

## **OPDS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **Introduction**

Students have the right to a safe and secure environment throughout their time in the UK, so they can take maximum enjoyment from a range of activities they choose to participate in.

This covers their time whilst at their chosen school / college and their time with a host family during exeat and school holidays.

OPDS aims to assist all students for whom we are Guardian to achieve their full potential, both academically and in terms of personal development. They must be able to participate in and enjoy any activity and to be treated with dignity and respect.

### **1. CHILD PROTECTION STATEMENT**

- 1.1 OPDS is committed to ensuring that all students are protected and kept safe from harm whilst engaged in services organised and provided by the Company. OPDS will also safeguard the welfare of all students who use the services of OPDS or who attend activities within its venues, by protecting them from abuse.
- 1.2 OPDS recognises its responsibilities under the terms of the Children Act 2004, and other relevant legislation, to make arrangements for ensuring that its services are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all situations within the Company's operation, which could potentially involve children or young people. This may include OPDS staff speaking to students on the phone or when students stay with host families for short or long holidays.
- 1.4 The policy affects every OPDS staff member, volunteer and anyone working on behalf of and/or representing the Company.

## **2. DEFINITIONS**

OPDS recognises that:

- 2.1 The term student is used to refer to anyone under the age of 18 years and for whom we have been appointed educational Guardian.
- 2.2 The term parent is used as a generic term to represent anyone with legal parental responsibility.
- 2.3 The terms staff and volunteers are used to refer to employees, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of and/or representing the Company.
- 2.4 All students, irrespective of their age, class, religion, culture, disability, gender, ethnicity or sexual preference have the right to protection.

## **3. THE AIMS OF THE POLICY**

- 3.1 OPDS accepts the moral and legal responsibility to:
- 3.2 Implement procedures.
- 3.3 Provide a duty of care for children and young people. Safeguard their wellbeing and protect them when they are engaged in services organised and provided by the Company or when they come into contact with Company staff and volunteers.

## **4. THE COMPANY AIMS TO DO THIS BY**

- 4.1 Raising an awareness in the Company and beyond of the statutory “duty of care” relating to children and young people and actively encouraging good practice amongst all staff and volunteers.
- 4.2 Creating a safe and healthy environment within all its services, avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur.
- 4.3 Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children and young people. Listening to children and young people, minimising dangers and working closely with other agencies.
- 4.4 Recruiting, training, supervising and supporting staff and volunteers who work with children and young people to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and young people from abuse, and themselves against false allegations. Staff and volunteers who work with children and young people must pass an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.
- 4.5 Responding to any allegations appropriately and implementing the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- 4.6 Requiring staff and volunteers to adopt and abide by the Company’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy together with procedures and good practice guidelines that may be published from time to time.

## **5. Actions to achieve these aims include:**

- 5.1 The general safety and well being of children and young people will be promoted within all Company services and good practice guidelines developed so that good working practices are maintained.
- 5.2 Training will be given to staff and volunteers in the Company on child protection procedures and good practice and further training to enable them to recognise the potential signs and indicators of abuse and to improve good practice.
- 5.3 Procedures will be provided for staff and volunteers describing the actions they should take if they have concerns or encounter a case of alleged or suspected child abuse, so that they will be confident and able to record and respond to incidents following the procedures.

## **6. THE PROMOTION OF THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

OPDS recognises its staff could have the potential to abuse children or young people. OPDS will therefore make every attempt to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and young people.

### **6.1 Recruitment and Selection**

The following procedures will be adhered to for the safety of children and young people: -

- 6.1.1 All staff with access to children and young people whether voluntary or paid must provide at least two references, which must be received and accepted as satisfactory to the Company before employment commences. One referee must be current, or if the applicant is not employed, the most recent employer
- 6.1.2 References must cover the last three years of employment and if in education be provided by the course tutor. Referees must be previous employers, not friends and must not be related to the applicant.
- 6.1.3 All new staff with access to children and young people are to be advised that the Company will require them to complete Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks.
- 6.1.4 Confirmation of employment will be subject to the receipt of necessary clearance.
- 6.1.5 DBS disclosures should be renewed every 3 years.
- 6.1.6 Where a subsequent DBS check shows concerns, staff may be asked to leave the company.

