

# Sycamore Adventure Safeguarding Policy & Procedures



children Safeguard policy



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## Policy statement



Sycamore Adventure has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in its play provision from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. Sycamore Adventure will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in its play provision through adherence to the Safeguarding guidelines adopted by Sycamore Adventure.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

## Policy aims



The aim of Sycamore Adventure Safeguarding Policy is to promote good practice:

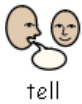
- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Sycamore Adventure. This does not mean stripping away all risk, rather taking a risk benefit approach to children's play, measuring the benefit of risk taking against the actual associated risks and mitigating against these carefully.
- Allow all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.



This policy is mandatory for all *Sycamore Adventure* staff and play providers working for or on behalf of *Sycamore Adventure* and was formally adopted in *January 2010*. The policy will be reviewed annually,



following significant legislation change in Child Protection or following a major investigation.

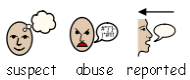
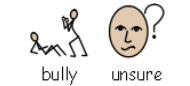


## Promoting good practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.



Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and in play environments. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. Sycamore Adventure play providers have regular contact with children and young people and are an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice will be reported following the guidelines in this document.



When a child enters any activity having been subjected to child abuse outside that environment, play provision can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances Sycamore Adventure will work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

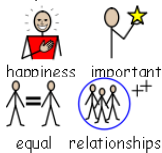


## Good practice guidelines

All Sycamore Adventure personnel are encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how Sycamore Adventure creates a positive culture and climate. All play providers delivering on behalf of Sycamore Adventure will ensure that they:



- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treat all children and young people equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always put the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process;
- Encourage and promote self directed play, enabling children to have an exciting, enjoyable and fulfilling time at Sycamore Adventure, promoting equality.
- Ensure that if any form of manual / physical support is required, it will be provided openly and in according to guidelines. Where care



is needed young people and their parents will always be consulted and their agreement gained.

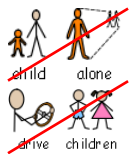


- Be an excellent role model – this includes not swearing, smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of children and young people.
- Secure parental consent in writing if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- All play staff will adhere to the Dudley Safeguarding Children Board Safer Working Practice Guidance for adults

### Practices to be avoided



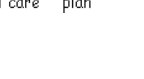
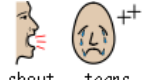
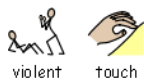
The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it will be with the full knowledge and consent of the lead play worker on shift at Sycamore Adventure or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session. Sycamore Adventure staff:



- will not spend time alone with children away from others
- will not take or drop off a child to an event or activity

### Practices never to be sanctioned

The following will never be sanctioned. Sycamore Adventure play staff will never:



- Initiate violent, overtly physical or sexually provocative games.
- Share a room with a child.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use abusive language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves.

Invite or allow children to stay with you at their home.

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children and young people who use Sycamore Adventure. These tasks will only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the child or young person involved and in line with the individuals intimate care plan.

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- Ignore incidents that must be reported / recorded.

If any of the following occur Sycamore Adventure play staff will report this immediately to the child protection lead (Ella Blewitt) and record the incident. They will also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- If a participant is accidentally hurt by a play worker.
- If a child seems distressed in any manner.
- If a participant appears to be sexually aroused by the actions of other participants.

### Use of photographic/filming equipment:

It is an essential component of the safeguarding agenda to ensure that meaningful safeguards are put in place when children are featured in any form of media (including social media).

There may be situations where some people will use play spaces as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of children and young people. In addition photographic images may be misused through modification or distribution via the internet.

Sycamore Adventure will ensure that the Dudley Safeguarding Children Board Use of Images guidance is adhered to ensuring that:

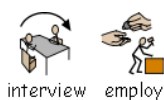
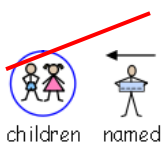
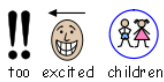
- Parental and child consent is gained for use of photography (initial consent is provided on the online registration system, but up to date DMBC consent forms will be used for all photographs intended for use on media).
- Children are only named where it is integral to the article
- Children are not named on the Sycamore Adventure website / Sycamore Adventure Face book page, Instagram or Twitter account.

### Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers

Sycamore Adventure recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

All Sycamore Adventure play workers will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All Sycamore Adventure play workers will receive an induction, during which:

- An interview should be held to see if the applicant is looking for experience for the right reasons. This will be carried out by senior staff / Managers of sessional Playworkers.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- A full enhanced DBS should be completed for all applicants



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- Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified. Inductions include information about safeguarding.
- They should sign up to the Dudley Safeguarding Children Board Safer Working Practice Guidance for adults.

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

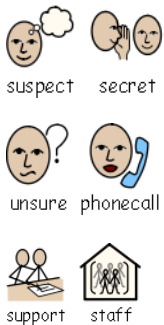
- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is not likely to result in allegations being made.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
- Work safely and effectively with children and young people.

All Sycamore Adventure play workers will attend child protection basic awareness as advised by Dudley Safeguarding Children Board, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection. Training should be updated every three years.



## Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for Sycamore Adventure, in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities. Sycamore Adventure will assure all staff / volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.



Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation,
- A child protection investigation,
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.



The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision. Action if there are concerns:

### 1. Concerns about poor practice:

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the designated Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the Sycamore Adventure Child Protection lead, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the lead for youth and



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 community (Amanda Grove) who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

## 2. Concerns about suspected abuse or allegations of abuse:



This includes anyone working with children in a paid or voluntary capacity. Child abuse can and does occur outside the family setting. Although it is a sensitive and difficult issue, child abuse has occurred within institutions and may occur within other settings (e.g. play settings or other social activities). Recent inquiries indicate that abuse that takes place within a public setting is rarely a one-off event. It is crucial that those involved in play are aware of this possibility and that all allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action taken. It is important that any concerns for the welfare of the child, arising from abuse or harassment by a member of staff or volunteer, should be reported immediately.

