

The Promise **Safeguarding Policy and Procedures**

Introduction

The Promise believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people it works with, by a commitment to a practice which protects them.

The overall emphasis of The Promise's approach to child protection issues is prevention through effective recruitment and selection procedures.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse

The purpose of this policy is:

- To provide protection for the children and young people with whom The Promise works.
- To deter applications from individuals who may place children or young people at risk during their employment or volunteering with The Promise.
- To identify and reject applications from individuals who may place children or young people at risk during their employment or volunteering with The Promise.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

This policy applies to all UK based and UK appointed overseas staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of The Promise.

Overseas applicants for overseas posts may not be able to be subjected to a Police Check or equivalent. In this case, extra care must be taken throughout the selection procedure.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a Guide to Good Practice for staff and volunteers
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

Recruitment and Training of Staff and Volunteers

The Promise 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.

Pre-selection checks to include the following:

- All staff/volunteers should complete an application form. The application form should elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent will be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring service where possible, depending on the availability of such records overseas.
- If the checks reveal any offences, the selection panel will discuss these findings amongst themselves and with the applicant. Final decisions will be made by the Board of Trustees.
- Two employment references should be taken up, or if no employment history, two relevant personal references.
- References may be followed up on the phone, asking specific questions about the applicant's suitability to work with children.
- All staff must provide evidence of identity

Interview and Offer of Employment:

- All staff/volunteers will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations.
- Any gaps in the applicant's employment history should be identified through the application form. If the selection panel is not satisfied that there are acceptable or believable reasons for gaps in the employment record, this will be sufficient reason for a rejection of the application at that stage of the recruitment process.
- Any convictions or disciplinary action that may have come to light, either through the Disclosure and Barring Service or through the application procedure should be explored in depth through questioning and follow up probes.
- Specific questions should be used at the first stage of the interviewing process to probe the applicant's attitude, experience and approach to working with children relevant to the post they have applied for.
- Job history details and essential qualifications must be verified.

Induction:

All staff/volunteers should receive an induction, during which:

- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- Safeguarding procedures are explained and training needs are identified
- Individuals should sign up to The Promise's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, including Guide to Good Practice as below

Training:

All staff/volunteers should be provided with the opportunity to identify and if needed receive training in order that they can:

- Analyse their own practice against The Promise's Code of Conduct to ensure their practice is not likely to result in allegations being made
- Recognise their responsibilities and understand how to report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse
- Work safely and effectively with children

The Promise Guide to Good Practice

The Promise encourages all staff, volunteers and trustees to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made.

The Promise aims to create a positive culture and expects all personnel to:

- Work in an open environment, minimise unobserved situations and encourage open communication with no secrets
- Treat all children and young people equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always consider the welfare of each child or young person to be paramount
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share and participate
- Ensure that if any form of physical support or assistance is required, it is provided openly, gently and respectfully
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible in order to share knowledge and empower
- Be an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children or young people
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of children and young people with whom they are working, gaining advice as required from Portage Worker/carer

The Promise would never sanction personnel to:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games with a child or young person
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children to use inappropriate 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 young people, that they can do for themselves

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, in view of the client group The Promise works with. These tasks should only be carried out if the child or young person:

- Is unable to do them independently
- With their consent or in their best interests

When assisting a child or young person with things of a personal nature The Promise expects you to:

- Respect the child or young person's dignity at all times
- Be responsive to the child or young person's reactions, responding appropriately
- Talk with the child or young person about what you are doing
- Give the child or young person choices where possible
- Ask for assistance from an appropriate adult if required
- Encourage the child or young person to participate as able in order to promote their independence

Use of Videoing or Photographic Materials

ThePromise is aware of the sensitive nature and risk of misuse of images, particularly on the internet, and therefore require all staff to ensure that when taking video footage or still images the children and young people are not being recorded in inappropriate or sexually vulnerable positions.

ThePromise reserve the right to access all images and footage taken by UK based and appointed staff and will store this data in a secure and appropriate way in order to minimise the risk of misuse.

Reporting Procedures of Suspected Child Abuse

All UK based/staff/volunteers working for ThePromise have a responsibility to act on any concerns of child abuse. ThePromise encourages all staff/volunteers to accurately and timely report any suspicions or witnessing of suspected abuse against a child or young person involved with ThePromise to the designated Child Protection Officer (Director). See Contact Details and Appendix B.

An accurate account should be made of:

- Date and time of what has occurred and the time the disclosure was made
- Names of people who were involved
- What was said or done by whom
- Any further action at the time
- Names of person reporting and to whom reported

It is not the responsibility of any of the staff/volunteers working for ThePromise in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However by reporting concerns to the appropriate officer ThePromise will ensure an appropriate level of enquiry is pursued by the Board of Trustees.

ThePromise 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 safeguarding 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.

Due to the nature of ThePromise's work with children and young people mainly being carried out in the Russian Federation and neighbouring countries reports of suspected abuse by foreign nationals cannot be covered under this policy. ThePromise may however, as appropriate, provide such reports to appropriate officials abroad.

Responding to Allegations or Suspicions of Child Abuse

The Promise will take appropriate action as outlined below.

