

# Newham Watersmeet Woodcraft Folk

## District Safeguarding Children Procedure

### Woodcraft Folk's Commitment

Woodcraft Folk believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind, that they should be supported to feel comfortable and confident when participating in our activities and the wider society.

Woodcraft Folk have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. Woodcraft Folk are committed to practice in a way that protects children and supports them to engage in activities that support our aims and principles.

Woodcraft Folk will not tolerate any behaviour which may harm children or young people emotionally, physically or psychologically. Such behaviour includes physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse, bullying, harassment, undue or harsh criticism or violence directed towards individuals or groups. Woodcraft Folk will take serious measures against any volunteer or staff member found in violation of this policy.

Woodcraft Folk strive to maintain a culture of honesty and openness, supporting children and young people to work co-operatively with adults to identify what they consider likely to affect them and their safety.

### Introduction

Newham Watersmeet Woodcraft Folk follows the national Woodcraft Folk Safeguarding Policy and Procedure (issued May 2014). These documents give very clear and helpful information. All adult members should read them.

This procedure must be followed if you become concerned that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer some form of maltreatment. The term 'child' means a person who has not reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. 'Maltreatment' means physical, emotional or sexual abuse, or neglect.

### General points

1. Group leaders should make it clear to children in their group that we have a safeguarding policy and procedure. Children should feel free to talk to an adult if they feel frightened or unsafe, or to raise issues of racism, sexism, homophobic or transphobic behaviour, or bullying.
2. Leaders for each group must be currently registered adult members of Woodcraft Folk, have up to date enhanced DBS checked and have signed this Procedure
3. Parent helpers and volunteers who help more than once a month or attend overnight trips/residential must be currently registered members of Woodcraft Folk, have enhanced DBS checked and have signed this Procedure
4. New volunteers are required to join Woodcraft Folk within six weeks, including ensuring two satisfactory written references are returned to the Membership Secretary. They will also be expected to complete a DBS application and produce the required proofs of identity and address for this in the same timescale
5. Each group must have at least two current Woodcraft Folk members aged 18 years old or over, who are present and engaged in the activity. Overnight activities, where possible, should have a leader of each gender.
6. Appropriate adult to child/young people ratios are an essential part of keeping children and young people safe. In practice, this means one adult for every 3 Woodchips, one adult for every five Elfins, one adult for every eight Pioneers and one adult for every 10 Venturers
7. When taking children on a group activity/event, an assessment of possible risks should be carried out and actions taken to minimise any perceived problems. Adults/leaders should avoid being alone with a child who is not their own.
8. A register should be taken at the beginning of each group night/session and stored securely.
9. Confidential information about children is only to be shared on a 'need to know' basis.
10. Group Leaders are responsible for ensuring each child has a registration form including up to date contact numbers. These forms should be stored securely but available for leaders on group nights.
11. Parental consent is sought for each camp, to include child goes with their permission and that they, or their alternative contact, will be available to collect their child in the event of illness or behaviour problems.

## 12. If problems arise at group night or camp:

- ⇒ Discuss with Group Leader, Camp Chief and other adults running the event as soon as possible
- ⇒ Discuss at District meetings as appropriate
- ⇒ If the incident involves a leader and the individual is not able to discuss it with them the individual needs to speak to the Local Safeguarding Officer.
- ⇒ If the concern is about the Local Safeguarding Officer, they should speak to the Woodcraft Folk Lead Safeguarding Officer.
- ⇒ Serious incidents should be written down, using the Reportable Incident or Safeguarding Form. A copy should be sent to the group leader of the group involved, the Local Safeguarding Officer and Woodcraft Folk's Lead Safeguarding Officer.

13. All adults should feel able to raise issues, however minor they may initially seem. It is preferable to talk through a concern that turns out to be unfounded than to miss a child who may be suffering harm. Adults who feel uneasy about something they have seen or heard should discuss their concerns with others appropriately and confidentially – this will usually be with the group leader, camp chief or an adult involved in running the event.

14. All new children's parents will be provided with an information sheet giving names and phone numbers of leaders and officers.

15. It is the responsibility of the Group Leader of each Woodchip, Elfin, Pioneer and Venturer/District Fellows group to allocate tasks and responsibilities for parent helpers and volunteers.

16. Training. The District will offer regular safeguarding training. This will be provided at least once a year, and more frequently if needed. Leaders, parent helpers and volunteers are strongly encouraged to attend.

17. District meetings will review the progress of the groups and the behaviour within. There should be honest open discussions, allowing feelings to be expressed and constructive criticism to occur. These discussions may lead to revisions of the Safeguarding Policy as necessary.

