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| **Policy: Safeguarding Children** |  |

**POLICY STATEMENT**

* 1. Julian House confirm our commitment to making sure that children and young people are protected and we recognise our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people. Child protection is taken very seriously. We aim to create an environment where children are safe from abuse and in which any suspicion of abuse is promptly and appropriately dealt with.
  2. The following principles are key for all staff:
* The interests of the child are paramount.
* In cases of suspected child abuse all staff have a responsibility to take action in the ways set out in this procedure.
* Immediate action, to refer or consult, is required where there is suspicion of abuse.
* Investigation is always the responsibility of the Children's Social Care Service and the Police. These agencies have to balance the necessity for action to protect the child with the potential adverse effects of an investigation on the family and/or others.
* Record keeping is essential at each stage and all documents should be kept to the standards outlined in Children's Social Care recording procedures.

1.3 Safe recruitment is covered in a separate policy.

1. **DEFINITIONS**
   1. **Children and Young People:** A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday (Children Acts, 1989 and 2004). ‘Children’ therefore means ‘children and young people’ throughout. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital, in prison or in a Young Offenders’ Institution, does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection under the Children Act 1989.
   2. **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined 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.
  1. **Child protection** is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm.
  2. **Children in need** are defined under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, as those whose vulnerability is such that they are unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health and development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of services (section 17(10) of the Children Act 1989), plus those who are disabled.
  3. The critical factors to be taken into account in deciding whether a child is in need under the Children Act 1989 are:
* What will happen to the child’s health or development without services being provided; and
* The likely effect the services will have on the child’s standard of health and development.
  1. **Abuse**: There are many different types of abuse. Children can be abused by an adult’s direct actions (e.g., beating a child) or because of an adult’s inactions (e.g., not feeding or bathing a child), and even by an adult’s indirect actions (e.g., domestic violence, addiction, etc). Children can be abused by adults as well as by other young people or children. The authorities will be notified if any professional suspects that a child is either suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm. Sometimes a single traumatic event constitutes ‘significant harm’ to a child; and, sometimes, a build-up of concerns or a series of incidents over time also gives rise to ‘significant harm’.
  2. The law recognises the following categories of abuse under the Children Act (1989): Julian House recognises the importance of its support services to families, children and young people.
  3. **Types of Abuse:** The NSPCC guidance defines Child Abuse as: any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can just as often be about a lack of love, care and attention. We know that neglect, whatever form it takes, can be just as damaging to a child as physical abuse.
  4. An abused child will often experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their lives. It often happens over a period of time, rather than being a one-off event. And it can increasingly happen online.
     1. Domestic abuse: Witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse, and teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships
     2. Sexual abuse: A child is sexually abused when they are forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities. This doesn't have to be physical contact, and it can happen online.
     3. Neglect: Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs. It's dangerous and children can suffer serious and long-term harm.
     4. Online abuse: Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones.
     5. Physical abuse: Physical abuse is deliberately hurting a child causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.
     6. Emotional abuse: Children who are emotionally abused suffer emotional maltreatment or neglect. It's sometimes called psychological abuse and can cause children serious harm.
     7. Child sexual exploitation: Child sexual exploitation is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status.
     8. Female genital mutilation (FGM): Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons.
     9. Bullying and cyberbullying: Bullying can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It’s usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.

1. **LEGISLATION, GUIDANCE AND REFERENCE**
   1. The main legislation governing this policy:

* Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004
* Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)
* Children Act (2004)
* Every Child Matters (2003)
* Public Disclosure Act
* https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/
  1. The Policy and Procedures should also be read in conjunction with the following documents:
* Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures
* Code of Conduct for Staff
* Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.
* Complaints Procedure
* Whistleblowing Procedures

1. **PROCEDURE**
   1. **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DEALING WITH CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES IN JULIAN HOUSE SERVICES?**
      1. If any member of staff or volunteer has reason to believe that a child is being abused or has been abused, they must discuss this immediately with their Line Manager and a decision should be taken on action to prevent further abuse in line with this policy. All staff must be aware of the procedures to follow when dealing with child protection cased, if the staff member with responsibility for this is not available. All staff should receive training in child protection.

