



**Safeguarding  
Children  
Policy**

2009 - 2011

## Foreword

Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) is committed to ensure that all WFDC activities provide a safe, enjoyable and positive experience for children and young people as participants and for the employees whose involvement is integral to the development of quality opportunities and services.

This Safeguarding Children Policy, its procedures and supporting implementation plan will ensure that child protection remains a priority for WFDC and highlights the commitment of all involved in ensuring that our procedures are continuously reviewed, improved and in line with development and government legislation.

This policy provides a generic statement on what parents, customers, young people and employees can expect from us, as minimum standards, in the area of child protection.

The policy and procedures will be transparent and open to inspection by anyone, and details how concerns about the wellbeing of young people will be responded to. It will provide a reference point for all, in the quest for making young people's lives as safe as possible.

We are aware that we cannot do this alone and, in return, we will continue to seek a minimum standard from voluntary organisations who work with young people. This document makes a commitment to review and to adapt to change in a positive stance on all areas of child protection.

This policy is mandatory for all employees and Members working for or on behalf of WFDC. The policy and procedures were issued by WFDC following Council approval on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2009 and will be reviewed in July 2011 or whenever there is a significant change in Child Protection legislation or following a major investigation.

Walter Delin

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Chief Executive, Wyre Forest District Council

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## **1.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

### **1.1 Introduction**

It is the policy of WFDC that all young people have a right to protection and for their welfare to be paramount. The following child protection procedures will be formally adopted and made known to all employees.

By the nature of the organisation, it is inevitable that various degrees of contact with young people will occur and it is therefore our policy to have in place clear guidelines for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare as well as protecting our employees and other adults in a position of responsibility from potential allegations of abuse. The term '**employees**' is used to include all council employees, full or part time, volunteers and anyone working on a paid or unpaid basis on behalf of WFDC.

We expect agencies and organisations and other stakeholders, with a remit for working with young people, that we work with or who hire our facilities, to adhere to our procedures as a minimum standard or operate their own effective child protection policy. Support is available from WFDC Community Development Manager to an organisation, which needs to establish their own policy (see Appendix G).

This policy relates to 'children' and young people under the age of 18 and to vulnerable people over the age of 18. We recognise the needs and vulnerability of children from minority ethnic groups and those who are disabled. The policy and procedures apply to all children and young people regardless of gender ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion. The term '**young people**' will be used to include those under 18 year's old and vulnerable adults.

This policy has been cross-referenced to other policies and procedures of the District Council, which promote the child's safety and welfare: Equality and Diversity Policy (see 1.4), Health and Safety Regulations, Disciplinary and Grievance Policies, Equal Opportunities Policy, Harassment Procedures, Recruitment Policy, Confidential Reporting Policy. This policy also links to policies of external organisations (see 6.0 Links to other Policies).

This policy has been produced in line with the Standards for Safeguarding & Protecting Children in Sport (Child Protection in Sport Unit 2003) and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2006.

### **Legislation most relevant to safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children**

#### **Children Act 2004, Section 11, Statutory Guidance**

Requires a range of organisations (including District Councils) to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions, and services provided, are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Organisations must take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised; and where there are concerns about children and young people's welfare, all agencies take all appropriate actions to address those concerns, working to agreed local policies.

**Key Features of Section 11 are:**

- senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting
- children's welfare;
- a clear statement of the agency's responsibilities towards children available for all staff;
- a clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting
- the welfare of children;
- service development that takes account of the need to safeguard and promote welfare and is
- informed, where appropriate, by the views of children and families;
- staff training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children for all staff working with
- or (depending on the agency's primary functions) in contact with children and families;
- safe recruitment procedures in place;
- effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and
- effective information sharing.

The Section 11 duty means that the local authority must make arrangements to ensure two things. Firstly, that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and secondly, that the services they contract out to others are provided having regard to that need

**Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006, Statutory Guidance**

Chapter 2, 2.8 lists responsibilities of organisations working with children, which mirror Section 11 and thus reinforces the guidance as detailed above.

**Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**

Comes into force in October 2009. Staff employed in a "regulated activity" needing to be "registered" with Independent Safeguarding Authority and staff employed in a "controlled activity" needed to be checked with ISA.

It will be adopted as best practice by WFDC employees, parents and young people involved in our activities as the Council works towards promoting a safe environment for all involved.

## **1.2 Responsibilities**

Wyre Forest District Council will:

- Accept the responsibility to implement procedures to provide a duty of care for young people, safeguard their well - being and protect them from abuse
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of young people
- Recruit, train and supervise its employees to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect young people from abuse and to reduce the likelihood of allegations made against them
- Require employees to adopt and abide by the WFDC Code of Conduct, Code of Behaviour for Employees, and the WFDC Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures
- Make people feel confident in reporting any issues on child protection
- Respond to any allegations appropriately and implement the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures
- Be committed to working together with other local authorities, Police, National Governing Bodies, Children's Services and the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) in accordance with their procedures

## **1.3 Principles**

The guidance given in the procedures is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of young people is the primary concern
- All young people, whatever their age, gender, racial origin, religious belief, disability and sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- It is everyone's responsibility to report concerns but it is the responsibility of Children's Services and/or Police to determine whether or not abuse has taken place
- All incidents or allegations of suspicious poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately
- Confidentiality will be upheld at all times and in line with the Data Protection Act
- There is a consistent understanding of acceptable behaviour of young people towards other young people within any organised activity, service or programme. (Appendix F: WFDC Code of Conduct for Young People)
- Discrimination, prejudice and oppressive behaviour or language is unacceptable within all activities, programmes or services

## **1.4 Equality & Diversity Statement**

WFDC recognises and celebrates the diverse nature of the people who live, work in and visit the Wyre Forest District and who work for the Council and its partners / contractors.

- WFDC is guided by its core value that people will be treated fairly and according to their needs
- WFDC supports and promotes equality of opportunity in employment and service delivery
- WFDC opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation
- WFDC accepts that it has a unique and influential position in the community as a major employer and quality service provider. It also accepts that it has a moral obligation to bring about positive change through its extensive contact with the community and its grant-aiding powers for community organisations

## **2.0 RECOGNITION OF POOR PRACTICE, ABUSE AND BULLYING**

### **2.1 Introduction**

It is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. WFDC employees have a responsibility to act if they have any concerns about the behaviour of an individual towards a young person. WFDC encourages and expects employees to discuss any concern they may have about the welfare of a young person immediately with the WFDC Safeguarding Advisor (7.0 – Essential Contacts).

### **2.2 Poor Practice**

Poor practice includes any behaviour that contravenes the WFDC Code of Behaviour for Employees (Appendix E) and WFDC Code of Conduct.

### **2.3 Abuse and Neglect**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

#### **2.3.1 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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

*Within a sports context an example might be hitting as punishment or training beyond a child's developed ability.*



### **2.3.2 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. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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

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

### **2.3.3 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 children that they are worthless or 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 capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to 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.

*Within an arts context an example might include constant criticism of the young person and undermining their efforts or subjecting them to unrealistic pressure to consistently perform to high expectations.*

### **2.3.4 Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

*In swimming and related activities, which might involve contact with young people, situations where sexual abuse might go unnoticed could be created.*

### **2.3.5 People with a disability**

Children with a disability are particularly vulnerable to abuse for several different reasons more often than not depending on their impairment. Dependency on others may make a young person feel powerless to report abusive treatment. Different

communication methods or an individual's lack of vocabulary might also prove to be a barrier for a child wanting to communicate their concerns.

