



Speedwell Trust

bringing children together

Speedwell Trust Policies

Child Protection Policy

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Policy Statement

Speedwell Trust accepts responsibility that each child in the care of their Staff will be treated as an individual by meeting the needs of each child.

The relationship between each child and Speedwell Staff can be shared to create a safe, secure, stimulating and happy environment. While the main area of expertise of the Staff is in cross-community or environmental education other areas of care include personal, social and emotional development.

Duty of Care

Staff are in a position of trust and owe a 'duty of care' to the children and young people they work with. The staff must be competent to teach or assist with teaching. If a child is injured the accompanying Teacher will be notified and first aid applied according to the nature of the injury, all accidents/injuries will be recorded in the confidential 'accident book' kept in the office. If a child is injured in during a school based activity the school's procedure will be adopted.

Speedwell Trust policy- A guide to inform your practice

Introduction

We all want to believe that children are looked after in ways which promote their safety and comfort. For most children this is indeed the case. However Speedwell Trust also recognises that some children do not experience this level of care. It has therefore drawn together some simple and common sense guidance for Staff, teachers, children and their parents/guardians in:-

- i) encouraging the adoption of the highest possible standards of care
- ii) out-lining a strategy for action if any concerns or suspicions are raised.

This document concerns the welfare of young people under the age of 18 years.

CHILD PROTECTION

Speedwell Trust wants to ensure that children are protected and kept safe from harm whilst taking part in activities. There is a broad range of legislation that affects Staff.

This section will:-

- outline a broad legal framework affecting those working with children
- provide Staff with information about child protection
- provide good practice guidelines for:-
children and young people when taking part in activities at Parkanaur in Schools, parents / guardians, Speedwell Staff and visiting teachers working with children and young people
- outline a system to deal with complaints and reports of misconduct

Legislation

The Children's (NI) Order 1995 defines harm as 'ill treatment or the impairment of health or development'. The definition includes physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural development, physical and mental health and any form of abuse (not just sexual abuse). Further legislation which affects Staff includes:

- the UN Convention Rights of the Child
- Children Order 1995
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003
- Cooperating to Safeguard Children 2003
- The Care Standards Act 2000
- Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2000 and the
- Disability Discrimination Act 2001
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007

Much of the legislation is directed towards people who care for children (nurseries or childminders). Staff, however, need to understand their legal duties to those they teach. There are two main areas that affect those working with children.

- For those teaching health-related activities, the care provided is considered usually to be incidental (eg. Care is not the main purpose of holding classes). Most teachers / instructors will not need to be registered with the Dept. of Education. However, this will depend on the age of children, the length of time the child spends in sessions and the frequency of the provision.
- Teachers must be fit to work with children.

- The Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order makes it a criminal offence for someone to apply for or accept any work if s/he is disqualified from working with children. It is also an offence to employ someone who is disqualified (eg. someone with a criminal record for the abuse of children). When the safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Order is implemented all those completing the 'Tots 2 teens' course will only obtain their certificate if they are registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority. This will enable the continual monitoring of the individual and for relevant information to be communicated to Fitness Northern Ireland.

What is Child Abuse?

The term 'child abuse' is used to describe ways in which children are harmed by someone in a position of power. There are many different ways in which children can be harmed, the common denominator that the child feels not valued and worthless. Abuse can happen anywhere, however research indicates that the perpetrators are likely to be known and trusted by the child. However, it is not the intention of this document to make Staff experts in recognising child abuse.

There are 4 recognised categories defined in the 'Cooperating to Safeguard Children.'

- **Physical** -Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child or the wilful neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.
- **Neglect** -Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and /or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger. Failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive (faltering growth).
- **Sexual** -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, including penetrative or nonpenetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Emotional** - Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are

worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Smothering a child's development through over-protection can also be a form of abuse. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse.

In addition to these four official definitions, **Bullying** has been recognised and defined as: "deliberately hurtful behaviour usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or sectarian remarks, threats, name-calling) and emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of his/her peer group). The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self harm).

The effect of abuse on the child can be devastating and often long lasting. What should you do?

Child abuse is not easy to recognise and many people fear reading too much into a situation thereby causing unnecessary upset. Most children are subject to minor accidental injuries, but there may be occasions when you are concerned about the nature and frequency of injury.

