



POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Pyramid of Arts

Safeguarding Children – Protection Policy

Pyramid of Arts (PoA) believes that everyone involved in the organisation has a right to be valued as an individual, to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be safe.

This policy has been written to help Pyramid of Arts to:

- Work in a way that can prevent abuse
- Support any child who is experiencing abuse
- Stop that abuse occurring.

Abuse may be physical, emotional, sexual, financial, neglectful, institutional or discriminatory (e.g. racist, sexist, based on a person's disability) and other forms of harassment

Pyramid of Arts will work:

- To promote the freedom and dignity of the child who has experienced or is experiencing abuse, and to ensure their safety and well-being
- As far as possible, to make sure the child understands what is happening and can decide what they want to do
- To promote the rights of all people to live free from abuse and coercion
- To organise activities in a way which promotes safety and prevents abuse
- To create a safe and open environment where social relationships can be confidently discussed and negotiated

Pyramid of Arts will work with other organisations within the framework of The Leeds Multi-Agency Adult and Child Protection guidelines. If a child may have been abused, PoA will pass information to Leeds Children and Young People's Social Care.

Confidentiality

PoA respects a child's right to privacy. If someone tells us any personal information we will normally keep it private. But if we are worried about a child's safety we might have to advise someone else, even if the child doesn't agree.

PoA will give a copy of the safeguarding crib-sheet to everyone who joins. This full policy is available on request (details of who to ask are on the crib-sheet).

PoA will make sure that everyone in Pyramid of Arts knows about the policy, and can work together to keep each other safe.

James Hill (Director) will be responsible for arranging training to help them to do this.

We will look at the policy and guidelines every two years, starting in 2004 to see if they are working, or if we need to change them.

The lead person for child protection in Pyramid of Arts is James Hill. Talk to him if you have any questions about this policy.

Child Protection: Guidelines

Part one: responding to possible abuse

If you are worried about anything at all the best thing to do is to let someone know. Follow your gut instinct and make sure you know who you need to contact. It is important to alert the appropriate person as soon as possible.

If possible, first speak to the core worker of the group. If that is not possible / appropriate then contact:

James Hill (Director)

0113 234 6040 / 07834 452 312

OR

Thomas Chalk (Trustee)

07974 174 739

Pyramid of Arts has identified a local independent person, the Chief Executive of Leeds Advocacy, who can be contacted in relation to child protection. If a member of PoA cannot be contacted or you wish to contact someone independent of the organisation:

Chief Executive, Leeds Advocacy

0113 244 0606

The reporting procedure

Workers and volunteers **must** report abuse or suspected abuse.

- Abuse and suspected abuse should be reported to the Director/ Trustees (James Hill / Thomas Chalk) at the first opportunity. Where a disclosure of abuse or other incident happens during a session, you should make sure the core worker knows what has happened. He or she will pass the information on to the appropriate person
- In the event of a complaint against anyone listed in point one, you should report the information to the Chief Executive at Leeds Advocacy (see above)
- The child disclosing abuse should be given space and time to talk, privacy, and access to communication aids (e.g. picture boards) where appropriate. Accept what the child is saying. Do not make comments other than to be comforting and sympathetic. Do not proactively ask the child for information. Tell the child that you will have to pass on what they have said (see '*what to do if someone talks to about abuse*', below)
- The person alerted must keep detailed records of any incident giving cause for concern, or of any disclosure. The person alerted should be aware that the report may be required later as part of a legal action (see '*keeping records*', below)

Emergencies

If you are a witness to abuse or abuse has just taken place the priorities will be:

- Ensure the immediate safety of the victim of abuse
- Ensure immediate medical attention if necessary. Inform the examining a doctor of the suspicion of abuse and that a written report will be required which may be used in legal proceedings. If sexual abuse is suspected there may be a need for a specialist forensic examination. These are usually performed by trained police surgeons
- Where a crime has just been or is being committed, call the police
- Ensure your own safety, and that of other participants
- Preserve any evidence
- Inform James Hill/ Thomas Chalk as soon as possible about what has happened, and make a written record.

