

**CHILD  
PROTECTION  
POLICY &  
PROCEDURES**

# **Walkway Community Centre**

## **Childcare Policy Statement**

“It is the policy of Walkway Community Centre when working with children and young people to provide the highest quality care and to safeguard their welfare by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.”

## **Child Protection Statement**

“It is the policy of Walkway Community Centre that when working with children and young people to provide the highest possible quality care and to safeguard their welfare by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.”

Alongside our moral and ethical obligation to keep children safe, we the Management Committee and Staff of Walkway Community Centre recognise and accept that we also have a legal obligation to protect the welfare of the children and young people with whom we have contact.

The purpose of this document in detailing “policies and procedures” is to ensure the highest standard of care and best practice towards children and young people whilst also ensuring that staff and volunteers are assured of their own protection against false allegations.

There is an expectation that all staff, volunteers and management committee members know and understand the “Policy and Procedures” and agree to and adopt the recommended standards of good practice contained within.

The code is based on the principle of paramouncy in dealing with young people which states “the fundamental principle of child care law and practice is that the welfare of the child must always be the paramount consideration in decisions taken about him or her.”

## **Child Protection Policy Statement**

We in the Walkway Community Association are committed to practice which protects children from harm.

Staff and volunteers in this organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

We endeavour to safeguard children by:

- Adopting Child Protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about Child Protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Following carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice at regular intervals.

## **Procedures for Reporting and Making Referrals**

In all situations, including those in which the cause for concern is made in confidence, it is extremely important to record the details of an allegation or reported incident, regardless of whether or not a referral is subsequently made to a statutory agency.

An accurate note should be made of the date and time of the incident or disclosure, the parties who were involved, any action taken within the organisation to investigate the matter, any subsequent further action and where there is to be no referral to a statutory agency, the reason why.

The records should be clear and factual since they may be of use to any professional investigating the incident and may at some time in the future be used as evidence in court.

This information will be kept in a secure place and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

The keeping of such records will as well as providing safeguards for children also protect the integrity of the organisation and staff.

### **Supervision of Children and Young People**

#### **Planned Activities**

- Children or young people should not be left to their own devices in, for example, a town for the evening or shopping expedition.
- All children and young people should be adequately supervised and engaged in suitable activities at all time.
- In circumstances when planned activities are disrupted, e.g. due to weather conditions, you as a member of Walkway Community Centre team should have a number of alternative activities planned.
- You as a member of Walkway Community Centre's team should obtain, in writing, parental consent to children joining an organised trip.
- Parents should be given full information about a trip, including details of the programme of events and the activities in which the children will be engaged.

## **Supervision of Children and Young People**

- As a member of Walkway Community Centre staff team you must be satisfied that those workers and adults who accompany group parties are fully competent to do so.
- Children and young people must be supervised at all times.
- Children and young people must not be left unsupervised at any venue whether it is indoors or outdoors.
- You as a member of Walkway Community Centre staff should know at all times where children or young people are and what they are doing.

Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment should have constant adult supervision.

## **Supervision of Children and Young People (Ratios)**

When working with children or young people, as a member of Walkway Community Centre staff team the level of supervision must be adequate whether it is in the base or on a journey/visit. Therefore when deciding how many adults are required to supervise, you must take into consideration a range of practical matters.

- The number of participants in the group.
- The nature of the site/venue.
- The activities to be undertaken. If the activity is one of a hazardous nature, e.g. mountain climbing, then there are specific ratios of adults and children/young people, which must be adhered to.
- It is important that everyone knows their responsibilities and role.
- Walkway Community Centre members should not travel alone on a journey or visit. Bus drivers should not be considered as supervisors.
- It is for the leader in charge to exercise his/her professional judgement in deciding the level of supervision.
- Where a party consists of children and young people of both sexes, both male and female supervision should be provided unless otherwise agreed.
- Two members of staff for up to twenty children or young people.
- The ratio of Walkway Community Centre staff/volunteers to children or young people with disabilities is dependant on the needs of the individual child/young person.

We in the Walkway Community Centre want to make sure that children are protected and kept safe from harm while they are with staff and volunteers in this organisation.

We do this by...

- Giving parents, children, young people and workers information about the Walkway Community Centre and what we do and what you can expect from us.
- Making sure that our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised.
- Letting parents, children and young people know how to voice their concerns or complain if there is anything they are not happy about.

## **Recording Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse**

In any case where an allegation is made a member of Walkway Community Centre staff should make a record of:

- Name of Child.
- Age.
- Any special factors.
- Parent name(s).
- Home address (and phone number if available).
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? If so record details.
- What has prompted the concerns? Include dates, times etc. of any specific incidents.
- Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?
- Has the child or young person been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Have the parents been contacted? If so what was said?
- Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, record details.
- Has anybody else been consulted? If so, record details.

It is our duty at the Walkway Community Centre to inform children and young people that they have the right....

- To be safe.
- To protect their own bodies.
- To say no.
- To get help.
- To tell.
- To be believed.
- Not to keep secrets.
- To make decisions.
- To have responsibility.
- To be listened to.
- To be trusted and respected.
- To have useful information.
- To be treated equally.

In order to protect children, young people, and members of the Walkway Community Centre staff/volunteers, you should be aware that as a general rule, **it doesn't make sense to....**

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children or young people away from others.
- Take children or young people alone in a car on journey's however short.
- Take children to your home.

In order to protect children, young people and members of Walkway Community Centre, staff should be aware that as a general rule, **you should never...**

- Engage in rough physical games including horseplay – apart from structured sports activities.
- Engage in sexually provocative games.
- Allow or engage in appropriate touching of any form.
- Allow children or young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child even in fun.
- Let allegations a child or young person makes go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or young people that they can do for themselves.

It may be at times necessary for Walkway Community Centre staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children or young people, particularly if they have a disability. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents. In an emergency situation which requires this type of assistance, parents should be fully informed.

## Reporting Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse

All suspicions or allegations of Walkway Community Centre staff should be reported to:

- Name Rachael Davison
- Job Title Centre Manager
- Address Walkway Community Centre, 1-9 Finvoy Street, Belfast. BT5 6EJ
- Phone 028 90 595858
- Name Deborah McClung
- Position Committee Member/Volunteer
- Address Walkway Community Centre, 1-9 Finvoy Street, Belfast. BT5 6EJ
- Phone 028 90 595858

Contacts outside of staff or committee:

- Name South & East Belfast Health & Social Services Trust
- Address 14 Lower Crescent. BT7 1NR Tel: 028 90 244061  
195 Templemore Avenue. BT5 4FR Tel: 028 90 454638  
414 Ormeau Road. BT7 3HY Tel: 028 90 642905

Out of hours contact number – Contact the Contractors Bureau – ask for the duty Social Worker. Tel: 028 90 668246

Police Service for Northern Ireland  
Strandtown Care Unit  
1-5 Dundela Avenue  
Belfast. BT4 3BQ  
Tel: 028 90 650222

N.S.P.C.C. Child Protection Helpline  
Tel: 0800 800500

## Reporting Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse

Name of Child: .....

Age: .....

Any special factors: .....

Parent's names: .....

Home Address: .....

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Phone Number: .....

Name of person making report: .....

Address: .....

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Phone Number: .....

Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? If so, record details.

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What has prompted the concerns? Include dates, times etc. of any specific incidents.

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Any Physical signs? Behavioral signs? Indirect signs?

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Has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?

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Have the parents been contacted? If so, what was said?

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Has anybody been alleged as the abuser? If so, record details.

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Has anybody else been contacted? If so, record details.

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Action taken or reasons why no action taken.

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Signature: .....

Date: .....