18. All injuries must be recorded and a first-aid kit must be available. Parents/carers to be made aware that an accident has occurred and informed of any first aid carried out. Serious accidents must be reported via the incident form.

## Building resilience

Many parents will be aware of reports in the media of risks of children being drawn into dangerous situations, such as sexual exploitation, gang affiliation, extremism and radicalisation. Although there is no single way of preventing these hazards, there is considerable evidence that children and young people are at less risk when their emotional resilience is promoted. Adults can help this by, for example:

- \* Creating a climate for activities where areas such as gender, sexuality, race, religion and disability are dealt with in a positive way
- \* Making sure every child involved in an activity feels they have something useful to contribute
- \* Providing children and young people with opportunities to express their views, be listened to, and be taken seriously
- \* Having a culture of recognizing and praising positive behaviour
- \* Encouraging involvement in activities that benefit others, for example within Woodcraft, or the wider community and environment
- \* Promoting awareness, and tolerance, of a range of opinions, lifestyles, faiths and beliefs
- \* Modeling respectful behaviour.

## Some signs of possible maltreatment

Research tells us that child maltreatment happens at similar rates across families regardless of, for example, social class, occupation, gender, sexuality, race, religion language and culture. If you become concerned, for example about something a child tells you, or the behaviour of a child or adult, avoid making assumptions, and always talk the situation through with another adult (see point 11 above).

There usually isn't just one sign in a child that indicates abuse. If you suspect maltreatment, keep an open mind, and clarify some basic information with the child. The following lists give some possible signs of maltreatment. They are not exhaustive. Sometimes a change in the child's appearance or behaviour can be a sign that something is wrong.

<p><u>Neglect</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Estimated to affect 6% of children</li> <li>* Can be physical, psychological, intellectual</li> <li>* Inadequate food, clothing and shelter</li> <li>* Not protecting from physical/emotional harm or danger</li> <li>* Inadequate supervision, and abandonment</li> <li>* Failing to seek help for, or comply with, treatment for a significant illness or injury</li> <li>* Delayed growth or development</li> <li>* Leaving child with unsuitable care-taker</li> <li>* Failing to access appropriate medical/dental care</li> <li>* Under-stimulation in first three years can have devastating consequences</li> <li>* Cause may be financial (lack of money) and/or emotional poverty (where the parent is unable or unwilling to provide suitable care).</li> </ul>	<p><u>Emotional Abuse</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Estimated to affect 6% of children</li> <li>* Usually happens over time, in a relationship</li> <li>* Abuser is usually the main care taker</li> <li>* Low self esteem</li> <li>* Self-harm, misuse of alcohol and other drugs</li> <li>* Unused to praise or encouragement</li> <li>* Often occurs alongside other types of harm, e.g. physical or sexual abuse</li> <li>* Can include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Persistently seeing the child in a negative way</li> <li>o Being emotionally unavailable</li> <li>o Having a distorted view of the world</li> <li>o Not recognising the child as an individual</li> <li>o Mis-socialising the child</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><u>Sexual Abuse</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Estimated to affect 11% of children</li> <li>* Girls are 3x more likely to be sexually abused</li> <li>* Males more likely to be the abuser, though women can also sexually abuse</li> <li>* Pregnancy or STIs (unless child over 13, through consensual acts with another person of a similar age)</li> <li>* Injuries may be present (e.g. to genitalia, perineum, anus) – in about 10% cases</li> <li>* Statement by child is most common indicator</li> <li>* Signs may also include non attendance at school, running away, substance misuse, eating disorders, nightmares and disturbed sleep</li> <li>* All sexual abuse is a crime, including 'grooming' and 'position of trust' offences</li> <li>* Age of consent is 16 for both genders, and for hetero/same sex relationships</li> <li>* Children under 13 are deemed incapable of giving consent</li> <li>* The sexual exploitation of children is increasingly being recognised – where the child is sexually assaulted by one of more others, often for some kind of profit. Although it is thought to more commonly affect girls, up to a third of victims of sexual exploitation are boys</li> </ul>	<p><u>Physical Abuse</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Estimated to affect 7% of children</li> <li>* More common in boys and younger children</li> <li>* Injuries in unusual areas – such as soles of the feet, back, chest and abdomen, inner upper aspects of arms or legs</li> <li>* Be more concerned if the injury:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Carries an imprint (e.g. buckle or strap mark)</li> <li>o Away from bony prominences</li> <li>o Is to the back, buttocks or ears</li> <li>o Injuries to both sides of the body</li> <li>o Doesn't seem to match the explanation given</li> </ul> </li> <li>* Many children who are physically abused have mothers who are surviving domestic violence</li> <li>* Children who are not yet walking independently are very unlikely to get accidental bruises - 'those that don't cruise seldom bruise'</li> <li>* Similarly, babies are very unlikely to sustain accidental fractures</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Sources: NSPCC 2000 Nuffield Foundation 2014</i></p>

