

Child Protection Guidelines

Voluntary organisations, such as Maranatha Camp, have a duty to care for any children they provide services, events or activities for. It is important to think through issues of child protection before problems arise. By putting measures in place we protect the children in our care but we also safeguard ourselves from accusation.

At camp:

- The welfare of the children in our care is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in Maranatha Camp in a fun and safe environment.
- Leaders should take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings.
- All suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Good Practice

As mentioned previously by putting measures in place and following appropriate guidelines we protect the children in our care but we also safeguard ourselves from accusation.

All leaders should adhere to the following:

- Always work in an open environment (avoid private or unobserved situations and encourage open communication with no secrets).
- Make the experience of Maranatha Camp fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying.
- Treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with campers (e.g. it is not appropriate for Leaders to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given.
- If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms always ensure Leaders work in pairs.
- Ensure that if mixed teams are taken away, a male and female Leader accompanies them.
- Leaders should not enter a young person's room on his or her own or invite young people to their rooms.
- Be a good role model
- Always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given.

Poor Practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all leaders:

- Unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others.
- Taking young people alone in a car on journeys, however short.
- Sharing a room with a young person.
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, even if it is just a bit of fun and a carry on – it may not be perceived as such.
- Allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any form.

- Allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun.
- Reducing a young person to tears as a form of control.
- Allowing allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.

If during your care you accidentally hurt a young person, the young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another leader and make a written note of it. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

Abuse

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

There are four main types of abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person.

Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after.

Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact or they may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve the imposition of age- or developmentally-inappropriate expectations on a child. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or exploiting or corrupting children.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or failure to respond to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Bullying

Bullying may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves.

There are four main types of bullying:

- Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping)
- Verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages, facebook messages)
- Emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group)
- Sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

We should be on the look out for instances of bullying, particularly amongst campers, at camp and deal with this head on by reporting incidents directly to Kirsty Haxton or Graeme Marshall.

Responding to accusations/disclosures of abuse

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Maranatha Camp to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. There is a responsibility to act on any concerns or disclosures made by a child through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person. This applies BOTH to allegations/suspicions of abuse occurring within Maranatha Camp and to allegations/suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

Should a child disclose an incident of abuse to you:

- Stay calm so as not to frighten the young person.
- Reassure the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell.
- Listen to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously.
- Keep questions to a minimum so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify.
- Never promise a child that you can keep the information a secret. Tell the child that you have to share what they have told you with someone else. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- Remember the safety of the child is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue.
- Record all information. As quickly as possible write down all that you can remember about the conversation.
- Report the incident immediately to Fiona Fowler. Do not share the information with anyone else.

All suspicions and allegations MUST be reported appropriately. Strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where an accusation is made against a colleague (fellow Leader). It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

Maranatha Camp expects it's Leaders to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with the person in charge and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The Welfare Officer (Fiona Fowler or David Baxter should she be offsite)
- The parents of the child
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services/police
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child). This would not be our responsibility.
- The Camp Director would be made aware that an incident of abuse has been reported and external agencies have been called upon

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

Important Information

Ensuring camper's safety

Due to outdoor nature of the centre we are vulnerable to outsiders wandering in to see what is going on.

In the event of a visitor appearing on site:

- Approach them and find out who they are.
- Accompany them to meet with Kirsty Haxton.
- Do not leave the person to wander the site unsupervised (remember they have not been disclosed and they may not be who they say they are).
- Kirsty Haxton should meet with and identify the person(s) quickly. Should Kirsty be offsite Graeme Marshall should be called upon. Thereafter they will be issued with a visitors badge so that others can identify them as being associated with our group.

After 'Light's Out' no dorm should be left unattended. In accordance with general good practice we should aim to have a minimum of two leaders in each dorm at these times.

Social Media

It is not appropriate for leaders to upload pictures of campers to their personal social media accounts (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.). We have parental permission to take photographs of campers for camp and promotional purposes only. It is also inappropriate for Leaders to send messages to individual campers through social media during the week. Whilst these comments may be harmless we should err on the side of caution on this issue so as to protect ourselves from accusations both from campers and others who can view these messages.