Listed below are some of the signs that may give cause for concern. It does not necessarily follow that the occurrence of one or more of these indicators means that child abuse is happening. However, the principle upon which this document is written is that **it is not your responsibility Staff to decide that child abuse is occurring. It is your responsibility to act on those concerns and to do something about it.**

Possible signs of abuse

- 1 Behaviour changes for no reason, withdrawn, moodiness, anger
- 2 Bruising in unusual places such as arms, stomach, around the mouth, head or back
- 3 Bruised eye
- 4 Cigarette burns

- 5 Finger marks
- 6 Bite Marks
- 7 Child or young person not using an arm or leg because it may have been injured by a blow
- 8 Inadequate clothing for the time of year (does not generally happen to teenagers)
- 9 Changes in eating patterns- loss of appetite or overeating
- 10 Unexplained weight loss
- 11 Child or young person looking increasingly dirty or unkempt
- 12 Disclosure of an abusive act by the child
- 13 Expression of concern for welfare of the child by another adult or child
- 14 Sexual awareness inappropriate to age

How to react and what to do?

The one thing you must not do is nothing.

There is no one set of hard and fast rules to follow when responding to these situations. If you receive information from a child or another person, which raises concerns, the procedure below should be followed:-

- Stay calm
- Listen carefully
- Allow time for the person to say what they want to say
- Tell the child that s/he is not to blame
- Reassure him/her that they have done the right thing in telling
- Show/tell the child that you take seriously what s/he is telling you
- Keep questions to a minimum
- Record in writing, as soon as possible, the name and address of the child, what has been said, heard or seen Include dates, times and a description of any visual bruising or injury.
- Also include details of who you have informed e.g. person in charge
- Be honest and explain that you may have to tell someone else to help protect the child.

DO NOT:-

- Panic
- Promise to keep secrets
- Inquire into the details of the abuse
- Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily

If you have received information, or your own observations over a period of time give cause for concern, what action do you take?

- In the first instance, inform the parents/guardians unless the information received concerns their actions. It may be that there has been some family trauma, which is making the child unhappy.
- Always inform the person in charge. This could be the children's Teacher or the Trust Manager. It is the person in charge's responsibility to act. If you are operating alone then you should take on that responsibility yourself.
- Immediately inform the Social Services Dept., NSPCC office and /or the Police. They will be able to advise you on what action you should take. However, under the Children's Order 1995, Social Services have a statutory duty to ensure the welfare of the child. When a referral is made it is Social Services' responsibility to investigate. The investigation may be made jointly with the Police. The telephone number of your local Social Services office can be found in the telephone directory.

Any information passed to the Social Services should be accurate. By following the procedures for responding outlined above you will be able to provide a useful record of the incident/allegations

If you do not know who to turn to for advice or are worried about sharing your concerns with a senior colleague, you should contact the Social Services direct (or the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000).

The vast majority of people who work with children are well motivated and would never harm a child. Unfortunately a few do and it is essential that organisations create a culture that makes all involved willing and comfortable to voice their concerns, particularly those about someone with whom they work or whom they know. The child protection procedures should be followed. During an investigation, support should be given both to the individual who voices concerns and to the suspected abuser. Once the investigation is completed, the Association must decide what action, if any is necessary to prevent a similar situation arising again. A report could be from a parent, child, other staff, outside agencies or anonymous.

Allegations made against a member of Speedwell Trust

Confidentiality

Information should be handled and disseminated on a 'need to know' basis only. This may include:-

- (a) The Trust Manager (b) The alleged perpetrator (c) The child's parents/guardian/teacher (d) The child /young person (e) Social Services (f) Speedwell Trust Board of Trustees

Speedwell Trust recognises the difficult issues raised and will support anyone who in good faith reports misconduct by a colleague.

If you suspect the actions of a colleague report your concerns with full details to the Trust Manager. It is then his/her responsibility to act. This may take 2 forms:-

1. **Poor professional practice** : The accusation may be dealt with by inhouse methods as a disciplinary matter. The person in charge should also contact the Chairperson of Speedwell Trust. The disciplinary procedure will be implemented, which could result in a registered member of the association:

- a) receiving a recommendation to undertake further training
- b) being removed from the Staff.

2 **Child Abuse**: Where an allegation indicates serious malpractice against a child and abuse is suspected, the person in charge must report this to the Social Services Dept or the Police. This will result in the following types of investigation:

- Child protection investigation by the Social Services
- A criminal investigation.

