

The Garden Classroom

Child Protection Policy

December 2008

The aim of the organisation The Garden Classroom is to reach out to and engage disadvantaged groups, and in particular young people, in gardening, wildlife, science and environmental and related skills.

The Garden Classroom believes that all adults, children and young people should be able to enjoy the facilities of outdoor spaces, events and activities we organise in safety and in a framework that minimises risk to adults, children and young people of harm through accident or abuse.

Aims

The policy aims to:

- Underpin the standards of our work with children.
- Keep children safe from abuse, or any kind of harm or distress as a result of their contact with staff and volunteers.
- Protect individual staff and volunteers from accusations of misconduct.

Implementation

Our policy of safeguarding children will be achieved through:

- Keeping policies and procedural guidelines for this area appropriate, up-to-date and accessible.
- Having clear processes for reporting and addressing any concerns or allegations relating to safeguarding children from abuse.
- Ensuring that our events and activities are appropriate to their audience, well planned, responsibly supervised and within the law.

Responsibilities of the committee

The committee must ensure that:

- Staff and volunteers are suitably qualified and/or experienced to supervise and deliver the activities they undertake and have an up to date CRB check that has been accepted by the client.
- Any third party individual or organisation involved in delivering activities as part of a garden event has appropriate experience and where relevant holds the appropriate qualifications and/or accreditation and insurance. If they are operating with any degree of autonomy, i.e. not under the close supervision of garden staff or volunteers, they should have child protection procedures at least equivalent to ours.

Responsibilities of staff and volunteers

You should:

- Set a good example; you are likely to be seen as a role model and should adopt an approach that encourages mutual respect.
- Always respect an individual's right to privacy and personal space.
- Be alert to inappropriate or potentially harmful behaviours within a group
- Always seek the consent of a child if you need to touch them to administer first aid or to help with clothing. Ensure another adult is in the room if removing clothing or administering first aid in sensitive areas.
- Respond sensitively to children anxious or unsure about participation in any activities.
- Encourage a culture of openness, where anyone experiencing upset feels able to report it.
- Immediately report any concerns you have about the welfare or safety of any child, or of inappropriate behaviour of other adults.
- Ensure participants are aware of who is responsible for the group.
- Be aware of the numbers and needs of participants. Adopt a going home or winding up procedure to minimise the chance of children coming to harm once the planned activities are complete.

- Ensure other adults attending a group (such as children's parents) or family event recognise the need for appropriate behaviour around children.

You should not:

- Rely on your good name to protect you from allegations.
- Be alone with a child. If a degree of privacy is required then you should aim to remain within sight or earshot of other people.
- Show favouritism within the group or be drawn into attention-seeking behaviour such as crushes or tantrums.
- Allow or engage in suggestive remarks, gestures or touching which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.
- Take photographs without consent from both the individual concerned and any responsible adult or carer.
- Engage in rough or physical contact unless it is permitted within the rules of a game or activity.
- Smoke, or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs¹ whilst around young people.
- Swear or use explicit language.

Reporting procedure

Marnie Rose (Director) and Rosey Lyall (Board Member) will liaise with the school's Child Protection Officer, Police or Social Care should need arise.

Any concerns relating to treatment of children at the garden should be addressed to Marnie Rose or Rosey Lyall in the first instance. All efforts should be taken to maintain confidentiality for all concerned when an allegation has been made and is being investigated.

The role of the Director and Board Member is to:

- receive information from staff, volunteers, children or parents and carers who have child protection concerns and record it;
- assess the information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information about the matter as appropriate;
- consult initially with a child protection agency such as the local children's services, or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline, to test out any doubts or uncertainty about the concerns;
- make a formal referral to a statutory child protection agency or the police.

It is not their role to decide whether a child has been abused or not.

Awareness of child protection policy

This policy document will be published on The Garden Classroom's website and will be available upon request (with reference made to this effect on the company leaflet).

¹ Other than those available from a pharmacist or prescribed by your doctor and for which no relevant side effects are expected.