

The British Dyslexia Association

Child Protection Policy

Approved by the Management Board – December 2003

Revised – March 2005

Reviewed by Management Board – March 2007

Preface

The BDA is committed to working practice that protects children and young people from harm. We aim to provide children with the maximum opportunities to develop their full potential. We want to ensure that children and young people are protected and kept safe from harm when they are with our staff and volunteers.

Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Objective**
- 3. Implementation**
- 4. Personnel Checks**
- 5. Reporting of Enquiry Results**
- 6. Personnel Records**
- 7. Activities**
- 8. Reporting of Concerns**
- 9. Feedback and Reporting**
- 10. Allegations against Workers or Management**
- 11. Induction and training**
- 12. Review of Policy**
- 13. Appendices**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy forms part of the Terms and Conditions of service, and applies to all activities of the BDA where children and young people under 18 years of age are present, and to all working in such activities, whether as an employee, volunteer, management representative or otherwise.

2. Objective

- 2.1 The Objective of the BDA's Child Protection Policy is to contribute to the personal safety of all children using the facilities and resources of the BDA, through actively promoting awareness, good practice and sound procedures.

3. Implementation

- 3.1 The Management Board shall appoint the Operations Manager and Head of HR to be responsible for all aspects of child protection awareness and implementation of this policy. The Education Director will be the point of contact for reporting any incidents of suspected child abuse within and outside office hours. In the absence on leave of the Education Director, the Chief Executive will take the lead for receiving incidents of suspected abuse. Contact numbers are appended to this policy document (Appendix 3).
- 3.2 The Operations Manager and Head of HR will be responsible to the Management Board for:
- a. ensuring that this policy is implemented throughout the BDA's activities;
 - b. ensuring all necessary child protection-related enquiries, procedures and investigations are carried out;
 - c. reporting results of screening enquiries and for preserving a "need to know" levels of confidentiality and access to secure records;
 - d. ensuring secure and confidential records relating to child protection matters;
 - e. the reporting to all meetings of the Management Board on the implementation of this policy;
 - f. ensuring there is adequate induction and training relating to child protection matters;
 - g. ensuring, with the Education Director, that each activity carried out by the BDA is sound in terms of child protection as regards personnel, practices, premises.

- 3.3 The Education Director will be responsible to the Management Board for:

- a. liaison with social services at a formal and informal level on child protection matters, likewise with the police;
 - b. the reporting of allegations and suspicion of abuse to the appropriate authorities;
 - c. checking all incident reports made by staff and volunteers, countersigning them, and making such reference to authority as is appropriate, after consultation with the Chief Executive as detailed below.
 - d. The Education Director will be responsible for liaising with BDA project workers and development officers who have responsibility for conforming to the area child protection procedures.
- 3.4 The Chief Executive of the British Dyslexia Association shall ensure active compliance with this policy by all working in the BDA and shall work closely with the Operations Manager and Head of HR and Education Director to ensure this, affording them every assistance to this end. All other officers, staff and voluntary workers of the BDA will actively endeavour to implement this policy.

4. Personnel Checks

- 4.1 The BDA's aim is to ensure as far as is possible that anyone, paid or voluntary, who seeks to work with children and young people through the BDA's is as safe to do so in child protection terms as can be guaranteed.
- 4.2 Therefore checks will be carried out on all prospective directors, staff and volunteers whose work may create a situation of regulated activity (ie unsupervised or unaccompanied contact for more than one hour per week) to children, young people or vulnerable adults:
- a. criminal records and vetting and barring scheme check at standard or enhanced level via Reading Borough Council Social Services Department (see Appendix 1 & 2);
 - b. at least one personal referee, nominated by the applicant - a person who is not related to the applicant and who preferably knows of the applicant's character, trustworthiness, any previous experience of working with/looking after children and young people
 - c. A completed BDA Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) identity check form, which details previous names and addresses, and includes a passport sized photograph of the individual.
- 4.3 The written consent of the applicant must be obtained to enable such enquiries to be made. No application may proceed unless such consent is given by the applicant.

