**RoadPeace Safeguarding Children Policy**

Safeguarding children is defined in Working together to Safeguard Children as:

* protecting children from maltreatment
* preventing impairment of children’s health or development
* ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
* taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes What is child abuse?

Neglect

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic physical needs or psychological needs, or both. Neglect can happen during pregnancy because of the mother’s substance abuse, or if a father has been violent to a mother during pregnancy. Once a child is born, neglect may happen if a parent:

* doesn't provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter. This would include throwing a young person out of the family home
* fails to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
* doesn’t supervise a child properly. This would include making inadequate childcare- arrangements
* doesn't allow the child access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
* It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

The neglect could be intentional or unintentional, and, if assessing a child for neglect, attention should be paid to both parents, not just the mother.

Physical injury

This could be threat of injury, or an actual physical injury, such as hitting or shaking a child.

Emotional abuse

This is treatment which causes serious damage to a child's emotional development. Examples include:

* constant or unjust punishment
* withholding affection
* telling a child that they are worthless
* not giving a child opportunities to express their views
* preventing a child from taking part in normal social interaction
* letting a child see or hear the ill-treatment of someone else, for example, in a domestic violence situation
* serious bullying, including cyber bullying, causing the child to feel frightened or in danger

All forms of abuse involve some emotional ill-treatment. The abuse could be intentional or unintentional.

Sexual abuse

This is where a child is made to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they know what’s happening and whether or not there is a threat of violence. It may involve:

* physical contact, for example, inappropriate touching or sexual assault
* non-contact activities, such as showing children pornographic images or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)
* using young people in prostitution. All young people under 18 used in prostitution are victims of child sexual abuse
* female genital mutilation.

Domestic abuse

If a child sees or hears domestic violence or abuse between their parents, this could, in itself, amount to child abuse.

Signs of child abuse

Every staff member and volunteer must constantly be alert to signs and symptoms displayed by a child that may indicate that abuse is taking place or that it has done in the past.

* Self-injury or self-destructive behaviours
* Attempting suicide or having suicidal thoughts/feelings
* Eating disorders – anorexia, bulimia, binge eating
* Depression or being consistently withdrawn
* Over-compliant behaviour
* Sleep disturbances/ Obvious lack of sleep/Nightmares
* Promiscuous behaviour
* Prostitution
* Unexplained injuries
* Refusal to discuss any injury/ unable to give any explanation about it
* Aggressive behaviour/Bullying
* Fear of physical contact/Flinching
* Continual self-deprecation
* Inappropriate responses to painful situations
* Social isolation
* Constant attention seeking behaviour
* Compulsive stealing
* Phobias
* Obsessive behaviour
* Drug/Alcohol/Solvent abuse

This list is by no means exhaustive, it is therefore important to be aware of any indication that the child may be suffering some form of abuse.

How to deal with disclosure

* + remain calm, approachable, and receptive
  + listen carefully, without interrupting
  + acknowledge you understand how difficult this may be
  + make it clear that you are taking what is said seriously
  + reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you
  + let them know that you'll do everything you can to help them
  + make a written record of exactly what has been said.

RoadPeace will also support and closely supervise the staff member or volunteer dealing with case.

Reporting procedure

* + Inform your line manager
  + They will then inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead who is the lead on safeguarding
  + A referral will then be made to Social Services – Child Protection Team.
  + If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, you should refer to children’s social care and/or the police. Before doing so, you should try to establish the basic facts. However, it will be the role of social workers and the police to investigate cases and make a judgement on whether there should be a statutory intervention and/or a criminal investigation.

This policy has been drawn in line with legislation and guidance from the following sources:

* + The Children Act 1989
  + The United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child 1992
  + The Human Rights Act 1998
  + The Education Act 2002
  + Sexual Offences Act 2003
  + Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
  + Equality Act 2010
  + Children and Families Act 2014
  + The Children and Social Work Act 2017
  + Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

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