Investing in People and Culture (IPC)

WORKING WITH CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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IF YOU FEEL A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON IS AT RISK OF SUFFERING SIGNIFICANT HARM CONTACT THE INITIAL RESPONSE SERVICE OF CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE USING THE DETAILS IN THE APPENDIX

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 999

Otherwise the IPC child protection officer (or senior staff member) must be contacted in relation to any child protection issue. An action plan will be developed on how best to approach the specific child protection issue that has arisen within IPC.

IPC trustees will be made aware of all cases of serious child protection issues, the action and outcomes put in place relating to the issue. However, they will not be made aware of names etc. due to confidentiality.

The Senior Management Team, with adequate consultation of the Board of Trustees, will regularly review the operation of this policy.							
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1. Aims

IPC recognises that it has a commitment to ensure that all staff and volunteers have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities when working with children/young person. This policy will aid staff to:

- have an understanding of the potential risks to themselves, and ensure good practice is adhered to at all times;
- recognise signs of improper behaviour from other staff, and take appropriate action;
- be protected against allegations of abuse;
- be able to recognise the different signs of abuse, and what appropriate course of action should be taken in these circumstances.

1.2 Employees have the responsibility to recognise, and respond to, child protection situations and concerns appropriately. As such, this policy affects every staff member, board member, volunteer and anyone working on behalf of the organisation. They will be referred to throughout as employee or volunteers.

1.3 It is the duty of anyone undertaking to care for a young person to protect the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the young person from all reasonably foreseeable risk.

1.4 The terms 'child' and 'children/young person' are used throughout the document, but this policy relates to anyone under 18 years of age. The basic principles also apply to work with vulnerable adults. It is important that IPC ensures all staff recognise their responsibilities, and refer to this policy while developing awareness of child protection issues.

It is impossible to ensure that no incidents occur whilst a young person is in contact with an employee / representative of or an activity arranged by IPC. However, implementing this policy and following the guidelines enables our employees to undertake their work confidently, knowing that they have taken all reasonable precautions to prevent harm occurring whilst prepared to deal with an incident should it occur.

We aim to make staff and volunteers aware of their individual responsibilities and what to do if they suspect or have evidence of any form of abuse or neglect taking place against a child or young adults with whom they have contact.

We also aim to make staff and volunteers aware of the procedures and rights where abuse has been alleged against them.

2. Objectives

2.1 Through this Policy we aim to adopt the highest possible standards and take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of the children/young person with whom we come into contact in relation to our work within IPC.

2.2 It is the responsibility of all IPC staff to do their best to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children/young person and young people and to report any abuse, alleged or suspected.

2.3 IPC will respond without delay to any complaints made that a child or young person, for whom we have come into contact with, may have been harmed.

2.4 IPC will satisfy themselves as to the suitability of any person applying to take on any role where contact with children/young person is possible.

3. Golden Rule – Safety in Numbers

3.1 In as many situations as possible we should aim to ensure that no adult is in a one-to-one situation with a child. Safety in numbers should be the golden rule, whether the numbers are other children/young person or adults.

3.2 Employees should endeavour to be aware of situations that can be misconstrued or manipulated by others.

4. Those working with Children/young person and Young Adults MUST:

4.1 Be professional and maintain the highest standards of personal behaviour at all times, giving an example we would wish others to follow. Remember that children/young person regard adults as role models and ensure your behaviour, language, gestures etc. are appropriate and above reproach.

4.2 Take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any child you come into contact with.

4.3 Prevent any other member of IPC from putting any child in a situation in which there is a significant risk to their health and safety. Take appropriate action if you become aware of anyone physically, emotionally or sexually abusing a child or acting in ways that might be misconstrued.

4.4 Treat all young people with respect and dignity, whilst encouraging respect and care for others.

4.5 Respect a child's/young person's right to personal privacy.

4.6 Provide time for children/young person to talk to us.

4.7 Remember to inform your line manager of any suspicions or allegations about abuse.

4.8 As far as is possible conduct all dealings with children/young person in a public environment in full view of others, in order that all behaviour can be observed.