- 4.4 The form and authorities will be completed at interview with the applicant, by the Operations Manager and Head of HR in consultation with the Chief Executive. The applicant may request this be done in confidence with only the Operations Manager and Head of HR present.
- 4.5 No applicant may start sessions unsupervised without the above enquiries being completed. However, the Chief Executive may, in consultation with the Operations Manager and Head of HR and on completion of a risk assessment, authorise an applicant to commence supervised work (one-to-one basis) where it is clear there will be no problems arising from the checks.
- 4.6 The Operations Manager and Head of HR shall be responsible for sending the enquiries to their destinations, under a strictly confidential heading in all cases, and shall ensure security of records.
- 4.7 At all times the onus is on the applicant/employee/volunteer to reveal any conviction, caution, bind-over, probation order, or pending prosecution, whether imposed prior to or within the period the applicant works on BDA activities.
- 4.8 The applicant shall produce photographic proof of identity (eg passport or photo driving licence) and proof of residence (eg utility bill, credit card statement) which checks the Operations Manager and Head of HR shall note as having been undertaken and will sign in the presence of the applicant. The applicant will then sign to indicate the details are correct.
- 4.9 The Operations Manager and Head of HR will not accept any previous reference, police check, social services endorsement etc provided by an applicant in substitution for the above enquiry process. At all times the initiative must lie with the BDA to make its own, completely independent enquiries.

5. Reporting of Enquiry Results

- 5.1 The Operations Manager and Head of HR will indicate to the Chief Executive whether an applicant is suitable to work on BDA activities, as revealed by the results of the checks at 4.2 a and b above.
- 5.2 Where a Schedule One offence is indicated by the above process, the Operations Manager and Head of HR must rule an applicant unsuitable, and that person must not undertake any form of work or help with the BDA. If such an attempt is made by a convicted Schedule One Offender or by any person prohibited under legislation from working with children and young people or from being in proximity to places where they may gather etc, the Operations Manager and Head of HR shall immediately inform Social Services and the Police.

- 5.3 The Operations Manager and Head of HR will recommend at each meeting of the Management Board on the acceptance or otherwise of applicants. No details other than an applicant was accepted or otherwise shall be given or minuted. The CEO may indicate an opinion on any application at this stage, in child protection terms. The Management Board shall consider the Operations Manager and Head of HR's recommendation and their decision shall be recorded in the minutes.
- 5.4 If there are any discrepancies revealed between the applicant's statements and the replies, the applicant will be invited to attend an interview at which these will be investigated thoroughly. In particular, the applicant should be advised as to the necessary procedures s/he can take if s/he queries the accuracy of a reference or check. The replies given may be taken into account by the SSM, in consultation with the CEO, in making a recommendation to the Management Board as at 5.3.
- 5.5 Where an applicant declines to attend such an interview as at 5.4, the SSM shall write to the applicant to inform him/her that their application has not been successful.
- 5.6 The SSM shall be authorised to undertake any additional enquiries as sanctioned by the applicant as may assist the making of a recommendation to the Management Board.

6. Personnel Records

- 6.1 The Operations Manager and Head of HR shall maintain a confidential file on each applicant in which shall be kept:
- a. copies of all forms, consents and replies as in paragraph 4.2 above;
 - b. a progress check form indicating progress of the checks and replies;
 - c. notes for file - where the Operations Manager and Head of HR receives a phone call or other non-written communication, the main points shall be recorded and filed with the applicant's records.
- 6.2 The file of an unsuccessful applicant shall be kept for six months and then safely destroyed by the Operations Manager and Head of HR - likewise for a successful applicant who declines to commence with the BDA. This period will be increased to 12 months from the date of leaving the BDA's service for any successful applicant who commences work with the BDA.
- 6.3 Anyone working with the BDA has the right to inspect their own confidential records as at 6.1 above, and may do so on request to the Operations Manager and Head of HR who shall not withhold consent unreasonably and will do so within one working day. The Operations Manager and Head of HR may only withhold such agreement and access if to do so might jeopardise a BDA or police or social services investigation relating to child protection matters or might lead to a child's welfare and safety being compromised. The Operations

Manager and Head of HR need give no reason for such withholding of consent. S/he will report such a situation to the Management Board, purely on the lines that a request was made and refused for reasons relating to the welfare of children.

- 6.4 The CEO may have access to such records as kept at 6.1 above, with the caveat at 6.3 above applying.

