

The Friendship Café Ltd



www.thefriendshipcafe.com

Charity Registration No: 1098562 & Company Limited by Guarantee no. 4403457

Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

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Approved by Reyaz Limalia, Chairman, on behalf of the trustees on
December 6th 2011

Contacts

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Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board www.gscb.org.uk

Social Services (01452-426000) (now known as Children & Young People's Directorate in Gloucestershire)

Gloucestershire Police 0845-090-1234

(includes Archery Club, St James City Farm & Riding School and activities directly related to / managed by our staff, volunteers, including Asian Carers and Bangladeshi Women's Group, but not other organisations which use our facilities and run their own projects)

Child Protection Policy

Responsibilities

The Friendship Cafe will:

- Promote the health and welfare of children by providing opportunities for them to take part in supplementary school activities safely.
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children.
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and protect them from abuse.
- Recruit, train, support and supervise its members to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse and to minimise risk to themselves.
- Require members to adopt and abide by this Protection Policy and these Procedures.
- Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children in line with this Policy and these Procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- **Review and evaluate this Policy and these Procedures on a regular basis.**

Principles

The welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting them from abuse. Children have a lot to gain from the services provided by the supplementary school. It provides an excellent opportunity for them to learn new skills, become more confident and maximise their own unique potential. This Policy and these Procedures are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of children is the primary concern.
- All children whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns about abuse and the responsibility of the Social Work Department and the Police to conduct, where appropriate, a joint investigation.
- All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Review

This Policy and these Procedures will be regularly monitored and reviewed:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children or any changes within **The Friendship Cafe** Following any issues or concerns raised about the protection of children within **The Friendship Cafe**.
- In all other circumstances, at least every three years as a minimum.

The Friendship Café

Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Procedures

1. Recruitment and Employment

All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

For all positions that require regular contact with children the following recruitment procedures must be completed.

1.1 Advertising

All forms of advertising used to recruit members for positions involving regular contact with children or vulnerable adults will include the following:

- The aims of **The Friendship Café** and, where appropriate, details of the particular programme involved.
- The responsibilities of the role.
- The level of experience or qualifications required (e.g. experience of working with children is an advantage).
- Details of **The Friendship Café's** open and positive stance on child protection.

1.2 Pre-application Information

Pre-application information for positions involving regular contact with children or vulnerable adults will be sent to applicants and will include:

- A job description including roles and responsibilities.
- A candidate specification (e.g. stating qualifications or experience of working with children or vulnerable adults required).
- An application form and self-declaration form.

1.3 Application and Self-Declaration Form

All applicants will be requested to complete an application and self-declaration form. The purpose of the application form is to obtain relevant details from the applicant for the position. The purpose of the self-declaration form is to collect information on criminal behaviour that is relevant to the position e.g. criminal records or investigations. Convictions alone should not bar applicants. Each case needs to be assessed on its merits, taking into account the nature of the offence, when it was committed, etc.

1.4 References

References will be sought as required. Where possible at least one of these references will be from an employer or a voluntary organisation where the position required working with children in any of the following capacities: employee; volunteer; or work experience. If the person has no experience of working with children, specific training requirements will be agreed before appointment.

1.5 Checks

All Checks will be done through DBS Disclosure .The Child Protection Officer at Present is Imran Atcha

Enhanced Disclosure

Enhanced Disclosures will be requested for positions that involve contact with children or vulnerable adults. For example positions that requires regular contact with, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children and young people.

1.6 Interview

For positions that require regular contact with children or vulnerable adults, interviews will be carried out. An interview will include requests for additional information to support the application.

1.7 Offer of Position

Once a decision has been made to appoint an individual, an offer letter will be presented to the applicant including the details of the position, any special requirements and the obligations e.g. agreement to the policies and procedures of the organisation, the probation period and responsibilities of the role. Confirmation of the position being accepted will require the offer letter to be formally accepted and agreed to in writing e.g. by the individual signing and dating their agreement on the offer letter and returning it to the organisation.

1.8 Induction

The induction process for the newly appointed member will include the following:

- An assessment of training, individual aids and any other needs and aspirations.
- Clarification, agreement and signing up to the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Clarification of the expectations, roles and responsibilities of the position.

1.9 Training

Newly appointed members will complete the following training over an agreed period:

- Protecting children.
- Working effectively with children (including presentation skills, developing child friendly resources and activities).
- Any other identified training needs.

