



Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty, the Environment & Child  
Support (CAPECS)

# Child Protection Policy

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## Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty, the Environment & Child Support (CAPECS)

### Introduction

This policy aims to provide all staff (paid and unpaid), children and young people, and their families with a clear and secure framework for ensuring that all children are protected from harm.

As an organization, CAPECS believes in supporting all aspects of children and young people's development and learning, and keeping children safe.

We understand that emotional and social aspects of children create a foundation for their growth and development. If a child has not been supported to understand, express and resolve their feelings, they may not have the ability to share with other children, resolve the small conflicts that arise in day-to-day life, or concentrate on learning. Their frustrations may cause a range of antisocial, disruptive, overly compliant or withdrawn behaviours.

All staff will work to ensure that:

- Children and young people feel listened to, valued and respected
- Staff are aware of indicators of abuse and know how to share their concerns appropriately
- All paid and unpaid staff are subject to rigorous recruitment procedures
- All paid and unpaid staff are given appropriate support and training

CAPECS staff will play a crucial role in helping to identify welfare concerns, and indicators of possible abuse or neglect.

In order to ensure children are adequately protected, we will ensure that:

- We have a designated child protection officer (CPO)
- All staff are trained in basic Child Protection awareness every three years
- All staff have read and understood the Child Protection Policy and are aware of the indicators of child abuse and how to respond to concerns or disclosures of abuse by children
- The child protection policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the CPO and the board of trustees



## Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty, the Environment & Child Support (CAPECS)

### Recognising Abuse

In the Children's Act of 1998, a child is a person below the age of eighteen years.

For purposes of this policy, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is:

- 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;
- undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

#### 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, illness in a child.

#### Emotional abuse

Emotional 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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. This can also occur when a child is a young carer for a parent who is disabled, has mental health problems or misuses alcohol or drugs.
- It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another – for example where there is fighting or violence in the home.
- It may involve serious bullying (including via electronic media), causing children frequently to 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.

#### Sexual abuse



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Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

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

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
  - protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
  - ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or
  - ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.



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### The Designated Child Protection Officer

The designated child protection officer (CPO) takes the lead responsibility for child protection, including support for other staff and information sharing with other agencies, developing policies and staff training. Usually, the CPO is also the named person who responds to [allegations](#) made against members of staff.

The CPO should be a senior member of staff with the authority and seniority to carry out the functions of the role.

#### CPO Responsibilities

- Refer suspected abuse and neglect to the appropriate authorities
- Report allegations made against members of staff management
- Develop and update the Child Protection and other safeguarding policies, ensuring that staff and children/families/parents are aware of them
- Provide support and advice to all members of staff within the setting regarding child protection concerns
- Keep the Program Manager informed about any issues that arise
- Ensure that cover is provided for the role when absent from the setting
- Ensure that all staff receive appropriate Child Protection and Safeguarding Training, and maintain training records

#### Other Staff's Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all other members of staff to ensure that all safeguarding concerns, both minor and serious, are reported to the CPO as soon as reasonably possible.

The CPO may have other information regarding a child, young person or their family of which other staff may not be aware. Minor concerns may take on greater significance within the wider context of knowledge of a child or family that the CPO may have.



## Child Protection Procedures

1. **You have a concern about a child / young person's wellbeing,** based on:

- a. Something the child / young person / parent has told you
- b. Something you have noticed about the child's behaviour, health, or appearance
- c. Something another professional said or did

Even if you think your concern is minor, the CPO may have more information that, together with what you know, represents a more serious worry about a child.

It is never your decision alone how to respond to concerns – but it is always your responsibility to share concerns, no matter how small.

2. **Decide whether you need to find out more** by asking the child / young person, or their parent to clarify your concerns, being careful to use open questions:

...beginning with words like: 'how', 'why', 'where', 'when', 'who'?

3. **Let the child / young person / parent know what you plan to do next** if you have heard a disclosure of abuse or you are talking with them about your concerns. Do **not** promise to keep what s/he tells you secret.

...for example, 'I am worried about your bruise and I need to tell Mrs Smith so that she can help us think about how to keep you safe'

4. **Inform the CPO immediately.** If the CPO is not available, inform the Program Manager or his designated deputy or other member of staff. If there is no other member of staff available, you must make the referral yourself.

5. **Make a written record** as soon as possible after the event, noting:

- a. Name of child
- b. Date, time and place
- c. Who else was present
- d. What was said / What happened / What you noticed  
... speech, behaviour, mood, drawings, games or appearance



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- e. If child or parent spoke, record their words rather than your interpretation
  - f. Analysis of what you observed & why it is a cause for concern
6. The **CPO shares information with other relevant professionals**, recording reasons for sharing information and ensuring that they are aware of what action the other professionals will take as a result of information shared
7. The **CPO remains in close communication with other professionals around the child / young person** and with the family, in order to share any updates about the child / young person

If a child protection investigation is pursued, the CPO and other key staff will:

- Work closely and collaboratively with all professionals involved in the investigation, to keep the child / young person safe
- Attend a child protection conference when invited and provide updated information about the child
- Attend any subsequent child protection review conferences.
- Attend core group meetings and take an active role in the implementation of the protection plan.



## Safe Practice

### Safer Recruitment

At least one member of staff on every recruitment panel has undertaken training in Child Protection.

Safer Recruitment processes aim to:

1. Deter potential abusers by setting high standards of practice and recruitment.
2. Reject inappropriate candidates at the application and interview stages
3. Prevent abuse to children by developing robust policies and agreeing on safe practice

### Allegations Against Staff

Allegations of abuse can be made by children and young people and they can be made by other concerned adults.

All allegations against staff or volunteers should be immediately brought to the attention of the CPO.

If an allegation is made against the CPO, this should be brought to the attention of the Program Manager.

The CPO should take the following actions:

- Ensure that the child reporting the allegation is safe and away from the member of staff against whom the allegation is made

Suspension should be considered when:

- There is a cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm or
- The allegation warrants investigation by the police or
- The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal

Any disciplinary investigation should be carried out once the child protection investigation has been completed.

### Staff Conduct

In order to protect children, young people and members of staff, we encourage staff to follow our professional code of conduct. This covers appropriate dress, the use of appropriate boundaries, social contact outside setting (including on social networking sites), the receiving and giving of gifts and favouritism, and the safe use of technology.

- Being alone with the child / young person
- Physical contact / restraint
- Social contact outside setting / appropriate boundaries
- Gifts & favouritism
- Behaviour management
- Intimate care
- Safe use of technology (Security / Internet / mobile phones / digital images of children, etc)
- Appropriate use of social networking sites

Appropriate and safe staff conduct is supported in the following policies:





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### **Child Protection Training**

The CPO will keep detailed records of all staff's child protection training and will issue reminders when training updates are required. It is good practice to include a safeguarding and child protection agenda item in all staff meetings.

All paid and unpaid members of staff, undertake single-agency, basic awareness child protection training once every three years.

In addition, the designated members of staff will undertake multi-agency training every two years.

### **Implementation, Dissemination & Review Strategies**

This policy is reviewed annually by the CPO and is approved by the board of Trustees.

All members of staff read and agree to the child protection policy before the start of their employment.



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**Appendix 1: Staff acknowledgement form**

Name	<input type="text"/>
Job Title	<input type="text"/>
I have read this Child Protection Policy and I understand my role with regards to Child Protection in this setting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Signature	<input type="text"/>
Date	<input type="text"/>