7. Activities

- 7.1 Prior to any activity/site/programme being commenced, the Education Director shall ensure that adequate child protection procedures are in place.
- 7.2 With the primary aim of maximising children's safety and minimising risk, all staff, volunteers and other individuals should be aware of who is accessing their premises and activities at all times.
- 7.3 In consultation with the CEO, the Education Director shall ensure a site audit is undertaken to ascertain the layout of premises/site, helpers and supervision required to achieve adequate personal safety of children and young people. The audit shall be undertaken with a view to recognising any problems in terms of e.g. supervision of helpers, extended sites creating communications concerns etc. There may be a need to audit an existing site etc if, in the opinion of the Education Director and/or the CEO there have been significant changes since the last use of that site.
- 7.4 As a basic principle, a volunteer or employee should avoid being alone with a child. Where direct work with a young person is being undertaken, it is important for consideration to be given to the location of the interview, proximity to other staff and volunteers and the possibility of a chaperone. All sessions shall be conducted with the provisions, aims and objectives of this policy in mind.
- 7.5 Every activity shall be undertaken with the possibility in mind that a child may be suffering abuse outside the BDA, that a disclosure or symptom relating to this may become apparent within a BDA activity, or that there will be children present who have not as yet revealed they are being abused. It is important that the environment created for BDA activity is as conducive to support of a child in such a situation as is possible.
- 7.6 For their own protection, but mainly as good practice and good manners, staff and volunteers are advised not to initiate physical contact with a child except where a child needs to be removed from a situation threatening its or other's safety. (NB: The Education Director will ensure that training is given on the appropriate use of restrictive physical interventions.)

8. Reporting of Concerns

- 8.1 Those working on BDA activities have a duty to ensure that any suspicion, incident, allegation or other manifestation relating to child protection is reported as provided below.
- 8.2 Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in any number of ways. This may be by what a child says, about itself or another child or children. It may be through interception of a written item, or through observation of activity or behaviour giving cause for concern. It may be through changes in behaviour or attitude. There may be physical, emotional pointers such as bruising, staining, inappropriate behaviour or knowledge. These and many other signs can be picked up by staff and volunteers. Disclosure may also be by parents to what they perceive as an “anonymous” Helpline. They may feel they have over-reacted, hit their child and want to discuss this behaviour. (See Appendix 4 – Responding to disclosure of abuse)
- 8.3 **It is vital for the successful operation of this policy that all incidents, observations, however insignificant-seeming, are logged by the observer(s) on the appropriate incident report forms. (See Appendix 5)**
- 8.4 The observing worker, paid and voluntary, will make a verbal report to the Education Director and also will make a written report outlining in adequate detail what was heard, seen, reported, alleged etc. Verbatim quotes from a child are important, as is the retention of anything which gave cause for concern such as a drawing, painting, writing etc. The worker will sign and date the report. The Education Director will countersign the report and at the end of the session or, at the latest, the next working morning and pass it to the Operations Manager and Head of HR who also will retain the report on file.
- 8.5 Many reports will be purely minor in nature. It is important to treat them with due seriousness, however, in case there already exists information within the BDA concerning a child or e.g. a related child.
- 8.6 The Education Director will ensure the Operations Manager and Head of HR has as much background, supplementary detail about a child or an incident as possible. The Operations Manager and Head of HR will keep records in such a way as will enable appropriate cross-referencing of reports. The object is that any persistent pattern is identified as soon as possible.
- 8.7 The Education Director will take an appropriate course of action as follows:
- a. **Immediate Report to Duty Officer at Social Services and/or Police:** this covers any situation where, in the judgement of the Education Director, after due consultation with workers involved and CEO, there is perceived to be an immediate danger to a child or detection of criminal offences against a child or other form of obvious, ongoing/future/recent serious harm. [If the BDA has a current liaison with e.g. the senior child welfare social worker in the Social Services Area Office, this person can be contacted during office hours in lieu of the Duty Social Worker]. Where the Duty Social Worker cannot be located, the Police should be informed and told of this problem in locating the Social Services officer.