4.9 Report any concerns within the area of Child Protection (physical, emotional, sexual or neglect) in confidence and without delay, to your line manager or the designated Child Protection Officer. This includes issues of bullying. Employees will not, at any time, discuss an allegation or suspicion with another person.

4.10 When reporting an allegation or suspicion, record information, including relevant details. This includes the nature of the allegation, background information of the parties involved, the period of time to which the allegation relates and the degree to which the information is known to be fact rather than opinion or hearsay.

4.11 At no time make comment to the media. Your line manager should be made aware of any media interest in relation to this policy.

4.12 Be identifiable – wear a form of identification at all times.

4.13 Obtain written consent from parent or guardian for permission when children/young person are under 18 years to use IT equipment, access the Internet and for the taking of photographs or video for publicity purposes.

4.14 Obtain written consent from parent or guardian when children/young person are under 18 years of age to participate in supervised offsite activities and events without the presence of the parent/guardian.

4.15 Be aware of Child Protection issues in relation to work and do not become complacent and believe "it could never happen to me". Be aware that, someone else might misinterpret our actions even if they are well intentioned.

5. Those working with Children/young person and Young Adults MUST NOT:

5.1 Engage in physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any child or young or vulnerable person.

5.2 Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person.

5.3 Engage in sexual relationships with young people under our responsibility even if they consent.

5.4 Let allegations a child makes be ignored, or go unrecorded. Staff should not jump to conclusions without checking facts, while ensuring that allegations of child abuse are not exaggerated or trivialised.

5.5 Make inappropriate or intrusive touching of any form.

5.6 Do things of a personal nature for a child that they can do themselves. It may occasionally be necessary for staff to do things of a personal nature for children/young person, particularly if they are very young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out under full consent from the parent/carer. If an emergency occurs that requires this type of help without prior consent, the parent/carer must be fully informed as soon as possible.

5.7 Ask young people to partake in activities that are potentially dangerous, illegal or unreasonable.

5.8 Take children/young person into an employee's home.

5.9 Enter a house when a child is alone.

5.10 Take a children/young person alone in a vehicle, except in an extreme emergency.

5.11 Arrange to meet a child outside work, unless with the full consent of the child's/young person's parent and your manager.

6. All planned contact with a Child/Young Person should include:

612.1 A clear purpose.

6.2 Information to be gathered, shared and discussed by all involved in planning of the event prior to the date.

6.3 Reference to any immediate concerns, including missed contacts and how these issues will be addressed.

7. Job Appointment

7.1 All individuals appointed to posts which involve regular, substantial or unaccompanied contact with children/young person will be subject to pre-appointment checks aimed at assuring IPC of their suitability to work with children/young person.

These will include the applicant being asked to complete a DBS application. For all Regulated Activities an Enhanced disclosure will be required.

7.2 Definition of Regulated Activity

- When the activity is frequent (once a month or more) or “intensive” (takes place on three or more days in a 30-day period).
- Any activity of a specified nature that involves contact with young people or vulnerable adults frequently, intensively and / or overnight including schools and care homes.

7.3 Fostering and Childcare
Any activity that involves people in certain defined positions of responsibility (such positions include school governor, director of social services and trustee of certain charities).

7.4 The appointment will only proceed if:

- The pre-employment checks prove satisfactory, and
- The Disclosure provides no cause for concern as to their suitability to work with children/young person.
- If DBS brings up any issues of concern IPC will follow procedures in line with the DBS Policy.
- This applies whether the appointment is the result of external recruitment or an internal move. Managers must also be mindful of these requirements as the content of posts develop over time and new tasks are assigned.
- All staff will have a full briefing of this policy, procedures and additional documentation.

8. Individuals awaiting receipt of Disclosure

Whilst waiting for disclosure all work with Children/young person and young people must be supervised until disclosure is received.

9. Partner Organisations, Volunteers, Contractors and Franchisees

If IPC is employing an organisation or individuals, we expect relevant staff to be DBS checked and signed up to the principles of this policy.

