



**Experiment in
International
Living UK**

EIL UK Safeguarding policy Child Protection

INTRODUCTION

EIL UK is aware of the potential for harm or abuse – of young people and also of vulnerable adults. EIL UK works with people from all over the world, people who may not understand our language, laws or culture, who may be lacking in confidence to question actions or words. In view of this it is important that we establish codes of conduct, and procedures to reduce the risk of abuse to participants, family volunteers and staff.

1. AIMS.

The aim of this policy is:

- To protect individuals at risk from abuse.
- To protect those working with young people from allegations of abuse.
- To help staff and volunteers recognise and identify the different types of abuse.
- To give guidelines for action on suspicion or disclosure of abuse.
- To define appropriate behaviour.

3. DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE.

a. What is abuse?

- Abuse occurs when an individual is harmed by the acts or omissions of another individual responsible for their wellbeing.
- Abusers are often, although not exclusively, adults and often adults that the individual knows and trusts.
- Abuse can cause harm to physical, mental or emotional health.
- Abuse can take many forms:

b. Neglect occurs when basic needs are not met (for example needs for food and warmth); when a vulnerable individual is left alone or unsupervised, or not given appropriate attention. Neglect in the host family situation could involve refusal of food, medical attention or isolation.

c. Emotional abuse is any behaviour that will have a negative effect on the emotional and behavioural development of an individual. It can include bullying, rejection, blackmail or threats.

All forms of abuse involve a degree of emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse in the host family situation might include situations where family members subject individuals to constant criticism, bullying, racial taunts or unrealistic pressure to conform to the family's norms.

d. Physical abuse is where injury is inflicted such as bruises, burns, physical injuries, poisoning or suffocation.

e. Sexual abuse is actual or likely sexual exploitation. This can include obscene phone calls, indecent exposure, fondling, taking pornographic pictures, attempted intercourse, rape or incest.

A host family member having physical contact (e.g. caring for individuals) could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed.

f. Financial abuse is where monies belonging to an individual are used or appropriated by underhand means to the detriment of the individual.

In the host family situation this might occur if money intended for the individual is not passed to them or personal money is stolen or misused.

g. Recognition of abuse.

Signs and symptoms of abuse could include:

- unexplained bruising and injuries
- sexually explicit language or actions
- sudden changes in behaviour
- something an individual has said
- Fear of going home or of specific individuals or situations
- Reluctance to change clothes/get changed
- Nightmares / sleepwalking / disturbed sleep
- Secretive behaviour
- Reluctance to talk

If you are concerned about the welfare of an individual it is not your responsibility to decide if it is abuse but it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it.

RESPONDING TO A CONCERN

If you are concerned about possible or actual abuse, the following process must be followed.

On becoming aware that a child has a concern EIL UK staff or volunteers should:

- i) Listen carefully to what the child has to say.
- ii) Stay calm.
- iii) Allow the child to say whatever he/she wishes to say in his/her own words and at his/her own pace.
- iv) Reassure the child that s/he has done nothing wrong – and was right to tell someone about the abuse.
- v) Try to elicit enough information to be able to decide what to do next – no more than this.
- vi) Consider the welfare of other children who might be at risk, including siblings.
- vii) Consult the child (according to age and understanding) as to what s/he would like to happen next – but do not allow this to override the responsibility to report abuse.
- viii) Keep the child informed as to what steps EIL and other agencies are taking.
- ix) Make an accurate written record as soon as possible using the following form.

You will need to record as much information as possible on the form at your earliest opportunity. This should include:

- i) Basic information about the child (name, address, DOB, ethnicity and any disability)
- ii) Who the child lives with
- iii) Name of the child's school
- iv) The precise nature of the concern
- v) Anything that the child has said about the concern/incident.

In such circumstances staff and volunteers SHOULD NOT:

- i) Panic – this will silence the child.
- ii) Inquire into the details of the abuse – it is the duty of social services and police to investigate abuse.
- iii) Push the child to speak
- iv) Promise to keep their secrets
- v) Fail to report their concerns.

REPORTING LINES

Volunteers and staff should report their child protection concern to their Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) at the earliest opportunity – **but in any event within the same working day**. You can also call the High School phone to speak with Programme Manager - 07530 659318.

In the UK the DCPO is responsible for deciding whether the concern expressed by the staff or volunteer should be referred to social services or police. If in doubt the DCPO should consult with the local social services informally and/or seek advice from the NSPCC child protection helpline on 0808 800 5000.

