

SAFEGUARDING POLICY & PROCEDURE

1. Policy Statement

Iverson Trust is fully committed to the welfare and safeguarding of children and young people, and this shall be paramount within all of the activities that the charity undertakes.

Iverson Trust recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from neglect, harm, abuse, and exploitation.

Iverson Trust acknowledges its duty to act appropriately when responding to reports or suspicions that cause concern for the protection, welfare or safety of a child or young person.

Iverson Trust recognises that all children, regardless of age, ability, sex, class, gender, nationality, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

2. Introduction

Iverson Trust works with parents and carers of children who are, or are at risk of being, sexually or criminally exploited by perpetrators external to the family by offering:

- 2.1 one-to-one telephone advice and support to parents and carers;
- 2.2 peer support to parents and carers through the online parent forum and through facilitation of meetings with similarly affected parents and carers;
- 2.3 advice on establishing rights as parents and carers and work in partnership with statutory agents such as police and social workers;
- 2.4 advice and support when pursuing disruption and prosecution of the perpetrators of child sexual and criminal exploitation; and
- 2.5 befriending support to parents and carers through the national befriending scheme.

Iverson Trust also offers guidance and training to professionals on how child sexual and criminal exploitation affects the whole family.

3. This policy

This safeguarding policy and procedure sets out the duties, obligations, responsibilities, and actions that Iverson Trust will adhere to when responding to allegations, reports or suspicions that cause concern for the protection, welfare or safety of a child or young person.

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff or anyone working on behalf of Iverson Trust.

This policy and procedure is developed in accordance with the legal frameworks of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and other legislation, regulations and guidelines relating to the protection, welfare and safety of children and young people and shall be reviewed annually by the trustees (or sooner should there be a change in legislation).

This policy shall apply to the safeguarding of children and young people up to the age of 18.

4. A named person for safeguarding and their responsibilities

Iverson Trust has appointed a named person who is responsible for dealing with any safeguarding concerns. In their absence, a deputy will always be available to consult with.

The charity's Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) shall be as follows:

Name: Lindsay Dalton, CEO

Telephone: 0113 240 3040

Mobile: 07932 071821

Email: lindsay.dalton@iversontrust.org.uk

The charity's Deputy DSOs (DDSO) shall be as follows:

Name: Pauline Bainbridge, National Parent Support Team Manager

Telephone: 0113 240 3040

Email: pauline.bainbridge@iversontrust.org.uk

Name: Leah Taylforth, National Parent Liaison Team Manager

Telephone: 07985 328988

Email: leah.taylforth@iversontrust.org.uk

The DSO and the DDSO shall:

- 4.1 be responsible for ensuring that all cases of suspected or actual safeguarding concerns are dealt with in accordance with current guidance and regulations;
- 4.2 ensure that they are aware of the procedural and legislative changes relating to the protection, welfare and safety of children and young people, and keep the trustees and staff informed as appropriate;
- 4.3 ensure that they receive appropriate training in safeguarding matters, at least every two years;
- 4.4 act as a source of advice and support within the charity in relation to safeguarding children and young people; and
- 4.5 ensure procedures of recording and reporting the neglect, abuse, harm and exploitation of children and young people are followed.
- 4.6 co-ordinate action regarding referrals in relation to suspected or alleged safeguarding concerns and allegations against staff and volunteers.

5. Responsibilities of staff and volunteers

Staff and volunteers have the responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this safeguarding policy, procedure and other related policies.

6. Ivison Trust's responsibilities

- 6.1 Ivison Trust will ensure that all concerns and allegations of abuse (as defined in the safeguarding procedure) will be taken seriously and will be responded to appropriately, which may require a referral to children's social care, the independent Local Authority Designated Officer for allegations against staff, trustees, volunteers, or anyone working on behalf of Ivison Trust and in emergencies, the police.
- 6.2 Ivison Trust is committed to safe recruitment, selection and vetting of trustees, staff and volunteers and ensuring that all necessary checks are completed.
- 6.3 Ivison Trust will ensure that access to the charity's safeguarding policy and procedure is part of the induction programme for all new trustees, staff and volunteers joining the charity. .
- 6.4 Ivison Trust will ensure that parents, carers, children and young people shall be made aware of this policy and the charity's safeguarding procedure as appropriate.
- 6.5 Ivison Trust will provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures.