10. Assistance provided by a member of staff who has not been through the Disclosure process

Any member of staff may assist in activities with children/young person on an occasional basis. They may do so only if the group is led by someone who has been appointed following the necessary pre-appointment checks.

11. Funding other organisations

Where IPC is funding (whether through cash or other contributions) other organisations we should, if necessary, seek to influence the way in which the organisation carries out appropriate levels of Child Protection.

12. Allegation of abuse

12.1 Though our focus must be on safeguarding children/young person we must also be aware that allegations of abuse made by children/young person about adults do occasionally happen. Some prove mistaken or, very rarely, malicious. The Policy and Guidelines are there to help us to avoid situations in which well-intentioned actions could be misinterpreted and ensure that we do not find ourselves in a situation where an allegation by a child, young or vulnerable person can be made.

12.2 There are four likely scenarios that people should be aware of and be prepared to deal with if necessary. These are:

- Suspicion or evidence that a child is being abused by a member of staff or other person associated with IPC
- A child accuses a member of staff or other person associated with IPC of abusing them
- Abuse takes place or is suspected on IPC land or at an IPC event by individual unrelated to IPC
- A child discloses abuse happening elsewhere e.g. at home

When a disclosure is made:

- Listen carefully
- Inform the young person that you will need to share this information, making it clear that you will only tell people who need to know
- Reassure the young person that they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not take any notes while you are with the young person
- Record the information (in private) immediately using the young person's own words
- Only record the facts given, do not question further except for clarification
- Speak to the designated Child Protection Officer immediately

12.3 In all cases you must contact your designated Child Protection Officer for a confidential discussion on how the matter is to be resolved.

13. Restraining Children/young person and Young Adults

13.1 Restraint should not be considered unless training has been carried out.

13.2 Restraint is where a child is being held, moved, or prevented from moving against their will. This is done to prevent injury to themselves, to others, or significant damage to property.

13.3 Restraint must always be used as a last resort when all other methods of controlling the situation have been tried and failed.

13.4 Restraint must never be used as a form of punishment and only staff who are properly trained in restraint techniques should carry it out.

13.5 A child should be restrained for the shortest amount of time needed to bring the situation under control.

13.6 Any incident of restraint must be recorded, detailing:

- All the facts of the behaviour
- Names of any witnesses
- Who restrained the child and how
- What other methods to control the situation had been tried previous to restraint
- Any follow up action that took place.

13.7 The situation must not be exaggerated in any way. This record must then be passed to your line manager and the child's/young person's parent/carer informed immediately.

14. **Use of Information relating to children/young person**

Information about children/young person e.g. name and address must be treated confidentially. It must be kept securely, stored only as long as necessary and disposed of in a way which maintains their confidentiality.

15. Discussion of the issues

Open discussion of child protection should be encouraged since this helps to make staff more comfortable with the issues involved. Do not keep it "under wraps" for fear of upsetting or embarrassing people.

16. Working Practices

16.1 All referrals to external agencies concerning the well-being of a child/young person must be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.

16.2 Service requests relating to the well-being of children/young person are given equal weight regardless of whether the contact is from an identified or anonymous source.

16.3 All staff and volunteers working directly with children/young person must have Child Protection training. Managers and supervisors of staff working with children/young person must have Child Protection training, even if they themselves do not come into contact with children/young person.

16.4 It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that work involving contact with children/young person is planned and managed in accordance with this policy.

16.5 The line manager will need to assess the nature and urgency of the situation and take action accordingly, completing a written report (Appendix 1) and informing the designated trustee for safeguarding of the situation as soon as possible.

16.6 During an investigation due regard will be paid to the rights of the vulnerable child or young adult; the person alleged to have carried out the abuse and the person making the allegation (if it is not the person being abused). All those involved can expect to be treated in a fair and unbiased way and to receive the appropriate level of support and information throughout the investigation. Confidentiality will be maintained except where, in the broader public interest and duty of care, the information needs to be shared with statutory bodies or other persons/organisations.

