

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Ultra Training Limited has a moral, and in many cases statutory, duty to ensure that the company conducts its business with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable young learners.

1.2 Throughout this policy reference is made to “children and young people”. This term is used to mean all children under 16 years of age and also learners aged under 19 who are deemed vulnerable because: they have learning difficulties and/or disabilities; are looked after; are young carers; are statemented; or are at risk of underachieving. The policy should also apply, with appropriate adaptations, to allegations of abuse to and the protection of vulnerable adults.

1.3 Ultra Training is committed to ensuring that it:

- Provides a safe environment for children and young people to learn in
- Identifies children and young people who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, and
- Takes appropriate action to see that such children and young people are kept safe, both at home, in the work place and on company premises

1.4 In pursuit of these aims, the Managing Director will approve and annually review policies and procedures with the aim of:

- Raising awareness of issues relating to the welfare of children and young people and the promotion of a safe environment for the children and young people undertaking programmes of learning with Ultra
- Aiding the identification of children and young people at risk of significant harm, and providing procedures for reporting concerns
- Establishing procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff
- The safe recruitment of staff

1.5 In developing the policies and procedures, the company will consult with, and take account of, guidance issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and other relevant bodies and groups. At a local level guidance will be sought from the Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards (LSCB) and concerns relating to children and young people at risk will, in the first instance, be directed to the relevant LSCB.

1.6 Staff working with children and young people will receive training or guidance adequate to familiarise them with child protection issues and responsibilities and the company’s procedures and policies. There will be a senior member of the operations staff designated the Child Protection Officer who will have special responsibility for child protection issues. The Child Protection Officer will be assisted by other suitably qualified members of staff.

2. DESIGNATED STAFF WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILD PROTECTION

Child Protection Officer

2.1 Kathy Shumacker, Youth Co-ordinator, will act as the company's Child Protection Officer (CPO). The CPO has a key duty to take lead responsibility for raising awareness within the staff of issues relating to the welfare of children and young people, and the promotion of a safe environment for the children and young people learning within the company. The CPO will receive training in child protection issues and inter-agency working, as required by the LSCB, and should keep up to date with developments in child protection issues.

2.2 The CPO is responsible for:

- Overseeing the referral of cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies as agreed with ACPC
- Providing advice and support to other staff on issues relating to child protection
- Maintaining a proper record of any child protection referral, complaint or concern (even where that concern does not lead to a referral)
- Ensuring that children, young people, parents and employers are aware of the company's child protection policy
- Liaising with the LEA and ACPC and other appropriate agencies
- Liaising with secondary schools that utilise the services of the company
- Liaising with employers and other organisations used as work placements or as sub-contracted provision
- Ensuring that staff receive basic training in child protection issues and are aware of the company's child protection procedures.

Designated Staff Members

2.3 Other designated members of staff with responsibility for child protection issues are: Dorothy Freeman, Childcare Assessor/Verifier.

2.4 These designated staff members:

- Assist the CPO
- Will know how to make an appropriate referral
- Will be available to provide advice and support to other staff on issues relating to child protection
- Will deal with individual cases, including attending case conferences and review meetings as appropriate.
- Have received training in child protection issues and inter-agency working, as required by the ACPC.

Managing Director

2.5 The Managing Director has ultimate overall responsibility for child protection issues.

3. DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING CONCERNS

3.1 The procedures for dealing with possible abuse or for reporting concerns should, in the first instance, be guided by the appropriate LSCB which will have established locally agreed inter-agency procedures. The following, however, are guidelines that staff should adopt to address immediate concerns:

3.2 If a child or young person tells a member of staff about possible abuse:

- Allow them to speak without interruption, accepting what is said
- Offer immediate understanding and reassurance, while passing no judgement
- Advise that you will try to offer support but that you must pass the information on
- Immediately inform the CPO and/or designated staff member
- Write careful notes of what was said; use actual words wherever possible
- Sign, date and pass on the notes to the CPO/designated person

3.3 Staff should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves, but should report them immediately to the CPO or designated staff member. The CPO or designated staff member will liaise with the LSCB over what further necessary actions should be taken.

4. ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF

Introduction

4.1 The company recognises that an allegation of abuse made against a member of staff may be made for a variety of reasons and that the facts of the allegation may or may not be true. It is imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind and that investigations are thorough and not subject to delay.

4.2 The company recognises that the Children Act 1989 states that the welfare of the child is the paramount concern. It is also recognised that hasty or ill-informed decisions in connection with a member of staff can irreparably damage an individual's reputation, confidence and career. Therefore, those dealing with such allegations within the company will do so with sensitivity and will act in a careful, measured way.

