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Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Safeguarding Children

Leaside is dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable adults participating in its activities. While we primarily work with children, adults also take part in events like community activities, outings, and workshops, always under supervision.

We recognise that:

- **Child Welfare:** The welfare of children is paramount. They have the right to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- **Equal Protection:** Every child, regardless of background, deserves equal protection.
- **Collaboration:** Safeguarding requires cooperation with children, families, and agencies.
- **Shared Responsibility: Everyone at Leaside has a role in safeguarding.**

This policy is designed to protect children and vulnerable adults involved in Leaside activities, including adult members or service users. It applies to all staff, trustees, paid staff, volunteers, and anyone working on behalf of Leaside.

We seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- **Respecting & Listening:** We value and listen to children and young people.
- **Conduct:** We follow child protection procedures and staff and volunteer conduct codes.
- **Safe Recruitment:** We conduct thorough background checks for staff and volunteers.
- **Training & Support:** We provide ongoing supervision and safeguarding training.
- **Information Sharing:** We share concerns with relevant agencies and parties.

Reporting Concerns:

- **Emergency:** Call 999 (or 101 for non-emergencies).
- **Non-Emergency:** Contact the designated safeguarding officer (Ian Stamford) or a senior staff member (Bethany Summers, Director) immediately. Concerns should be addressed promptly
- **Report Forms:** Complete a Safeguarding Concern Form for non-emergencies.
- **Serious Issues** - Use a Safeguarding Alert Form for serious issues.

Responding to Child Abuse:

A child protection issue may arise in several ways:

- A child may make a direct allegation or
- A child may make a comment which seems to suggest abuse, or
- A child may have bruises or marks, or
- Something about a child's behaviour may suggest the possibility of abuse, or an incident is witnessed

All child protection concerns should be immediately reported to the designated officer who will inform social services without delay.

In the event that a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or another child or young person, it is important that you:

- Listen to them and/or closely observe their presentation and behaviour;
- Let them know that you take what they are saying seriously;
- Do not attempt to question or interview them yourself;
- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else in order to help them. Do not promise to keep what they tell you secret;
- Inform your designated child protection officer as soon as possible;
- Make a written record of the incident or events.

Sometimes you may just feel concerned about a child but do not know whether to share your concerns or not. In this situation you should always raise your concerns with your designated child protection officer, who will help you to decide what to do.

The responsibility for investigating allegations of abuse, whether they result from the disclosure of a child or the concerns of an adult, lies with social workers and the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT). It is normally the responsibility of the designated child protection officer to make a referral to these agencies, but if you judge the situation to be an emergency and/or you require urgent advice in the absence of the designated officer, you must report your concerns directly, using the contacts listed at the start of these guidelines.

In summary -

- **Immediate Reporting:** Report concerns to the safeguarding officer.
- **No Investigation:** Staff should not investigate, but cooperate with authorities. They should make factual records of concern and take note of any witnesses.
- **Listen Carefully:** Take concerns seriously, do not promise confidentiality, and inform the officer.
- **Referral to Authorities:** The designated officer will refer concerns to social services or the police.

Good Practice Guidelines for Leaside:

- **Training & Supervision:** All staff will receive safeguarding training and regular supervision.
- **Adult Supervision:** Staff must never be alone with children without observation.
- **Outings:** Ensure vehicles are insured and drivers are DBS-checked. Immediate action is required if a child goes missing.
- All new staff working with children and vulnerable adults should receive regular supervision from a more experienced staff member and be encouraged to attend basic safeguarding training;
- Under no circumstances should visitors be allowed to wander around the premises unaccompanied when children and young people are present;
- Where possible there should always be at least two adults present with a group of children – it is vital that the ratio of adult to child is adequate to ensure safety. For children under 8 the ration should be no more than 1:8; for children under 5 it should be no more than 1:6.
- Staff should be alert to strangers frequently waiting outside a venue with no apparent purpose. Children should not be collected by people other than their parents unless notification has been received;
- If a child is not collected after a session it is reasonable to wait for a parent or carer to arrive. If the parent or carer cannot be contacted, staff should contact the police and request assistance.

