



Safeguarding Policy

Residential trips, young people & vulnerable adults

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Our safeguarding policy

It is the policy of Cohort to safeguard the welfare of all young people by protecting them from neglect and from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

Cohort believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to create a safe and welcoming environment, promoting the welfare of all children and young people who stay with us and to keep them safe.

For the purpose of this policy:

- 'Staff' refers to all employees of Cohort, whether paid or unpaid, full-time or part-time, permanent or temporary.
- 'Group or trip leader' refers to those individuals who either initiated and made a group booking with Cohort and/or those who accompany and are responsible for a visiting residential group
- 'Young people' refers to all individuals under the age of 18 years who are staying in the building, whether as part of a visiting group, with parents or on their own.

This policy applies to:

- All employees of Cohort, including management and anyone else working with or on behalf of Cohort.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- To protect children and young people who use our accommodation services, social spaces and social events. This includes children of adult guests and all those who stay as part of an organised group residential visit such as primary/secondary school or college students.
- To provide staff with the overarching principles that guides our approach to the safeguarding of young people.
- To demonstrate professional and exemplary policies and procedures which are expected of an educational accommodation provider.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practise: 0 to 25 years – Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities; HM Government 2014
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers; HM Government 2015
- Working together to safeguarding children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; HM Government 2015

Accompanying policy and Procedure

This policy should be read alongside our policies and procedures on:

- Health & safety policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Overnight duty policy & procedure
- CCTV policy
- Sexual harassment, bullying or harassment policy

Principles upon which this Safeguarding Policy is based

- The welfare of a child or young person will always be paramount.
- The rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people (inc their families) and young people here in an organised capacity will be respected and listened to.

- All staff of Cohort will work in accordance with the interests of children and young people and follow the policy outlined below.

Our Commitments

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parent, carers and educational establishments is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

Child & young person safety

We will seek to keep young people who are guests or visitors of Cohort safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting safeguarding practises and a staff code of conduct
- Providing effective management of staff through supervision, support and training measures
- When required record and store information professionally and securely and share information about safeguarding with children, their care-givers, group leaders and staff
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff appropriately
- Ensuring we provide a safe physical environment for young people and staff by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance

Types of Abuse

To help us protect young people from harm, we need to understand the four main categories of abuse. Use the acronym PENS to help you remember the various types of abuse:

Physical Abuse is where deliberate physical harm is inflicted.

Symptoms of physical abuse include: unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body, cigarette burns, human bite marks, broken bones



Emotional Abuse is when a person's emotions are deliberately ignored, taken advantage of or not met.

Symptoms of emotional abuse include: neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking, self-harm, eating disorders, self-esteem,



Neglect is when there is persistent failure to meet a child or vulnerable person's basic physical or psychological need.

Signs of neglect include: constant hunger, stealing food, inappropriate clothing for the conditions, complaining of being tired all the time



Sexual Abuse occurs when someone is forced or enticed into taking part in sexual activities, regardless of whether they are aware of what is happening.

Symptoms of sexual abuse include: fear of being left with a specific person or group of people, acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults.



Safeguarding residential trips

Cohort provides accommodation to a variety of visiting residential groups such as educational, sports and activity groups. These groups will consist of young people aged between 3-18 yrs and/or include vulnerable adults.

Cohort takes various safeguarding precautions to ensure the safety and welfare of all visiting groups:

Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) Checks

Cohort provides high quality residential accommodation, and a safe physical environment for visiting organised groups

As a responsible residential trip operator, we will ensure all staff apply for a basic DBS check in order to work for us. This provides a basic level of disclosure.

As a residential accommodation provider we do not provide any type of regulated or supervisory activity as defined by the Disclosure and Barring Service, therefore we are not legally permitted to submit an application for enhanced DBS checks for our staff.

We have been in consultation with Cornwall Council HR Safeguarding Team regarding our safeguarding responsibilities who affirm we are not eligible for enhanced DBS checks. For further information and clarification please contact Lee or Daniel Strickland at Cohort on 01736 791664

That withstanding we do take the safeguarding of children and young people extremely seriously which is reflected in this policy.

Recruitment – permanent staff

We take normal safeguarding checks at the recruitment process: checking gaps in employment history and following up references. Basic DBS checks are required

Recruitment – live-in, seasonal staff

Seasonal staff stay with us from 3 – 8 months and are accommodated (onsite) in the same building as visiting groups. All trip organisers are made aware of this at time of booking. Basic DBS checks are required. Live-in staff are also subjected to strict policies around sharing communal spaces with visiting groups, especially primary school groups.

Staff code of conduct

We operate a strict staff code of conduct which all employees of Cohort must abide by (see below).