Staying Safe – Advice to Staff

The role of Speedwell Trust is to promote high standards of professional practice. The following are examples of good practice when conducting sessions with children and young people. By adhering to them you will prevent yourself from being placed in a potentially vulnerable situation and maintain the high standards expected by Speedwell Trust.

Check that you are personally covered for indemnity and liability.

- Be appropriately qualified.
- Accept that the child's welfare is paramount. This means respecting the child's view of what he/she wants from the session. Negotiate rather than impose.
- Conduct all sessions in an open manner, be observable by colleagues/parents /guardians/accompanying teachers.
- Avoid unnecessary or inappropriate physical contact, eg rough play. Acceptable contact would be holding hands in a circle.
- Avoid being on your own with a child for any length of time.
- If the child is upset in your presence or has had an accident /injury during the session, this should be recorded in writing, reported to the person in charge, and the accompanying teacher informed.
- Avoid becoming over-friendly with children and young people.
- Avoid any 'horseplay'
- Do not tolerate the use of offensive language or anti-social behaviour by children.

Induction

It should be understood that Speedwell Trust have the expertise to train those interested in working with children as far as their professional skills and

knowledge of child development and health are concerned. We will ensure that only those who pass all aspects of checking and safeguarding are trained to work with children.

Vulnerability of those with a Disability

In the largest study into the issue of disabled children and abuse, Sullivan & Knutson (2000) found that 31% of disabled children had been abused, compared to a percentage rate of 9% among non-disabled child population.

It is recognised that children with a disability,

- have the same needs and require the same safeguards as all children.
- may also have additional needs associated with their disability, which may increase their vulnerability to abuse.
- are often more dependent on adults e.g. in intimate care needs
- may be unable to recognise abusive behaviour because they may have learning difficulties or a lack of awareness, and /or reduced exposure to the norm of adult/children interactions. For example a child with disabilities may have difficulty in differentiating between appropriate and inappropriate touching
- particularly those with physical disabilities, may have a poor and/or incomplete body image and therefore may not recognise inappropriate behaviour
- communication difficulties often leads to misunderstandings and frustration for the child.

Speedwell Trust is committed to working with young people with disabilities or special needs and their parents to ensure our activity is inclusive for all. Our Staff are advised to ask the experts i.e. the young person and their Teacher to ensure they have a clear understanding of the young persons needs.

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

Speedwell Trust Health and Safety Policy

The Speedwell Trust aims to take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of children and other vulnerable people attending its activities and events. It has adopted set procedures for the appointment of staff and volunteers who work closely with young people and established guidelines for them to work to when organising events, wherever they are held.

The Policy will be implemented through:

Striving To Maintain A Safe Environment for Activities

- Identifying hazards on a site in relation to the activities planned, including carrying out risk assessments on activities, and completion of a site assessment sheet identifying nearest telephone, hospital etc.
- Incorporating appropriate safety measures in the activity.
- Keeping records of the above.
- Ensuring leaders of, and participants in the activities, are aware of hazards and safety measures.
- Ensuring leaders and participants are suitably equipped for the activity and conditions.
- Ensuring the task is suitable for the ability of the participants.
- Ensuring all tools and equipment are checked for safety and removed if found to be dangerous.
- Making sure children are not exposed to dangerous substances.

Running Closely Supervised and Well Organised Activities

- Ensuring that all participants are aware of and follow safety policy guidelines.
- Ensuring ratios of adults/helpers to children are appropriate to activities (e.g. near water, involving tools).

- Leading activities in a calm and relaxed manner.
- Giving clear roles and responsibilities to all assistants.
- Agreeing safe going home procedures with parents/guardians*.
- Ensuring activities involving tools are supervised by appropriately trained people.
- Making sure information on the times, meeting places and nature of events, as well as clothing and equipment required, is communicated to parents and guardians.
- Ensuring all volunteers and staff involved in an activity are fully insured.
- Competently Carrying Out Accident and Emergency Procedures.
- Ensuring suitable first aid is available at all events. (This should relate to risk assessment).
- Making sure a first aid kit is present, accessible and regularly checked.
- Making participants aware of the accident and emergency procedure.
- Reporting all accidents.
- Ensuring that medical information and contact numbers for each child are obtained.
- Completing an activity planning sheet to include an assessment of first aid requirements in relation to risk.