### **2.3.6 Race and Racism**

Children from black and minority ethnic groups (and their parents) are likely to have experienced harassment, racial discrimination and institutional racism. Although racism can cause significant harm, it is not, in itself, a category of abuse. The experience of racism is likely to affect the responses of the child and family to assessment and enquiry processes. Failure to consider the effects of racism undermines efforts to protect children from other forms of significant harm. The effects of racism differ for different communities and individuals, and should not be assumed to be uniform. Attention should be given to the specific needs of children of mixed parentage and refugee children. In particular, the need for neutral, high-quality, gender-appropriate translation or interpretation services should be taken into account when working with children and families whose preferred language is not English. All organisations working with children, including those operating in areas where black and minority ethnic communities are numerically small, should address institutional racism, defined in the Macpherson Inquiry Report (2000) on Stephen Lawrence as 'the collective failure by an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people on account of their race, culture and/or religion'.

### **2.3.7 Identifying Signs of Possible Abuse**

There are certain signs of abuse, both in a young person's appearance and behaviour, which may alert an individual to the possibility that abuse, is occurring. Some of these signs are common to all types of abuse; others are more specific.

Knowing the signs to be aware of is essential for recognising a real or potential problem. However, the presence of any one sign in itself may not necessarily mean abuse is occurring, and conversely, a young person who is being abused may show none of the obvious signs. Such factors make the issue of child abuse more complex, but all concerns and suspicions should be reported and acted upon accordingly. The following are indications that a young person may be being abused:

- Unexplained bruising or suspicious injuries
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (becoming very quiet, withdrawn, outbursts of temper)
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- A young person has difficulty in making friends
- Changes in appearance such as weight loss

Remember that at all times the welfare of the young person is paramount. If a young person's behaviour or your observations give rise to concern then talk to them sensitively to find out if there is anything wrong or discuss your concerns with the WFDC SA (see 7.0 Essential Contacts). It may be appropriate to raise your initial concerns with parents (see 4.3.2).

## 2.4 Bullying

Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are:

- physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft)
- verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling)
- emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group).

The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development, or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm).

Bullying in sport: refers to HWSP CP Policy available from the WFDC Sports Development Officer.

### 2.4.1 The action WFDC will take:

Whatever its form, bullying is unacceptable within WFDC and it always will be challenged and addressed appropriately. There is an expectation on the ground that 'low level' incidents will be dealt with by employees. However, incidents that are serious e.g. causing marks and injuries or bullying (regardless of seriousness) that persists despite efforts to deal with it should be referred (see 4.6). If in doubt employees should contact Safeguarding Advisor to discuss concerns.

## 3.0 SAFE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PRACTICES

### 3.1 Recruitment, training and disclosure checks of employees who will have direct or indirect contact with young people

- The term '**direct** contact with young people' refers to an employee who has either responsibility for young people in a supervisory role, **or**, who, during the course of carrying out the normal duties of their post will come into contact or interact with a young person/people, without any other persons present. An example of this would be a Play leader leading an activity or session, a Parks Patrol Officer dealing with anti social behaviour in a park, a Pest Control Officer entering a private house, or a public toilet cleaner.

***These posts would require an Enhanced CRB check to be completed***

- The term '**indirect** contact with young people' refers to an employee who, during the course of carrying out the normal duties of their post, is likely to come into contact with young people. An example of this would be a Grounds Maintenance Operative mowing grass, a Customer Services Officer who has access to databases.

***These posts would require a Self Declaration form to be completed***

***Members of WFDC and Heads of Service will be required to complete a Self Declaration form and will have the option to complete to an Enhanced CRB check should they wish.***

The majority of WFDC posts will not be required by law to have a CRB check. However, each post needs to be adequately risk assessed by the Head of Service to ensure that the person doing this work does not pose a risk to children or vulnerable adults. This will allow measures to be identified and put in place therefore mitigating the risks. For example, it may be decided a CRB check **is** necessary.

Heads of Service will ensure that Enhanced CRB or self declaration forms are completed as appropriate by employees within their respective Divisions, in accordance with the policy above.

If an employee feels that they are being asked to complete a CRB check without reasonable justification the employee should make a formal request to the Head of HR for the decision to be reviewed in line with ISA Guidance.

WFDC recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse young people in some way and that all necessary steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with them.

### **3.1.1 Pre-selection checks must include the following:**

- All potential candidates will have to fill in the WFDC Application Form.
- All applicants working with young people will be subject to an Enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check prior to any work being offered in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- A minimum of two written references will be taken up and may be confirmed by telephone.
- Employees, who are required to have an Enhanced CRB or Self Declaration, will have a check every 2 years.

NB. It will be a requirement in the future to be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) for people working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, including volunteers. The 'route' to becoming ISA registered is through a CRB check. It will be a criminal offence for employers to employ a person in a 'regulated activity' who is not ISA registered.

WFDC will conform to this change at the appropriate time.

### **3.1.2 Interview and Induction:**

All employees will be required to undergo an interview under the guidelines of the WFDC Recruitment and Selection Policy. All employees will receive an informal induction upon commencement of employment.

During the Recruitment Process:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including CRB form or Self Declaration form).
- Their qualifications should be substantiated.

During the Induction Process:

- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- They should consent to sign up to WFDC Code of Conduct, Code of Behaviour for Employees, and the WFDC Safeguarding Children Policy.
- Safeguarding children procedures are explained and training needs identified.
- **Portability:**

**CRB checks are not portable.** If a prospective employee comes to WFDC requiring a disclosure check a new CRB will be processed. However, if an employee leaves our employment for a period of time and can show where they were working during this time the CRB check will be valid for two years after the original date of issue if this employee were to return to WFDC employment e.g. museum assistant, sports coach.

### 3.1.3 Training:

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help employees to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and ensure their practice reduces the likelihood of allegations against them.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond appropriately to concerns expressed by a young person.
- Work safely, effectively with young people.

WFDC requires:

- It is mandatory for employees working with young people to attend recognised Child Protection awareness training as soon as this can be arranged following their appointment.
- Employees will have to update their Child Protection training every 2 years.
- Training levels are appropriate to the employees contact with young people and their responsibilities for child welfare within WFDC.
- Members and CMT will be required to attend awareness briefing sessions for child protection.
- Employees who are likely to have contact with young people during the course of their work e.g. Grounds Maintenance Operative, **must** complete the Self Declaration form and receive advisory information and CP awareness training. **This is WSCB Briefing Awareness (every 2 years).**
- Seasonal employees who have direct contact with young people during the course of their work e.g. summer Play leaders, Sports Coaches and Rangers, **must** be Enhanced CRB checked and child protection will be part of their induction training. **This is WSCB Briefing Awareness (every 2 years).**
- Employees who have direct contact with young people during the course of their work e.g. Parks Patrol Officer, Arts Development Officer, **must** be Enhanced CRB checked and **must** have the appropriate level of training. **This is WSCB e-learning and Grade A (every 2 years).**
- Designated Safeguarding Advisor will receive specific training to support their more enhanced role. **This is WSCB Grade B (every 2 years).**

NB. Employees/volunteers are advised that the safeguarding training is a pathway and that each level must be completed or provide evidence of their attendance at alternative training events which have met a similar set of learning outcomes.

### **3.2 Code of Behaviour for Employees working with Young People**

In order to ensure adherence and understanding, all individuals working for or on behalf of WFDC will apply the WFDC Code of Behaviour for Employees (Appendix E) and the WFDC Code of Conduct as it relates to their particular role with young people.

Young people taking part in WFDC activities will be expected to treat each other with mutual respect and dignity. WFDC employees will ensure that acceptable standards of behaviour are communicated to participants and adhered to e.g. Code of Conduct for Young People (Appendix F).

### **3.3 WFDC Guidance and Procedures relating to activities and services**

In the course of preventing abuse to young people WFDC have established guidance and procedures related to activities and services.

#### **3.3.1 Use of photography, video recording, image recording and mobile phone cameras**

There is national evidence that some people have used events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people.

