

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

It is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and Downright Excellent recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

Purpose of this policy

The purpose of the Downright Excellent safeguarding children policy is to ensure that procedures are in place so that every child who attends is safe and protected from harm and abuse.

This policy will give clear direction to team members, volunteers, members of the Board, families, carers and visitors about how to ensure our children and young people are kept safe, and how any safeguarding concerns are managed.

Introduction

Downright Excellent recognises the importance of protecting children from harm and abuse and supporting and promoting the welfare of all children who attend. The key elements of our policy are prevention, protection and support.

The Children Acts 1989 and 2004 state that a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Therefore, when this policy uses the word 'child' or 'children' it is referring to 'children and young people' up to the age of 18.

This policy applies to:

1. Anyone working on behalf of Downright Excellent, including all team members, including managers and the board of trustees, paid members of the team, volunteers and sessional workers, agency workers, students or anyone working on behalf of Downright Excellent's services (referred to as team members and volunteers).
2. The parents, carers, siblings or similar using Downright Excellent's services or accompanying a child or young person who is using Downright Excellent's services (referred to as parents and carers).
3. Children or young people themselves who are Downright Excellent service users (referred to as children or young people).

These shall collectively be referred to as the '*DEx community*' in this document (except where a specific group is necessarily being referred to).

Our Ethos:

Downright Excellent promotes an ethos where children attending feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened to. We recognise that many of the children attending are particularly vulnerable because they have special educational needs and many are completely dependent on adult support for all aspects of care which includes intimate care.

In particular:

- We seek to provide all our children with the necessary support to keep them safe and build their self-esteem and self-confidence.
- We want children who attend Downright Excellent to feel able to communicate freely to any member of the team and volunteers if they are worried or concerned about something.
- All members of the team and volunteers will, through induction and training, know how to recognise, respond to and report concerns about a child and know how to manage a disclosure made by a child.
- We will not make promises to a child we cannot keep and we will not keep secrets. Every child will be told, by the adult they have chosen to communicate with, what will happen next.
- Downright Excellent will endeavour to provide activities and opportunities within its structure that will equip children with the skills they need to stay safe. This will also be extended to include material that will encourage children to develop essential life skills.
- At all times we will work to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers and colleagues from other agencies.

PROCEDURES:

Induction

When new members of the team, board and volunteers join Downright Excellent they will be informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place and given a copy of this policy. This will include being told who the Safeguarding Team consists of and their roles. A hard copy will be kept at the Sundial Centre for reference.

When new families join Downright Excellent, and at each annual assessment/interview carried out with all families, the parents and/or the carers will be informed that we have a safeguarding policy. This will be offered to families and carers in whatever format is most appropriate for them (ie. via link to the website, email or hard copy as appropriate). Families and carers will be informed who the members of Downright Excellent's safeguarding team are, their roles and how they can be contacted. Families and carers will also be informed of our legal and statutory duty to assist our colleagues in social care with child protection enquiries and what happens should we have cause to make a referral to another agency.

The induction programme for new team members and volunteers will ensure that each individual is talked through this policy and how we apply it at DEx in all of our communications and interactions, including face-to-face, online, on the phone. Team members and volunteers will be shown where the hard copy policy is kept, along with reporting forms (electronic and hard copies). It will be explained to them how the form should be filled out and how to ensure data is protected in line with data protection legislation and best practice. They will be introduced to the safeguarding leads. As part of

their induction, all team members and volunteers will be given basic safeguarding information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage disclosure from a child, when and how to record a concern about welfare of a child. They will also be required to take the NSPCC's online training course, 'Child protection: an introduction' and gain the certificate to show that they have successfully completed the training.

Safeguarding children training

The Department for Education's (DfE) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018 document states that those 'in regular contact with children and young people or with adults who are parents and carers' should have access to basic safeguarding children training.

Furthermore, the document states that appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking safeguarding training should be given by the organisation.