All workers, volunteers and trustees should be aware of the utmost need for confidentiality, for the safety of the child disclosing abuse and of those reporting.

What to do if a child talks to you about abuse

Do

- Stay calm and try not to show shock
- Listen carefully
- Be sympathetic
- Tell the child
 - that s/he did right to tell you
 - you are treating the information seriously
 - it was not her/his fault
 - you are going to inform the appropriate (named) person in Pyramid of Arts/Leeds Advocacy
 - that the organisation will take steps to protect and support them.
- If the child agrees, it may be helpful to ask another volunteer or worker to listen too
- Write down what was said by the child disclosing, noting date and time
- Report it to the appropriate person in Pyramid of Arts/Leeds Advocacy and ask for copy of the report to be put in the Incident Book in the office

Don't

- Press the child for more details
- Promise to keep secrets
- Make promises you cannot keep (for example "This will never happen to you again")
- Contact the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental (for example "Why didn't you run away?")
- Break the confidentiality agreed with alleged victim and the person you reported to
- Destroy medical evidence

Keeping Records

- Use a pen with black ink if you possibly can
- Ensure written records are clear and detailed
- It may be possible to take notes at the time the allegation is being made. Try and note down what the child actually says, using their own words and phrases. Also make a note of what you said and did in response
- In some circumstances it would not be appropriate to be taking notes at the time the allegation is made. Make a written report as soon as possible afterwards
- Factual information should be clearly separated from expression of opinion
- Be aware that your report may be required later as part of a legal action or disciplinary procedure
- Sign and date the report
- A copy of the report should be placed in the incident book in the PoA office
- Detailed records relating to abuse should not be kept on open files
- Note records of any injuries, behaviours etc.

Responding to abuse and suspected abuse: management responsibilities

Once they are informed of abuse or suspected abuse, James Hill/ Thomas Chalk will decide what action to take. There is a responsibility to pass on information as follows:

Reporting possible abuse of a child

Pyramid of Arts has a responsibility to report abuse or alleged abuse of a child.

- If a young person is describing abuse which is happening within PoA, the Director/the trustees must contact the parents/legal guardian in the first instance - they hold parental responsibility for the welfare of their child. The Director should also seek advice immediately from the local Children and Young People Social Services Department
- If the abuse seems to be happening within the person's home, the Director should consult the local Children and Young People Social Services Department in the first instance

PoA management and senior staff should:

- Ensure that PoA has done what it can to safeguard the immediate safety and wellbeing of anyone experiencing abuse
- Take responsibility for informing a child protection enquiry coordinator about disclosures or suspected abuse
- Offer support to the child during protection procedures and any resulting enquiry
- Where alleged abuse has occurred within Pyramid of Arts, inform enquiry coordinators and continue to liaise with them as necessary regarding PoA's involvement in any resulting enquiry

Any person who is acting on behalf of PoA and who is the subject of abuse allegations will be formally withdrawn from PoA activity. If this is a member of PoA staff they will be suspended from activity on full pay.

Support

James Hill will work to ensure that any child experiencing or disclosing abuse is offered appropriate support (by Pyramid of Arts and/or other agencies), and is informed as far as possible of the options open to them and of any action taken on their behalf by Pyramid of Arts. As far as possible this action should reflect the wishes of the person experiencing abuse.

Where the alleged abuser is another young person or person with learning disabilities, James Hill and a core worker will work to ensure that the needs of both are met. The needs of the child experiencing abuse will be paramount and where necessary the alleged abuser will be withdrawn from Pyramid of Arts activity until investigations are completed.

PoA has a responsibility to support any member who is accused of abuse within PoA activity, to inform them of the procedures being followed, and to allow them the chance to express their feelings. It may be necessary for this support to be in the form of an independent representative.

PoA senior staff and management will ensure appropriate support and supervision for staff who:

- have reported abuse
- are working directly with someone who has/is experiencing abuse
- are working directly with someone who behaves abusively

Part 2: Preventing abuse

Vetting of Adults working with Children and Young People

All workers and volunteers who want to work with PoA are required to complete and sign an application form and attend an interview. PoA will undertake an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service record check on all adult volunteers and workers.