When using professional photographers or inviting the press to a WFDC activity, WFDC will:-

- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour
- The photographer must wear identification at all times during the event
- Not allow unsupervised access to young people or one to one photo sessions at events
- Parents and spectators intending to photograph or video at an event will be required to register with the event organiser if they wish to use photographic equipment
- Individuals registered to use photographic equipment will be issued with identification
- Young people and their parents will be informed to report any concerns to the event organiser
- Concerns raised over inappropriate or intrusive photography will be reported to the event organiser and recorded as a child protection concern
- See WF Dance Festival CP Policy, WFDC Play Development, HWSP Child Protection Policy

### **3.3.2 Organised photographic opportunities**

- The majority of promotional and press releases are organised through the Media and Marketing Officer. These are generally agreed by both parties in advance. We undertake not to use the young person's images unless we have written consent for both the taking and publication of films or photographs from the parent, carer or Head Teacher in the case of schools.
- When a media photographer arrives at our venue he/she will be required to have formal ID and have it to hand at all times. Such photographers are not required to complete the Self Declaration Form (Appendix B). If there is any doubt about the ID the Media and Marketing Officer should be contacted.
- All photographers not on the Council's appointed Freelance Photographers list will be required to fill out the Self Declaration Form (Appendix B2)
- The image rights will be negotiated between the Media and Marketing Officer and the photographer
- WFDC will ensure that the young person's names are not mentioned in their publications if requested by the parents/guardians or schools in line with their Child Protection Policy
- Written consent (on WFDC Consent form) on behalf of an under 18 year old must be obtained on WFDC organised photographic opportunities

### **3.3.3 Unofficial photographic and filming opportunities taken by parent/carers and others**

#### **A) Parks and Open Spaces and Nature Reserves**

It is not practical to control unofficial filming and photography in parks and open spaces and nature reserves that are owned by Wyre Forest District Council.

If concerns are raised during:

- An event organised by Wyre Forest District Council or outside bodies
- Normal operating hours

They should be reported to the event organiser or directly to the Police. As the incident is in the public domain, this should be reported as a police matter and Wyre Forest District Council has no direct responsibility to act, other than contacting the police to respond.

#### **B) Civic Halls, Community Centres and Museum**

These facilities are managed by Wyre Forest District Council and may be visited by members of the public or hired for private functions/events.

All hirers will be made aware of the Wyre Forest District Council Safeguarding Children Policy. It is the responsibility of the hirer to communicate their own

policies and arrangements to parents/carers, although these should not contravene the policy of Wyre Forest District Council.

All events organised by Wyre Forest District Council at these facilities will be covered by the Council's policy under 3.3.1/3.3.2.

### **3.3.4 Letting procedure**

- WFDC facilities will be managed in line with the Safeguarding Children Policy. Minimum standards in relation to safeguarding are incorporated as part of the normal operating procedures for each facility.

### **3.3.5 Internet**

- Young people on work experience or others participating in one of our clubs may need supervised access to the internet. At WFDC access to inappropriate web sites and chat rooms is prevented by specialist blocking software. There are systems in place for monitoring usage of the internet and all employees have log in passwords, which can easily be traced. Any employees discovered to have accessed or placed *sexually abusive images of children and young people* on the Internet will be subject to the Internet Security Policy and WFDC Disciplinary procedures.

### **3.3.6 Voluntary organisations and service providers working with young people**

- All 'employees' working for voluntary organisations or outside bodies commissioned to provide services will be required to complete the Self Declaration Form (Appendix B2) and sign to declare they will abide by the WFDC Code of Behaviour for Employees (Appendix E). For example this may apply to providers of children's entertainment: Bouncy Castles, Donkey Rides, Bands
- The Self Declaration will be repeated every 2 years

Further guidance and procedures relating to activities and services can be found in Appendix I.

Work Experience and Extended Work Experience

Trips, Tours and Holiday Clubs

Residentials

Transporting young people

Lost/Found young people

Procedure for dealing with lost young people

Procedure for dealing with found young people

Procedure for dealing with young people who decide to leave the activity

Restraining young people

Our policy on working in schools

Guidance for employees to do home and site visits

Our policy on working with Agency employees



## **4.0 PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST PEOPLE WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN**

### **RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES, SUSPICIONS AND ALLEGATIONS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The procedures should be used in respect of all 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 towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

There may be up to three strands in the consideration of an allegation:

- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- enquiries and assessment by children's social care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services
- consideration by WFDC of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

#### **4.2 Responding to Disclosures**

##### **4.2.1 Actions to Take:**

The individual receiving information concerning a disclosure should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the young person.
- Tell the young person he/she is not to blame and that it was right to tell.
- Take what the young person says seriously.
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- It is likely that the young person will be frightened and unsure of what will happen. Be open and honest in explaining to the young person what will happen next.
- Do not make promises to keep the information a secret. The young person must be told that the information will be passed on. Explain to them that concerns will have to be shared with someone who is in a position to act.
- Complete an Incident Report Form (Appendix C), the exact questions asked and the answers given – using the same vocabulary as the young person. The recording should be completed as soon as possible and on the same working day. It should be signed and dated.
- Do not take sole responsibility: Contact and consult the WFDC Safeguarding Advisor stating that you wish to discuss a possible child abuse incident and pass on the Incident Report Form. This way you can begin to protect the young person by referring concerns to the appropriate agencies and so that you can get some support for yourself in what could be a difficult situation (Appendix A – A Quick Guide to Procedures).

Not all young people are able to express themselves verbally. In this instance where there are concerns an Incident Report Form (Appendix C) should be completed and the same procedures for making a referral followed.

**NB.** The same approach should be taken if the disclosure, suspicion, or allegation comes from an adult.

#### **4.2.2 Actions to be avoided:**

The individual receiving the disclosure should not:

- Panic
- Dismiss the concern
- Probe for more information than is offered
- Speculate or make assumptions
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Approach the alleged abuser
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets

### **4.3 Responding to suspicions, indications, allegations of abuse**

It is not the responsibility of those working for WFDC to take responsibility or to decide whether or not child abuse is taking place. However, there is a responsibility to report concerns in order that appropriate agencies can make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person. The LADO should be informed of all allegations.

#### **4.3.1 Children's Services**

Under The Children Act 1989 Social Services (now under Children's Services) have a legal responsibility to investigate any allegation of child abuse, and to work with the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board, (WSCB), to ensure the welfare of children. Enquiries may be carried out jointly with the police. If action needs to be taken urgently and out of office hours, then the Police or the Children's Services Emergency Duty Team will deal with the enquiry. The LADO should be informed of all allegations.

#### **4.3.2 Sharing Concerns with Parents**

WFDC is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers where there are concerns about their child. In most situations any initial concerns about a young person will be shared with parents and carers, as there may be a reasonable explanation that clarifies initial concerns. For example, if a young person seems withdrawn, there may be a reasonable explanation. He/she may have experienced an upset in the family, such as a parental separation, divorce or bereavement.

#### **4.3.3 When it is Not Appropriate to Share Concerns with Parents**

Circumstances may arise, where sharing concerns with parents may put a young person at greater risk, (e.g. where a parent or carer may be responsible for abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately). In these situations or where concerns still exist, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse will be reported to the WFDC Safeguarding Advisor as soon as possible and recorded appropriately.

Advice and guidance should be sought from the LADO with respect to consulting with parents.

#### **4.3.4 Designated Officer**

WFDC has identified designated Safeguarding Advisors (3) at a senior manager level in Community and Partnership Services Division (CAPS) to handle child protection issues (7.0 – Essential Contacts) in liaison with Human Resources and Legal sections.

The WFDC Safeguarding Advisors have undertaken an Enhanced Disclosure and will receive appropriate training and information.