Helping to Keep Children Safe From Abuse

- Choosing appropriate venues and timings to minimise the risk of abuse.
- Ensuring that children, assistants and leaders are able to contact an independent person with whom they can discuss any concerns relating to their experiences in their group.
- Ensuring that leaders and assistants plan activities so that situations in which abuse might occur are minimised.
- Ensuring that all leaders and assistants have clear responsibilities.
- Ensuring that all assistants are competent to look after children and put the child welfare and safety policy into practice.
- Ensuring that all leaders, assistants and other personnel are aware of the Code of Practice on how to behave with young people, the Independent Persons Procedure and what to do if they are concerned about the possibility of abuse taking place or children being at risk.

Ensuring Safety on Outings (at events)

- Making sure hazards on a site have been identified in relation to the planned activities and that these are recorded as outlined in section 1.
- Ensuring appropriate safety measures are identified, recorded and communicated to all adults and children participating in the activities as outlined in section 1.

- Ensuring ratios of assistants to children are appropriate to the planned activities. This also includes transportation to the site if this is included in the activity.
- Obtaining insurance for all volunteers and staff participating in an activity.
- Communicating information on the nature of an outing or event, its venue and time, food, clothing, and equipment requirements (and procedures for going home to parents and guardians*).
- Giving volunteers and staff clear roles.

Observing Competent Management Procedures

- All personnel who apply for a position in which they take responsibility for children are interviewed to assess their suitability to work with children and ensure their acceptance of this policy.
- Two references are obtained for each candidate, one of which will relate to the candidate's ability to work with children.
- All applicants must consent to a police check being carried out and to sign a declaration stating that they have not had any convictions that may affect their ability to work with children.
- An individual working with children is subject to a three-month probationary period, at the end of which their suitability to work with children will be assessed.
- A monitoring process is carried out to ensure the policy is being implemented.

Speedwell Trust Policy Statement on Community Relations and Anti-Sectarianism

Speedwell's position on community relations and anti-sectarianism has been clearly set forth in its aims:

Speedwell is a voluntary organisation which works to enable young people achieve their full potential by providing environmental and community relations programmes to young people, their teachers and school community.

Speedwell Trust is non-party political and committed to promoting community relations and has an anti-sectarian approach in its work.

Speedwell Trust believes that sectarianism is endemic in the values, attitudes and structures of society in Northern Ireland, including that of the voluntary sector.

Speedwell Trust recognises that the effects of sectarianism are incompatible with Aims and Values and therefore seeks to develop community relation and combat sectarianism at institutional, group and individual levels.

Speedwell Trust is committed to ensuring that its equal opportunities and anti-sectarianism policies are implemented and their effectiveness monitored and evaluated.

Speedwell Trust, as an Equal Opportunities Employer, strives to protect the rights of all staff and volunteers to work in an environment free from sectarianism, in any form such as intimidation, discrimination, victimisation, harassment, coercion or abuse.

Speedwell Trust acknowledges the rights of staff and volunteers to hold and develop their own particular religious beliefs and political affiliations, however, Speedwell Trust demands that all who work for Speedwell Trust, in their dealings with others during work, take due care to ensure that no offence is caused to another's feelings by an action which could be deemed to be sectarian or intimidatory. Speedwell charges all its staff and volunteers with the responsibility of ensuring that any sectarian act is challenged in an appropriate manner.

Speedwell Trust will provide opportunities for volunteers and members of staff to develop community relations and anti-sectarianism awareness and practice.

Legal Framework

This community relations and anti-sectarian policy recognised and upholds the law as it applies to disadvantaged groups in our society and it seeks to go

beyond the minimum requirements of existing legislation, including the provisions of the following:

- The Sex Discriminations (NI) Orders 1976, 1989
- The Equal Pay Act (NI) 1970 as amended
- The Fair Employment Acts (NI) 1976, 1989
- The Disable Persons Employment Act (NI) 1945, as amended

The Northern Ireland Act 1988 (sec 75). This policy fits within Speedwell Trust overall Equal Opportunities Policy. It does not diminish the rights of any Speedwell employee as set out in other policy statements-rather it supplements the rights of the employee as specified in the following policies and agreed procedures:

- Speedwell Trust Aims and Objectives
- Equal Opportunity Policy
- Grievance Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Staff Development policy
- Redundancy Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Alcohol and Drugs Policy and Procedure
- Policy on HIV Infection
- Equal Opportunities Policy on Disability

Definitions

Discriminations may be direct or indirect.

Direct discrimination is treating somebody less favourable because that person is perceived to belong to a particular group.

Indirect discrimination is applying an unjustifiable condition or requirement, which although it is applied equally to members of two or more groups is such that considerably smaller proportions of a particular group can comply with it.