1.10 Probation

Newly appointed members will complete an agreed period of probation on commencement of their role.

1.11 Monitoring and Performance Appraisal

All members who have contact with children will be monitored and their performance appraised. This will provide an opportunity to evaluate progress, set new goals, identify training needs and address any concerns of poor practice.

2. Members with Specific Responsibility for the Protection of Children.

2.1 Child Protection Officer

The Child Protection Officer has the main responsibility for managing child protection issues within **The Friendship Cafe**. The role and responsibilities of the Child Protection Officer are detailed below. Specific responsibilities in relation to allegations against members are detailed in the Procedure for Managing Suspicions and Allegations of Abuse of a Child against Members (Section 7.5).

2.2 Role and Responsibilities of the Child Protection Officer

Within **The Friendship Cafe** the Child Protection Officer will:

- Implement and promote **The Friendship Cafe**'s Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Regularly report to the **(management Committee)**
- Act as the main contact within **The Friendship Cafe** for the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- Provide information and advice on the protection of children.
- Support and raise awareness of the protection of children.

- Communicate with members on issues of child protection.
- Keep abreast of developments and understand the latest information on data protection, confidentiality and other legal issues that impact on the protection of children.
- Encourage good practice and support of procedures to protect children.
- Establish and maintain contact with local statutory agencies including the Police and Social Work Department.
- Maintain confidential records of reported cases and action taken and liaise with the statutory agencies and ensure they have access to all necessary information.
- Organise training for members.
- Regularly monitor and review the **The Friendship Cafe's** Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Within Member of **The Friendship Cafe**, the Child protection Officer will:

- Implement and promote **The Friendship Cafe** Child Protection Policy and Procedures.)
- Regularly report to the **Management Committee/ Trustees** .
- Act as the main contact within the organisation for the protection of children.
- Encourage good practice and support of procedures to protect children.
- Keep abreast of developments and understand the latest information on data protection, confidentiality and other legal issues that impact on the protection of children.
- Communicate with governing body's Child Protection Officer.
- Maintain confidential records of reported cases and action taken and liaise with the statutory agencies and ensure they have access to all necessary information.
- Report cases, concerns and action taken to governing body's Child Protection Officer.
- Attend training on the protection of children.
- Establish and maintain contact with local statutory agencies including the Police and Social Work Department.
- Monitor and review the Child Protection Policy and Procedures for the Organisation.

3. Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children

This code of conduct details the types of practice required by all members of **The Friendship Cafe** when in contact with children. The types of practice are categorised into good practice; practice to be avoided and practice never to be sanctioned. Suspicions or allegations of non-compliance of the Code by a member will be dealt with through **The Friendship Cafe's** Disciplinary Procedure for misconduct or through Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse against a Member of the Club. (Section 7.5).

3.1 Good Practice

The Friendship Cafe supports and requires the following good practice by members when in contact with children and vulnerable adults.

When working with children:

- Make learning fun, enjoyable and promote fair play.
- Always work in an open environment e.g. avoid private or unobserved situations and encourage an open environment for activities.
- Treat all children equally, with respect and dignity.
- Put the welfare of each child or first before winning or achieving performance goals.

- Be an excellent role model including not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Ensure that if any form of manual or physical support is required for a child, it is provided openly, the child is informed of what is being done and their consent is obtained.
- Deliver educational instruction first verbally; secondly role-modelled.
- Involve parents, guardians and carers wherever possible.
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust that empower children to share in the decision-making process.
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of children and avoid excessive training or competition and either pushing them against their will or putting undue pressure on them.

First Aid and Treatment of Injuries:

If, in your capacity as a member of **The Friendship Cafe**, a child requires first aid or any form of medical attention whilst in your care, then the following good practice must be followed:

- Be aware of any pre-existing medical conditions, medicines being taken by participants or existing injuries and treatment required.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Where possible, ensure access to medical advice and/or assistance is available.
- Only those with a current, recognised First Aid qualification should respond to any injuries.
- Where possible any course of action should be discussed with the child, in language that they understand and their permission sought before any action is taken.
- In more serious cases, assistance must be obtained from a medically qualified professional as soon as possible.
- The child's parents/guardians or carers must be informed of any injury and any action taken as soon as possible, unless it is in the child's interests and on professional advice not to do so.
- A Notification of Accident Form must be completed and signed and passed to the organisation as soon as possible.