The Safeguarding Advisors will be responsible for informing Children's Services of any alleged incident of child abuse without delay and will be required to follow this up in writing within 24 hrs of the report. (Appendix D – WFDC Safeguarding Advisor Roles and Responsibilities) In the event that the first named Safeguarding Advisor is unavailable, the person with the concerns will contact the other designated officer/s. In the event that neither officer can be contacted then Children's Services should be contacted directly. All incidents reported directly to Children's Services must also be reported to the WFDC Safeguarding Advisor at the earliest opportunity. (7.0 - Essential Contacts)

#### **4.3.5 Expert Advice**

If you are not sure what to do, contact the WFDC Safeguarding Advisor. You can also obtain advice by telephoning the local Children's Services department or call the NSPCC 24-hour free phone Helpline on 0808 800 5000. The Police also have specially trained child protection teams who will give guidance and support. (7.0– Essential Contacts) Please note that Children's Services are happy to discuss any concerns you may have about child protection and will be able to advise on whether it is necessary to make an official referral.

#### **4.3.6 Records and Information**

Information that is passed to Children's Services or the Police must be as helpful as possible. It is therefore essential that a detailed record be made at the time of the disclosure/concern using the Incident Report form (Appendix C).

All alleged incidents of child abuse are to be reported to the Police or Children's Services without delay by the Senior SA. Referrals made by telephone to Children's Services or the Police are to be confirmed in writing by the WFDC Safeguarding Advisor within 24 hours. A record will be kept of the name and position of the Officer to whom the concerns were passed, of advice given, together with the date and time of the call and agreed actions including feedback to the WFDC Safeguarding Advisor.

### **4.4 Allegations against WFDC Employees**

Child abuse can and does occur outside the family setting. It is crucial that those involved in delivering an activity or providing a service are aware of the possibility and that all allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action taken. It is important that any concerns for the welfare of the young person, arising from abuse

or harassment by an employee should be reported immediately to the SA (Appendix A – A Quick Guide to Procedures).

#### **4.4.1 Seek Advice**

Occasions may arise where the WFDC Safeguarding Advisor is informed of situations where there is uncertainty about whether the allegation made constitutes abuse and is therefore unclear about what action to take. Allegations made may be about poor practice but those responsible should always seek advice if there is any doubt as the incident may be one of a series of incidents which together cause concern.

#### **4.4.2 Confidentiality**

If you have concerns about an adults' behaviour towards a young person it is important that you share your concerns with the WFDC Safeguarding Advisor. It is acknowledged that it may be difficult for an individual to report his / her concern about a colleague's practice and WFDC will support and protect anyone who (without malicious intent), reports an incident of poor practice or suspected abuse involving a WFDC employee. Procedures outlined in the Confidential Reporting Policy will be adhered to. WFDC will ensure that confidentiality for all concerned is maintained in all incidents of suspected child abuse. Information will be handled and disseminated on a "need to know" basis only. This includes the following people:

- Parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused.
- The person making the allegation
- Children's Services/Police
- Designated officers within WFDC e.g. Safeguarding Advisor, Human Resources
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a young person)
- Advice should be sought from Children's Services or Police before any approach is made to the alleged perpetrator, or the parents if the alleged perpetrator is a young person

The WFDC Safeguarding Advisor will be responsible for ensuring that the information is stored in a secure place (by Human resources) where access will be limited to certain designated people. Data Protection legislation will be upheld and strictly adhered to. All concerns will be taken seriously and managed accordingly within the policies and procedures of WFDC and for the welfare of young people.

#### **4.4.3 If the referral relates to an incident of child abuse outside of a WFDC activity or service**

- Concerns should be reported to SA as in section 4.3.4
- The WFDC Safeguarding Advisor will notify the local Children's Services Department or the Police
- No further action will be taken under WFDC procedures

- WFDC may need to explore any support required for the young person and person making the referral

#### **4.4.4 If the referral relates to an incident of child abuse within a WFDC activity or service**

- The WFDC Safeguarding Advisor will notify the local Children's Services Department or the Police
- The WFDC Safeguarding Advisor will deal with any media enquiries and decide (in consultation with HR and Senior Management) on any action required to suspend the individual involved following advice from Children's Services and/or the Police
- A full investigation will be conducted in line with the disciplinary procedures. (Appendix A – A Quick Guide to Procedures)

#### **4.4.5 Action if there are Concerns**

The WFDC Safeguarding Advisor will judge whether the disclosure is poor practice alone or suspected child abuse and in doing so may discuss with Children's Services to clarify concerns before reaching a decision.

#### **4.4.6 Poor Practice**

- If the WFDC Safeguarding Advisor considers the allegation to be poor practice, it will be dealt with as a misconduct issue and in line with Council's Disciplinary Procedure referred to the employees Line Manager.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the designated WFDC Safeguarding Advisor/s, or if the matter has been dealt with inadequately, it will be referred to the Head of Service/Human Resources (7.0- Essential Contacts), who will then make a decision about appropriate action.

#### **4.4.7 Allegation against the Safeguarding Advisor**

If the WFDC Safeguarding Advisor is the subject of the suspicion or allegation, the Head of HR or Head of Service will be responsible for taking the appropriate action outlined above.

#### **4.4.8 If an allegation is made against you**

If you are the person who is the subject of an allegation, the situation will be explained to you in due course and you may be asked to stop working for WFDC whilst investigations take place. This may result in suspension whilst an investigation is carried out, ensuring all parties involved are protected.

Following the investigation, the appropriateness of you returning to work will be assessed and will be dependent on the outcome of the WFDC internal investigation and all other available information (including information from the Police and Children's Services). WFDC will assess on a case-by-case basis the support that can be offered to an individual who has an allegation made against them.

#### **4.4.9 Internal Enquiries and Suspension**

The WFDC Safeguarding Advisor will make an immediate recommendation to the Head of Service/HR about whether to suspend an employee accused of abuse pending a Children's Services or Police investigation.

Irrespective of the findings of the Children's Services or Police enquiries, WFDC will assess all individual cases under the disciplinary procedures to decide whether an employee should be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled with other employees.

This decision may be difficult in incidents where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the Police. In this instance WFDC will make a decision based on all available information that could suggest that more likely than not the allegation is true. The welfare of young people will always remain paramount and disciplinary procedures will be drawn to a conclusion to ensure the protection of young people.

#### **4.4.10 Support to Deal with the Aftermath**

Consideration will be given to what support WFDC can offer to young people and their parents/carers and employees. Details of Helplines and support groups will be provided. (7.0 – Essential Contacts)

Referrals to Occupational Health or counselling may be available through HR for employees.

Consideration will also be given about what support may be appropriate to the alleged perpetrator of the abuse.

#### **4.5 Allegations of Previous Abuse**

Allegations of abuse may be made some time (often years) after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a young person or by an employee who is still currently working with young people). In this instance WFDC will follow the procedures as previously outlined and will report the matter to Children's Services or the Police as other young people may be at risk.

Any individual who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with young people.

#### **4.6 Action if bullying is suspected**

Any allegations of bullying within any WFDC activity will be taken seriously and steps taken to eliminate the actions.

##### **4.6.1 Action to help the Victim and Prevent Bullying**

In order to prevent bullying from occurring and to help victims of bullying, WFDC will:

- Encourage all young people to speak and share their concerns by creating an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe.

- Speak with the victim and the bully (ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them although do not promise to keep the information confidential.
- Keep a record on Employees Personal File for 15 months of what is said.
- Report any concerns to the person in charge of the particular activity where the bullying is occurring. If the person in charge feels that they cannot deal with the allegation or the abuse is severe and/or persists, the WFDC Safeguarding Advisor will be informed.