Where a child seems in imminent harm or danger/ injury or worse, then the Education Director is authorised to make a complaint to the Police in order to secure immediate action and protection of a child. **No protocol should ever inhibit this course of action if it is truly warranted.**

- b. Most situations will not require reference as in a. It will be more appropriate for the Education Director to raise them with a contact at Social Services, provided that the social worker is dealing with child-related matters in the course of their duties.
 - c. There may quite often be situations arising from the reporting process which will not require the urgent formal reporting of a. above but the Education Director should never hesitate to contact the Social Services liaison person on an informal basis as soon as possible. Such situations may arise e.g. where there is insufficient hard evidence or facts to warrant a complaint/ urgent formal referral, but there may be enough in terms of e.g. previous reports to justify referral of concerns.
- 8.8 The point of making reports as in 8.7 above should not be under-estimated. It may well be that, from a child protection viewpoint, the information given to social services in a piecemeal manner, is potentially a major way of picking up issues as they develop. Our piece of information may be one part of a jigsaw - it may even be the first piece. It may complete "a puzzle".
- 8.9 The Education Director and all staff and volunteers should bear in mind that in the BDA we may not be privy to all or indeed much information about a given child's situation, as held by Social Services - but our item of information may assist in promoting a child's welfare.
- 8.10 Social Services aim to work in partnership with parents in a supportive way and early notification is always helpful.

9. Feedback and Reporting

- 9.1 Staff and Volunteers will always wish to be assured that, having made a report, appropriate action has been taken. The Education Director should always attempt to give such feedback from a reporting situation as is appropriate. The Education Director herself may be short on information once a report has been made to Social Services, who for reasons of confidentiality may be unable to give specific details. However the Education Director should press for a description about progress from the Social Services end, usually through the liaison machinery but if necessary by direct action as high as may be warranted if a serious matter has been reported. The Education Director is entitled to ask what specific action has been taken so far, whether the police have been informed etc.

- 9.2 In giving any feedback to staff and volunteers, the Education Director has to bear in mind "need to know" and confidentiality. So, the member of staff or volunteer who made a report can be told what action has been taken by the Education Director, including any representations that e.g. the police should be brought in etc.
- 9.3 Child protection matters will be reported to the Management Board by the Operations Manager and Head of HR and the Education Director with due care to confidentiality.

10. Allegations against staff or volunteers

- 10.1 If a child or parent makes allegations of child abuse to the BDA against any person working for the BDA, whether paid or unpaid, the following procedure will come into force - incident reports will be made at all stages as appropriate:
- a. All allegations about BDA staff/volunteers should be made to the Education Director in the first instance. On receipt of the allegation, the Education Director may contact Social Services to appraise them of the situation. Normally this will be by informal channels but if there is a criminal allegation, the contact will be formal to the duty social worker and also to the police. The Education Director will also inform the Chief Executive.
 - b. The Chief Executive should inform the person against whom an allegation has been made as soon as possible unless there appears to be a case that this might prejudice a criminal investigation. This will require consultation with the police to ascertain. The Chief Executive, in consultation with the Operations Manager and Head of HR, will consider whether suspension of the employee is advisable, based on the report of the Education Director.
 - c. If the allegation is against the Education Director, the Chief Executive will be the referral point. If the allegation is against the Chief Executive, the Chairman will follow the procedure outlined above.
- 10.2 The course of action to be taken from thereon will be decided by the nature of the allegation(s).
- a. If a **criminal allegation** e.g. of sexual abuse and impropriety is made, or physical assault, or inappropriate behaviour, the Chief Executive will activate the Disciplinary Procedure and suspend the person from any activity in the BDA under the heading of alleged Gross Misconduct.
 - b. If the allegation is for **unacceptable professional behaviour**, the BDA Disciplinary Procedure will be followed.
 - c. If the behaviour is deemed to be **acceptable professional behaviour**, eg including exercising appropriate control and restraint within existing BDA guidance, then no further action will be taken.

11. Induction and Training

11.1 The BDA shall ensure that there is adequate and appropriate induction and ongoing training and information to all employed staff and voluntary workers concerning child protection matters, which shall be the responsibility of the Chief Executive to devise and implement, in consultation and liaison with the Operations Manager and Head of HR and Education Director. All directors, employees and volunteers shall have this policy drawn to their attention on joining the BDA.

12. Review of this Policy

12.1 The Management Board shall review this policy, every two years and the Operations Manager and Head of HR shall ensure, with the Chief Executive, that the views of all staff, paid and voluntary, are sought and reflected in such a review process, and that any statutory authority input is sought as appropriate.