For taking and transporting children away from home:

If it is necessary to provide transport or take children away from home the following good practice must be followed:

- Where practicable request written parental/guardian consent if members are required to transport children.
- Always tell another member that you are transporting a child, give details of the route and the anticipated length of the journey.
- Ensure all vehicles are correctly insured.
- All reasonable safety measures are taken, e.g. children in the back seat, seatbelts are worn.
- Ensure, where possible, a male and female accompany mixed groups of children adults. These to be familiar with and agree to abide by **The Friendship Cafe** 's Child Protection Policy and Procedure
- Always plan and prepare a detailed programme of activities and ensure copies are available for other members and parents/guardians.

3.2 Practice to Be Avoided

In the context of your role within **The Friendship Cafe**, the following practice should be avoided:

- Avoid having 'favourites' - this could lead to resentment and jealousy by other children and could lead to false allegations.
- Avoid spending time alone with children away from others.
- Ensure that when children are taken away from home adults avoid entering their rooms unless in an emergency situation or in the interest of health and safety. If it is necessary to enter rooms, the door should remain open, if appropriate.
- Avoid taking children to your home.
- Avoid, where possible, doing things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.

Important Note:

It may sometimes be necessary for members to do things of a personal nature for children a, particularly if they are very young or vulnerable. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the child or and where possible their parents/guardians. It is important to respect their views. Do not take on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

3.3 Practice never to be sanctioned

In the context of your role within **The Friendship Cafe**, the following practices should never be sanctioned:

- Never engage in sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Never engage in rough or physical contact except as permitted within the rules of the game or competition.
- Never form intimate emotional or physical relationships with children.
- Never allow or engage in touching a child in any sexually/none sexually suggestive manner.
- Never allow children to swear or use sexualised language unchallenged.
- Never make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Never reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Never allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Never share a room with a child for sleeping accommodation (but see note below).
- Never invite or allow children to stay with you at your home.

Important Note:

In special cases sharing may be required for health and safety reasons or if the child is very young or particularly vulnerable. If so, explain why this is necessary to the child and their parent or guardian and seek their consent. Where possible ensure that at least two adults, preferably male and female are in the room. These kind of arrangements may be unavoidable during, for example, camping weekends, when we need to share tents. However, we should try and keep the adults and children's quarters separate within the tents or bunkers and avoid an adult remaining alone with the child/ren.

3.4 Reporting

If members have concerns about an incident involving a child that seems untoward or unusual they must report their concerns as soon as possible to the Child. Parents should also be informed of the incident as soon as possible unless it is not in the child's interests to tell them (refer to Section 8, Sharing Concerns with Parents, Guardians or Carers).

Report, record and inform if the following occur:

- If you accidentally hurt a child.

- If a child seems distressed in any manner.
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have said or done.
- If a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a child needs to be restrained.

4 Identifying and Managing Bullying

The lives of many people are made miserable by bullying. Victims of bullying can feel lonely, isolated and deeply unhappy. It can have a devastating effect on a child or vulnerable adult's self-esteem and destroy their self-confidence and concentration. They may become withdrawn and insecure, more cautious and less willing to take any sort of risk. They may feel it is somehow their fault or that there is something wrong with them and at worst cause depression and/or feelings of worthlessness that lead to suicide.

To ensure **The Friendship Cafe** creates an atmosphere where bullying of children is unacceptable and to help members manage bullying issues, guidelines for identifying and managing bullying have been developed.

Any suspicions or allegations of bullying of a child against a member will be dealt with through the **The Friendship Cafe** Disciplinary Procedures and/or Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse against a Member of the Club. (Section 7.5).

5 Photographing, Videoing and Filming of Children

There is evidence that some people have used schools sporting venues and activities as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of children. The following procedures have been developed to protect children and vulnerable adults.

The following is required for **The Friendship Cafe** activities or events where children participating:

- Where appropriate all materials promoting **The Friendship Cafe** events or activities shall state that accredited photographers will be present.
- Where possible consent from the parent/guardian for photographing, videoing and/or filming of a child must be obtained prior to the event or activity.
- Where possible anyone wishing to use photographic/film/video equipment at a venue must obtain the approval of **The Friendship Cafe**.
- An activity or event specific identification badge/sticker must be provided to and clearly displayed at all times by accredited photographers, film and video operators on the day of the activity or event.
- No unsupervised access or one-to-one sessions are to be permitted unless this has been approved in advance by the child, parent/guardian and the organisation, and appropriate vetting has occurred e.g. Disclosure check of individual wanting to photograph, film or video.
- **The Friendship Cafe** reserves the right at all times to prohibit the use of photography, film or video at any event or activity with which it is associated.
- The requirements above are publicly promoted to ensure all people present at the event or activity understand the procedure and are aware of whom to contact if concerned.