#### **4.6.2 WFDC employees have a responsibility to deal with the individual's accused of bullying by:**

- Talking with the bully to explain the consequences of their behaviour.
- Seeking an apology from the bully to the victim.
- Informing the bully's parents/carers.
- Insisting on the return of "borrowed" items.
- Imposing sanctions as necessary such as suspension or even exclusion will be considered
- Encouraging and supporting the bully to change behaviour.
- Informing the WFDC Safeguarding Advisor of all incidents and actions.
- Keep a written record on Employees Personal File for 15 months of all incidents and actions taken.
- Ensuring the presence of a second individual as a witness when dealing with the incident.
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

#### **5.0 REVIEW OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

This policy and procedural document has been issued by Wyre Forest District Council and had Committee approval on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2008. It will be subject to review in July 2011 and every 3 years thereafter or whenever there is a significant change in the organisation or relevant legislation change.

It will be the responsibility of the WFDC Human Resources in conjunction with the WFDC Safeguarding Advisor to notify employees of any changes in the documentation and / or changes in relation to their roles and responsibilities.

## **6.0 LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES AND GUIDANCE**

HWSP Child Protection Policy

WFDC Dance Festival Policy

WFDC Play Development Policy

DC Leisure Child Protection Policy

WFDC Code of Conduct for Employees

WFDC Recruitment and Procedures Policy

WFDC Disciplinary and Grievance Policies

WFDC Complaints Procedure

WFDC Equality and Diversity Policy

WFDC Confidential Reporting Policy

WFDC Harassment and Bullying Policy

WFDC Health and safety Regulations

WFDC ICT Policy and Procedures

WCC Worcestershire Vulnerable Adults Policy

Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)

Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Board (WSCB) policies and guidance



## 7.0 **ESSENTIAL CONTACTS**

### **WFDC Safeguarding Advisors**

#### **Senior SA**

Lesley Fox Community Development Manager 01562 732976

#### **Deputy SA**

Loz Samuels Arts and Play Development Officer 01562 732977

Sue Harper Leisure Services Manager 01562 732979

### **Departmental Contacts**

**Human Resources** Rachael Gill Personnel Officer 01562 732701

### **WSCB: Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**

**for North Worcestershire:** Jon Hancock 01905 752800

### **Children's Services**

Public number for emergencies (8.00am - 6.00pm) 0845 607 2000

### **West Mercia Constabulary**

Tel 08457 444888 or 01905 723888

Police Family Protection Units (Child Protection & Domestic Violence)  
Kidderminster 01562 826104

### **Nighstop**

01562 820110

### **National Contacts**

#### **NSPCC 24 hr Child Protection**

**Helpline** (Freephone) 0808 800 5000

#### **Childline UK**

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

0800 1111

#### **Victim support**

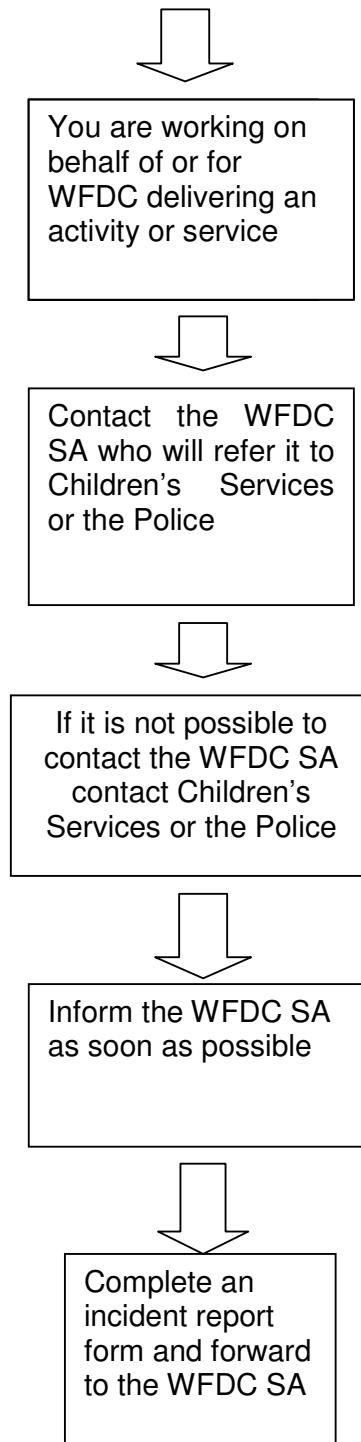
0207 735 9166

A Quick Guide to Procedures

Flow Chart 1

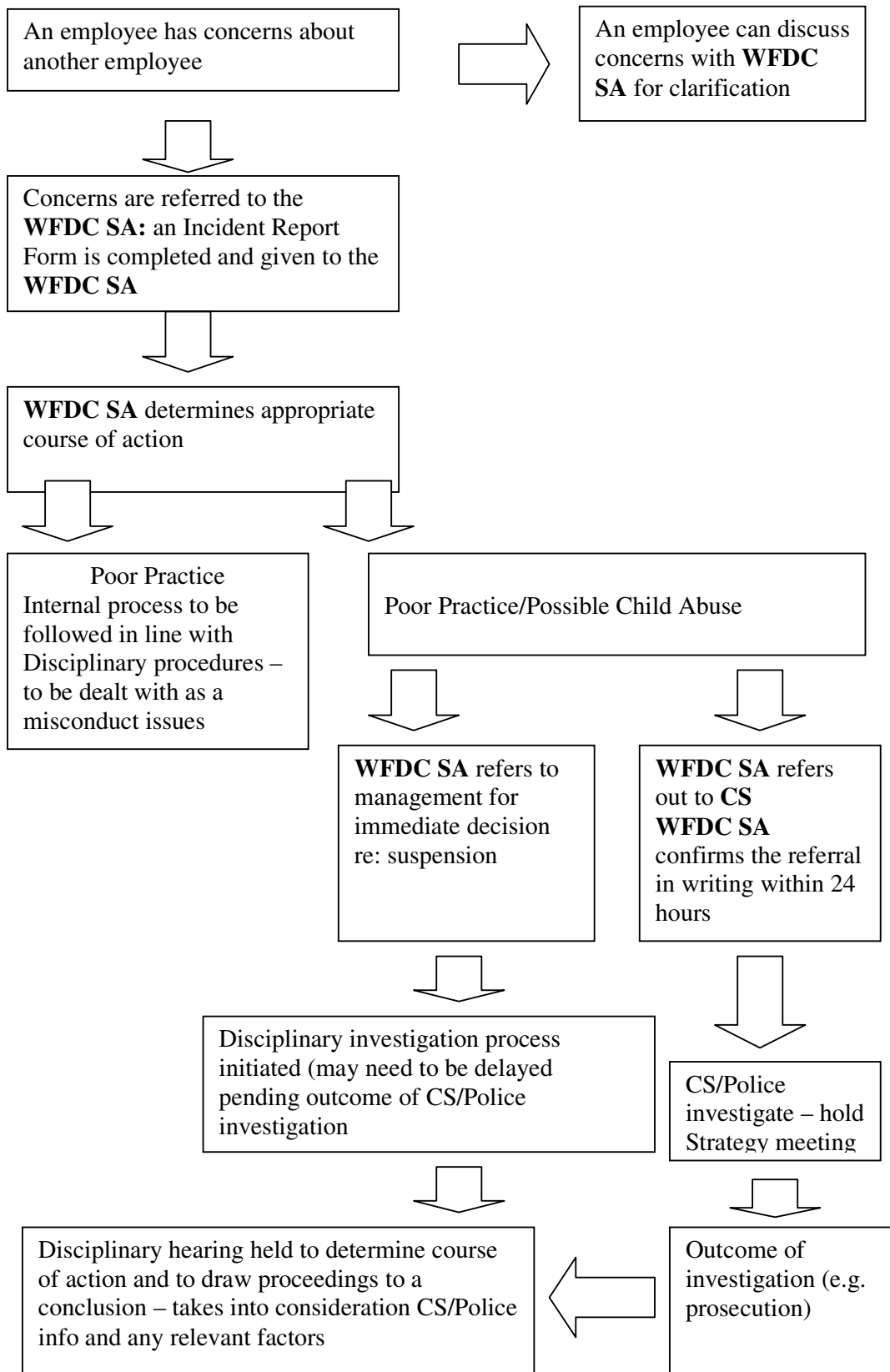
**Appropriate action when concerns about a young person are raised through direct disclosure or observation, or a young person discloses to you**

A young person or adult discloses an incident to you

**Yes**

Flow Chart 2

**You have concerns about the behaviour of an employee towards a young person**



**Self Declaration Form Employees**

The reason for seeking this information is to enable WFDC to ensure the suitability of the employee to:

- work with young people
- work in close proximity to young people whilst carrying out their duties

The term 'young people' refers to those under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults over 18.