* + 1. The named Lead Safeguarding Children Advisor at Julian House is the Operations Director, to whom all allegations or concerns should also be reported, or in their absence the Deputy named Safeguarding Children Advisor - Service Development Manager for Domestic Abuse services.
    2. The named lead safeguarding children advisor is responsible for:
* Providing the strategic lead on all aspects of Julian House’s contribution to safeguarding children;
* Provide professional advice on child protection matters;
* Ensuring each service has a specified link to the Local Safeguarding Children Board;
* Collaborate with the Local Safeguarding Children Board/s and operational nominated child protection adviser in other departments / services / in reviewing Julian House’s involvement in serious incidents which meet the criteria for serious case reviews;
* Ensure the training needs of staff are addressed by promoting, influencing and developing relevant training;
* Prioritising the promotion of children’s welfare and safeguarding in Julian House’s internal and inter-agency strategic planning;
* Ensuring the needs of children and their families are kept to the fore whenever services are being reviewed, planned, developed and / or commissioned.
  + 1. The named deputy safeguarding children advisor will take on the following responsibilities:
* Source of advice and expertise on Safeguarding Children issues;
* Initial point of contact for all Safeguarding Children matters;
* Supervise and monitor reports made to Social Services by named staff member(s);
* Promote good practice and effective communication on all matters relating to Safeguarding Children within Julian House;
* Conduct internal case reviews, where agreed/appropriate.
  1. **DEALING WITH SPECIFIC INCIDENTS OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE** 
     1. It is essential that employees understand that child abuse is a complex issue, and that diagnosis of the validity of an allegation is the responsibility of relevant, expert agencies. It is the responsibility of Julian House’s staff to report incidents and concerns to the police or social services so that wider enquiries can be carried out and informed decisions made as to the most effective course of action to protect the child and promote his/her welfare.

* + 1. Child protection is a multi-agency responsibility. The role of employees is to report and refer any concerns, not to investigate or judge. A referral should not be seen as a betrayal of trust but as a necessary and responsible way of protecting children. Before making an actual referral it may sometimes be helpful to discuss a possible referral with social services or the NSPCC (giving no names) and to ask what action they would be likely to take in these circumstances. Health Visitors may also be able to offer helpful advice.
    2. If a member of staff or volunteer suspects that a child is being abused or neglected, they should discuss this immediately with their Line Manager who will adhere to the policy and procedure set out in this document.
    3. In cases of an injury or bruising, staff will consider whether medical help is necessary. It is essential to discuss how the injury or bruising happened with the partner/carer. This should be recorded. It may also be helpful to consult the child’s health visitor, if there are concerns that an injury may not be accidental. If the injury does not appear to be consistent with the explanation given, this should be discussed with whoever is responsible for dealing with child protection and if necessary a referral should be made to social services.
    4. In cases of emotional abuse or neglect, it is important to stop the process of abuse and to be proactive in promoting better care for the child. Concern may not be confined to an isolated incident, so it is very important to record observations over a period of time. If the abuse is repeated, a meeting should be set up with the parent/carer to discuss the situation and any support needs. A decision may be reached to work with the parent/carer over a stated period of time.
    5. If a member of staff witnesses abuse by the parent/carer, they should intervene and challenge the behaviour if is safe to do so. The situation should be calmed down and the child should be offered comfort and reassurance. As soon as possible a meeting should be set up with the parent/carer at which it will be made clear that this behaviour is unacceptable. This will be recorded.
    6. If the abuse or neglect continues or is repeated, the situation will be discussed with the parent/carer and they will be reminded of the child protection policy. Every effort will be made to work with the parent/carer, including offering support and practical help. After consultation with the parent/carer, the line manager may decide that it is necessary to involve an outside agency.
  1. **REFERRALS**
     1. Reasons to refer:

1. A child / adult clearly alleges or is at risk of abuse relating to any of the following areas: domestic abuse, neglect, on-line abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, exploitation, FGM and Forced Marriage, Bullying and Cyberbullying.
2. A child or vulnerable adult has an injury not consistent with the event reported as causing it.
3. A pre-mobile child or an immobile adult has an injury without clear accidental explanation
4. A third party makes a credible allegation of abuse.
5. Concerns regarding sexual abuse even though there is no direct allegation.
6. Concerns about a child or vulnerable adult living with or having contact with a person posing a risk
7. Abandonment.
8. Child / vulnerable adult refused urgent medical treatment
9. Child / vulnerable adult at risk of sexual exploitation
   1. **SHARING CONCERNS WITH PARENTS**
      1. Julian House is committed to working in partnership with parents or carers where there are concerns about their children. Therefore, in most situations, it would be important to talk to parents or carers to help clarify initial concerns. It is essential, therefore, that the line manager or head of service undertakes this liaison.