A referral about child protection would generally be made to the duty officer, children and families team of the local social services department. In an emergency the police should be called as well. Outside of normal working hours social services operates an emergency duty service to which referrals should be made.

Remember:

- **Ensure the abused individual is in a place of safety.**

This means that they are not in contact with the alleged abuser. This may involve the DCPO, Deputy DCPO or EIL staff member with a full Disclosure collecting the individual.

- **Inform EIL of your concerns immediately.**
- **Make a record of the suspicion or disclosure.**

EIL will inform the relevant agencies:-

- Social Services Department
- Police

4. GUIDELINES ON TALKING TO INDIVIDUALS ABOUT SUSPECTED ABUSE.

Care must be taken when talking to individuals about indications or accusations of abuse. Be aware that the way in which you talk to an individual could have an effect on the evidence, which is put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings.

- Do not ask leading question. For example, 'Tell me what happened' rather than 'Did they do x to you?'
- Do not ask questions which encourage the individual to change his or her version of events in any way.
- Do not impose your own assumptions.
- Listen to the individual and take their concerns seriously.
- Record the discussion and inform EIL. You should record the date, time place and people who were present as well as what was said.

Confidentiality

There are limits to a child's right to confidentiality within the context of child protection. It is important that information about a child is confidential in the sense that only those who need to know are informed. Otherwise, a child's right to confidentiality is superseded by his/her right to protection. This means that information suggesting a child is at risk (whether given by the child, a parent or anyone else) must be shared with the authorities. It also means that absolute promises of secrecy and confidentiality should never be given to children.

5. PROCEDURES TO MINIMISE THE RISK OF ABUSE OCCURRING

a. Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers and Staff.

EIL will:

- Issue a clear job description, outlining responsibilities and duties of the post.
- Ensure all relevant information is gathered from applicants, including experience of working with young people and vulnerable adults.
- Ensure applicants sign a declaration that there is no reason why they should not be employed and declare any criminal record.
- Complete CRB Disclosures on all staff and any volunteers who may work with young people under 18 years of age.
- Take up independent references for all staff and volunteers.

b. Homestay Programmes

Local Area Reps will;

- Visit all host family homes prior to accepting a family.
- Meet all members of the family in permanent residence at the address.
- Obtain a completed host family application form.
- Complete an EIL family visit form.
- Ensure that every home is safe and secure, with adequate heating, sanitation, lighting, ventilation, fire precautions and access to a telephone. Insurance cover should be adequate to cover domestic incidents.
- Send host family application forms, home visit forms and CRB Disclosure application forms to EIL on completion.
- Never place an under-eighteen year old in a single-person household.
- Never accept as a host family, one they do not feel completely confident in
- Ensure that host families are accurately informed of any dietary or medical requirements/problems.
- Return all post visit forms to EIL as soon as possible.

Be aware

- If there is no local rep for a host family the programme manager at EIL will be responsible for these duties.

c. Non-homestay programmes and programmes abroad.

EIL will ensure that:

- Residential centres/hostels/hotels offer clean and safe environments.
- Activity instructors have the appropriate qualifications and are registered with the relevant authority.
- Group Leaders have access to immediate support and have relevant telephone numbers and information for in the event of emergency.
- Offices abroad provide information on their procedure for recruiting host families and monitoring their progress.
- UK groups of young people are accompanied by sufficient staff (a ratio of 1:10 or less is advised) and that, where possible, there is a gender mix of leaders in mixed sex groups.
- UK leaders are provided with completed parental consent forms with appropriate medical information.
- Leaders do not spend time alone, and in isolation, with a young person.
- Evaluation forms are provided to both participants and group leaders/staff.

d. Reducing the possibility of abuse through good practice.

Avoid:

- spending time alone with a young person away from others
- taking a young person alone in a car on journeys, however short

Never:

- allow or engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- allow individuals to use inappropriate language unchallenged,
- make sexually suggestive comments to an individual, even in fun
- let allegations an individual makes go unchallenged or unrecorded
- do things of a personal nature that individuals can do for themselves
- allow your judgement or actions to be affected by alcohol or drugs

It is the responsibility of all EIL UK staff and individual programme managers to ensure good practice for the protection of young people and vulnerable adults associated with EIL UK, and to report any concerns immediately to their line manager and / or Chair of Trustees as appropriate.