16.7 Where a member of staff or a volunteer is involved in an allegation of abuse the IPC Disciplinary and Grievance Policy and Procedures in relation to gross misconduct should be invoked. In serious cases this could involve immediate suspension of a staff member or volunteer; in less grave instances it could be sufficient to ensure that the person concerned does not work with vulnerable adults or the vulnerable individual concerned.

16.8 Where the alleged perpetrator is not a member of staff or a volunteer the line manager should contact the Child Protection Office or Duty Manager at Children/young person Services or call the police.

17. Equality and Diversity

We aim to be an organisation that values, recognises and responds to the diverse needs of members and those we serve. We adhere to the Equality Act 2010 and will not discriminate against any person or other organisation with particular reference to the protected characteristics

Appendix 1 **Child and Young Adult Protection Report Form**

Details of child or young adult who may have been abused

Name _____ Gender _____

Address _____

_____

Telephone Number _____

Any relevant information about this child or young adult

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Details of person making this report

Name _____

Position in IPC: _____Tel No: _____

Details of contact with person

_____

_____

_____

Line Manager: _____ Tel No: _____

Describe what happened or attach a copy of the notes you took at the time

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Details of any other witness (name(s), address(es), telephone number(s)

_____

_____

_____

Action taken by Line Manager

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Continue on separate sheet if necessary

Line Manager signature _____

IPC Lead Child Protection Officer

Signature _____

Print Name _____ Date _____

Appendix 2 **Contact numbers North East**

Emergency Notice: If you believe a child or adult is in immediate danger, always dial 999 straight away.

1. Children's Safeguarding Contacts

Local Authority	Office Hours Contact	Out of Hours / Emergency	Online Reporting & Portals
Newcastle	0191 277 2500	0191 278 7878	newcastle.gov.uk/services/care-and-support/children/keeping-child ren-safe/report-concern-about-child-or-young-person
Gateshead	0191 433 2653	0191 477 0844	gatesheadsafeguardingchildren.org.uk
Sunderland	0191 561 7007	0191 520 5560 / 5552	togetherforchildren.org.uk/article/21096/Get-in-touch
South Tyneside	0191 424 5010	0191 456 2093	southtyneside.gov.uk/article/4460/Safeguarding-Adults-and-Childre n
North Tyneside	0345 2000 109	0330 333 7475	northtynesidescp.org.uk/about/worried-about-a-child/
Middlesbrough	01642 726004	01642 524 552	Email: MiddlesbroughMACH@middlesbrough.gov.uk
Redcar & Cleveland	01642 130700	01642 524 552	Email: RedcarMACH@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk
Stockton-on-Tees	01642 130080	01642 524 552	teescpp.org.uk/contact/stockton

Appendix 3 Safeguarding : guide for staff & volunteers

DO :

1. Be a good role model - ensure your behaviour, language, gestures etc. are appropriate and above reproach.
2. Treat all young people with respect and dignity, whilst encouraging respect and care for others.
3. Respect a child's/young person's right to personal privacy.
4. Provide time for children/young person to talk to us.
5. As far as is possible conduct all dealings with children/young person in a public environment in full view of others, in order that all behaviour can be observed
6. Be identifiable – wear a form of identification at all times.
7. **Report any concerns within the area of Child Protection (physical, emotional, sexual or neglect) in confidence and without delay, to your line manager or the designated Child Protection Officer.** This includes issues of bullying. Employees will not, at any time, discuss an allegation or suspicion with another person.
8. When reporting an allegation or suspicion record information, including relevant details. This includes the nature of the allegation, background information of the parties involved, the period of time to which the allegation relates and the degree to which the information is known to be fact rather than opinion or hearsay.
9. Be aware of Child Protection issues in relation to work and do not become complacent and believe "it could never happen to me". Be aware that someone else might misinterpret our actions even if they are well intentioned.