Concerns about poor practice:

- If, following consideration by the board of trustees, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; The Promise Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue
- If the allegation is about poor practice by The Promise Child Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the charities commission who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Concerns about suspected abuse:

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by A UK based or appointed member of staff or volunteer should be reported to The Promise Child Protection Officer, as outlined above, 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 Promise Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the Board of Trustees and may involve the police if necessary
- If The Promise Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the chair or other member of the Board of Trustees.

The Promise will ensure every effort is made to maintain confidentiality for all concerned and that the information is handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

This includes the following people:

- The Promise Child Protection Officer
- The parents/carers of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Social services/police

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

Internal enquiries

- The Promise Child Protection Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further inquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of any police inquiries The Promise Board of Trustees will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the The Promise Board of Trustees 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.

Where such an allegation is made, The Promise will follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the appropriate bodies and/or the police. This is because other children may be at risk from this person. 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.

Contact Details and Other Sources of Information

Designated Child Protection Officer:

Jo Pritchard
Director

Jo.pritchard@thepromise.org.uk / 07825 512154

Deputy Child Protection Officer:

Sarah Settelen
Chair of Trustees

Sarah.settelen@thepromise.org.uk / 0203 016 2897

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 0808 800 5000

Policy Review Details and Signatures

ThePromise are committed to reviewing our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures on an annual basis.

ThePromise Chair of Trustees

Signature_____

Date_____

Designated Child Protection Officer

Signature_____

Date_____

Appendix A

Definitions and signs of 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.

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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Physical signs of abuse:

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them,
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls or games,
- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body,
- Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching),
- Cigarette burns,
- Bite marks,
- Broken bones,
- Scalds,
- Injuries which have not received medical attention,
- Neglect-under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care,
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation,
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts,
- Flinching when approached or touched,
- Reluctance to get changed, for example, wearing long sleeves in hot weather,
- Depression,
- Withdrawn behaviour,
- Running away from home

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.

The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- A failure to thrive or grow particularly if a child puts on weight in other circumstances: e.g. in hospital or away from their parents' care,
- Sudden speech disorders,
- Persistent tiredness,
- Development delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- Obsessions or phobias,
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration,
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults,
- Being unable to play,
- Attention seeking behaviour,
- Fear of making mistakes,
- Self-harm,
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour.

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 (eg: 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, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital/anal area,
- Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas,
- Sexually transmitted disease,
- Vaginal discharge or infection,
- Stomach pains,
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down,
- Pregnancy.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming withdrawn or aggressive,
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people,
- Having nightmares,
- Running away from home,
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level,
- Sexual drawings or language,
- Bedwetting,
- Eating problems such as over-eating or anorexia,
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts,
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about,
- Substance or drug abuse,
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money,
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence),
- Acting in a sexually explicit way with adults.

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 and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children,
- Constantly dirty or smelly,
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight,
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time,
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments,
- Having few friends,
- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised.

Children with Disabilities

Any child with a disability is by definition a 'child in need' under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

A child with a disability is as vulnerable to physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect as any other child, though the level of risk may be raised by:

- A need for practical assistance in daily living, including intimate care from what may be a number of carers
- Carers and staff lacking the ability to communicate adequately with the child
- A lack of continuity in care leading to an increased risk that behavioural changes may go unnoticed
- Physical dependency with consequent reduction in ability to be able to resist abuse
- An increased likelihood that the child is socially isolated
- Lack of access to 'keep safe' strategies available to others
- Communication or learning difficulties preventing disclosure
- Parents'/carers' own needs and ways of coping may conflict with the needs of the child

In addition to the universal indicators of abuse / neglect the following abusive behaviours must be considered:

- Force feeding
- Unjustified or excessive physical restraint
- Rough handling
- Extreme behaviour modification including the deprivation liquid, medication, food or clothing
- Misuse of medication, sedation, heavy tranquillisation
- Invasive procedures against the child's will
- Deliberate failure to follow medically recommended regimes
- Misapplication of programmes or regimes
- Ill fitting equipment e.g. callipers, sleep board which may cause injury or pain, inappropriate splinting

Where a child is unable to tell someone of her/his abuse s/he may convey anxiety or distress in some other way, e.g. challenging behaviour and carers and staff must be alert to this.

Appendix B

The Promise - Safeguarding Incident Report Form

Your Name:
Your Position:
Child's Name:
Child's Date of Birth:
Date and Time of any Incident:
Your Observations:
Exactly What the Child Said and What You Said (Remember, do not lead the child – record actual details. Continue on separate sheet if necessary)
Action Taken so far:

<p>Child Protection Officer Informed</p> <p>Yes/No</p>	<p>If yes – who and when:</p> <p>Details of Advice Received:</p>
<p>Police Informed</p> <p>Yes/No</p>	<p>If yes – which:</p> <p>Name and Contact Number :</p> <p>Details of Advice Received:</p>
<p>Advise sought from other agencies (e.g. NSPCC)</p>	<p>Which:</p> <p>Name and Contact Number:</p> <p>Details of Advice Received:</p>
<p>Signature:</p>	<p>Print Name:</p>
<p>Date:</p>	