5.1 Concerns about Photographers, Video or Film Operators

Any concerns with photographers or video or film operators are to be reported to **The Friendship Cafe** Child Protection Officer and where relevant, the Police.

6. Responding to Disclosures

Information you receive about or from a child may fall into one of the following categories:

- 1 Suspicion or allegation of misconduct against a member of **The Friendship Cafe**
- 2 Suspicion or allegation of abuse against a member of **The Friendship Cafe**
- 3 Suspicion or allegation of inappropriate behaviour against someone who is not a member

4 Suspicion or allegation of abuse against someone who is not a member

If unclear about the nature of the information (and therefore which category the disclosure falls into) advice must be sought from the Child protection Officer or the Police or Social Work Department.

It is not the responsibility of anyone from **The Friendship Cafe** to decide whether or not a child has been abused. It is however everyone's responsibility to report concerns.

It is very important that **The Friendship Cafe** members understand what is meant by the term 'abuse'. The different types of abuse are:

- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Negative Discrimination (including racism)
- Bullying (includes bullying by gangs; bullying by family members; physical bullying; verbal bullying; teasing; and harassment)

The definitions for the types of abuse and signs that may suggest abuse are detailed in Appendix A. It is very important that this appendix is read and understood.

7.1 How to Listen to a Disclosure

It is important to listen carefully to the information a child discloses. When listening to a disclosure the following good practice is required:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child.
- Listen to the child.
- Do not show disbelief.
- Tell the child that he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell.
- Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what a child says, especially if they have a speech disability and/or differences in language.
- Do not pre-suppose that the experience was bad or painful - it may have been neutral or even pleasurable.
Always avoid projecting your own reactions onto the child.
- If you need to clarify, keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- If you need to clarify or the statement is ambiguous, use open-ended, non-leading questions.
- Do not introduce personal information from either your own experiences or those of other children
- Reassure the child

Actions to Avoid

When receiving a disclosure:

- Avoid panic.
- Avoid showing shock or distaste.
- Avoid probing for more information than is offered.
- Avoid speculating or making assumptions.
- Avoid making negative comments about the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- Avoid approaching the individual against whom the allegation has been made.

- Avoid making promises or agreeing to keep secrets.
- Avoid giving a guarantee of confidentiality.

7.2 Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Inappropriate Behaviour or Misconduct against someone who is Not a Member of The Friendship Cafe

In the course of your role within **The Friendship Cafe** a child may disclose information to you about a person who is not a member that leads to a suspicion or allegation of inappropriate behaviour or misconduct.

If the disclosure is about an incident that occurred during a **The Friendship Cafe** event or activity:

- Listen to the child as detailed above.
- Acknowledge the information received.
- Pass the information to both the manager of the event or activity and the Child Officer and if appropriate the parents/guardians/carers of the child (refer to Section 8 Sharing Concerns with Parents, Guardians or Carers).
- Make a full written record of the disclosure on the day you receive the disclosure.
- Sign and date the record then pass it to the Child protection Adult Officer.

7.3 Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Inappropriate Behaviour or Misconduct against a Member of The Friendship Cafe

If you receive a disclosure that leads to a suspicion or allegation of inappropriate behaviour or misconduct against a member:

- Listen to the child as detailed above.
- Acknowledge the information received.
- Pass to the Child protection Officer.
- Make a full written record of the disclosure on the day you receive the disclosure.
- Sign and date the record then pass to the Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer.

Establishing the Basic Facts

The Child protection Officer must clarify the basic facts to establish whether there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that misconduct has occurred. If the basic facts support a suspicion or allegation of misconduct by a member, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the schools Disciplinary Procedure.

7.4 Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse against someone who is Not a Member of The Friendship Cafe

All allegations of abuse must be taken seriously. Although false allegations of abuse do occur, they are less than usual. If a child says or indicates that he/she is being abused or information is obtained which gives concern that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused, you must react as soon as possible that day in line with the following procedures.

Where there is uncertainty about whether the concern relates to abuse or misconduct, the Child protection Officer must firstly be consulted for advice on the appropriate course of action. If the Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer are unavailable, external agencies such as the Police and Social Work Department must be consulted for advice. This is important because they have an overview of child protection issues and they may well have other information that together causes concern.