You have a right of access to information held on you and other rights under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Wyre Forest District Council will only collect and process personal information provided on this form for no other purpose than for the purpose of safeguarding children.

This disclosure is strictly private and confidential and will be kept secure in line with CRB procedures and destroyed after 6 months.

**Part A**

Title:	First Name:	Surname:	Any previous name by which you may have been known:
Address:  Postcode ( <b>must be completed</b> ):  Telephone number(s):  Email address:			

DATE OF BIRTH

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SEX

M	F
---	---

Position held/applied for:

Start Date:

Enhanced CRB:

Date of Issue

Number

Line Manager to sign that they have seen CRB

Self declaration (for completion by the individual named in Part A)

**1. Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offences? YES/NO\***

If YES, please supply details:

.....

Note: You are advised under the provisions of the Rehabilitations of Offenders Act 1974 (exceptions) order 1975 as amended by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Amendment) Order 1986, you should declare all convictions including 'spent' convictions

**2. Have you ever been convicted of an offence (formal warnings, cautions or bound over orders)? YES/NO\***

If YES, please supply details:

.....

**3. Are you a person known to any Children's Services department as being an actual or potential risk to young people? YES/NO\***

If YES, please supply details:

.....

**4. Have you had a disciplinary sanction relating to child abuse? YES/NO\***

If YES, please supply details:

.....

\*Delete as appropriate

**IMPORTANT**

- I have read and understood the information leaflet regarding WFDC Safeguarding Children Policy. I hereby consent to WFDC undertaking CRB Disclosure if required.
- In the event of a positive disclosure, I hereby consent to WFDC making enquiries with statutory services such as Police, Children's Services and Probation Service to facilitate the risk assessment. Any item revealed may result in disciplinary proceedings.
- If it transpires that any false information has been given on this declaration this may result in disciplinary proceedings.
- I undertake to inform the Safeguarding Advisor at WFDC if I am subsequently arrested or investigated in relation to any child welfare matter.

Signed by the above named individual .....

Print name: ..... Dated .....

**Self Declaration Form External service providers/temporary employee**

The reason for seeking this information is to enable WFDC to ensure the suitability of the person to:

- work with young people
- work in close proximity to young people whilst carrying out their duties
- provide services for WFDC

The term 'young people' refers to those under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults over 18.

You have a right of access to information held on you and other rights under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Wyre Forest District Council will only collect and process personal information provided on this form for no other purpose than for the purpose of safeguarding children.

This disclosure is strictly private and confidential and will be kept secure in line with CRB procedures and destroyed after 3 months.

**Part A**

**Name of Organisation.....**

Title:	First Name:	Surname:	Any previous name by which you may have been known:
Address:			
Postcode ( <b>must be completed</b> ):			
Telephone number(s):			
Email address:			

DATE OF BIRTH

--	--	--	--	--	--

SEX

M	F
---	---

Position held:

.....

Start Date:

.....

Enhanced CRB:

Date of Issue

Number

Line Manager to sign that they have seen CRB

**Part B**

Self-declaration (for completion by the individual named in Part A)

**1. Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offences? YES/NO\***

If YES, please supply details:

.....

Note: You are advised under the provisions of the Rehabilitations of Offenders Act 1974 (exceptions) order 1975 as amended by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Amendment) Order 1986, you should declare all convictions including 'spent' convictions

**1. Have you ever been convicted of an offence (formal warnings, cautions or bound over orders? YES/NO\***

If YES, please supply details:

.....

**2. Are you a person known to any Children's Services department as being an actual or potential risk to young people? YES/NO\***

If YES, please supply details:

.....

**4. Have you had a disciplinary sanction relating to child abuse? YES/NO\***

If YES, please supply details:

.....

\*Delete as appropriate

**IMPORTANT**

- I have read and understood the information leaflet regarding WFDC Safeguarding Children Policy. I hereby consent to WFDC undertaking CRB Disclosure if required.
- In the event of a positive disclosure, I hereby consent to WFDC making enquiries with statutory services such as Police, Children's Services and Probation Service to facilitate the risk assessment.
- I undertake to inform the Safeguarding Advisor at WFDC if I am subsequently arrested or investigated in relation to any child welfare matter.
- Refusal to sign this form may result in the termination of any planned activities/events with the person representing the organisation and/or organisation.

Signed by the above named individual .....

Print name: ..... Dated .....

**Wyre Forest District Council Child Protection Incident Report Form**

**Reporting an incident that has been disclosed to you**

***Depending on the circumstances, and if the risk is very high, do not spend time filling in this form but go straight to the SA who will contact Children's Services immediately***

Your Name:	
Your Position:	Contact No.
Child's Name:	
Child's Address:	
Parents/Carers name and address:	
Contact No.	
Child's age and date of birth:	
What is the child's ethnic origin:	
Does the child have a disability? If yes give details.	
Date and time of disclosure:	
Venue where disclosure was made:	
Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? Give details.	
Brief description of what has prompted concerns: include dates, times etc of any specific incidents.	
Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? (NB. Do not ask the child to show you)	
What exactly did the child say? What did you reply? (NB. Do not question the child. You can reassure. Just listen. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)	



Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? If so, give details?
Details of actions taken so far:
Details of actions you intend to take:
Name and contact details for witnesses to the incident:
Contact details to whom this information has been passed to:  Name:  Position:  Organisation:  Date and time that the information was forwarded:
Agreed action, including feedback from statutory agency:
Signature:  Date:
<i>This form should be placed in a sealed envelope, marked Confidential and for the attention of Lesley Fox, Senior Safeguarding Advisor, Wyre Forest District Council, Civic Centre, Stourport on Severn. Tel: 01562 732976</i>

Wyre Forest District Council will only collect and process personal information provided on this form for no other purpose than for the purpose of safeguarding children.

**Wyre Forest District Council Safeguarding Advisor Roles And Responsibilities**

**The role of the designated person is to:**

- Be available to any employee or young person to discuss any child protection or poor practice concerns
- Receive referrals or reports of possible child abuse or poor practice
- Have an understanding of legislation and government guidance relevant to this role
- Have an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the statutory agencies within the field of child protection
- Responsible for child protection - establish contact with the senior member of Children's Services Department within Worcestershire
- Provide information and advice on child protection within the organisation and act as a local source of advice on child protection matters
- Ensure that the WFDC Safeguarding Children Policy is adhered to and support the interest of young people on WFDC activities and events
- Ensure that Children's Services or Police are informed of relevant concerns about individual young people
- To establish contact with the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) and to be aware of local procedures
- Manage the administration/organise the paperwork and record the information received
- Ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing following the correct procedures
- Maintain accurate records relating to the concerns raised and/or ongoing investigations affecting WFDC
- Keep relevant people within the organisation informed about any action taken, along with any further action required
- To uphold confidentiality as appropriate, in all child protection matters
- Advise the organisation of child protection training needs

**Wyre Forest District Council Code of Behaviour for Employees working with Young People**

This Code of Behaviour outlines good practice when working with young people. An environment which allows bullying, shouting, racism, sectarianism or sexism is not acceptable.

