents and carers**

We ensure that parents and carers have an understanding of our responsibility to promote the safety and welfare of children by making our obligations clear during initial assessments /interviews and thereafter during the annual assessments / interviews.

In most cases parents and carers should be informed when concerns have been raised about their child. It is important that parents and carers are given an opportunity to address concerns raised.

Parents **must not** be informed if it is believed that by doing so would put the child at risk, for example if the child has made a disclosure of sexual or physical abuse.

In this event immediate advice will be sought by a DEX Safeguarding Officer from the Children and Families Service's Initial Assessment Team.

**The role of the Board**

Downright Excellent's Board will ensure that:

- The policies and procedures adopted and reviewed by the Board are fully communicated and implemented by all members of the team and volunteers.
- Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the safeguarding team to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategic discussions and training.

- All members of the team and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner.
- Downright Excellent operates safe recruitment practices, including appropriate use of references and checks on new members of the team and volunteers.
- A member of the Board is responsible for championing safeguarding children issues within DEx. This Trustee liaises with the Downright Excellent's safeguarding team and provides strategic information to the Board including the impact of new legislation.
- Downright Excellent has a safeguarding team consisting of a Designated Safeguarding Officer, Deputy Safeguarding Officer and the Safeguarding Advisor. The team must undertake appropriate training and attend refresher training every 2 years.
- Downright Excellent follows local safeguarding procedures and the policy is reviewed annually.
- There is a whistle blowing policy and a procedure for dealing with allegations made against a member of the team and volunteers.
- All members of the team and volunteers are aware of Downright Excellent's safeguarding children arrangements and those who are in regular contact with children, undertake appropriate training which is kept up-to-date by refresher training at three-yearly intervals.
- Any deficiencies or weaknesses that lead to poor or unsafe practices in regards to children are brought to the attention of the Board to be rectified.
- Twice yearly the Board will receive an anonymised report detailing all safeguarding incidences

## **The role of the Safeguarding Team**

The Safeguarding Team have a specific responsibility for championing the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people attending Downright Excellent.

The role of the Safeguarding Team includes:

### Referrals to Children and Families Service

- Ensuring all actions are in line with the local authority's Safeguarding Procedure.
- Supporting and enabling members of the team and volunteers to report concerns that a child is being abused.
- Holding a copy of all referrals made to the Children and Families Service and referrals to other agencies related to safeguarding children matters.
- Liaison with the trustee with responsibility for leading on safeguarding to inform him/her of any issues and on-going investigations.

### Training

- Ensuring members of the team and volunteers have received information of safeguarding children at induction.
- Making sure members of the team and volunteers receive local authority or other approved safeguarding training at least every 3 years and all receive training appropriate to their role.
- Ensuring all staff with specific responsibility for safeguarding children attend more in depth training.
- Ensuring all members of the team and volunteers understand internal reporting and recording systems and are clear about what they do if they are worried about a child.

### Raising awareness

- Ensure all members of the team and volunteers are aware of Downright Excellent's safeguarding policy and it is readily available and reviewed annually.

## Recording concerns

- Managing Downright Excellent's Incident Reporting system and ensuring all members of the team are aware of their responsibilities to record and highlight as required.

## Child protection Conference and core groups

Members of the team may be asked to attend external child protection conferences and / or relevant core group meetings, on behalf of Downright Excellent, in respect of an individual child. The person attending from Downright Excellent will often be the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Senior Speech and Language Therapist, however another member of the team may be asked to attend depending on their role or involvement with the child. The person attending will need to have as much relevant up-to-date information about the child as possible.

A child protection conference will be convened if it is considered the child/ren are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm. Review conference and regular core group meetings will be held to monitor the child protection plan.

All reports for child protection conference will be prepared in advance of the meeting. The information contained in the report will be shared with parents / carers at the conference and will include information relating to the child's physical, emotional and intellectual development. Child protection conferences can be upsetting for parents / carers. We will work in an open and honest way with all parents and carers. Our responsibility is to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and our aim is to achieve this in partnership with our families.

## **Managing allegations and concerns against members of the team and volunteers**

Any allegation made against a member of the Downright Excellent team (voluntary or paid) will be 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 subject to the allegation.

## **Safe Recruitment and Selection of Team Members including volunteers**

All recruitment will follow the policies and procedures agreed by the Board.

## **Complaints or Concerns Expressed by Children, Team or Volunteers**

In accordance with the DEx ethos, all complaints and concerns will be dealt with sensitively and in accordance with the safeguarding policy and procedure.

Downright Excellent will seek to ensure that the child or adult who makes the complaint is informed not only of the action DEx will take but also the length of time that will be required to resolve the complaint.

Downright Excellent will also endeavour to keep the child or adult regularly informed as to the progress of his/her complaint.

The Downright Excellent Board of Trustees is committed to reviewing safeguarding policies annually and reviewing practice at each Board meeting.

**Date of last policy review: May 2017**

**Date of next review: May 2018**

## Appendix A

### Definitions of Abuse

#### **Significant Harm**

The threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life and gives Local Authorities a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

#### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, an illness in a child.

#### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to part take in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. The activities may include non-contact activities, such as involving children looking at, or in the production of, sexual on-line images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

#### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse for example.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (inc. the use of inadequate care-takers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

#### **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 involve conveying to the children that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capacity, as well as over protection and the limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing a child in participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

## Appendix B

### Useful contact details

| Position/supporting agency | Named person   | Contact No    | Website/ email address   |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------------|--|
| DEx Safeguarding Officer   | Ann Reynard    | 07789 482 038 | <a href="mailto:annreynard@btopenworld.com">annreynard@btopenworld.com</a>   |
| DEx Safeguarding Deputy    | Beth Davies    | 07930 281327  | <a href="mailto:beth@downrightexcellent.org">beth@downrightexcellent.org</a> |
| DEx Safeguarding Advisor   | Kirsty Jackman | 07889 819363  | <a href="mailto:Kirstymj126@hotmail.com">Kirstymj126@hotmail.com</a>         |

### For confidential advice:

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|----------------|--|---------------|--|
| NSPCC Helpline |  | 0808 800 5000 | <a href="mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk">help@nspcc.org.uk</a>       |
| Childline      |  | 0800 1111     | <a href="http://www.childline.org.uk">www.childline.org.uk</a> |
| Barnardo's     |  | 020 8550 8822 | <a href="http://www.barnardos.org.uk">www.barnardos.org.uk</a> |