Approved by the Management Board 16 December 2003

Reviewed March 2005 and March 2007

Logo Updated Dec 2008

Appendix 1 – Criminal Records Bureau

The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) has been set up as a "one stop Shop" which it is hoped will improve protection of children and vulnerable adults. All the different types of pre-employment checks will be processed through the CRB. These are:

- a) The Police National Computer - centralised information point for police forces in England and Wales
- b) Local police force records
- c) Department of Health Protection of Children Act List (POCAL) - list of individuals considered unsuitable for working with children
- d) Department for Education and Employment list of individuals considered unsuitable for working with children (List 99)
- e) Department of Health list of people unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults

This "one stop shop" can be used for employment-related and voluntary purposes. The aim of the service is to standardise delivery of information on criminal records.

The CRB will start issuing certificates (known as disclosures) on 11 March 2002. Each disclosure will be dated and will only be accurate as of that date.

There are three types of disclosure:

Standard disclosures

This is available for those applying for posts where

- there is regular contact with children
- there is regular contact with elderly, sick or disabled people

It is also available for posts covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975:

- those involved in administration of the law
- professions which have legal protection such as lawyers, doctors, dentists, nurses, chemists and accountants
- includes jobs where national security may be at risk eg civil service

Standard disclosures contain the following information:

- Details of all convictions, spent and unspent, held at national level
- Details of cautions, reprimands and warnings held at national level
- Any details if an individual is on any of the Department of Health or Department for Education and Employment lists

Things to remember:

- Can only be used for exempted positions
- Expect to receive 95% within one week
- Information will be sent to applicant and employer
- Applicant can appeal to the CRB if information is wrong
- Usually portable. However if Post A was not working with children, but Post B is, new disclosure would be needed.

Enhanced disclosures

This is available for individuals applying for positions which **involve regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of persons aged under eighteen or vulnerable adults.**

Contains the following information:

- Details of all convictions, spent and unspent, held at national level
- Details of cautions, reprimands and warnings held at national level
- Information from local police records including relevant non-conviction information (unless the Chief Officer of the force decides that it is not in the interests of the prevention or detection of crime. It will, however, be disclosed to the registered body if that does not harm those interests.)
- Shows if an individual is on any of the Department of Health or Department for Education and Employment lists

Things to remember:

- Can only be used for exempted positions
- Expect to receive 95% within 3 weeks
- **Not portable as some information - non-conviction information - will be released only to employer!** Applicant can give consent for information to be passed to new employer, but non-conviction information given by police can only be released with permission of police. **Non-conviction information can never be given by anyone but the police.**

Responsibilities

Registered Body

Reading Borough Council has become a registered body which means that it satisfies the following conditions:

- It is likely to ask exempted questions
- It has a duty of care to children or vulnerable adults in its care
- It is responsible for childcare
- It recruits those specified in the Rehabilitation of Offenders 1974 Exceptions Order
- It is responsible for
 - Controlling access to the information on the Disclosure
 - Ensuring the security of the information
 - Ensuring that the necessary identification checks of applicants have been made
- Ensuring compliance with the Code of Practice

Umbrella Body

- A Registered Body which acts on behalf of other organisations
- Ensures that those organisations are entitled to ask exempted questions
- Ensures that those who receive disclosure information comply with the Code of Practice
- Ensures there is a written statement outlining mutual expectations
- May decision to whom it offers access to the disclosure service

Accountability and arrangements

- Umbrella Body passes the disclosure to the other organisation and takes no part in the decision
- Umbrella Body discusses the content of the disclosure with the other organisation and advises on the employment decision and the law on the correct use of disclosure information. The Umbrella Body may bear some liability for the decision depending on the agreement.
- Umbrella Body does not pass on disclosure information and makes the decision in accordance with their agreement. The Umbrella Body is wholly responsible for the decision and the security and usage of the disclosure information.