**You must:**

- Treat all young people equally, and with respect and dignity
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow
- Ensure that whenever possible there is more than one adult present during activities with young people, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others
- Provide a male and female employee to accompany young people when trips are organised
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy/encourage them and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- Build a balanced relationship based on mutual trust that empowers young people to share in decision-making processes
- Give enthusiastic feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognise the needs of every young person as an individual
- Secure parental consent in writing to acting *loco parentis* if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or medical treatment
- Have emergency contact and medical details for participants in their care
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
- Be aware that even physical contact with a young person may be misinterpreted
- Recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with young people
- Operate within WFDC Policies, Procedures and Guidance
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and language and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse
- Ensure access to a phone or mobile
- Give guidance and support for inexperienced employees

### **You must not:**

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with young people
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour/make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of young people
- Take a young person alone on car journeys, however short
- Give a young person your personal telephone number
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- Either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- Show favouritism to any individual
- Rely on your good name or that of WFDC to protect you
- Believe 'it could never happen to me'
- Take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach

### **What action will be taken if an employee breaks the Code of Behaviour**

1. If a decision needs to be made which potentially could contravene this code of a minor nature then there should be appropriate discussions with the Line Manager and risk assessments carried out.
2. If any of the above should occur you should report them immediately to the Line Manager and ensure a written record of the event is completed.
3. If the incident was deemed to be of a more serious nature then the incident would be dealt with through the WFDC Disciplinary process.
4. Parents should also be notified of the incident:
  - If you accidentally hurt a young person
  - If they appear to be distressed in any manner by your actions
  - If a young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done or said

N.B It may sometimes be necessary for employees to do things of a personal nature for a young person, particularly if they are young or disabled. These should only be carried out with the full understanding and written consent of parents and the individuals involved. Employees should be responsive to the person's reactions. In the event that the person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and where possible give choices. This may be for example where you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing or where there is physical contact or lifting/assisting to carry out activities. Individuals are advised to avoid completing tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

**Wyre Forest District Council Code of Conduct for Young People**

This policy will be characterised by a positive, child centred approach to caring for young people. We recognise the need for rules within any setting and the necessity for managing difficult behaviour.

This policy will ensure that young people are treated fairly and are protected under the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child.

**The aim of the policy is:**

- To ensure that young people are safe and treated fairly at all times
- To respect and value each young person as individuals
- To encourage co-operative and kind behaviour between young people
- For young people to take responsibility for their own behaviour
- For young people to take pride in their own and others good behaviour
- To give employees specific guidelines on how behaviour will be managed

**We expect young people to:**

- Treat everyone equally with respect and sensitively regardless of their gender, ethnic origin, cultural background, sexual orientation, religion or political affiliation
- Know and abide by the rules and spirit of the event
- Avoid violence and rough play and help anyone that may be injured
- Accept the decisions of those in authority without question or complaint
- Exercise self-control at all times
- Give maximum effort and strive to achieve your best
- Learn to accept success and failure, victory and defeat with humility and dignity respectively and without excessive emotional displays
- Abide by the instructions of the employees and officials provided they do not contradict the spirit of this code
- Treat everyone how you would like to be treated
- Do not use foul, sexist or racist language at any time
- Be a good sport, applaud good performance
- Remember to have fun, improve skills and feel good

### **When working on activities organised by WFDC employees we will:**

- Give priority to the best interests of the young people in decisions that they make about them
- Keep young people safe from all harm and protect them
- Wherever possible let young people have a say in what affects them
- Treat young people respectfully at all times
- Be consistent and fair, keeping promises (where possible) made to young people
- Actively work to help all young people feel welcome, happy and at ease

### **What action will be taken if young people break their code of conduct?**

1. A warning and explanation of why the behaviour is unacceptable.
2. A record is made in the Community Development Section Low Level Incident Book with an explanation of the incident.
3. Employees will employ their own system of warnings and minor sanctions e.g. time out (5 minutes max); 3 strikes and you are out. Young people must be aware of these sanctions from the outset.
4. If the young person's safety and/or others is being compromised due to their behaviour prompt action should be taken by the employee.
5. A session ban may be imposed.
6. Parents/carers are informed if their child is involved in unacceptable behaviour.
7. A behaviour contract between the young person, parent/carer, and WFDC employees may be agreed to get the young person back into the mainstream.
8. In some circumstances a young person may be permanently banned from participating on WFDC schemes.

**Wyre Forest District Council Safeguarding Children Policy Information Leaflet**

**Available from Safeguarding Advisor**

### Wyre Forest District Council Guidelines and Procedures for Activities and Services

#### 1. Work Experience and Extended Work Experience

- It is important to distinguish between work experience and extended work experience (sometimes called work placement). Work experience refers to Key Stage 4 children going into a work environment for 1 – 2 weeks. Extended work experience refers to young people experiencing a working environment, possibly by undertaking work based learning over a longer period of time, 1 or 2 days per week, to achieve vocational qualifications
- This is arranged by schools and Further Education providers and Local Education Authorities with employers or training organisations contracted to carry out this function, and can be either a full or part time basis. WFDC takes approaches through Human Resources and each Division has an officer to manage enquiries and liaise with employees.
- It is good practice to arrange a pre visit interview with the candidate. This may be the schools procedure in any event. The responsible teacher may advise the young person to telephone the manager before the start date if time does not allow an interview
- Section Heads should ensure that Risk Assessments are in place for work experience students

#### 2. Trips, Tours and Holiday Clubs

- All trips, tours and holiday clubs will undergo the necessary level of preparation and will cover Health and Safety requirements such as risk assessments. Where Play schemes are registered with OFSTED their standards will be adhered to
- It is vital that any transport arrangements pay due regard to safeguarding young people and that adequate supervision is provided if young people are taken on trips and tours. Parents and carers must be notified and sign a form giving permission for young people to attend
- **Recommended ratios** must be adhered to before commencement. In some cases employees may consider it appropriate to increase the level of supervision depending on the activity and the nature of young people taking part. Normally the ratio adult: child over 8 is 1: 12, under 8 is 1: 8
- A person will be nominated to be the lead officer on outdoor transported trips. If parents and volunteers accompany any trip or activity, then they will be under the direction of that nominated person. The use of parents or volunteers shall not compromise employees/child ratios and in no way substitute the “duty of care” WFDC should be showing. At no time should persons accompanying their own children be left alone with children who are not their own – although we do recognise that parents have a valuable and crucial role to play



- A complete list of all children and adults will be drawn up and head counted on departure and arrival. All children should be seen to be picked up on return unless specifically told otherwise in writing and signed for by the parent/carer in advance – a verbal undertaking is not acceptable. It is the duty of the parent to inform employees of this wish
- In the event of a “new” person being requested to collect a child, an additional registration form must be completed by the parent. At no time will a child be handed over without full confirmation by the parent/carer
- In the event that a parent/carer fails to collect a child the 2 members of employees must be present at all times. We ask a parent to inform us of any likely delays as soon as they are known. If no parent has arrived then it is the duty of the lead officer to try to make contact with the parent/carer. If no parent/carer has arrived after 30 minutes then the Police should be called. It is important to gauge what response time may be expected and advice sought therein from the Police
- Before each trip, the lead officer must have registration forms, first aid kit, medical notes and medicines (if appropriate) and a mobile phone. Any hospital referrals must be relayed to parents/carers immediately
- When organising a trip the lead officer must nominate an employee who is ‘on call’ should there be an emergency. This officer must have all the trip details (including names and contact details of participants) so that parents/carers can be contacted if necessary

### **3. Residentials**

- WFDC does not organise residentials for young people. However, from time to time employees may be involved in a partnership project that may include an overnight stay
- On these occasions WFDC employees will provide secondary support to the organising body such as Connexions (PAYP), Youth Service. The lead organisation must have a policy on residentials which WFDC employees must be aware of before taking part in the event
- A Welfare Plan must be drawn up prior to the residential by the lead organisation

