

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Name of regulation:	Child Protection Policy
Purpose of regulation:	To inform staff of AlterEgo Creative Solutions Ltd of their responsibilities when working with children
Approval for this regulation given by:	Directors
Responsibility for its update:	Directors
Regulation applies to:	All company staff who work with children

Introduction

- A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).
- For the purpose of this policy document the term 'child' will be used to describe all children and young people under the age of 18 years old participating in Company led activities. The term 'staff' will be used to describe those employed on a contract of employment or a contract for services with AlterEgo Creative Solutions Ltd including those working on a voluntary/unpaid basis.
- Staff should implement this policy using the following guidelines when conducting work that involves children. This will protect the safety and well-being of children engaging with the Company and that of our own staff.
- For all activity and events involving AlterEgo Creative Solutions Ltd, at least one member of staff should lead on child protection, raising awareness of this policy and its guidelines among other staff.
- The "Lead member of staff" referred to in this Policy is Company Director Sean McGrath

Children's Rights

All children have needs and rights:

- The need for physical care and attention
- The need for intellectual stimulation
- The need for emotional love and security
- The need for social contact and relationships
- The right to have their needs met and safeguarded
- The right to be protected from neglect, abuse and exploitation
- The right to be protected from discrimination
- The right to be treated as an individual

AlterEgo Creative Solutions Ltd Protection Policy

In our provision for children we will ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All staff have a responsibility to report concerns both to the Company child protection lead and to the relevant child protection lead at the venue they are working in

Policy statement

AlterEgo Creative Solutions Ltd staff have a professional duty to take such steps that are reasonable to see that children are safe from harm while involved in Company activities. AlterEgo Creative Solutions Ltd will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in its activities through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines it has adopted.

Policy aims

The aim of the AlterEgo Creative Solutions Ltd Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst learning with/engaging with the Company
- Allow all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Policy implementation

AlterEgo Creative Solutions Ltd Child Protection Policy will be implemented by adhering to the policy guidelines contained within this document. All staff who work with children must comply with this Policy in conjunction with the Company's Code of Conduct, failing which disciplinary action may be taken under the Company's Disciplinary Procedure.

The guidelines cover three main areas:

- Staff recruitment, support and training
- Staff conduct
- Child protection procedures

Staff recruitment, support and training

For staff working with children at AlterEgo Creative Solutions Ltd, safe recruitment will be ensured by checking their suitability to work with children:

- Pre-activity training including:-
 - Activity requirements and responsibilities clarified
 - Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified
 - Staff sign up to the Company's Code of Conduct for staff and the Child Protection Policy.
- Staff are selected on their suitability for the activity requirements and responsibilities and their ability to demonstrate that they can work safely with children.

- In response to Home Office and Ofsted advice all AlterEgo Creative Solutions Ltd staff that are left unattended with young people or have the opportunity to build an ongoing relationship with young people over a period of time will be required to complete a Criminal Record Bureau Check (CRB check).
- All appropriate staff will receive a copy of AlterEgo Creative Solutions Ltd Child Protection Policy and a copy will also be available on the Company's website.
- Awareness of child protection issues will continue to be addressed through on-going training.

Staff Conduct

All staff should demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from allegations of misconduct.

Good practice means that you:

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets). Never allow yourself to be left alone with a child. Never make gratuitous physical contact with a child (there may be occasions where a distressed child needs comfort which may include physical comforting and staff should use their discretion to ensure that it is appropriate and not unnecessary or unjustified contact). Be cautious about physical contact in games. Where physical contact is inescapable (e.g. to demonstrate equipment or a particular exercise/move) staff should be aware of the limits within which such contact should take place and of the possibility for misinterpretation of such contact.
- Always use staff and visitor toilet facilities.
- Treat all children equally, and with respect and dignity. AlterEgo Creative Solutions Ltd take positive action to eliminate discrimination against any person or group of people. Staff should ensure that children are protected from discrimination on any grounds, including ability and challenge discriminating comments and behaviour.
- Never contradict an instruction given by a teacher or other member of staff (unless that instruction may cause physical or mental harm to anyone).
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with children (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child).
- Conduct yourself in a manner that sets a good example to the children. Be an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of/whilst responsible for children.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Never use physical force against a participant, unless it constitutes reasonable restraint to protect him/her or another person or to protect property. If it is necessary to restrain a participant because they are an immediate danger to themselves or others or to property then the minimum amount of force should be used for the shortest amount of time. Remain calm and get the attention and support of appropriate staff. The incident should be recorded in writing, with a witness statement (where possible), immediately afterwards.
- Never use physical punishment
- Ensure that should any child suffer from illness or injury they are passed on to the appropriate member of staff.
- Always refer any problems to the child protection the lead member of staff and the appropriate person in the venue

You never:-

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- Share a room with a child
- Engage in any form of inappropriate touching

- Abide Children's inappropriate use of language and/or behaviour. This should always be challenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- Let allegations made by a child go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home or arrange meetings with them

Child Protection Procedures

AlterEgo Creative Solutions Ltd will:

- Ensure we have a lead member of staff for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role
- Ensure every member of staff knows the name of the lead staff member responsible for child protection and their role
- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the lead staff member. However, staff should remember that they are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer
- Adopt a procedure for dealing with concerns about possible abuse

What is abuse?

Child Abuse is term used to describe a range of ways in which people harm children.

Child abuse is neglect, physical injury, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or emotional abuse inflicted or knowingly not prevented, which causes significant harm or death.

Awareness of actual or likely occurrence of abuse

There are a number of ways in which abuse can become apparent:

- A child discloses abuse
- Someone else discloses that a child has told him/her or that he/she strongly believes a child has been or is being abused
- A child may show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation
- A child's behaviour may indicate that it is likely that he/she is being abused
- A member of staff's behaviour or the way in which he/she relates to a child causes concern

Issues of Disclosure

Becoming aware of abuse can cause a multitude of emotional reactions, which are personal to each individual. Whatever the reaction and however the abuse has become apparent, actual or suspected, it must be responded to in the correct manner according to the procedure outlined here. Even if the truth of the disclosure is uncertain – an appropriate response has to be made. A response in accordance with the procedure outlined here will be supported by the lead member of staff and ultimately AlterEgo Creative Solutions Ltd.

What to do upon suspicion or disclosure

- Stay calm and don't panic
- Don't over-react (it is extremely unlikely that the participant is in immediate danger)
- Listen, hear and believe
- Don't probe for more information (questioning the child may affect how the child's disclosure is received at a later date)
- Give time to the person to say what they want
- Don't make assumptions, don't paraphrase and don't offer alternative explanations
- Reassure & explain that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Explain that only those professionals who need to know will be informed
- Don't promise confidentiality
- Don't promise to keep secrets
- Don't promise that everything will be OK (it might not)
- Act immediately in accordance with the procedure in this policy
- Don't try to deal with it yourself
- Record in writing as near as verbatim as possible what was said as soon as possible
- Don't make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Immediately report the suspicion, allegation or disclosure to the appropriate member of staff at the venue
- Immediately report the suspicion, allegation or disclosure to the Company lead member of staff
- Report the name of the appropriate venue staff member that you informed to the Company lead member of staff
- Inform but don't 'gossip' with colleagues about what has been said to you