## **6.2 USE OF CONTRACTORS**

- 6.2.1 OPDS and its staff and volunteers take care that contractors doing work on behalf of the Company are all subject to an enhanced DBS check before we use their services. We request that any changes in the circumstances of any (sub) contractor be notified to OPDS, such that we can monitor this appropriately. Any contractor or sub-contractor, engaged by the Company in areas where workers are likely to come into contact with children and young people, should have a similarly robust Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.
- 6.2.2 Contractors will be monitored by the Officer responsible for the contract who will record the degree of compliance with this policy and take the appropriate action should the required standards cease to be adhered to.

## **7. INDUCTION AND TRAINING**

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be given to staff, volunteers and host families to recognise their responsibilities with regard to their own good practice and the reporting of suspected poor practice and concerns or allegations of abuse. The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy informs members of staff what conduct is expected and advises situations to avoid in order to protect themselves from allegations.

This will include the following:

- 7.1 All staff will receive an introduction to this policy  
7.2 All staff with some possible contact with children and young people will receive appropriate guidance on best practices.

## **8. PROCEDURES**

These procedures inform staff and volunteers of what actions they should take if they have concerns or encounter a case of alleged or suspected child abuse, i.e. response actions. The procedures apply to all OPDS staff and volunteers.

### **8.1 RESPONDING TO CONCERNS AND ALLEGATIONS: General Procedures**

- 8.1.1 It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware that the first person that has concerns or encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse

has occurred. However, staff and volunteers do have a duty of care to the child or young person and they undertake to report any suspicions they may have to the Director, Sunny Field (Designated Officer) in the first instance.

- 8.1.2 In general there are 3 situations that staff and volunteers may need to respond to a concern or case of alleged or suspected abuse:
- 8.1.2.1 Responding to a child or young person disclosing abuse, i.e. they make an allegation of abuse
  - 8.1.2.2 Responding to allegations or concerns about a member of staff or volunteer from your own observation or due to a complaint.
  - 8.1.2.3 Responding to allegations or concerns about any other person, i.e. parent, carer, other service user

OPDS has a Named Director with overall responsibility for ensuring the organisation has appropriate arrangements in place of the management of allegations against staff/ volunteers/students. This is Sunny Field – Designated Officer.

## **8.2 REPORTING INCIDENTS**

It is the duty of any member, Company employee or volunteer to:

- 8.2.1 Report any concerns about a child being subject to abuse.
- 8.2.2 Receive a disclosure.
- 8.2.3 Report if they are aware of members or colleagues behaving in an inappropriate manor.

All reports are confidential and will be handled in the same way and with respect to the person raising the concern regardless of the outcome

## **8.3 DETAIL TO BE RECORDED**

You should record in writing all the details that you are aware of and what was said using the child or young person's own words, immediately. In your record you should include the following using the form in Appendix 2:

- 8.3.1 The date and time of the report
- 8.3.2 The child or young persons name, address and date of birth
- 8.3.3 The nature of the allegation
- 8.3.4 Your observations – e.g. a description of the child or young persons behaviour and physical and emotional state and a description of any visible injuries.
- 8.3.5 Exactly what the child or young person said and what you said. Record the child or young persons account of what has happened as close as possible.
- 8.3.6 Sign and date what you have recorded.

Do not ask any leading questions, other than the child or young persons name, address and date of birth. Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing in telling you. Inform the child you will pass on this information to someone who can help them.

## **8.4 CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 8.4.1 Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only, i.e. Designated Person, Social Services or Police. It is extremely important that allegations or concerns are not discussed, as any breach of confidentiality could be damaging to the child or young person, their family, those who are the subject of allegations and any child protection investigations that may follow.
- 8.4.2 Informing the parents of a child or young person of concerns you may have should be done in consultation with Social Services. Parents will not be informed if they are the subject of the allegation.
- 8.4.3 However, any individual against whom an allegation has been made has the right to be notified about the cause for concern. This should be done in joint consultation with Social Services and the Police. It is important that the timing of this does not prejudice the investigation.
- 8.4.4 Recorded information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to Designated Persons, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure). If enquiries arise from the public or any branch of the media, it is vital that all staff and volunteers are briefed so that they do not make any comments regarding the situation. Staff and volunteers should make no comment and direct all enquiries to the Designated Leader

## **8.5 PHOTOGRAPHY**

Staff and volunteers should be vigilant at all times regarding people using cameras or videos within OPDS services and at events or activities which involve children and young people. Consent must be sought from parents when cameras and other image recorders are used to picture children and young people.