On receiving information about a non-member that leads to a suspicion or allegation of abuse:

- Listen to the child or vulnerable adult as detailed in section 7.1 How to Listen to Disclosures.
- Pass your concerns to the Social Work Department or the Police in the area where the abuse is alleged to have occurred immediately (these are available 24 hours a day). Act on any advice given. At the earliest opportunity tell the Child protection Officer about the action taken.
- Make a full written record of what has been seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible in the child/ own words. The information must, where known, include the following:

- Name of child/.
- Age, date of birth of child.
- Home address and telephone number of the child.
- The nature of the allegation in the child own words.
- Any times, dates or other relevant information.
- Whether the person making the report is expressing their own concern or the concerns of another person.
- The child account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any injuries occurred.
- The nature of the allegation (include all of the information obtained during the initial account e.g. time, date, location of alleged incident).
- A description of any visible (when normally dressed) injuries or bruising, behavioural signs, indirect signs (do not examine the child).
- Details of any witnesses to the incident.
- Whether the child parents/guardians/carers have been contacted.
- Details of anyone else who has been consulted and the information obtained from them.
- If it is not the child making the report, whether the child has been spoken to, if so what was said.
- Record, sign and date on the day what you have seen, heard or been told.
- If making an electronic copy do not save to the hard drive or floppy disk. Print off the record, sign and date, and then delete the electronic copy, that day.
- Pass the record to the Social Work Department or the Police.

Remember: Listen; Respond; Report and Record

7.5 Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse against a Member of The Friendship Cafe

The feelings caused by the discovery of potential abuse by a member will raise different issues, e.g. disbelief that a member would act in this way. It is not the responsibility of a member to take responsibility or to decide whether or not a child has been abused. However, as with allegations against non-members, it is the responsibility of the individual to act on any concerns.

Any information that raises concern about the behaviour of a member towards a child must be passed on as soon as possible that day, in accordance with these procedures. No member in receipt of such information shall keep that information to himself/ herself or attempt to deal with the matter on their own.

These Procedures aim to ensure that all suspicions and/or allegations of abuse against a member are taken seriously and are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner. They must be read in conjunction with the Schools Disciplinary Procedures.

7.5.1 On receiving information about a member that leads to a suspicion or allegation of abuse:

- Listen to the child as detailed in section 7.1 How to Listen to Disclosures.
- Pass your concerns to the Child Officer on the day or if not available, the Social Work Department or the Police in the area where the abuse is alleged to have occurred (these are available 24 hours a day). Act on any advice given.
- Make a full written record of what has been seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible in the child/ own words.
- Sign and date the record including what you have seen, heard or been told, that day.
- If making an electronic copy do not save to the hard drive or floppy disk. Print the record, sign and date, and then delete the electronic copy, that day.
- Pass the record to the Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer or the Social Work Department or Police.

Important Note: Where the concern is about the Child protection Officer it must be reported to the **Headmaster/Trustee**.

7.5.2 Actions for the Child Protection Officer when Concerns are reported

Before taking any action the Child protection Officer must always seek advice from the Police or Social Work Department. Thereafter:

- **Establish Basic Facts** - the Child protection Officer must initially clarify the basic facts to establish whether there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a member may have abused a child.

Important Note:

- This may necessitate the child (ren)) involved being asked some basic, open-ended, non-leading questions solely with a view to clarifying the basic facts. It may also be necessary to ask similar basic questions of other children, or other appropriate individuals e.g. coaches. After seeking advice from the Police and/or Social Work Department, the parents/guardians may be approached to provide consent to speak to a child.
- Advice must be sought from the Police and/or Social Work Department as to whether the member about whom the allegation has been made may be approached as part of the initial enquiry.
- This process will not form part of the disciplinary investigation.

Making a Referral in Cases of Suspected and/or Alleged Abuse – If the basic facts support a suspicion or allegation of abuse:

- The Child Protection Officer will refer the suspicion and/or allegation to the Social Work Department and the Police, as soon as possible that day.
- Appropriate steps may be required to ensure the safety of the child. A record should be made of the name and designation of the Social Work Department member of staff or the Police Officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow up is required.
- Following advice from the Social Work Department and/or Police, the parent/guardian of the child or vulnerable adult should be contacted as soon as possible.