### **4. Transporting Young People**

- A reputable transport company with the appropriate insurance will be used
- Sufficient supervisors (team managers, coaches, parents) will be present on the coaches
- Each person will have a seat and seat belt regulations will be adhered to
- Parents/carers will be provided with details of both pick up and drop off points and times
- Employees of a supervisory capacity will have the following information for each participant

- Name / contact number
  - Pick up / drop off point and time
  - Name of parent/carer collecting the participant
  - Emergency contact number
  - Medical details
- Participants will not be left unsupervised
  - It is not good practice to take young people alone on journeys, however short. Where this is unavoidable, it should be with the full knowledge and consent of the parents or carers, and someone in charge of the organisation. Employees should be able to state the purpose and anticipated length of the route. You must be insured for business use. The child should sit in the rear seat. If there were 3 young people in your care, two should sit in the back and one in the front. When the first child is returned to the parent the remaining young people should be sat in the back seats

## **5. Lost/found young people**

- When operating from a building we will endeavour to make all inside and outside areas as secure as possible. Whilst great care is taken to ensure the young people in our care are always accounted for, we do however have procedures for lost and found children (see following pages)
- If young people are on outdoor trips the lead officer is responsible as identified above. In the case of outdoor sites such as parks and nature reserves, employees are aware of the potential risk of lost young people and how to deal with these situations
- Lost young people will only be handed over to the designated person named by the parent/carer on the registration form. In the case of parks and open spaces where young people are not on official trips, but nonetheless leisure users, the handing over of young people will only be done at the behest of Police involvement

## **6. Procedure for dealing with lost young people**

- On suspicion of a lost young person the officer will conduct a roll call without alarming them
- The lead officer and one extra employee will conduct a thorough search of the building and grounds and the immediate vicinity
- Employees conducting the search and remaining employees will ensure a calm manner and normal routine will be conducted
- If the young person is not found, the Police and the child's parent/carer will be contacted. The SA will be informed
- A full report will be produced on WFDC *Incident, Accident or Ill-Health Form*
- The relevant authorities will be informed

- Employees will work closely with the Police, parents, and other authorities to ensure all relevant information is made available to aid the safe recovery of the young person
- The incident will be evaluated and fully discussed with the employees and SA, Children's Services and the Police and, if appropriate, procedures reviewed. Policies will be amended if necessary

## **7. Procedure for dealing with found young people**

- Get down to the young person's height, show them your name badge and tell them where you work. In the first instance try to find out their name, giving the child time to respond as they may be extremely distressed. If that proves difficult then look for a discarded jumper or coat, as often there are name tags in clothing. Do not physically touch the young person to find out these details and seek another employee, as soon as possible, to help. Take the young person's name, age, address and telephone number if possible. If you cannot obtain any details at all then you must call the Police
- Carry out a brief search of the immediate area with the young person. Mostly lost young people are near their family who are simply obscured by people or objects. Ask the young person where they last saw the parent/carer/guardian. Older young people sometimes have been left on site by parents who are to return later, be vigilant as to where and how long young people are waiting for parents to return
- Small young people may become very distressed. In this case 2 employees should stay with the young person all the time, preferably the one person who has made initial contact – this avoids confusing the youngster. Alert all other employees on duty. Never leave a young person unattended. If a young person refuses to stay then call the Police immediately and stay vigilant to their direction
- At no time put the young person in a vehicle. (see Appendix I 4. Transporting Young People). At the discretion of the SA contact the Police after 30 minutes of unsuccessful search. If out of normal hours and the SA is not available contact the Police directly and inform the SA at the next possible time
- If the parents are found, ask for identification. Do not release young people to anyone under the age of 16

## **8. Procedure for dealing with young people who decide they wish to leave the activity that you are in charge of**

- WFDC Play schemes operate a **closed access policy** (see WFDC Play Development Policies and Procedures)

Should a young person leave the session without prior permission employees will:

- Employees will try to find out why the young person wishes to leave and sort out the issue if possible
- Gently restrain the young person if they are in danger to themselves, employees or venue property

- Follow the young person home if employees ratio permits (although this would be unlikely)
- Refer to registration form and contact parent/guardians immediately

## 9. Restraining young people

- Employees should consider using physical force towards a young person only when they are in danger or there is a danger to others
- Any incidents of this kind will be recorded on the Incident Form and reported to the SA and to parents on the same day
- WFDC recognises that at all times employees might need to intervene and that unease and unwillingness to act appropriately could lead to the needs of the children being neglected, or their safety being put at risk

## 10. Our policy on working in schools

- Employees who visit schools in the course of their duties have during curriculum or extra curricular time to deliver an activity or service should wear the official WFDC Identification badge.
- During curriculum time for WFDC employees who are in close contact with young people such as sports coach, plumber, builder, grounds maintenance, play leader, artist, ranger, **a teacher must always be present** (at least within sight of the group). The teacher has *loco parentis*, which is the legal responsibility for the young people.
- When WFDC are responsible for organising the activity at a school during extra curricular time and are 'hiring' the facility e.g. gymnasium, hall, field area, then an employee from the school should be on site. The person in charge of the activity should be familiar with the school site and its regulations. The Head Teacher has responsibility for all employees working on their premises
- The Line Manager of the employee working in schools should check the schools Child Protection Policy and the reporting route.

## 11. Guidance for employees to do home and site visits

- Where it is practical to do so employees should prearrange the visit, preferably in writing
- Colleagues should be notified of the date, time, address of the visit and the expected return time of the officer
- Employees should wear/show the WFDC Identification badge/card
- If a young person answers the door and the adult who has made the appointment is not present (and has made no other arrangements) the member of WFDC employees should not enter the premises but rearrange the visit
- Refer to (Appendix C), Code of Behaviour for Employees (Appendix E)

- Inadvertent contact with young people on their own may occur (e.g. refuse collectors pulling a bin out from a rear garden and coming into contact with a scantily clad young person) in which case they should leave the area and report the incident to their Line Manager
- Refer to Intranet for more detailed guidance

## **12. Our policy on working with Agency employees**

- Wherever an agency is used to supply temporary employees WFDC will provide a copy of our Safeguarding Children Policy
- The agency will be required to supply WFDC with their own Policy/procedures for our reference
- Agency employees who have the potential to be in contact with young people in the course of their temporary duties must complete and sign the Self Declaration Form prior to taking up responsibilities for WFDC

## Glossary of Terms

**WFDC:** Wyre Forest District Council

**'Employees'** includes all council employees, full or part time, volunteers and anyone working on a paid or unpaid basis on behalf of WFDC.

**'Young people'** relates to children and young people under the age of 18 and to vulnerable people over the age of 18.

**Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB):** Children Act 2004 requires the local authority to establish an LSCB from April 2006. This Board will replace the Area Child Protection Committee. WSCB co-ordinates work of Board partners to ensure that they are effective in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

**LADO:** Local Authority Designated Officer: The LADO is County based and fulfils a strategic role. Responsibilities include managing and overseeing cases from the WSCB and partner agencies if the allegation meets the threshold; and monitoring of progress to ensure cases are dealt with within agreed timescales.

**HWSP:** Herefordshire & Worcestershire Sports Partnership (County Sports Partnership/HWSP). Partnership of 6 District Councils, Herefordshire, University College Worcester, Local Education Authority.

**Criminal Records Bureau (CRB):** uses the Police National Computer record to check disclosure of applicants when they are applying to work with young people.

**Enhanced or Standard Disclosure:** the level of criminal record check required in respect of the application.

**Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA):** It will be a criminal offence for employers to employ a person in a 'regulated activity' who is not ISA registered.

**Occupational Health (OH):** is the agency through which WFDC refers all medical matters for employees. Support services such as counselling are organised by OH.

**CS:** Children's Services Department.

**PAYP:** Positive Activities for Young People - national programme delivered through the Connexions.