

# St. Dennis Band

## Child Protection Policy and Procedures

**Issue: 5 Date 19/01/2018**

### Child Protection Policy

1. St Dennis Band believes that it is always unacceptable for a child, young person or vulnerable adult to experience abuse of any kind and recognise our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all band members by a commitment to a practice which protects them.

2. We recognise that:

- The welfare of band members is paramount.
- All band members regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Working in partnership with band members, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

3. The purposes of the policy are:

- To provide protection for band members.
- To provide the Executive Committee, tutors and other volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt if they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm. This policy, therefore, applies to everyone working for or with the band.

4. We will endeavour to safeguard band members by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for the Executive Committee, tutors and other volunteers.
- Recruiting the Executive Committee, tutors and other volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with band members, parents, the Executive Committee, tutors and other volunteers.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Providing effective supervision, support and training for the Executive Committee, tutors and other volunteers.

5. We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

### Code of Conduct

6. The Executive Committee, tutors and voluntary helpers must:

- Treat all band members with respect.
- Provide an example of the good conduct you wish others to follow.
- Ensure that whenever possible there is more than one adult present during activities with band members, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others.
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy, whilst encouraging young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or

behaviour they do not like.

- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned.
- Be aware that physical contact with a band member may be misinterpreted.
- Recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with band members.
- Operate within our principles and guidance and any specific procedures.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse.

7. You must not:

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with band members.
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour/make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of band members.
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts.
- Either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.
- Show favouritism to any individual.
- Rely on your good name or that of the St Dennis Band to protect you.
- Take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach.

## **Abuse**

8. Abuse may take a number of forms, and may be classified under the following headings:

**Neglect:** This is where adults fail to meet a child's basic needs like food, shelter, warm clothing or medical care, or to protect them from physical harm. Children might also be constantly left alone or unsupervised.

**Physical Abuse:** This is where someone physically hurts or injures children, for example by hitting, shaking, throwing, squeezing, burning, suffocating and biting or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Giving children alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute physical abuse.

**Sexual Abuse:** Adults or other children, both male and female, who use children to meet their own sexual needs, can abuse girls and boys. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, or fondling. Showing children pornographic material is also a form of sexual abuse.

**Emotional Abuse:** Persistent lack of love and affection, where children may be led to believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve the child being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child very nervous and withdrawn. It may also feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. Emotional abuse also occurs when there is constant overprotection, which prevents children from socialising. Emotional abuse in banding might include situations where children are subjected by a parent or tutor to constant criticism, name-calling, sarcasm, bullying, racism or unrealistic pressure in order to perform to high expectations.

**Bullying:** This may be bullying of a child by an adult or another child. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling, graffiti, abusive text messages transmitted by phone or on the internet), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

9. Indicators of abuse may include one or more of the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent.
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her.
- Someone else – a child or adult, expresses concern about the welfare of a child.
- Unexplained changes in a child's behaviour – e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of temper - or behaviour changing over time.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour in games.
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Difficulty in making friends.
- Being prevented from socialising with other children.
- Displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite.
- Losing weight for no apparent reason.
- Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.

10. Signs of bullying may include:

- Behavioural changes such as reduced concentration or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctant to go to band rehearsals or to competitions.
- An unexplained drop-off in standard of performance.
- Physical signs such as stomach-aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bedwetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes and bingeing on food, cigarettes or alcohol.
- A shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions.

### **Responding to Suspicions and Allegations**

11. Many cases of child abuse in fact take place within the family setting. However, abuse can and does occur in other situations as well, which may include brass banding or other social activities, and is rarely a one-off event when it occurs within such a setting. It is crucial that those involved in the Band are aware of this possibility and that allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action taken. It is, however, **NOT** the responsibility of anyone in the Band to decide whether or not child abuse is taking place. Our responsibility is to inform appropriate agencies of possible abuse so that they can then make inquiries and take any necessary action to protect the child. This applies both to suspicions of abuse occurring within the Band and to allegations that abuse is taking place elsewhere. This section explains how you should respond to such concerns.

12. We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening ourselves; we may suspect that it is occurring because of signs such as those listed above; it may be reported to us by someone else, or directly by the child affected. In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a child says or indicates that he or she is being abused, or information is obtained which gives you concern that a child is being abused, you should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child.
- Tell the child they are not to blame and that it was right to tell.
- Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what a child who has a speech disability and/or differences in language says. Keep questions to the absolute minimum necessary so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said, and be careful not to ask leading questions.
- Reassure the child, but do not promise to keep the matter secret – explain that to resolve the problem it will be necessary to inform other people as appropriate.

13. As with other forms of information arising in relation to child protection, information of this kind is highly sensitive and confidential. Accordingly, it should be held under secure conditions and only made available to those who have a definite need for it. You should make a note as soon as possible

of whatever information you obtained, both for your own future reference and possibly for passing on to others, appropriate agencies such as the social services department or the police. In writing such a note, you should confine yourself to the facts, and distinguish between what is your own personal knowledge and what you have been told by other people. You should not include your own opinions on the matter, to avoid the possibility of libel. Information should include the following:

- The nature of the allegation, in as much detail as possible, including times, dates, locations and other relevant information
- Details of the child involved, including name, age, address and other contact details, and identifying who has parental responsibility for the child
- Details of the person against whom the allegation is made, including name, relationship with the child, age and contact details (if known)
- The identity and contact details of any informants or other witnesses
- The child's account, if he or she can give one, of what has happened
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries
- Details of who else has been informed of the alleged incident
- Any other relevant information

You should report your concerns immediately to a member of the Executive Committee, If the allegation is against a member of the Executive Committee you should report the matter to the Chairman of the Executive Committee.

14. The role of the Executive Committee in these cases is to:

- Receive and record information from the committee, tutors, other volunteers, children or parents and carers who have child protection concerns.
- Assess the information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information about the matter as appropriate.
- Consult initially with either the NSPCC 24-hour Helpline (0808 800 5000) to test out any doubts or uncertainty about the concerns as soon as possible.
- If appropriate, make a formal referral to the social services office that covers the area in which the band member lives.

16 In addition, the Executive Committee is responsible for:

- Ensuring that our child protection policy and procedures are followed, in particular our recruitment processes and, where appropriate, DBS checking.
- Promoting awareness of the policy within St Dennis Band and amongst band members and the parents and carers.
- Ensuring that our child protection policy and procedures remain appropriate, including reviewing them annually.

## **Personnel**

17. Our vetting procedure will be used prior to the appointment of Executive Committee members, tutors and voluntary helpers having significant access to band members. All applicants will be required to either:

- Be personally known to existing Executive Committee members for at least two years.
- Be able to provide a reference from an independent professional person (not a family member) as to character and background.

- Be able to provide a current DBS check certificate with regard to young people from another organisation or workplace.

### **Internet**

18. Photographs of band members may, with their consent, appear on the website, St Dennis Bands Facebook pages and local newspapers without identification of individuals unless specific permission has been obtained.

19. It should be recognised that the bands activities often attract the attention of the media in varying forms including, but not limited to, local TV news, radio and newspapers. These organisations extensively use pictures and video and it is beyond the control of the band or Executive Committee where such images are used. Concerned parents/carers should always check with the Committee at band promoted events to which such media organisations may have been invited.

20. The child protection policy and procedures will be added to the Website.

### **Policy adoption**

21. This Policy was adopted by the Executive Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2014

22. This Policy was re-affirmed at the AGM on the 19 March, 2015

23. This Policy was re-affirmed at the AGM on the 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2016

24. This Policy was re-affirmed at the AGM on the 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2017

25. This Policy was re-affirmed at the AGM on the 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2018