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## Story Stitches CIC - SAFEGUARDING POLICY

This document outlines the policy is to support all staff with Understanding Child Abuse (page 2), the necessary procedures for handling disclosure and raising concerns for a child's welfare (page 4), and how to deal with staff allegations (page 7)

### Statement

- Story Stitches is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of its participants. All our staff are fully DBS cleared and have public liability insurance.
- They should also show respect and understanding for their own rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the process of implementing the policy is the responsibility Felicity Goodman
- All staff are provided with a copy of the Story Stitches' Child Protection Policy statement and Safeguarding procedures.

### Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues



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- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

## 1. Understanding Child Abuse

### Abuse and Neglect of children

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or young person. They may result in a child suffering or being likely to suffer significant harm. 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. They may be abused by an adult, or another child or children. Government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2013) defines various forms of abuse, including:

### 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



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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. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, 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

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:



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- 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 care givers); or
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### Peer on Peer Abuse - Children harming other children

It is part of our duty of care that we make sure children are protected from harm from other children. At Story Stitches, If you think that a child is targeting another child, it is important to raise this with the Child Protection Lead immediately. In recording and reporting incidents it is important that the identity of the child that did the hurting is not disclosed. This is part of our duty of confidentiality to all children and families. If a parent asks who has hurt their child, show understanding of their upset, anger or pain but explain that we are not able to share this information.

## 2. Concerns for a child's welfare

If you are concerned about child's welfare you should:

- Tell the nominated Child Protection Lead - Felicity Goodman.
- Any concerns must be kept confidential and should not be discussed with anyone other than the Child Protection Lead, Felicity Goodman who should make a referral to children's services.
- If you have concerns about the nominated Child Protection Lead, Felicity Goodman you should contact Warrington's Children's Safeguarding/Social Work Team on 01925 443322 or the out of hours service: 01925 444400.

### Handling disclosure

If a child tells you they are experiencing abuse:

- Stay calm and listen to the child
- Reassure them that they've done the right thing in telling you.



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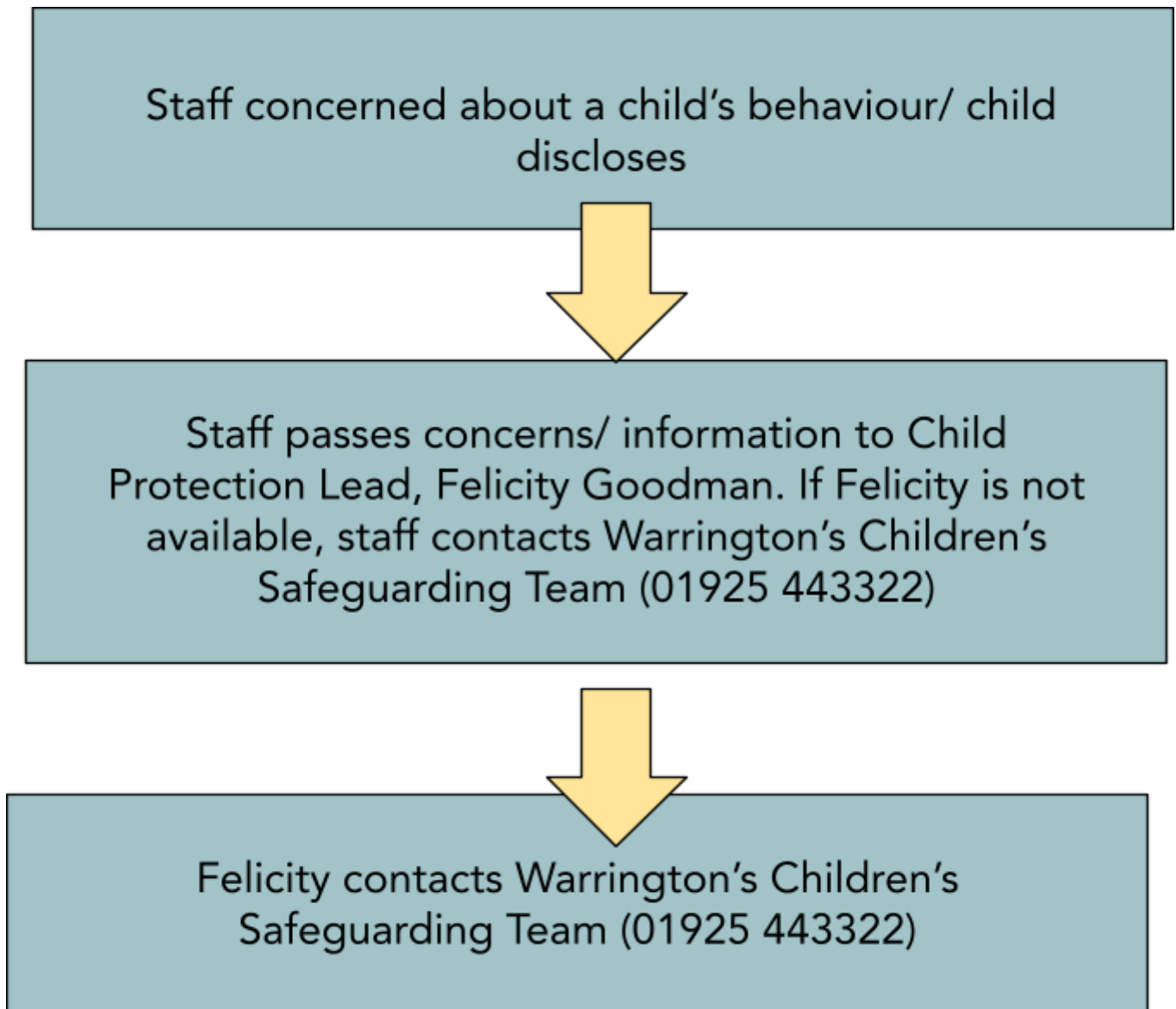
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- Make sure they know that abuse is never their fault.
- Control expressions of panic or shock
- Use the child's language or vocabulary
- Never promise a child that you will keep the things they're telling you a secret.
- Explain that you need to share what they've told you with someone who will be able to help.
- Do not be tempted to give false reassurances to the child but tell them that you will do your best to protect or help them
- Avoid writing anything down, give the child your attention.
- It is not your responsibility to decide if a child has been abused.
- Pass on any information to the Child Protection Lead, Felicity Goodman