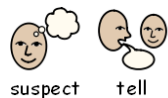
An allegation is when a person who works with children has:

- 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 way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children



investigate

“It is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are seen to be followed up and they are examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation concerned” *Working Together 2006 Appendix 5 (para 1.3)*



suspect tell

Any allegation or suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer must be reported to the centre manager or senior play ranger, who will:

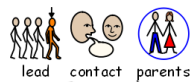
- take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The centre manager or senior play ranger within Sycamore Adventure will refer the allegation to the Single Point of Access (SPA) who will decide on appropriate action.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the SPA team.



lead investigate



lead report



lead contact parents



suspect lead contact Extended Services

If the centre manager or senior play ranger is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the youth and community lead who will refer the allegation to the SPA.

### Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:



confidential

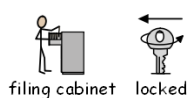
- The **Sycamore Adventure** centre manager or senior play ranger.



lead worker



- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation.
- Social care/police.
- Seek Children's Services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser (or parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

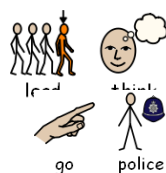


Information will be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws / GDPR (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).



internal

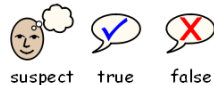
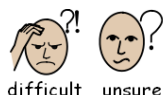
## Internal Enquiries and Suspension



- The Sycamore Adventure child protection lead in liaison with the youth and community lead will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social care inquiries.



- Irrespective of the findings of the social care or police inquiries the youth and community lead and the centre manager will assess all individual cases to decide whether a play worker can be reinstated and how this can be handled sensitively. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the youth and community lead and Sycamore Adventure centre manager must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

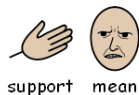


### Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse:

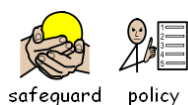
Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of help-lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189,



E-mail: [bac@bacp.co.uk](mailto:bac@bacp.co.uk), Internet: <http://www.bacp.co.uk>.



Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.



### Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, Sycamore Adventure will follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to SPA or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside the play service, may be at risk from this person.



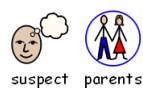
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Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.



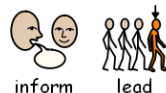
### **Action if bullying is suspected**

See Sycamore Adventure Anti Bullying Policy



### **Concerns outside the immediate play environment (e.g. a parent or carer):**

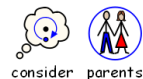
Report your concerns to Sycamore Adventure centre manager or senior playworker, who should contact the youth and community lead, SPA or the police as soon as possible.



See 4. below for the information Social care or the police will need:



If the Sycamore Adventure lead staff is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact SPA or the police immediately.



SPA and the Sycamore Adventure lead officers will decide how to involve the parents/carers.



Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.

See 4 below regarding information needed for social care.

### **What is SPA & MASH:**



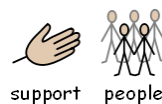
**Single point of access (SPA)** is used for all contact with, or referrals to, children's social care. Previously, there were four referral and assessment teams across the borough. The single point of access (SPA), centralises these teams with one single contact phone 0300 555 0050 (based at Corbyn Road).



The SPA team will manage all contact activity with children's social care across the borough and ensuring a greater level of consistency in responding to calls and referrals. As well as social care professionals, this central information hub will also bring together staff from Dudley Council's early help, housing and family information service team.



**Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):** Working together, under one roof, partner agencies can securely share relevant information they have on the child/family or vulnerable adult who has been referred and then swiftly decide on the best course of action to take. This multi-agency working is key to early and effective identification of risk, improved information sharing, joint decision making and co-ordinated action, leading to improved outcomes. The MASH will act as a single point of entry for referrals, triage referrals, enable thorough research of each case to identify potential risk, share information between agencies, facilitate





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early intervention – to prevent the need for more intensive interventions at a later stage and manage cases through co-ordinated interventions.

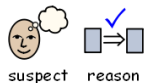
#### 4. Information for social care or the police about suspected abuse



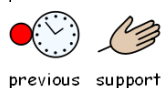
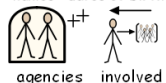
To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:



When you contact SPA have as much information available as possible including:



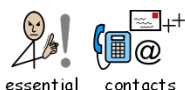
- The reasons for your concern
- Full name and date of birth of the child
- Names and dates of birth of the child's family/household members
- Other agencies/professionals involved with the family
- The child's first language and any special needs
- The child's developmental needs, family and environmental factors and parenting capacity



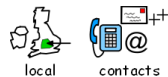
- Any work you may have already undertaken with the child and family



- All incidents will be reported on a Social Care Referral form (Stored on office computers). Both forms will need to be forwarded to Social Care and the Play Manager.



## Essential Contacts



<b>Lead for Youth and Community</b>		
Amanda Grove 3-5 St James road Dudley	<b>Tel: 01384 818145</b> <a href="mailto:Amanda.grove@dudley.gov.uk">Amanda.grove@dudley.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Local Contacts</b>		
Single Point of Access (SPA)	<b>0300 555 0050</b>	
Local police public protection unit	<b>West Midlands Police</b> <b>0845 113 5000</b>  In an emergency contact via <b>999</b>	
<b>National Contacts</b>		
Childline UK	Freepost 1111 London N1 OBR	Tel: 0800 1111
NI Childline	74 Duke Street Londonderry	Tel: 0504 311555
NSPCC Freephone 24 Hour Helpline		Tel: 0800 800 5000