All members of the team and volunteers who are in regular contact with children will need to attend basic safeguarding children training every 3 years – currently, we require each member of the DEx team, which includes volunteers, to complete the NSPCC's Safe Network on-line training, as referenced above. Members of the safeguarding team, who have particular responsibilities, will attend more comprehensive training at a higher level provided by the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership) and in-house.

Recording and reporting concerns about the safety and welfare of a child

"No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action." (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 p.5)

The DEx Team needs to maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" where safeguarding is concerned (Keeping children safe in education 2018).

All concerns about safety and welfare of a child must be taken seriously.

The recording process

- All members of the team, Board and volunteers have a responsibility to take prompt action if they are concerned about the safety and welfare of a child, and if they think the welfare of the child was or is being affected then a concern form should be recorded.
- Any member of the DEx community should speak to the safeguarding lead in the first instance (or deputy lead or Trustee lead if that is more appropriate in the circumstances).
- If a child is suffering or likely to suffer 'significant harm' (see appendix A) action must be taken immediately.

- The Downright Excellent's Reporting Concerns about a Child form ensures that essential information is recorded. It must be completed in every detail. These forms are kept in the locked filing cabinet at Sundial in the Store Room; Joana, Beth and Ann hold keys and will provide Incident forms. All incidents must be recorded on the day of the incident before the involved persons leave. After completing the form, the person/s must then discuss further action with the Downright Excellent Designated Safeguarding Officer or to the authorised person acting in their absence. They must agree the action/s to be taken and by whom and the review date/s.

Non-urgent or low-level concerns

All concerns about a child should initiate some form of action.

Some concerns that are of a non-urgent or low-level nature may not, in themselves, reach the threshold of significant harm. If a pattern of concerns is noted, this may suggest emotional abuse or neglect and must still be recorded centrally using Downright Excellent's Incident Report system. Parents or carers should be informed of the concern, **unless** informing them would put the child at risk of harm.

Recording and acting upon low level or non-urgent concerns about a child is important in order to recognise the cumulative effect of some types of abuse. The records may be needed by the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership

Informing parents and carers

We ensure that parents and carers have an understanding of our responsibility to promote the safety and welfare of children by making our obligations clear to each other during initial assessments /interviews and thereafter during the annual assessments / interviews, or appropriate times.

In most cases parents and carers should be informed when concerns have been raised about their child. It is important that parents and carers are given an opportunity to address concerns raised.

Parents or carers **must not** be informed if it is believed that doing so would put the child at risk, for example if the child has made a disclosure of sexual or physical abuse by the parent or carer.

In this event, immediate advice should be sought from the Children and Families Service's Initial Assessment Team.

The role of the Board

Downright Excellent's Board is accountable and will ensure that:

- All members of the team, which includes volunteers, hold a current enhanced clearance certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service (police checks). This is initiated during the recruitment process. These are reviewed by DEx every 2 years.
- The policies and procedures adopted and reviewed by the Board are fully communicated and implemented by all members of the team and volunteers.
- Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the safeguarding team to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussions and training.

- All members of the team and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner.
- Downright Excellent operates safe recruitment practices, including appropriate use of references and checks on new members of the team and volunteers.
- A member of the Board is responsible for championing safeguarding children issues. This person liaises with the Downright Excellent's safeguarding team and provides information to the Board.
- Downright Excellent has a safeguarding team consisting of a Designated Safeguarding Officer, CEO and the Safeguarding Trustee. The team must undertake appropriate training and attend refresher training every 2 years.
- Downright Excellent follows local safeguarding procedures and this policy is reviewed bi-annually or as a response to lessons to be learned from safeguarding investigation, complaint or incident or legislative and statutory changes
- There is a whistle blowing policy and a procedure for dealing with allegations made against a member of the team and volunteers.
- Anonymised reports are provided to the Board relating to reported safeguarding concerns and actions arising from them, on a six-monthly basis.
- All members of the DEx community are aware of Downright Excellent's safeguarding children arrangements.
- Any deficiencies or weaknesses that lead to poor or unsafe practices in regard to children are brought to the attention of the Board to be rectified.