#### Recording disclosure

- The date and time of the interview or disclosure
- The child's account
- Any physical or other signs of injuries noted.
- An assessment made by the staff member as to why the information given constitutes a child protection concern
- Action taken by the staff member
- Record any subsequent events and actions
- All records of concerns, emails, notes of phone conversations and actions are filed confidentially and securely.

### Reporting Disclosure Flow Chart



### 3. Allegations against Staff

This often-difficult issue is discussed at staff training so that all staff understand what is meant by the term 'whistle-blowing' and their responsibilities with



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regards to it and are able to raise concerns with the Child Protection Lead. If the behaviour of a staff causes you concern:

- do not ignore your concerns.
- do not confront the person about whom you have concerns
- discuss your concerns with the Child Protection Lead, Felicity Goodman
- If the Child Protection Lead, Felicity Goodman is not immediately available, you should speak to Warrington's Children's Safeguarding/Social Work Team on 01925 443322 or the out of hours service: 01925 444400. You can also discuss concerns with the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000
- If you are concerned about the Child Protection Lead, Felicity Goodman is not immediately available, you should speak to Warrington's Children's Safeguarding/Social Work Team on 01925 443322 or the out of hours service: 01925 444400. You can also discuss concerns with the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000
- Do not delay in passing on concerns to someone who is in a position to take them forward and ensure that a proper investigation takes place
- Do not worry that you may have been mistaken. It is better to have discussed it with someone with the experience and responsibility to make an assessment.

In the case of allegations against a staff member, an investigation may have three related strands:

- If the allegation reaches the threshold of significant harm, the matter should be referred to children's social care who will undertake child protection inquiries relating to the safety and welfare of any children involved
- Where circumstances warrant it, there may be a police investigation into a possible crime
- If it appears that allegations may amount to misconduct or gross misconduct, Story Stitches's disciplinary procedures should be invoked.

Any member of staff who is charged with a criminal offence against a child, either in a personal or professional capacity will be immediately suspended pending the outcome of the criminal proceedings.



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Staff about whom there are concerns should be given information to help them understand the concerns expressed, the processes being invoked and be informed of the outcome of any investigation and the implications for disciplinary processes. The investigation should be completed as quickly as possible, consistent with its effective conduct. In any case involving a criminal investigation, the decision as to when to inform the suspect of the allegations should always be jointly agreed between the police and other relevant agencies.

Parents and carers should be given information on any concerns, advised on the processes to be followed and informed of the outcomes, except in circumstances when the allegations involve the parent/ carer directly. Professional advice should be sought as to what can be said to parents/ carers.

If an individual is removed from regulated activity with children (or would have been removed if they had not left) because the person is considered by Story Stitches to pose a risk of harm to children, Story Stitches is obliged to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.





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## Allegations against Staff Member Flowchart.

If an allegation is made that a member of staff has harmed a child; is alleged to have behaved in a way in their private life that may suggest they are unsuitable to work with children and young people; the designated Child Protection Lead. If they are unavailable or the allegation concerns designated child protection lead, Warrington Children's Safeguarding Team should be informed (01925 443322 or out of hours: 01925 444400)



To assess the most appropriate course of action, the following initial information must be collated:

- the date and time of the observation or the disclosure,
- the exact words spoken by the child/staff/member/parent/volunteer as far as possible,
- the name of the person to whom the concern was reported ( with date and time),
- the names of any other person present at the time,
- wider relevant knowledge or background information.

(Note: it is not appropriate at this stage to conduct formal interviews or take written statements from staff, as this could compromise a later or police investigation)



Warrington Children's Safeguarding Team should be informed within one working day on 01925 443322 or out of hours: 01925 444400

Warrington Children's Safeguarding Team will clarify if and how the matter will be taken forward and what appropriate course of action should be taken. In serious situations, the Warrington Children's Safeguarding Team will advise whether a suspension should take place immediately



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## Policy Notes

This document works in conjunction with the Staff Code of Conduct. Story Stitches are committed to reviewing this procedure annually and updating any changes that need to be made in line with best practice.

Date of procedure: November 2022