



# Children & Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

Corn Exchange Newbury takes the protection of children and vulnerable adults very seriously, and considers the safeguarding of these individuals fundamental to their enjoyment of our programme and their engagement with us as an organisation. We have a child protection policy and follow best practice in this area in order to ensure that the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount in every project that we run and in all aspects of our work.

## **Policy definitions:**

- Children are defined as young people under the age of 18 years.
- Vulnerable adults are defined as people over the age of 18 who are or may be in need of community care services because of age, illness, physical or learning disability, or those who are unable to take care of or protect themselves against harm or exploitation (including those for whom English is an additional language).
- Whenever the word 'child' or 'children' are used in this document they also refer to vulnerable adults.
- Whenever the word 'Corn Exchange' are used in this document it refers to the Corn Exchange (Newbury) Trust and activities taking place at both the Corn Exchange and New Greenham Arts

## **The purpose of the policy is:**

- To provide protection for all children who use Corn Exchange Newbury's services.
- To provide staff, volunteers, visiting companies, hirers and workshop leaders with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.
- To apply to all staff and volunteers working on behalf of Corn Exchange Newbury on any project, whether within Corn Exchange Newbury, New Greenham Arts or external venue delivering project on behalf of Corn Exchange Newbury.

## **POLICY PRINCIPLES**

### **We will seek to safeguard children by:**

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.

- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made to relevant post holders (eg learning department staff, project leaders, chaperones)<sup>1</sup>.
- Sharing information about safeguarding children and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Adopting the principals of this policy in relation to online engagement (eg by appropriate use of social networking websites).

### **Child Performers**

Corn Exchange Newbury will comply with legislation to ensure that performers under the age of 18 are correctly licensed and supervised by the appropriate number of licensed chaperones.

### **Hirers & Visiting Companies**

All organisations hiring the Corn Exchange Newbury or New Greenham Arts will be given a copy of this policy and required to put in place procedures that enable them to comply with the policy. In addition hirers must:

- Ensure they comply with legislation in relation to children and vulnerable adults taking part in their activities.
- Keep a register of children involved with the organisation, including details of their name, address, date of birth and next of kin.
- Keep a register of paid staff and volunteers working with children.
- Have appropriate adult supervision for children in the organisation (paying attention to numbers of supervisors, of appropriate gender and experience).

### **Data protection**

We are committed to complying with The Data Protection Act (1998) and to upholding the principles of good information handling practice. All information relating to individuals will be kept securely and for no longer than required.

A photo/video consent declaration will be obtained from all participants of projects where Corn Exchange Newbury seeks to take photographs or video footage for publicity purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> Corn Exchange, Newbury works to current government guidelines with reference to provision of CRB enhanced disclosures.

## **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR AND GOOD PRACTICE**

This section outlines the behaviour required of Corn Exchange Newbury staff and volunteers as well as staff from other organisations who engage with children and young people through the Corn Exchange and its activities, including visiting companies, hirers and workshop leaders.

### **Purpose**

This code has been developed to provide advice which will not only help to protect children, but will also help identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse being made against individuals.

Following this good practice code will also help to protect the Corn Exchange Newbury by reducing the possibility of anyone using their role within the organisation to gain access to children in order to abuse them.

When working with children for the Corn Exchange Newbury all staff and volunteers are considered to be acting in a position of trust. It is therefore important that staff, volunteers and visiting companies are aware that they may be seen as role models by children and must act in an appropriate manner at all times and follow the code of conduct.

When working with children it is important to:

- always follow the Corn Exchange Newbury Child Protection Policy
- treat all people with dignity and respect putting the welfare of each participant before the goals of the project
- actively involve children in planning activities wherever possible
- treat children fairly and without prejudice
- value and take children's contributions seriously
- should try to ensure that feedback is enthusiastic and constructive.
- always ensure language is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory, and will not make sexually suggestive comments, even in fun.
- always avoid favouritism
- always ensure equipment is used appropriately and for the purpose it was designed for
- ensure any contact with children is appropriate and in relation to the work of the project
- provide examples of good conduct you wish others to follow

All Staff and volunteers must follow the guidelines below and manage their behavior accordingly:

- must keep an appropriate distance from participants and not engage in any inappropriate physical contact
- will always work in an open environment and avoid private or unobserved situations eg accompanying a child to the toilet
- must not take, receive or pass on contact details from children nor let children have your personal contact details eg mobile number or address
- will not arrange any contact with children met through Corn Exchange activities outside of those activities, except with the express permission of parent/guardian/carers, which

must be sent to a member of the Corn Exchange Executive who will make a note on the relevant personnel file

- may only touch participants when it is absolutely necessary to the particular arts activity. In this case, agreement will be sought from participants prior to any physical contact.
- will kindly discourage all types of physical conduct that a child may wish to initiate (eg, a hug).

Staff who breach this code of conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures. Any breach of this code involving a volunteer or member of staff from another organisation may result in cancellation of the associated project or hire. Serious breaches of this code may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the Police or Children's Services Department.

## **PROCEDURES**

As an arts organisation we will always have a contact person with legal responsibility for the child, young person or vulnerable adult, this could be the parent, guardian, carer, teacher, youthworker etc. The Corn Exchange its staff and volunteers are not able to assume sole responsibility for a child, young person or vulnerable person.

This contact person will be informed of the situation in the event that any of the procedures detailed below need to be followed. In the event that the person with legal responsibility is the source of the problem the Corn Exchange will inform the appropriate authority.

