

## 5. Policies

DEP strives through its policies and practices to achieve equality of opportunity in employment and the fair treatment of all applicants and members of staff, issues which it regards as central to its aims and objectives and to be of significant importance

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#### 5.4 Section 4 Child Protection Policy

##### 5.4.1 Child Protection Policy

##### 5.4.2 Image release forms

##### 5.4.3 Parental consent forms

##### 5.4.4 Safeguarding Children and Young People ECM

#### 5.4 Section 4 Child Protection Policy

##### 5.4.1 Child Protection Policy

The Manchester Development Education Project (DEP) is committed to practice that protects children from harm (see appendix). Staff and volunteers in this organisation accept and recognise the responsibilities required to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

We will endeavour to safeguard children by:

- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers;
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and carers, staff and volunteers;
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- following carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers;
- providing effective and appropriate management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

DEP is committed to reviewing our policy and good practice at regular intervals.

### Legislation

DEP is aware of and acts in accordance with the provisions of the following Acts:

- The Children Act 1989;
- Human Rights Act 1998 and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Protection of Children Act 1999;
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

In addition, all new staff, current staff and volunteers likely to have substantial access to children will have the appropriate checks made with the Criminal Records Bureau. DEP will ensure that all other individuals employed by the DEP will work under the close supervision of vetted staff.

All data held and notes generated by the DEP are stored and passed on only in accordance with The Data Protection Acts 1984 and 1998.

DEP's Health and Safety Policy exists under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and is communicated to all staff and volunteers as part of their induction training.

## **Equal Opportunities**

DEP operates under strict Equal Opportunities principles. Any breach of this by staff or volunteers will be dealt with in accordance DEP's Disciplinary and Grievance Policies.

Within the provision of our Child Protection Policy, we recognise the needs of children from minority ethnic groups and children who are disabled and clarify that the procedures apply to all children and young people regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

### **Dealing with concerns about the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children or their neglect**

All staff and volunteers will be made aware of the various ways in which somebody in the organisation may become aware of the actual or likely occurrence of abuse, and of the action that should be taken.

- 1) The Director of the organisation is responsible for dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse. A second individual within the DEP will be identified as responsible in the absence of the Co-ordinator.
- 2) The Director will receive information from staff, volunteers, children or parents and carers who have child protection concerns and record it. If the DEP is working in partnership with another organisation, the information will be shared with the appropriate persons (responsible for child protection).
- 3) The Director (and partner organisation if appropriate) will then assess the information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information about the matter as appropriate.
- 4) The Director (and partner organisation if appropriate) will then consult initially with a statutory child protection agency such as the local social services department or health board, or the NSPCC, to test out any doubts or uncertainty about the concerns as soon as possible.
- 5) The Director (and partner organisation if appropriate) will then make a formal referral to the statutory child protection agency or the police without delay. It is not the role of the Co-ordinator / DEP to decide whether a child has been abused or not.

### **Recruitment and vetting**

The DEP will consider the tasks and skills necessary for each role undertaken by staff or volunteers and therefore, what kind of person is most suited to the post. The selection process in place has been designed to consider and measure all applicants against these key selection criteria.

All applicants are asked to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children if this is appropriate to the position being applied for. This declaration states the requirements under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 to disclose any relevant convictions. All information is treated in strict confidence and is not used against the applicant unfairly.

All staff and volunteers must provide documentation to confirm their identity e.g. birth certificate, national insurance number, passport.

References are obtained from two non-family members and referees are specifically asked to comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children if this is relevant to the role.

All relevant appointments are subject to an Enhanced Criminal Records Certificate from the Criminal Records Bureau.

### **Code of conduct and good practice**

DEP has strict child-centred principles and these are made known to all children, young people, staff and volunteers.

These principles include the right of all children to be listened to, that they have the right to be valued and respected as individuals, that they have the right to be involved in decision making processes as appropriate and that they have the right to praise and encouragement.

All concerned with the projects, including staff, volunteers, children and young people are given clear guidelines on what is expected, and what is not acceptable with respect to their behaviour (see appendix).

In addition, all staff and volunteers are given clear written guidelines regarding good practice (see appendix) when working with children and young people and DEP take every precaution to ensure that

these guidelines are adhered to. Any breach of principles would be subject to action under the Disciplinary and Grievance Policies.

### **Training**

Once recruited, all relevant staff and volunteers are kept well-informed, trained, supervised and supported so that they are less likely to become involved in actions which can lead to harm or be misinterpreted and possibly lead to false allegations being made against them.

The DEP will ensure staff and volunteers are clear about their roles and the limits that apply to them through the provision of an in depth Job Description and through training. They are made aware of the Child Protection Policy and their obligations to other policies such as Health and Safety.

All appointments are subject to a three-month trial period. A criteria for completion of the probationary period is the successful outcome of police checks, during which time the member of staff or volunteer is heavily supervised and particular attention is given to their approach to working with children, if applicable.

DEP holds regular staff meetings and all staff are reviewed on a one-to-one basis regularly, giving both staff and employer the opportunity to address training needs, voice any concerns and agree any action points. All meetings are confidential and should enable staff and volunteers to share any concerns they may have regarding another colleague's behaviour, with a designated person.

### **Complaints**

DEP has laid down procedures for dealing with complaints which will be followed in all instances.

DEP will look at each incident in isolation and will make a decision based on the circumstances governing that particular case when deciding what information needs to be communicated or shared and with whom.

#### **5.4.4: Safeguarding Children and Young People ECM**

DEP, As an educational charity is committed to ensuring our work follows the white paper 'Every Child Matters' (ECM) green paper identified the five outcomes that are most important to children and young people:

1. Be healthy
2. Stay safe
3. Enjoy and achieve
4. Make a positive contribution
5. Achieve economic well-being

The five outcomes are universal ambitions for every child and young person, whatever their background or circumstances. Improving outcomes for all children and young people underpins all of the development and work within children's trusts.

The outcomes are mutually reinforcing. For example, children and young people learn and thrive when they are healthy, safe and engaged; and the evidence shows clearly that educational achievement is the most effective route out of poverty.

Improving outcomes also involves narrowing the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers. The Government is focusing particularly on improving outcomes for looked-after children and children with special educational needs and disabilities, and on reducing the incidence of teenage pregnancy and the number of young people not in education, employment or training.

The Government recognises the crucial role of parents, carers and families in improving outcomes for children and young people and the need to provide support for parents, carers and families in order for them to do so. The Government also recognises the important role of the local community.

To ensure that local children's services reflect the needs of children and young people, local authorities and partners need to ensure there is a good level of participation of children and young people in the design and delivery of services.

For more info see: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/>