

Early Education

Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Policy

Introduction

Early Education is a charity which promotes high quality early years education across the UK through its membership services, publications, training and consultancy, project work and campaigning. We work with early years practitioners, but not usually directly with children and young people. Thus while safeguarding of children and young people is central to our mission and purpose as an organisation, only a small subset of our direct activities have safeguarding implications. This policy is intended to cover those activities, and will be kept under review to ensure any new activities are considered and that the policy is developed as needed.

Statement of intent on safeguarding children and young people

Early Education is committed to safeguard the wholeness and the wellbeing of every person in our community, of whatever age. It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect of every member of our community, and particularly the abuse of those most vulnerable among us, including children, young people, vulnerable adults and fragile families. The welfare of the child is paramount. All children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of religion or belief, disability, sexuality, sex or race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin.

All Early Education's staff, volunteers and Associates will be made aware of this policy and what to do if they have any concerns. There is guidance for those responding to concerns so that they are properly dealt with, including sharing information about concerns with agencies that need to know and involve children, young people and families appropriately.

Safeguarding & Promoting the Welfare of Children

'Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children' is defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013* as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safe Recruitment and Selection

It is a criminal offence if an employer does not take sufficient steps to check an employee working with children and/or knowingly gives someone a job who is inappropriate to work with children.

Determined abusers have often managed to gain access to children and young people. We recognise therefore, that the most effective point at which an organisation can use good management to minimise the possibility of abuse is when new paid staff,

volunteers or contractors are appointed, although it is important to ensure that vigilance is maintained thereafter.

It is our policy that all staff, contractors and volunteers, temporary personnel and helpers should undergo a suitable recruitment process, as reflected in the list below. Should there be circumstances where there will be contact with children and young people, individuals will be subject to additional vetting processes as listed below, as indicated at b) and e).

- a) Completion of an application form and checking the person's identity by their birth certificate or passport, an official document with a photograph.
- b) Taking up two references, one of whom has experience of their work or contact with children if relevant
- c) An interview by at least two members of the senior management team or the Board of Trustees
- d) Identifying reasons for gaps in employment or inconsistencies
- e) Carrying out police checks and checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service if appropriate (see next section)
- f) Allowing no unsupervised access to children and young people until this has been completed.
- g) Advice is sought about recruiting someone with a criminal record
- h) A supervised probationary period for new people to the organisation and a comprehensive induction period that includes our child protection policy and procedures

Disclosure and Barring Service

Early Education staff and volunteers do not usually have regular unsupervised contact with children and young people, and therefore do not fall under the exceptions list to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and would not usually be expected to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) check. Similarly, in many cases our Associates would not be expected to undergo DBS checks in order to undertake training and consultancy activities, but we recognise that some commissioners may require DBS checks and would deal with these on a case by case basis to ensure these were in place where appropriate. DBS checks will be carried out in accordance with our policy on employing ex-offenders (see Appendix 1).

Role of the Child Protection Representative

There will be a named staff Child Protection Representative (see below).

This person will take on the responsibility for:

- ensuring the policy is being put into practice
- being the first point of contact for child protection issues
- keeping a record of any concern expressed about child protection issues
- where necessary, taking further steps, such as referring concerns to other agencies
- bringing any child protection concerns to the notice of the President, Chair of the Trustees and the Board of Trustees
- ensuring that paid staff and volunteers are given appropriate training, support and supervision on safeguarding children and young people.

- ensuring that everyone involved with the organisations is aware of the identity of the Child protection representatives
- liaising with NSPCC on adopted policies and procedures

Staff, Volunteers and Associates

Early Education staff, volunteers and Associates should organise all their activities to reduce to a minimum those situations within which it may be possible for children and young people to be abused. Staff, volunteers and Associates are required to abide by this Code of Practice to safeguard children and young people.

DO treat all children and young people with the respect they deserve

DO make sure any suspicions or allegations are recorded and reported to the Child Protection Representative.

DO act – but not beyond the bounds of your competence

Staff, volunteers and Associates should also adhere to Early Education’s Code of Ethics and Code on Conduct, including in relation to safe and appropriate use of digital technologies and the internet.

What to do if you think a child is being harmed

Early Education staff, volunteers or Associates who have concerns about the welfare of a child should raise these with the Child Protection representative.

Early Education staff, volunteers or Associates who encounter concerns raised by individuals in settings, or have concerns about what they see within settings, for example during the delivery of training or consultancy, should in the first instance discuss the concerns with the individual to establish whether they have already taken the issue forward via the setting’s own safeguarding procedures, and if not, encourage them to do so, or if appropriate raise concerns directly with the setting’s own child protection representative. In addition, the concerns should normally also be raised with Early Education Child Protection Representative to determine whether any further action is needed in terms of referral to other agencies.

Whistleblowing Procedure – (The Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013) Allegations against Trustees, Staff and Volunteers

Employees will usually be the first to know when someone inside or connected with an organisation is doing something illegal or improper, and they therefore have a vital role in raising potential safeguarding concerns. Early Education has a separate Whistleblowing Procedure which gives details of what employees should do if they have concerns. Where those concerns involve safeguarding, the following organisations may be a helpful source of information and support:

National Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Reviewing the policy

The named staff Child Protection Representative for Early Education is:

Beatrice Merrick, Chief Executive (as from November 2013)

If you have any questions about our policies and procedures please contact email: beatrice@early-education.org.uk or tel: 020 7539 5400.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it is meeting its aims by the Child Protection Representative. They will consult on any amendments with the Senior Management Team and the Board of Trustees.

This is the current copy of this policy

Name: Beatrice Merrick

Signature: 

Date: 28 February 2014

Appendix 1 – Policy on employing ex-offenders

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, Early Education complies fully with the Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a DBS check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

- Early Education is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.
- We have a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, which is made available to all DBS applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.
- We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.
- A DBS check is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a DBS check is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a DBS check will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.
- Where a DBS check is to form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process, except for certain spent convictions and cautions which are 'protected' so not subject to disclosure to employers and that cannot be taken into account. We request that any information not subject to this filtering is sent under separate, confidential cover, to a designated person within Early Education and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.
- Unless the nature of the position allows Early Education to ask questions about your entire criminal record, except for certain spent convictions and cautions which are 'protected' so not subject to disclosure to employers and that cannot be taken into account, we only ask about 'unspent' convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- We ensure that all those in Early Education who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- We make every subject of a DBS check aware of the existence of the Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.
- We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a DBS check with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.