



Child Protection Policy

I Child Protection Policy

I.1 Introduction

Everyone who participates in Tech Camp, tutors and children, are entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. Tech Camp has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, tutors and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

Tech Camp is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of Tech Camp and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18.
(Children's Act 1989)

I.2 Policy Statement

Tech Camp is committed to the following:

- the welfare of the child 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 the event in a fun and safe environment
- taking 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
- all Tech Camp employees who work with children will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and child protection procedures
- working in partnership with parents and children is essential for the protection of children
- securing written parental consent for the camp to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises and keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given

I.3 Monitor and review the policy and procedures

The implementation of procedures should be regularly monitored and reviewed. The Child Welfare Officer (CWO) should regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements gaps and areas where changes are required to the management committee.

The policy should be reviewed every 3 years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.

2 Recruiting and Selecting Personnel

2.1 Introduction

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, both full and part time. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children the following steps should be taken when recruiting.

2.2 Controlling Access to Children

- All staff and volunteers should complete an application form and/or provide an up to date CV. This will elicit information about the applicants past.
- Consent should be obtained from the applicant to seek information from the Disclosures and Barring Service (DBS).
- A confidential reference, preferably one regarding previous work with children should be obtained. This must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo)

2.3 Interview and Induction

All employees and volunteers will be required to undertake an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction during which:

- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified
- They should sign up to the Tech Camp's Code of Conduct
- Child Protection Procedures are explained and training needs identified e.g. basic child protection awareness

2.4 Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child
- Work safely and effectively with children

Tech Camp requires:

- All staff and volunteers who have access to children to undergo a DBS check
- All employees, volunteers, tutors, welfare officers and managers to undertake relevant child welfare training to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of positive culture towards good practice and child protection
- All staff and volunteers to receive advisory information outlining good/bad practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person
- At least one staff member at each residential event to have an up to date first aid qualification

3 Tutor's Code of Conduct – Promoting Good Practice

3.1 Introduction

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities at camp everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore **NOT** the responsibility of employees or participants in the event to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. **It is** however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child, as explained in section 6.

This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice.

3.2 Good Practice

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action:

- make the experience of the event fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying.
- treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity
- always put the welfare of the young person first
- always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets) No staff are to take campers in their cars without permission from the manager or director
- ensure that adults should not enter a young person's room (at a residential event) unless necessary (for example, the handing out of medications) and wherever possible this should be done briefly and openly (with the door to the room open, for example). Wherever possible this should also be done with an adult of the same sex as the child. This is of even greater importance when working with female campers due to the increased need for privacy.
- not invite young people into their own rooms
- be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- consume alcohol responsibly only when off duty
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- always refer to the CWO any issues of concern that you have or that are raised by a child and never allow allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon

4 Physical Restraint

Any physical restraint is only permissible when a child is in imminent danger of inflicting an injury on himself / herself or on another, and then only as a last resort, when all efforts to diffuse the situation have failed. Another member of staff should, if possible, be present to act as a witness. **ALL** incidents of physical restraint should be recorded in writing and reported immediately to the CWO who will decide what to do next.

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 the CWO and make a written note of it.

5 Use of Photographic / Filming Equipment at Events

At Tech Camp we have parental consent for taking photographs and videos of activities. This is normally done by an assigned staff member and only openly in public. Should other staff want to take photos they should obtain the consent of the manager or director.

6 Defining Child Abuse

6.1 Introduction

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**
- **Neglect.**

Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood

Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

6.2 Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- the young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person
- unexplained changes in a young person's behavior e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- inappropriate sexual awareness and / or engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- distrust of adult's, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- difficulty in making friends and / or being prevented from socialising with others
- displaying variations in eating patterns including over eating or loss of appetite
- losing weight for no apparent reason
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt

6.3 Signs of bullying include:

- behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go training or competitions or an unexplained drop off in performance
- physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes

- a shortage of money or frequents loss of possessions

7 Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

7.1 Introduction

It **is not** the responsibility of anyone working in Tech Camp in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there **is** a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the CWO, or the Camp Director if the allegations concern the CWO, 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 Tech Camp and to allegations / suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

The CWO (or Camp Director) will then follow the procedure outlined below.

If you are not sure what to do and the CWO is not immediately available you can gain help from NSPCC 24 hour help line Tel No: 0800800500

7.2 Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record will be kept by the CWO at the time of the disclosure/concern.

Information should include the following:

- the child's name, age and date of birth
- the child's home address and telephone number
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- details of witnesses to the incidents
- the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred
- have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail.

7.3 Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations will be reported appropriately by the CWO. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with judgements about any action to take.

Tech Camp expects its members and staff 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.

A summary of reporting procedures is provided in this document. Where there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation.

- **Criminal** in which case the police are immediately involved
- **Child protection** in which case the social services (and possibly) the police will be involved
- **Disciplinary or misconduct** in which case Tech Camp will be involved

All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection. Social services have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern

- Tech Camp will refer the matter to social services department
- the parent/carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department
- the director should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings
- if the CWO is the subject of the suspicion/allegation the report must be made to the director who will refer the matter to social services

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to social services. This is because other children may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children.

7.4 Concerns outside the immediate Environment (e.g. a parent or carer)

- Report your concerns to the Tech Camp CWO
- The Tech Camp CWO should also report the incident to the Tech Camp director.
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis

7.5 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 Tech Camp's Child Welfare Officer.
- The parents of the child
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services/police
- The Tech Camp director
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

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

7.6 Internal Inquiries and Suspension

- The Tech Camp CWO will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the director will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to

uphold any action by the police. In such cases the director must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.