If someone believes a child or young person may be in immediate danger, always dial 999 for police assistance. If someone believes that a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering significant harm, then s/he must make a member of the Corn Exchange Executive aware who will then notify social services.

### **Accidents and Injuries**

Corn Exchange maintains an accident record book and requires staff to enter a record of the accident when a child is injured whilst at the Corn Exchange. The record will be countersigned by the person responsible for the child, or, in the absence of that person, by a responsible member of staff. The accident book will be kept for a minimum of 12 months.

If a child or member of a vulnerable group arrives at the Corn Exchange with an obvious physical injury, a record will be made in the accident book and the person with responsibility for that individual will be required to counter-sign. This record will be used if a formal allegation is made later as a record that the individual did not sustain the injury whilst at the Corn Exchange

### **Responding to possible abuse and to disclosure**

The Corn Exchange its staff and volunteers will take seriously all complaints of suspected or actual child abuse or concerns that a child is being put at risk. These complaints/concerns will be acted upon immediately. It is the responsibility of the authorities to determine whether abuse has occurred.

In the event of a complaint/concern, the following procedures must be followed:-

### ***What to do if a Child discloses Abuse***

Look at the child directly.

Accept what the child says.

Be aware that the child may have been threatened.

Do not adopt a critical approach.

Do not press for information.

Reassure the child that (s)he is right to tell you, and that you will take what (s)he says very seriously.

Do not promise to keep the information the child has disclosed a secret.

Let the child know what you are going to do next, who you are going to tell, and why, and roughly what will happen.

Finish on a positive note.

### ***Immediate Action to be taken***

Do not delay

Do not act alone

Inform the Duty Manager, Learning & Participation Manager or member of the Corn Exchange Executive of the position immediately.

In the event that a member of the public is involved, where possible ensure their contact details are taken and work with the Duty Manager to ensure all CCTV footage is stored.

The child's parent/guardian/carer must be contacted immediately, unless the disclosure relates to the parent/guardian/carer.

As soon as possible afterwards, with the Duty Manager or Learning & Participation Manager make hand written notes of exactly what the child said and the date and time. Including where possible:-

Name of the child.

Parent's/Carer's details.

The child's address.

Relevant phone numbers.

What is said to have happened, or what was seen.

When it occurred.

Who else was there.

What was said by those involved.

Whether there is any actual evidence eg, bruises, bleeding, changed behaviour.

Who has been told about it.

Who was concerned.

Was the child able to say what happened?

Whether the parents/guardians/carers have been advised.

### ***Subsequent Action to be taken***

Meet with the Learning & Participation Manager in order to take a written record of the facts.

The Learning and Participation Manager will then liaise with a member of the Corn Exchange Executive who will then inform the social services of the disclosure who will then liaise with the relevant departments on a need-to-know basis and will, if appropriate, inform the police.

#### **Reporting Procedure where breach of policy is suspected**

Any suspected breaches of this Policy must be reported to a member of the Corn Exchange Executive without delay, so that all allegations can be investigated promptly and thoroughly.

#### **RIGHTS AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

If a complaint or allegation is made against a member of Corn Exchange staff s/he should be made aware of his or her rights under both employment law and internal disciplinary procedures.

## **APPENDIX**

### **DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE**

#### Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scolding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent/guardian/carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child they are looking after.

#### Emotional abuse

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 the child(ren) 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.

#### Sexual abuse

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 non-penetrative acts, as well as touching of any part of the body, clothed or unclothed. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

#### Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic and/or psychological needs. It may involve a parent/guardian/carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

#### Signs and Indicators of Abuse

The signs of physical abuse may include:-  
unexplained bruising, marks or injuries  
bruises that reflect hand marks or fingertips  
cigarette burns  
bite marks  
broken bones  
scalds

Changes in behaviour can also indicate physical abuse:-  
fear of parents being approached for an explanation  
aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts  
flinching when approached or touched  
depression  
withdrawn behaviour

It is important to remember that children and young adults collect cuts and bruises in their daily life. It is important that these can be readily explained.

The signs of sexual abuse may include:-

- stomach pains
- discomfort when walking or sitting down

Changes in behaviour that might indicate sexual abuse include:-

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- running away
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- self harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- saying they have a secret they cannot tell anybody about
- substance or alcohol abuse
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

Some indicators of neglect may include:-

- looking badly presented with old, torn clothing
- always hungry and looking for food
- not being expected to be at home when it seems reasonable that they should be
- adults not seeming to know or be interested in what is happening to them
- becoming thin and under-nourished
- not having what they need for their studies
- not receiving medical attention when it seems appropriate

Emotional abuse can be difficult to identify but changes in behaviour may include:-

- fear of making mistakes
- sudden speech disorders
- self-harm
- fear of parent being approached concerning their behaviour

Further information / guidance can be found at:

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline for adults on 0808 800 5000

Firstcheck: a step by step guide for organisations to safeguard children: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Keeping Arts Safe [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

Local Safeguarding Children Boards: [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/lscb](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/lscb)

Criminal Records Protection Bureau line: 0870 90 90 811 [www.crb.gov.uk](http://www.crb.gov.uk)

Disclosure service [www.disclosure.gov.uk](http://www.disclosure.gov.uk)

Use of Social Media:

[http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/cpsu/resources/briefings/social\\_networking\\_services\\_wdf69029.pdf](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/cpsu/resources/briefings/social_networking_services_wdf69029.pdf)

[www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)