* + 1. However, there are circumstances in which a child might be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared (e.g. where a parent or carer is the alleged abuser or is not able to respond to the situation appropriately). If there is any concern that informing a parent or carer may place the child at risk or may compromise police evidence, immediate advice must be sought from the Local Authority Child Protection officer within social services or the Police designated officer.
  1. **IF A CHILD DISCLOSES ABUSE TO A MEMBER OF STAFF OR A VOLUNTEER**
     1. Julian House staff or volunteers will:
* Stay calm and listen carefully
* Reassure the child that s/he was right to disclose what happened and that the abuse is not her/his fault
* Explain to the child that in these circumstances confidentiality cannot be maintained
* Accept what you hear without passing judgement.
* Do not investigate.
* Assure the child that the issue will be taken seriously
* Fill out an incident form (appendix A) immediately stating what was said by both the child and the member of staff, and recording facts rather than opinions
* Discuss this with the member of staff responsible for dealing with child protection issues decide on the appropriate course of action and record this decision.
  1. **IF IT IS ALLEGED THAT A CHILD HAS BEEN ABUSED BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE PARENT/CARER (NOT A FAMILY MEMBER)**
     1. Julian House staff and volunteers will ensure that:
* This is discussed with your line manager responsible for child protection
* The situation will then be discussed separately with the resident and the parent/carer of the child
* A record will be kept of any comments made.
* If the allegation is of a serious nature and staff have reason to believe it is correct, then staff should complete an incident form and social services should be informed.
  1. **IF IT IS ALLEGED THAT A STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER HAS ABUSED A CHILD**
     1. Julian House staff and volunteers will:
* Ensure that any such allegation is reported immediately to your line manager and the senior management, who will decide what action is necessary.
* Keep a record of any allegations of child abuse made against any staff member or volunteer.
* Fully investigate any allegation of inappropriate behaviour by a staff member or volunteer.
* Refer the matter to the police or social services, if a criminal offence appears to have been committed or where other children may be at risk.
* If may be necessary to suspend the staff member or volunteer while the investigation is carried out.

1. **MONITORING AND REVIEW**
   1. The Operations Director and Services Development Managers will monitor and review this policy and associated procedures annually in line with Local Authority Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure. Changes to it are informed by consultation with staff and clients. Results of consultation are provided to the Senior Management Team who can agree amendments to the policy.

* 1. All staff and clients are encouraged to give feedback at any time on any difficulties they have in operating the policy. Any issues can be raised with line management which will ensure they are considered and appropriate action taken.

1. **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**
   1. This policy applies to everyone involved within Julian House and covers all the children with whom we come into contact, reflecting our commitment to ensure that they are protected from harm. We will not treat anyone less favourably than anyone else because of:

* Age
* Disability
* Gender Reassignment
* Pregnancy and Maternity
* Marriage and Civil Partnership
* Race
* Religion or belief
* Sex
* Sexual Orientation
* Other unjustifiable factors, for example language challenges
  1. Julian House published Purpose and Core Values remain at the centre of our work.

**APPENDIX A**

Report of incident/concern Involving Child or Young Person

This form is to be used in every instance where a Julian House employee raises a concern about the wellbeing of a child or young person.

It may be completed in consultation with the employee’s line manager.

When completed, it must be submitted to the person responsible for Child Protection.

Part A

Employee details (to be completed by the employee reporting the incident)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name |  |
| Department |  |
| Position |  |
| Contact details:   * Office telephone * Mobile telephone * E-mail address * Office address |  |

Child or Young Persons details:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Child’s first Names |  |
| Child’s Last Name |  |
| Any other names |  |
| Age and date of birth |  |
| Address |  |
| Contact telephone numbers |  |

Parents/carers details:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Relationship | DOB | Contact details |
|  |  |  |  |

List of concern:

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| --- |
| Please detail all information, including date, time, place, how long have you known the child or young person and in what capacity, and the precise details of the concern. Clearly define what is fact, opinion or hearsay. |
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Injuries

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| --- |
| Description – describe the injury seen by you. |
|  |
| Site – Describe location |
|  |

Medical Assistance

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| --- |
| Detail any medical assistance you obtained, including the name of any doctor, nurse or other professional. If an ambulance was called, state ambulance number and crew base. |
|  |

Police

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| --- |
| If police called, detail who called them and provide name, badge number, and police station of all officers attending |
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Social services

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| --- |
| If social services contacted, provided details of who spoken to , time and advice they gave. |
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Line Manager

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Date informed | Time informed |
|  |  |  |

Signature of staff completing form;

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Signature | Date | Time |
|  |  |  |

PART B

Line Managers Action (to be completed by employee’s line manager or Operations Director)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name |  |
| Directorate |  |
| Position |  |
| Contact Details   * Office telephone * Mobile No. * Email address * Office address |  |

Action taken

|  |
| --- |
| Detail date, time, and place informed, information given by the employee and action you took. |
|  |

Signature of officer completing form

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Signature | Date | Time |
|  |  |  |