## 9. THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED PERSON

- 9.1 The designated person will be the Director responsible for Guardian students who will have the duty to ensure that this role is implemented.
- 9.2 Where information is reported that a person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, or otherwise believed to be a child in need the concerns will be referred to the local Social Services Authority for the area in which the alleged offence has taken place. Support will also be given by reporting the incident to the Police if this is deemed appropriate and necessary by the local Social Services Authority.

In General:

- 9.3 Professionals should seek, in general, to discuss any concerns with the family and, where possible, seek their agreement to make a referral, this should only be done where such discussion and (such referral) agreement seeking, **will not** place a child at increased risk of significant harm.”
- 9.4 Where the circumstances of the referral indicate the possible commission or attempted commission of a criminal offence, the matter will also be referred to the local Police for the area in which the alleged offence has taken place. This will enable the Police and Social Services to consider jointly how to proceed in the best interests of the child.
- 9.5 The Designated Person will keep the records of reports in a secure place.
- 9.6 The Designated Person will establish with the reporting person whether Parental permission should be sought.
- 9.7 Personal information about referrers, including identifying details, will only be disclosed to third parties (including subject families and other agencies) with the consent of the referrer

## 10. The Concept of Significant Harm

- 10.1 Some children may be suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm, either as a result of a deliberate act, or of a failure on the part of a parent, guardian, host family or carer to act or to provide proper care. These children need to be made safe from harm, alongside meeting their other needs.
- 10.2 The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children.

The local authority is under a duty to make enquiries, or cause enquiries to be made, where it has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm (S.47). A court may only make a care order (committing the child to the care of the local authority) or supervision order (putting the child under the supervision of a social worker, or a probation officer) in respect of a child if it is satisfied that:

10.2.1 The child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm; *and*

10.2.2 That the harm or likelihood of harm is attributable to a lack of adequate parental care or control

10.3 There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. However, to understand and establish significant harm, it is necessary to consider:

10.3.1 The family context and the child's development within the context of their family,

10.3.2 Wider social and cultural environment;

10.3.3 Any special needs, such as a medical condition, communication difficulty or disability that may affect the child's development and care within the family;

10.3.4 The nature of harm, in terms of ill-treatment or failure to provide adequate care;

10.3.5 The impact on the child's health and development; *and*,

10.3.6 The adequacy of parental care.

10.4 For those children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, joint working is essential, to safeguard the children and – where necessary – to help bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against children. All agencies and professionals must:

10.4.1 Be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect;

10.4.2 Be alert to the risks which abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children;

10.4.3 Share and help to analyse information so that an informed assessment can be made of the child's needs and circumstances.

10.4.4 Contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard the child and promote his or her welfare;

10.4.5 Regularly review the outcomes for the child against specific shared objectives; *and*,

10.4.6 Work co-operatively with parents unless this is inconsistent with the need to ensure the child's safety.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Sources of information / support**

#### **ChildLine**

Offer a free helpline for children and young people in the UK. children and young people can call to talk about any problem [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)  
Phone 0800 1111

#### **NSPCC**

Information for children and adults  
[www.nspcc.org.uk/html/home/needadvice/needadvice.htm](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/html/home/needadvice/needadvice.htm)  
Phone 0808 800 5000

#### **Designated Person:**

Mrs. Sunny Field  
Director  
Overseas Personal Development Services Ltd.  
40c Waddington Avenue  
Old Coulsdon  
Surrey  
CR5 1QF

Tel: 020 8660 8869  
Mobile: 07936 899 333  
Fax: 020 8668 5585  
E-Mail: [sunny.field@opds.co.uk](mailto:sunny.field@opds.co.uk)

**Appendix 2**

**Child Protection Incident Report Form**

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<b><u>Name of child:</u></b>	<b><u>Child's name (if known):</u></b>	<b><u>Child's date of birth:</u></b>
Incident:	Child's gender – M / F	
Where incident occurred (if known):		

**Referral/Disclosure Details:**

Name of Referrer:

Contact Number:

**Brief factual description of abuse:**

Suspected / Alleged / Actual

**Age Band of Child:**

16-19

Information about the alleged abuser:

**Gender:** Female  Male:

**Relationship to child** (e.g. partner, spouse relative, friend, neighbour, volunteer, paid carer, stranger, passer-by, other service provider etc):

**Have discussions taken place with other key professionals?**

Yes  No  If yes, give details:

**If yes, please tick all those involved:**

Social Care

Police

Health

Designated person

Please give name(s) of those involved

Type of Abuse Alleged:

**(please tick all that apply)**

Physical:

Sexual:

Psychological/Emotional:

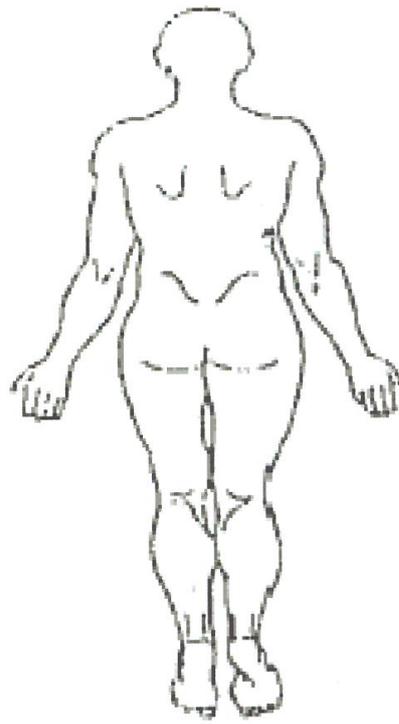
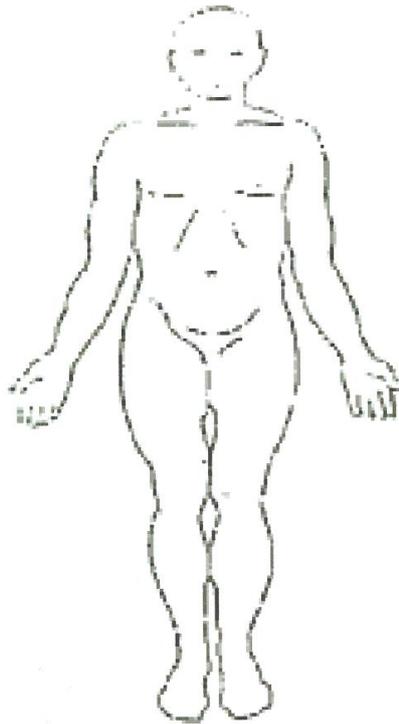
Neglect/Acts of omission:

Physical Injury Charts

Indicate position on body of marks or injuries, note colour of injury, whether is skin broken anything else of relevance.

**Child Front**

**Child Back**



**Child right**

**Child right**

Keep your answers factual, tell us what you heard / saw, and what you said and did. Use injury charts above.

What explanation for injuries / marks was given, and by whom?

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1. Did you observe the alleged abuse?      Yes       No
2. Or was it reported to you?      Yes       No  (see below)
3. Or was it disclosed by the child?      Yes       No

If it was reported to you, by whom was it reported?

Full Name:

Relationship to child (e.g. partner, spouse relative, friend, neighbour, volunteer, paid carer, stranger, passer-by, other service provider etc):

Please forward this form electronically to: [sunny.field@opds.co.uk](mailto:sunny.field@opds.co.uk)  
If you do not have access to a computer, put the completed form in an envelope marked  
'Confidential and Urgent' for the attention of:

The Child Protection Designated Person  
Mrs Sunny Field  
Overseas Personal Development Services Ltd.  
40c Waddington Avenue  
Old Coulsdon  
Surrey  
CR5 1QF

**London Office**

40c Waddington Avenue  
Old Coulsdon  
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E-Mail: [info@opds.cn](mailto:info@opds.cn)  
[www.opds.cn](http://www.opds.cn)

## Appendix 3

### Contact Details

#### Local Safeguarding Children Board in Croydon Council:

Telephone: 0208 604 7275

#### Local Authority Designated Officer in Croydon Council:

Telephone: 020 8726 6000 Ext.84322

Email: [LADO@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@croydon.gov.uk)

Address: 4th Floor, Zone F, Bernard Weatherill House, 8 Mint Walk, Croydon, CR0 1EA

#### London Office

40c Waddington Avenue  
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