Leaside Safeguarding Code of Conduct:

- Treat all children with respect and dignity.
- Lead by example in conduct.
- Ensure a culture where children feel comfortable expressing concerns.
- Avoid being alone with children in private settings.
- Report concerns of abuse and document incidents carefully

Staff & Volunteer Expectations:

- **No Inappropriate Contact:** Do not engage in inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children.
- **Avoid Favoritism:** Treat all children equally.
- **Respect Privacy:** Never perform personal tasks for children that they can do themselves.

Safeguarding Procedures:

- Clear roles and responsibilities are established for staff and participants.
- Consent forms from parents/guardians must be obtained before activities.
- All staff supervising mixed-gender groups should also be of mixed gender

Independent Persons: Leaside ensures children have access to a trained, independent person to discuss concerns, especially about physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.

Leaside's Named Safeguarding Contacts:

- Ian Stamford: 07951 722125
- Beate Hohmann: 07738 593385

Recognizing and Responding to Abuse:

- **Physical Abuse:** Includes harm like hitting or suffocating.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Damages emotional well-being through criticism, intimidation, or bullying.
- **Neglect:** Failing to meet a child's basic needs.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Involves inappropriate contact or exploitation.

Leaside is committed to promoting a safe and supportive environment by upholding the highest standards of care and protecting children and vulnerable adults from harm.

Staff Selection and Recruitment

All staff working with children must undergo an enhanced DBS check and provide references before starting work. Leaside Trust is also committed to a thorough recruitment process for paid staff and volunteers. The following vetting procedures are in place:

1. **Applications**: Applicants must provide personal details (name, addresses, dates of birth), previous experience working with children, and two references (one related to work with children).
2. **Criminal Convictions**: Applicants must disclose all criminal convictions, including 'spent' convictions related to offences against children (as per the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974).
3. **Interviews**: Applicants will undergo an interview conducted by at least two experienced individuals, who will assess the candidate's qualifications, skills, and suitability for the role. Identity and status verification will also be required.
4. **References**: Leaside will request references, particularly regarding the applicant's suitability to work with children. These will be followed up before appointment, if possible.
5. **Police Checks**: All staff, volunteers, and directors must undergo an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, which must be satisfactory to the Director and/or Board.

These procedures are based on the NSPCC sportscheck materials, and Leaside appreciates their support.

First Access and Screening Team (FAST): FAST serves as a point of contact for advice, information, and referrals related to children or young people in need of help or protection. (See Appendix 2)

Appendix 1: Action to Take if a Disclosure is Made

- Do not share the complaint with anyone until you have spoken to an Independent Person. This includes the alleged offender or other club officials.

- Report concerns to Social Services or Police as needed under the Children Act, but also inform an Independent Person at Leaside.

- For any safeguarding queries, contact Leaside's Named Safeguarding Persons:
    - Ian Stamford – 07951 722125
    - Beate Hohmann – 07738 593385

Appendix 2: First Access and Screening Team (FAST)

FAST is the primary contact for professionals and the public seeking advice, information, or referrals for children in need of help or protection.

Leaside's Named Safeguarding Persons will contact FAST for child protection support:

- ***Ian Stamford** – 07951 722125*
- ***Beate Hohmann** – 07738 593385*

Contacting FAST

- ***Phone:** Call 020 356 4844 (Monday–Friday). After 5pm and on weekends, call the Out of Hours social work service at 020 8356 2710.*
- ***Email:** FAST@hackney.gov.uk or secure email at FAST@hackney.gov.uk.cjsm.net.*
- ***Mail:** Send referrals/letters to FAST at Hackney Learning Trust, 1 Reading Lane, Hackney E8 1GQ.*
- ***Fax:** 020 356 5516/7.*
- ***Walk-in:** Families can visit Hackney Service Centre to see a duty children's social worker (Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm).*

***Local Authority Designated Officer:** [Insert Name]*

This information is posted in staff rooms and public areas.