Lead Countersignatory

- Senior person within the organisation who has management responsibility for the use of the disclosure service
- Principal point of contact with the Criminal Records Bureau
- Validates the countersignatory's application

Countersignatory

Required to:

- Ensure the post is covered by the Exceptions Order to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

- Ensure that the disclosure requested is at the appropriate level
- Countersign applications and receive the disclosures
- Control the use of, access to and security of disclosures
- Confirm details of the evidence needed to establish the identity of the applicant applying for the disclosure
- Ensure compliance with the Code of Practice

Assurance

The Criminal Records Bureau will carry out checks to ensure the integrity of the service at various levels:

- By providing assurance support teams that will offer support and advice
- By conducting random assurance visits to assist the Registered Body in meeting the obligations set out in the Code of Practice
- If a complaint is received about a Registered Body, this will trigger an assurance check

BDA Policy Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-offenders

As an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure Service, under the umbrella of Reading Borough Council, to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, the BDA complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

Under the Code of Practice, we have an obligation to have a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders. This policy is sent to all applicants for posts where a disclosure is requested.

The British Dyslexia Association is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff and volunteers, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

The British Dyslexia Association actively promotes equality of opportunity for all and welcomes 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.

Unless the post is one which allows us to ask questions about your entire criminal record, we will only ask about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

For posts where a disclosure is required, all recruitment information will contain a statement that a disclosure will be requested if an offer is made. You will be asked to provide details of your criminal record prior to being offered the post. We guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

We ensure that those at the British Dyslexia Association 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, eg the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

At interview, you will be reminded that the post may be offered subject to a disclosure. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the post could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

We will ensure that you are aware of the Criminal Records Bureau's Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.

We will discuss anything that was contained in a disclosure with you before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. This will depend on the nature of the post and the circumstances and background of your offences.

**Agreed by BDA Management Board
December 2002**

Appendix 3 – Contact Details

Any incidents of suspected child abuse within or outside office hours should be reported to the BDA Education Director, **Kate Saunders**.

Mobile: 07733 110699

Home: 01225 446322

In the absence on leave of Kate Saunders, please call BDA Chief Executive, Judi Stewart.

Office: 0118 966 2677

Mobile: 07917 390 288

Appendix 4 - Responding to disclosure of abuse

Dealing with disclosure

If a child or young person tells you that s/he is being abused, you should:

- Stay calm and be reassuring.
- Allow the child or young person to speak without interruption, accepting what is said.
- Advise the child or young person that s/he will be offered support, but that you cannot promise confidentiality as in certain circumstances you will have to inform others.
- Immediately tell the Responsible Officer.
- Record the information as soon as possible and give a copy to the Responsible Officer. (Write what the young person has told you, not your interpretation.)
- If there is a need for urgent medical attention this takes priority.

Reassure

Reassure the young person, but only so far as is honest and reliable, for example do not make promises you may not be able to keep, such as "I will not tell anyone if you don't want me to", or, "Everything will be all right now."

Things you might say when a young person discloses to you:

- You cannot promise confidentiality as in certain circumstances you will have to inform others.
- You are glad that the young person was able to tell you.
- That you believe what you are being told (young people rarely lie about abuse).
- That you know it is not the young person's fault.
- That you are ready to listen, but do not press the young person for information.
- That you will do your best to protect and support the young person.

Respond

It is not your role to investigate and great care should be taken to avoid any leading questions or comments. Don't try to get too much information, rather, let the child give you as much as they are prepared to give. You should try to act as naturally as possible.

Do Not

- Do not ask direct questions, for example, "What did s/he do next?" or "Did s/he touch your private parts?" Such questions may invalidate your evidence and the young person's in any later prosecution.
- Do not criticise the perpetrator; the young person may love him/her.
- Do not ask the young person to repeat it all for another member of staff/volunteer.

Do

- Do listen and believe the child.
- Do take notes, but only those that are necessary.
- Do keep questions to a minimum. It may be more appropriate to nod and acknowledge the child's account. If you need to question then only ask open ended questions such as, "Can you tell me where this happened?"
- Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality and respect for those with whom the association works is important and information should only be passed to those people who need to know in order to take action. However you should not allow yourself to be bound to secrecy which may inhibit action being taken on behalf of the child. The welfare of the child is paramount and should take precedence over all other considerations.

Appendix 5

Child Protection – Incident Report Form

Name of Child:

Name of worker/volunteer:

Address and Contact number:

Date and Time of incident:

Nature of Concern:

[If you have not already done so make a factual written record of your observations and any conversations. Sign and date it then attach to this form.]

Who have you spoken to about your concerns?

Child Yes/No
Carer Yes/No

Other Agencies Yes/No Details:

Signature of Worker/Volunteer:

Date & Time:.....

Signature of Child Protection Officer:.....