Receiving an Allegation from a Child or Young Person

4.3 A member of staff who receives an allegation about another member of staff from a child or young person should follow the guidelines detailed above for dealing with disclosure

4.4 The allegation should be reported immediately to the Managing Director, unless the Managing Director is the person against whom the allegation is made, in which case the report should be made to the CPO and a Manager. The Managing Director (or CPO and Manager if the allegation is against the Managing Director) should:

- Obtain written details of the allegation from the person who received it, that are signed and dated. The written details should be countersigned and dated by the Managing Director (or CPO/Manager).
- Record information about times, dates, locations and names of potential witnesses.

Initial Assessment by Managing Director (or CPO/Manager)

4.5 The Managing Director (CPO/Manager) should make an initial assessment of the allegation, consulting with the CPO, designated staff member and the LSCB as appropriate. Where the allegation is considered to be either a potential criminal act or indicates that the child or young person has suffered, is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the matter should be reported immediately to the police and LSCB.

4.6 It is important that the Managing Director (or CPO/Manager) does not investigate the allegation. The initial assessment should be on the basis of the information received and is a decision whether or not the allegation warrants further investigation. Other potential outcomes are:

- The allegation represents inappropriate behaviour or poor practice by the member of staff and is neither potentially a crime nor a cause of significant harm to the child or young person. The matter should be addressed in accordance with company disciplinary procedures.
- The allegation can be shown to be false because the facts alleged could not possibly be true.

Enquiries and Investigations

4.7 Child protection enquiries by social services or the police are not to be confused with internal, disciplinary enquiries by the company. The company may, however, be able to use the outcome of external agency enquiries as part of its own procedures. The company will hold in abeyance its own internal enquiries while the formal police or social services investigations proceed; to do otherwise may prejudice the investigation. Any internal enquiries will conform with the existing staff disciplinary procedures.

4.8 If there is an investigation by an external agency, for example the police, the Managing Director (or CPO/Manager) should normally be involved in, and contribute to, the inter-agency strategy discussions. The Managing Director (or CPO/Manager) is responsible for ensuring that the company gives every assistance with the agency's enquiries. He/she will ensure that appropriate confidentiality is maintained in connection with the enquiries, in the interests of the member of staff about whom the allegation is made. The Managing Director (or CPO/Manager) will advise the member of staff that he/she should consult with a representative, for example, a lawyer or trade union.

4.9 Subject to objections from the police or other investigating agency, the Managing Director (or CPO/Manager) will:

- inform the child/children/young person or parent/carer making the allegation that the investigation is taking place and what the likely process will involve.
- ensure that the parents/carers of the child or young person making the allegation have been informed that the allegation has been made and what the likely process will involve.
- inform the member of staff against whom the allegation was made of the fact that the investigation is taking place and what the likely process will involve.

4.10 The Managing Director (or CPO/Manager) will keep a written record of the action taken in connection with the allegation.

Allegations without foundation

4.11 Obviously false allegations may be indicative of problems of abuse elsewhere. A record should be kept and consideration given to a referral to the LSCB in order that other agencies may act upon the information.

4.12 In consultation with the designated CPO and/or staff member, the Managing Director will:

- inform the member of staff against whom the allegation is made orally and in writing that no further disciplinary or child protection action will be taken.
- inform the parents/carers of the alleged victim that the allegation has been made and of the outcome.
- where the allegation was made by a child or young person other than the alleged victim, consideration to be given to informing the parents/carers of that child or young person.
- prepare a report outlining the allegation and giving reasons for the conclusion that it had no foundation and confirming that the above action had been taken.

Records

4.13 It is important that documents relating to an investigation are retained, together with a written record of the outcome and, if disciplinary action is taken, details retained in the member of staff's personal and confidential file. If a member of staff is dismissed or resigns before the disciplinary process is completed, he/she should be informed about the company's statutory duty to inform the appropriate authorities.

Monitoring Effectiveness

4.14 Where an allegation has been made against a member of staff, the Managing Director, together with the CPO will, at the conclusion of the investigation and any disciplinary procedures, consider whether there are any matters arising from it that could lead to the improvement of the company's procedures and/or policies and/or which should be drawn to the attention of the LSCB. Consideration should also be given to the training needs of staff.

5. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

5.1 The company already has recruitment and selection procedures; however, in terms of child protection the following points need to be re-iterated:

- they should apply to all staff who may work with children or young people.
- the advertised post should be clearly defined.
- the key selection criteria for the post should be identified.
- vacancies should be advertised widely in order to ensure a diversity of applicants.
- the requirement for documentary evidence of academic/vocational qualifications.
- the importance of obtaining professional and character references.
- verification of previous employment history.
- the need to obtain an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure.
- the requirement to use a variety of selection techniques (e.g. qualifications, previous experience, interview, reference checks).

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