Two written references are sought, one from someone who has known the person recently. It is recommended that staff phone the referees as a matter of course to confirm the references. If references cause any serious doubts, PoA will make further contact with referees before the volunteer/worker can work within the organisation. PoA can decide to exclude someone from working or volunteering with us if we have any doubts about their references or suitability.

Volunteers and staff will be told that the work and contact they will have with children require PoA to ask them to declare any criminal convictions they may have which involve abuse against children, however old these conviction may be. This is an exemption from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

All workers and volunteers must agree to abide by PoA's Safeguarding Children Protection Policy. The interviewing panel must make sure that all volunteers and workers are aware of and understand their obligations under the policy.

All other materials relating to the application will be held centrally by the Operations Coordinator, and will be held carefully and in confidence.

Training and preparation of adults taking responsibility for activities

PoA is committed to training its volunteers and sessional workers, and to delivering a rolling programme of training throughout the year. The Foundation course includes information on the safeguarding policy and procedures. All volunteers and workers will be expected to attend the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board's Level 1 Safeguarding training. In addition, workers and volunteers may be directed towards Leeds City Council youth work training and introduction to counselling short courses.

PoA is committed to regularly monitoring training needs, including:

- Skills required to plan the work of groups to prevent abuse
- Skills required to recruit and to interview people who wish to volunteer
- Skills required to deal with abuse which has been disclosed or discovered

Staff Monitoring

All staff and sessional workers are provided with clear job descriptions and specifications for their work, and they will complete a probationary period of employment as set out in their contract of employment.

All staff receive regular supervision.

Regular planning and monitoring meetings provide volunteers and workers with the opportunity to review and plan their work, share experiences, receive training and discuss their relationship with the children and young people.

Working to prevent abuse

Participants should be encouraged to practise acceptable social behaviour at all times, and unacceptable behaviour should be challenged.

PoA activities should provide opportunities for children to develop life skills which may help to prevent abuse. For example, opportunities for assertiveness, making choices, developing self-esteem and forming positive relationships within sessions.

Workers should offer participants access to information about abuse and sources of support available, such as copies of the protection policy and training on offer through Pyramid of Arts and information on external agencies where appropriate.

Learning disabled and young members will be encouraged to use their skills and expertise in the running of the organisation.

Participants and carers should be informed about Pyramid of Arts' Complaints Procedure.

Workers should initiate group discussions as appropriate about issues related to abuse and its prevention (e.g. bullying, physical contact in sessions).

Activities should be planned to minimise the risk of abuse occurring.

At Pyramid of Arts we ensure minimum risk by adhering to the following guidelines:

Working with children and young people

- Youth group sessions are be staffed by at least two workers and two volunteers, including at least one person of each sex. This may mean parents/carers staying with young people until volunteers/workers have arrived
- Adults must avoid being alone with a child: if an adult needs to leave the room with a child, they must ask a third person to come with them
- No worker or volunteer will be alone with a child in a vehicle. The only exception would be emergency transport home/to hospital with the permission of parent/ guardian
- Adults are not permitted to meet individually with children outside group activities
- In exceptional circumstances where an adult may be alone with a child for a short period, the adult must ensure that other workers are aware of the situation and that they support this action
- Workers are required know the safe arrangements for children to get to the group and home after activities
- Workers and volunteers must ensure that physical contact is not exploitative and is not open to misunderstanding. Children must be encouraged to communicate what they find acceptable and unacceptable in the way they are approached by others in the group
- Children will be encouraged to discuss openly their feelings about activities, and the behaviour of adults and young people to each other in session debriefs and review meetings
- Confidential material collected on children relevant to their address, dietary needs, medical needs etc. must be treated with respect and only be shared between workers and volunteers on a need-to-know basis
- Core workers are required to keep an incident book, and to report any incidents or concerns to the coordinator during weekly feedback sessions.

Last updated: January 2014