Discrimination is unfavourable treatment of one group or individual by another on grounds of, for example, race, gender, class, caste, culture, religion, politics, nationality, age, physical or learning ability, sexual orientation, language, relative wealth, life-style, HIV status.

Discrimination may be due to:

Individual prejudice, e.g. dislike of a group without any object basis;

Perceived differences between groups (stereotyping) where an individual or group has the power to treat another less favourably.

Organisational structures and institutionalised practices, which directly or indirectly deny equal access to any group.

Sectarianism is discrimination on the basis of perceived religion or politics.

Victimisation is treating somebody less favourably because that person has made a complaint or allegation of discrimination or has helped someone else to do so or has been involved in any other way or intends to do any of those things.

This policy seeks to ensure that members of Speedwell Trust staff will not suffer discrimination, victimisation, harassment, or abuse from other members of staff and seeks to protect staff in their working contact with people who are not members of staff.

The harassment of Speedwell Trust staff is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in the organisation.

Areas Covered

This policy applies to the following areas:

Applicants of jobs (including volunteers)

- In advertising a vacancy.
- In arrangements made for determining who is offered a job in terms on which a job is offered.
- By deliberately omitting to offer a person a job.

Employees

- Induction.
- In access to opportunities for promotion/transfer/training.
- In any other benefits, facilities or services provided to employees.
- In dismissal/selection/redundancy.
- In any other aspect of employment contract.
- In their contract with people who do not work for Speedwell Trust.

Members (including organisations and individuals)

- In arrangements made for admitting organisation or individuals to membership.
- In access to services provided by Speedwell Trust.
- In access to any other benefits for facilities.
- In removal from membership.
- In any other aspect of work with Speedwell Trust.

Other Organisations

- In consultation on social policy.
- In selecting individuals for honorary positions.
- In buying services from other institutions and companies.
- In arrangements for identifying organisation to work with.

Publications, Publicity and Public Statements

- In public statements on sectarianism.
- In arrangements for supporting community relations and anti-sectarianism vigils and marches.
- Materials produced by Speedwell Trust.

Implementing the Policy

Responsibility

The overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests with the Trust Manager.

Each individual member of staff has responsibility for ensuring that she/he acts in the spirit of the policy.

Collectively all members of staff in Speedwell Trust are responsible for ensuring that the organisation is anti-sectarian.

Monitoring

In order to measure the effectiveness of its community relations and anti-sectarian policy, Speedwell Trust will monitor the perceived religious background of applicants to posts, its work force, its members and the use of its service.

The information gathered by such monitoring will be used to assess the effectiveness of Speedwell Trust community relations and anti-sectarian policy and to further refine and improve it.

In instances where monitoring indicated that there is a discrepancy between the allocation of resources to different sections of the community, further work will be carried out to identify the cause for the discrepancy and corrective action will be taken.

Corrective action will be specified with a programme of action including targets and timetables and will be agreed with all staff involved before implementation.

Complaints

If any member of staff has a complaint of discrimination, intimidation, victimisation, or harassment of any kind that member of staff is encouraged to raise that complaint in accordance with the grievance procedure.

When such grievance is expressed the Grievance Procedure shall be invoked and the aggrieved person shall be entitled at all stages to be accompanied by a staff colleague, staff representative(s) or trade union representative (s). The aggrieved person may alternatively choose to have the above person (s) present the complaint on her/his behalf.

The procedure for dealing with a grievance arising from a sectarian action is the same as that relating to any other form of grievance.

If a member of staff has a grievance, which is not resolved, she/he may make a complaint to a Fair Employment Tribunal.

A complaint must be made to the Fair Employment Tribunal within three months from the date when you first know or might reasonably be expected to have known of the act of discrimination or within six months from the date when the act occurred, whichever is the earlier. Where an act (e.g. harassment) occurs over a period of time, the time limits run from the date of the last incident.

If the community relations and anti-sectarian policy is breached, disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

Disciplinary Procedure

In accordance with the Staff Disciplinary Rules the following is regarded as constituting misconduct:

“Words, gestures, or actions likely to cause distress or offence to colleagues or visitors on account of their sectarian nature...”

Such “words, gestures or actions” are considered to include the following:

- Intimidation, victimisation or harassment.
- The display of flags, emblems, posters, graffiti, etc.
- Discrimination
- The use of words, verses, songs and gestures
- The circulation of written material