## Dealing with a disclosure of abuse

You may become concerned that a child is suffering, or at risk of, harm as a result of something they tell you, how they behave, or their physical condition. Children sometimes say things to adults that are vague, but potentially worrying. It is not the responsibility of Woodcraft members to carry out a detailed interview with the child, or to make an investigation. If necessary, this will be done by a local authority social worker, and may also involve the Police if there is a possibility of a crime having been committed against the child.

### Clarifying information with the child

It is usually helpful for you to clarify four pieces of basic information with the child:

1. What, if anything, has happened?
2. Who was involved?
3. When did it happen?
4. Where did it happen?

You should use non-leading questions. A leading question is one that guides a child to give a particular answer. For example, with a child who has a bruise on their arm, asking 'how did you get that bruise?' is fine. If you ask 'who hurt you?' you're making the assumption that a person caused the injury.

### Some key things to remember

- ⇒ Listen to what is being said. Stay calm, take what the child says seriously, and try not to look shocked at what you hear
- ⇒ It can be helpful to let the child know they did the right thing in telling you this, because it means something can be done to stop it from happening again
- ⇒ Children need to know that what they tell you cannot be kept secret if it relates to significant harm to them or someone else. If you know, you can tell the child who you need to speak to about what they have told you.
- ⇒ If abuse is disclosed, you should inform the group leader or District Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible, the same day
- ⇒ In an emergency, call Newham Children's Services, or the Police immediately
- ⇒ The person who makes a report (usually by phone) to Children's Services should agree with them what, if anything, the parent can be told at this point
- ⇒ Make an accurate written record as soon as possible. People quickly forget details, so do this within a day. Your record should include what you saw, what you were told, and separate facts from your opinion of what the information meant. Use clear straightforward language. Your report should be signed and dated.
- ⇒ Information should be shared on a 'need to know' basis. Do not tell other parents about what you have been told
- ⇒ Don't assume someone else will have noticed what's going on, or have done something
- ⇒ If you are worried about a child, speak to the group leader or the Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible. It is far better to talk through a worry that turns out to be unfounded than miss signs of harm to a child
- ⇒ The disclosed abuse may have happened at home, at Woodcraft, or somewhere else. In all cases, inform the District Safeguarding Officer
- ⇒ If the information relates to a Group Leader, contact the District Safeguarding Officer. If they are not available, contact the Woodcraft Folk's National Safeguarding Officer
- ⇒ If the allegation concerns a leader or helper, the leader/helper should step down from the group and not make contact with the child. You should not give them any details regarding the allegation at this stage. The adult concerned should be treated fairly, and kept informed of the progress of any investigation by the District Safeguarding Officer
- ⇒ If a case is reported at a Woodcraft session, the Group Leader (or Camp Chief) should inform the parents and inform the District Safeguarding Officer (who will inform the National Safeguarding Officer). The District Incident/Disclosure Form should be completed and returned to the District Safeguarding Officer.

## **Contacts**

Local Safeguarding Officer until 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017: Mike Smith – 07976 843 580

Newham Children's Services ('Social Services') 020 3373 4600. Respond to child protection alerts within office hours

Newham Emergency Duty Team (provides an emergency social work service outside office hours): 020 8552 9587

**In an emergency, if you believe the child in immediate need of protection from significant harm, call the Police on 999**

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000

Lead Safeguarding Officer: Debs McCahon, Membership Development Manager -0845 217 8939  
[deborah.mccahon@woodcraft.org.uk](mailto:deborah.mccahon@woodcraft.org.uk)

Deputy Lead Safeguarding Officer: Jon Nott, General Secretary – 020 7703 4173 [jon.nott@woodcraft.org.uk](mailto:jon.nott@woodcraft.org.uk)

All national Woodcraft Folk safeguarding documents and the national Policy can be viewed at  
[www.woodcraft.org.uk/safeguarding](http://www.woodcraft.org.uk/safeguarding)

**Keeping children safe is a responsibility for all Leaders, Parent Helpers and Volunteers, who must read this document carefully, and sign a short form to confirm they have read and understood it.**

**Please contact Mike Smith (Local Safeguarding Officer) if you have any questions about this document.**

This Procedure was revised in January 2017. It was agreed by Newham Woodcraft District General Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2016. To be reviewed annually.