The four main elements of this code of conduct in relation to our safeguarding responsibilities are:

1. Staff will not engage in any kind of supervisory or regulated role with any visiting school group, unless carrying out a specific task as part of their duties
2. Staff will ensure that they do not find themselves alone with any young person, unless carrying out a specific task as part of their duties.
3. Staff will not share/receive personal details with/from any young person staying at Cohort.
4. Staff will not take photos or videos of any child or young person staying at Cohort

Responsibility for safeguarding – Trip leaders

It is the responsibility of the trip leader and/or the person responsible for making a booking with Cohort for the safeguarding of their group.

By making a booking with us the trip leader accepts responsibility for the safeguarding and behaviour of all individuals within their party. If necessary, trip leaders are responsible for conducting their own risk assessments for their stay at Cohort.

Unless a trip leader books exclusive use of the building, trip leaders must assume they will be sharing the building with members of the public and, if necessary, conduct their own risk assessment.

If trip leaders require support or have concerns around safeguarding at Cohort then they can contact Lee or Daniel Strickland.

Responsibility for safeguarding – Cohort St Ives

Cohort provides high quality residential accommodation and a safe physical environment for teachers and students. Whilst we have a duty of care to all who stay in the building, and take all reasonable steps possible to ensure the safety and security of our guests, we do not accept sole responsibility for the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults. Responsibility for safeguarding lies predominantly with the trip leader present.

On request we are able to complete risk assessments for trip leaders and/or provide copies of our own relevant assessments, policies & procedures.

Cohort operates a staff code of conduct regarding visiting school groups which strengthens this safeguarding policy and the protections of young people and employees alike.

Cohort's Educational Trip risk assessment can be seen upon request

Staff safeguarding responsibilities

Staff responsibilities: Protecting from harm

It is the policy of Cohort to safeguard the welfare of all young people by protecting them from neglect, and from physical, sexual and emotional harm. Our only duty of care is to provide safe accommodation; and whilst we hold no supervisory responsibilities towards any young member of a visiting group we still need to be aware of what to do if we have concerns regarding an individual.

What to do if...

If you suspect a young person is being abused, a young person confides in you, someone has a concern or makes a complaint about any adult or about you; in all instances it is your duty to immediately report it to senior management.

If a young person tells you they are being abused, you should do the following.

1. Allow them to speak without interruption and accept what they say.
2. Be understanding and reassuring but do not give your opinion.
3. Tell them that you will try to offer support but you must pass the information on.
4. Tell senior management immediately.
5. Write careful notes of what was said, using the actual words where possible.
6. Pass notes onto senior management, making sure you sign/date them.

If you are concerned about a young person's safety and well-being, or there is a concern, complaint or allegation about an adult or yourself, you should do the following.

1. Inform senior management immediately.
2. Write careful notes of what you witnessed, heard or were told.
3. Sign, date and pass your notes to senior management.

If the young person is at immediate risk of significant harm, contact the police or Social Services and inform senior management immediately.

Any adult at Cohort has the right to report concerns or suspicions about another

member in confidence and free from harassment. You must refer any concern or complaint to senior management immediately.

DO NOT investigate it yourself.

If you are in any doubt about what to do contact the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 0800 500

If an allegation is made against a member of staff then Cohort must contact our Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO is involved in the management and oversight of individual allegations of harm and abuse made against staff or volunteers who work with children.

Most issues can be resolved online; it's the quickest and most convenient way to get help.

For help and support email the following within one working day of an allegation being made:

lado@cornwall.gov.uk 01872 326536

Staff responsibilities: Code of conduct

Do's & Don'ts

Do

- Avoid all situations in which you are alone with any young person.
 - If necessary, move to a place where you can both be seen and heard by others.
- Respect a young person's personal privacy (e.g. knock before entering dorm rooms)
- Comfort a young person who is hurt or distressed, without compromising their dignity or doing anything to discredit your own behaviour.
- Allow young people to talk about any concerns they may have.
- Avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour (crushes)
- Remember someone might misinterpret your actions, even if you mean well.
- Take seriously if a young person informs you of a personal problem or disclosure of a concerning nature; report to management immediately
- Alert a supervising adult if you witness abusive, ridiculing or bullying behaviour
- Treat all children and young people with respect.
- Ensure you are read and understand the Cohort Safeguarding Policy

Don't

- Supervise any young person unless carrying out a specific task as part of your staff duties
- Share your personal information with any member of a school group
- Agree to be friends or link up on any social media channel.
- Initiate or accept inappropriate physical contact with a child/young person.
- Ask probing questions about a child or young person's personal life.
- Make suggestive remarks or gestures, even in fun.
- Use inappropriate language in front of any visiting school group
- Smoke or drink alcohol in front of any young member of an organised group
- Take photos or videos of any child or young person staying in the building
- Enter an unacceptable situation with a young person (i.e. sexual relations)

The safeguarding of young people (and staff) is paramount and any staff member whose behaviour breaks these rules or who contravenes the spirit of our code of conduct will be subject to disciplinary action and maybe asked to leave Cohort with immediate effect.

If you have any questions regarding these responsibilities then please speak to Cohort management.

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