The role of the Safeguarding Team

The Safeguarding Team have a specific responsibility for championing the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people attending Downright Excellent.

The role of the Safeguarding Team includes:

Referrals to Children and Families Service

- Ensuring all actions are in line with the local authority's Safeguarding Procedure.
- Supporting and enabling members of the team and volunteers to report concerns that a child is being abused.
- Holding a copy of all referrals made to the Children and Families Service and referrals to other agencies related to safeguarding children matters (in line with GDPR requirements).
- Liaison with the trustee with responsibility for leading on safeguarding to inform them of any issues and on-going investigations.

Training

- Ensuring members of the team and volunteers have received information of safeguarding children at induction.
- Making sure members of the team and volunteers receive local authority or other approved safeguarding training at least every 3 years and all receive training appropriate to their role.

- Ensuring all staff with specific responsibility for safeguarding children attend more in-depth training.
- Ensuring all members of the team and volunteers understand internal reporting and recording systems and are clear about what they do if they are worried about a child.

Raising awareness

- Ensure all members of the team and volunteers are aware of Downright Excellent's safeguarding policy and it is readily available and reviewed annually.

Recording concerns

- Managing Downright Excellent's Incident Reporting system and ensuring all members of the team are aware of their responsibilities to record and highlight as required in compliance with GDPR requirements, electronic and hard copy security and safeguarding

Child protection Conference and core groups

Members of the team may be asked to attend a child protection conference and / or relevant core group meetings, on behalf of Downright Excellent, in respect of an individual child.

The person attending from Downright Excellent will often be the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Senior Speech and Language Therapist, however another member of the team may be asked to attend depending on their role or involvement with the child. The person attending will need to have as much relevant up-to-date information about the child as possible.

A child protection conference will be convened if it is considered the child/ren are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm. Review conference and regular core group meetings will be held to monitor the child protection plan.

All reports for child protection conference will be prepared in advance of the meeting. The information contained in the report will be shared with parents / carers at the conference and will include information relating to the child's physical, emotional and intellectual development.

Child protection conferences can be upsetting for parents / carers. We will work in an open and honest way with all parents and carers. Our responsibility is to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and our aim is to achieve this in partnership with our families.

Managing allegations and concerns against members of the team and volunteers

Any allegation made against a member of the Downright Excellent team (voluntary or paid) will be dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child, and at the same time supports the person who is subject to the allegation.

Safe Recruitment and Selection of Team Members

All recruitment will follow the policies and procedures agreed by the Board.

Complaints or Concerns Expressed by Children, Young People, Families, Team Members or Volunteers

In accordance with the DEx ethos, all complaints and concerns will be dealt with sensitively and in accordance with the safeguarding policy and procedure. It is important that children and young people have a voice and are confident that they will be listened to, and that they are valued.

Downright Excellent will seek to ensure that the child or adult who makes the complaint is informed not only of the action DEx will take but also the length of time that will be required to resolve the complaint. Downright Excellent will also endeavour to keep the child or adult regularly informed as to the progress of his/her complaint.

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Appendix A – Definitions of Abuse

Appendix B – Safeguarding contact details

Appendix A

Definitions of Abuse

Significant Harm The threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life and gives Local Authorities a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Physical Abuse Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, an illness in a child.

Sexual Abuse Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to part take 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. The activities may include non-contact activities, such as involving children looking at, or in the production of sexual on-line images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse, for example.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (inc. the use of inadequate care-takers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Emotional Abuse Emotional abuse, including domestic abuse, is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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 and unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capacity, as well as over protection and the limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing a child in participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Appendix B

Safeguarding contact details

Position/supporting agency	Named person	Contact No	Website/ email address
Safeguarding Officer			Sandra@downrightexcellent.com
Working with the CEO and Safeguarding trustee	Sandra Redman	07765 865758	
CEO	Hannah Kowszun	07753 240022	hannah@downrightexcellent.org
Safeguarding Trustee	Christina Leath	07972 602939	christina@signaturesafeguarding.co.uk