Important Note:

- Reporting of the matter to the Police or Social Work Department must not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information. A Referral for Reporting Suspicions and/or Allegations of Abuse against a Member of **The Friendship Cafe** Form must be completed as soon as possible that day. Where possible, a copy of this form must be sent to the Police and Social Work Department within 24 hours.

Possible Outcomes following advice from Police

Where the initial enquiry reveals that there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a member has abused a child there will be an investigation. There are three types of investigation that can result:

- A disciplinary investigation
- A child protection investigation
- A criminal investigation

Following advice from the Police, disciplinary action may be taken in cases where a criminal investigation is ongoing provided sufficient information is available to enable a decision to be made and doing so does not jeopardise the criminal investigation.

Procedures 7.5.1 and 7.5.2 are summarised in Flowchart 1.

7.5.3 Managing the Member against Whom the Allegation has been made

Following advice from the Police, if the decision is made that the member against whom the allegation has been made is to be informed, the member should be told an allegation has been made which suggests abuse. It is essential to preserve evidence for any criminal proceedings while at the same time safeguarding the rights of the member.

7.5.4 Suspension

- Suspension is not a form of disciplinary action. The member may be suspended whilst an investigation is carried out.
- Suspension will be carried out in accordance with **The Friendship Cafe's** Disciplinary Procedures.
- At the suspension interview the member will be informed of the reason suspension is taking place and given the opportunity to give a statement should he/she wish. Notification of the suspension and the reasons will be conveyed in writing to the member in accordance with **The Friendship Cafe** Disciplinary Procedures.

7.5.5 Managing False or Malicious Allegations

- Where after investigation, the allegation is found to be false or malicious the member will receive an account of the circumstances and/or investigation and a letter confirming the conclusion of the matter. The member involved may wish to seek legal advice.
- All records pertaining to the circumstances and investigation will be destroyed.
- Where this involves a member of **The Friendship Cafe**, they will be advised of the appropriate counselling services available.

7.5.6 Managing Allegations of Historical Abuse

- Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event e.g. an adult who was abused as a child by a member who is still currently working with children. Where such an allegation is made the procedures for managing allegations of abuse, detailed in Sections 7.4 and 7.5, must be followed.

8 Sharing concerns with Parents, Guardians or Carers

8.1 Where it is Not Abuse

There is always a commitment to work in partnership with parents/guardians/carers where there are concerns about a child. Therefore in most situations, not involving the possibility of the abuse of a child, it would be important to talk to parents/guardians/carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, he/she may have experienced an upset in the family, such as a parental separation, divorce or bereavement. **Common sense** is advised in these situations however advice should be sought from the Child Protection Officer if there is any uncertainty about the appropriate course of action.

8.2 Allegations of Abuse

There are circumstances in which a child might be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared e.g. where a parent/guardian/carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately. **In all cases of suspected or alleged abuse, advice and guidance must first be sought from the local Social Work Department or the Police as to who contacts the parents.**

8.3 Definitions of Abuse (taken from NSPCC website)

Sexual abuse is when a child or young person is pressurised, forced or tricked into taking part in any kind of sexual activity with an adult or young person. This can include kissing, touching the young person's genitals or breasts, intercourse or oral sex. Encouraging a child to look at pornographic magazines, videos or sexual acts is also sexual abuse.

Physical abuse includes hitting, shaking, kicking, punching, scalding, suffocating and other ways of inflicting pain or injury to a child. It also includes giving a child harmful substances, such as drugs, alcohol or poison. If a parent or carer reports non-existent symptoms of illness in a child, or deliberately causes illness in a child, this is also a form of physical abuse.

Neglect is the persistent lack of appropriate care of children, including love, stimulation, safety, nourishment, warmth, education and medical attention. It can have a serious effect on a child's physical, mental and emotional development. For babies and very young children, it can be life-threatening.

Emotional abuse is when a parent or carer behaves in a way that is likely to seriously affect their child's emotional development. It can range from constant rejection and denial of affection, through to continual severe criticism, deliberate humiliation and other ways of verbally "terrorising" a child.

It's not always easy to identify when a child is being emotionally abused. But the effects are damaging and long lasting. They can lead to serious behavioural, learning, emotional or mental disorders. All of which affect the child's chances of developing into a healthy, well-adjusted adult.

9. Legal Framework

The legislation and guidance on which this policy and supporting procedures is based is located in Appendix.

Flowchart 1: Procedure for Responding to Suspicions and/or Allegations of Abuse of a Child against a Member ('Child Protection Officer' is Saleha Moola)