- 6.6 Ivison Trust will ensure that staff and volunteers who, through their role, are in contact with children and young people will have access to safeguarding training at an appropriate level.
- 6.7 Ivison Trust will record and store information professionally and securely, and will share information about safeguarding with other agencies in accordance with good practice and any applicable legislation.
- 6.8 Ivison Trust will ensure any allegations against staff or volunteers are appropriately responded to in line with their safeguarding procedure.
- 6.9 Ivison Trust will ensure that effective complaints policy and procedure as well as whistleblowing measures are in place.

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

7. Identifying abuse

All staff and volunteers who come into contact with children and young people and their families have a role to play in safeguarding children and young people. Staff and volunteers who are involved in the parent liaison programme are particularly important as they often have direct contact with children and young people. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to take appropriate action and work with other services as needed in relation to any safeguarding concerns. Any concern, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO – see point 4 above) or the Deputy DSO immediately and record the reasons for any delay in reporting to the DSO/DDS.

It is not the responsibility of the charity to investigate suspected or alleged abuse; this is the role of the police and social care.

8. Definitions of child abuse

The categories below are drawn from the statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018*

8.1 Physical abuse: A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

8.2 Emotional abuse: This is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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 in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not

giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or “making fun” of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, (including cyber-bullying) causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

8.3 Sexual Abuse: Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

8.4 Child sexual exploitation: This is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

8.5 Neglect: The persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: (a) provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment; (b) protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; (c) ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate caregivers; (d) ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

9. Signs of abuse

All staff and volunteers should be aware of the signs of abuse so that they are able to identify children and young people who may be in need of help or protection.

Although not an exhaustive list, the possible signs of abuse include:

- 9.1 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 or the explanation of the cause of the injury does not seem right.
- 9.2 The child discloses abuse, or describes what appears to be an abusive act.
- 9.3 Someone else (child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child.
- 9.4 Unexplained change in behaviour such as withdrawal or sudden outbursts of temper.
- 9.5 Inappropriate sexual awareness or sexually explicit behaviour.
- 9.6 Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- 9.7 Difficulty in making friends.
- 9.8 Eating disorders, depression, self-harm or suicide attempts.

10. Becoming aware of a safeguarding issue

There may be several different ways in which staff or volunteers may become aware of a safeguarding issue involving a child or young person and these may include:

- 10.1 an allegation from a parent, carer or other family member of a child or young person that a child may be suffering or likely to suffer neglect, harm, abuse or exploitation;
- 10.2 a third party or anonymous report or allegation that a child may be suffering or likely to suffer neglect, harm, abuse or exploitation;
- 10.3 a child or young person's appearance, behaviour, play, drawing or statements causing a suspicion of neglect, harm, exploitation or abuse;
- 10.4 a child or young person informs/reports an incident(s) of alleged abuse;
- 10.5 a written report is made regarding the serious misconduct of a Iverson Trust worker or representative towards a child or young person.

11. Responding to reports and suspicions of neglect, harm, abuse and exploitation of a child or young person

Staff and volunteers should take any allegations of abuse extremely seriously and must never assume that someone else is dealing with the allegation. Anyone who has concerns about the safety of a child or young person has a responsibility to take appropriate action and adhere to the following steps:

11.1 Stage 1

- 11.1.1 Take the person and the report or suspicion seriously;
- 11.1.2 Listen carefully to the information being given by a child, parent/carer or a third party;
- 11.1.3 Explain that Iverson Trust has a duty to ensure the protection, safety and welfare of children and young people;
- 11.1.4 Remember that it is not the responsibility of staff and volunteers to investigate incidences of suspected child abuse but to gather information and refer the same to the DSO.
- 11.1.5 Always explain to the person informing/reporting concerns about abuse (usually parent/carer as Iverson Trust's primary service user) that any information they have given needs to be shared with the social care or the police. Encourage the parent/carer to report their concerns to social care or police, if they haven't already done so, explaining the importance of such reporting. Where a parent/carer is unable or unwilling to report to statutory safeguarding agencies, inform them that Iverson Trust will inform social care or the police.
- 11.1.6 Notify the DSO or the DDSO (see point 4 for contact details.)
- 11.1.7 Record what was said as soon as possible after any disclosure/report; the person who receives the allegation or has the concern should complete a pro-forma and ensure it is signed and dated. The contents of the pro-forma should include:
 - 11.1.7.1 Date and time of notification, and by whom
 - 11.1.7.2 Young person's name, address and date of birth
 - 11.1.7.3 What was said as far as possible
 - 11.1.7.4 Actions to be taken (both internal and external actions – based on the issues raised in the allegation and disclosure.)

11.1.8 Respect confidentiality and file documents securely

11.2 Stage 2

11.2.1 The DSO/DDS0 should take immediate action if there is a suspicion that a child or young person is being or likely to be abused, neglected, harmed or exploited. In this situation the DSO/DDS0 should contact appropriate authorities such as the police and children and young people's social care.

11.2.2 Staff and volunteers should note that parents and carers will need to be informed about any referral to children and young people's social care unless to do so would place the child at an increased risk of harm.

12. Safer Recruitment

Iverson Trust is committed to safer recruitment and all staff and volunteers shall be recruited in line with the recruitment policy.

13. Allegations against staff

Any allegations relating to the safeguarding of a child or young person that are made against a trustee, member of staff or volunteer shall be referred to the CEO unless the allegation relates to the CEO in which case it should be made to the person noted below, who should deal with the allegation immediately. The CEO shall not speak to the trustee, member of staff or volunteer who is the subject of the allegation at this point.

In the absence of the CEO, or where an allegation in relation to the safeguarding of a child or young person is made against the CEO, the allegation should be reported to the Chair of Trustees. On all occasions where an allegation in relation to the safeguarding of a child or young person is made against a trustee, member of staff or volunteer, the content of the allegation should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

A decision as to how to proceed including the decision whether to suspend a trustee, member of staff or volunteer will be taken by CEO following consultation with the LADO (and, in the most serious cases, the police). The decision about whether to suspend the CEO shall be taken by the Chair of Trustees (having consulted the relevant authorities).

14. Whistleblowing

All trustees, staff and volunteers should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of their colleagues and should follow Iverson Trust's whistleblowing policy.

15. Information sharing and confidentiality

Iverson Trust recognises that all matters relating to the safeguarding of children and young people are confidential. Information in relation to the safeguarding of any child or young person shall only be disclosed to other members of staff and volunteers when absolutely necessary.

All staff and volunteers must be aware of their responsibility to share information with other agencies when necessary in order to safeguard children and must be aware that they cannot promise a child, parent/carer or a third party informant to keep secrets. Staff and volunteers must not make promises about confidentiality to any child, parent/carer or a third party informant. In the case of any safeguarding disclosure by a child, parent/carer or a third party informant, the member of staff or volunteer should consider whether the child or the parent/carer is able to provide consent for the information to be shared and if so, seek to obtain that consent. In all other circumstances where children are at risk of harm sharing of the information will be on the basis that it is necessary to protect the vital interests of the child.

If the child or the parent/carer does not consent, the member of staff or volunteer should explain that they need to share the information with the DSO/DDSO and reassure the child or the parent/carer that the information will only be disclosed to other people as necessary.

Adopted by Board of Trustees: 5th October 2017 **Graham Brownlee, Chair**

Reviewed: 25th Nov July 2019 **Ann Lucas, Chair**

Reviewed: 12th July 2021 **Ann Lucas, C**