DO NOT:

1. Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person.
2. Make inappropriate or intrusive touching of any form.
3. Engage in sexual relationships with young people under our responsibility even if they consent.
4. Do things of a personal nature for a child that they can do themselves.
5. Ask young people to partake in activities that are potentially dangerous, illegal or unreasonable.
6. Take children/young person into an employee's home.
7. Take a child alone in a vehicle except in an extreme emergency.
8. Arrange to meet a child outside work, without full consent of the child's parent and your manager.
9. Let allegations a child makes be ignored, or go unrecorded. Staff should not jump to conclusions without checking facts, while ensuring that allegations of child abuse are not exaggerated or trivialised.

Appendix 4 Definitions of Abuse

Definitions are based on those from 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026' (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2). They are intended to ensure that all staff have a comprehensive understanding of their responsibilities when working with children/young people.
They should allow staff to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse.

It is generally accepted that there are four main categories of abuse.

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can involve the actual, or likely, physical injury to a child from actions such as hitting, burning, shaking, throwing and suffocating. It can also be the deliberate poisoning of a child, whose symptoms or physical signs have been secretly induced by a parent or carer. This is known as fabricated illness.

It is sometimes difficult to spot non-accidental injuries, as most cuts and bruises are part and parcel of everyday life.

Some physical signs to be aware of:

- injuries that the child cannot explain, or explains unconvincingly
- cuts, bruises and burns situated on parts of the body where accidental injury is unlikely, such as ears, cheeks, thighs
- bruising that resembles hand or finger prints
- cigarette burns
- bite marks

Behavioural signs to be aware of:

- fear of the parent/carer being approached about injuries
- covering arms and legs, even in hot weather, unless for religious reasons
- fear of going home
- flinching when touched or approached
- depression or mood swings that are out of character

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves an adult enticing a child to take part in sexual activities to which the child cannot give their consent because of their dependence on adults. This can include direct actions, such as genital or anal sexual contact, and penetrative acts, such as rape, buggery and oral sex. Indirect actions can include showing a child pornographic material, genital exposure, and encouraging children/young person to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Some physical signs to be aware of:

- pain, itching, bruising or bleeding to genital or anal areas
- stomach pains or discomfort when the child is walking or sitting
- sexually transmitted diseases

Some behavioural signs to be aware of:

- sexually explicit behaviour, including the use of inappropriate language
- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour
- reluctance to change clothes for sports etc unless for religious reasons
- fear of being left with a specific person

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can involve cases where the parent/carer shows a persistent lack of affection and/or basic emotional care. Emotional abuse can have a severe impact on the child's/young person's behaviour and/or physical development. A child may be constantly threatened, taunted, or shouted at, leading to the child becoming withdrawn and nervous. This can also result from excessive over-protection and unrealistic pressure to succeed. However, some children/young person are naturally shy and withdrawn, and it is important not to confuse this with abuse.

Some physical signs to be aware of:

- delayed emotional or physical development
- sudden speech disorders
- failure to thrive and grow

Some behavioural signs to be aware of:

- self-harming
- excessive need for approval, attention and affection;
- incontinence
- reports of young people frequently visiting a particular home
- excessive lack of confidence

Neglect

Neglect is the failure to meet a child's/young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, including failure to protect the child from any danger, such as cold or starvation. This can result in a significant impairment in a child's/young person's health or development. Neglect can also involve children/young person being left unsupervised or unattended.

Some physical signs to be aware of:

- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from others
- loss of weight
- dirty/smelly
- untreated medical conditions – injuries and illnesses

Some behavioural signs to be aware of:

- Constant tiredness
- Hardly any friends
- Compulsive scavenging
- Left alone or unsupervised regularly

Caution in Diagnosing Abuse

It is important to remember that many children/young person may exhibit some of these signs, and their presence should not be taken as proof of abuse. There may be other reasons for changes in behaviour and physical appearance, such as moving house, a new baby or a medical condition.

It is also important to note that there is a high correlation between domestic violence and child abuse. If a child discloses domestic violence at home, consideration must be given to the risk of that child facing emotional abuse, physical abuse and neglect.

Those whom this policy affects must not search out abuse, or abusers, but ensure that any concerns about a child are reported in accordance with the procedures in this policy. It must not be presumed that someone else will do it or it is someone else's responsibility.