CHILD PROTECTION &

SAFE GAURDING POLICY

INNOVATION POD

Reviewed on: 08/02/2024

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Innovation Pod staff members operate within schools and, therefore, abide strictly by the policies and procedures set out by each school. Although we have our own policy guidelines, the school’s statutory Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy supersedes any information in this document.

**Organisation**

1. An attendance consent form will be obtained for each child which their parent/guardian must complete.
2. Innovation Pod will ask the school to provide any vital information about health and emergency contacts for each child which will be kept by the school and made available for each session.
3. Each child and young person will be be formally registered within the group. This will then be relayed immediately to the school office to be kept on file.
4. All Innovation Pod staff members will read and fully understand each school’s Child Protection Policy and will know all of the school’s Designated Child Protection Officers.
5. No information regarding the children will be taken offsite by Innovation Pod staff.

**Child Protection Representative**

Each school will have an appointed Designated Child Protection Officer who will be the first point of contact for Innovation Pod staff members if they have any concerns regarding a child’s safety.

Additionally, Innovation Pod has appointed Matthew Pereira as the company’s child protection representative to ensure that the company adheres to the best practice in regards to children protection and safeguarding. Matthew Pereira will take on the following responsibilities:

* Ensuring that the policy is being put into practice;
* Being an emergency point of contact for a child protection issue if the school’s DSO is not available;
* Bringing any child protection concerns to the notice of the school and contacting the Local Authority if appropriate;
* Ensuring that paid staff and volunteers are given appropriate training and monitoring;
* Ensuring that everyone involved with the organisation is aware of the identity of the Child Protection Representative.

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it is meeting its aims.

**Vetting and training for all staff members**

Workers and assistants are by far the most valuable resource that Innovation Pod has for working with young people. When recruiting and selecting paid workers and volunteers the following steps are taken:

* Checking of the applicants’ identity (passport, driving license, etc) and address;
* Taking up references prior to the person starting work;
* Ensuring criminal record checks have been carried out through relevant local agencies approved by the Criminal Records Bureau;
* Further checks for individuals are made for candidates who have lived or worked abroad.
* Taking appropriate advice before employing someone with a criminal record;
* Allowing no unaccompanied access to children until all of the above have been completed;
* Identifying reasons for gaps in employment, and other inconsistencies in the application;
* A probationary period of 3 months for new paid workers and volunteers;
* On-going supervision of paid workers and volunteers;
* Ensuring good practice is followed in working with children and young people by providing appropriate training and guidance;
* All members will complete Disqualification and Disqualification by Association declarations;

**Training**

All members of staff have gained an accredited Level 1 Child Protection and Safeguarding Training Certificate which is no more than one year old. In addition, Innovation Pod runs its own Safeguarding to refresh our practitioners’ understanding of best practice.

**Protocol for all Innovation Pod staff members**

**Before starting with the school**

Ensure that you obtain the following information. This information should be kept in a secure place within the school office and not taken out of the school for any reason.

1. Read and understand the school’s safeguarding policy;
2. Know who to report a safeguarding concern to;
3. Know where to find documents to record a safeguarding concern;
4. Have a register for the children in your club;
5. Ensure that the register is completed every session and returned to the school office;
6. Obtain any vital information about each child in regards to their health and well-being;
7. Know the procedures for first aid and fire alarms;
8. Know and understand the procedures for dismissing children at the end of the session.

**What is child protection**?

**Child protection is the response to the different ways in which a young person’s or child’s physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health are damaged by the actions of another person.**

**What you should do**

1. Listen to the child/young person
2. Look at them directly and do not promise to keep any secrets before you know what they are, but always let the child/young person know if, and why, you are going to tell anyone
3. Take whatever is said to you seriously and help the child/young person to trust his/her own feelings. Take notes of exactly what is said to you avoiding assumptions and conjecture.
4. It is note the role of the worker to investigate any allegations (this would contaminate evidence if a situation went to court). Any disclosure by a child/young person must be reported to the named child protection officer.
5. Speak immediately to the Local Authority or NSPCC for further advice and guidance.

**What you should *not* do**

1. Project workers/volunteers should not begin investigating the matter themselves.
2. Do not discuss the matter with anyone except the correct people in authority.
3. Do not form your own opinions and decide to do nothing.

**Things to say or do:**

* ‘What you are telling me is very important’
* This is not your fault’
* ‘I am sorry that this has happened/is happening’
* ‘You were right to tell someone’
* What you are telling me should not be happening to you and I will find out the best way to help you’
* Make notes soon after the event. Try to write down exactly what the young person or child said. Avoid assumptions or conjecture.

**Things *not* to say or do:**

* Do not ask leading questions – Why? How? What?
* Do not say ‘Are you sure?’
* Do not show your own emotions e.g. shock/disbelief
* Do not make false promises

**Personal/Personnel Safety**

* A group of children or young people under sixteen should not be left unattended at any time.
* Avoid being alone with an individual child or young person for a long time. If there is a need to be alone with a child or young person (e.g. first aid or he/she is distressed) make sure that another worker knows where you are and why.
* At no time should a volunteer or worker from any external organisation arrange to meet a young person away from the activity without someone else being there.
* As such meetings should be planned and have the approval of a member of the Committee (this must be someone other than the organiser themselves).

**Child Safety**

1. Make sure that the area you are using for activities is fit for the purpose, e.g. remove furniture, which could cause injury in energetic games.
2. Make sure that all workers and assistants know
   * Where the emergency phone is and how to operate it
   * Where the first aid kit is
   * Who is responsible for First Aid and how to record accidents or injuries in the incident book
   * What to do in the event of a fire or other emergency
3. Once a year there should be a fire practice
4. Do not let children go home without an adult unless the parent has specifically said thy may do so. Never let a child go with another adult unless the parent has informed you that this will happen.
5. If private cars are used for an outing, the drivers must be approved by the committee, be properly insured, have rested before driving, and should have clean licenses. There should always be at least one other responsible person (16 or over) in each vehicle. All vehicles should be fitted with full seatbelts, not just lap belts. Full seatbelts should always be used.

Under normal circumstances, workers should only give a lift home to a young person from group activities if the parents of the young person have specifically asked for them to do so. (If workers are asked to give a young person or child a lift home, they are not obliged to do so, it is left to their discretion).

In the case of trips or outings, it should be made clear if workers’ cars will be used and where the children or young people will be returned to.