

Coed Cariad Learning Community

Safeguarding children and child protection Policy

Introduction

Coed Cariad is a learning community for home-schooled and flexi-schooled children between the ages of 4 and 12 years old in the Carmarthenshire area. The project runs for two days a week. It is a nature-based and democratic project where children spend a majority of their time engaged in outdoor play and are empowered to run their own community through democratic processes.

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 Nation Convention of the Rights of the Child, 1991
- Children Act, 2004
- Children and Social Work Act, 2017
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act, 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act, 2012
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, 2014
- Education Act, 2011
- Adoption and Children Act, 2002
- Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2003
- Children and Young Persons Act, 2008
- Children and Adoption Act, 2006
- Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015

Purpose and Aims

The purpose of Coed Cariad's safeguarding and child protection policy is to provide a framework for Facilitators, volunteers and parents to ensure the physical, mental and emotional safety and wellbeing of children at the project. The policy aims to ensure that:

- All adults (paid staff, volunteers, parents and visitors) understand the expected behaviours and Coed Cariad's legal responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection. All training will be designed to put the aims of this policy into practice.
- That children who attend Coed Cariad are protected through the establishment of excellent safeguarding practice by staff: including, thorough risk assessment, informed best-practice and collaborative, clear communication processes.

Coed Cariad Learning Community

- Safeguarding processes and practices are embedded across all elements of activity and planning at Coed Cariad including the curriculum, environmental arrangements and managing of relationships.
- A simple, clear process for whistle-blowing and sharing information is set out and disseminated to all, including members who are children and young people.

Ethos

Safeguarding and child protection is everybody's responsibility.

Children and young people are given the tools, through explicit training, and confidence, through an empowering community culture, to share concerns and question in a safe and supported culture.

Safeguarding awareness, assessing and managing risk is seen as an integral part of preparing children and young people for adult life and is therefore embedded in every-day dialogue and planning of activities. We believe this, as opposed to isolating safeguarding awareness as an 'add-on' exercise is the best way to minimise risk and promote healthy protective behaviours.

Establishing and nurturing relationships with parents and working effectively with outside agencies are both integral in maintaining effective communication channels with regards to safeguarding and child protection.

Guidelines

If an adult member of the community (or a visiting practitioner from another agency / organisation) has safeguarding concerns they must act immediately by reporting their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. (this includes concerns that the child might be at risk, a disclosure from the child or another person or an incident or observation the adult has personally witnessed).

All adults (Designated Safeguarding Officer, Trustees of Coed Cariad Learning Community, staff and volunteers) have a duty to refer any concerns or allegations of abuse to the relevant agency (insert relevant Carmarthenshire agencies here).

Records pertaining to safeguarding concerns must be kept securely in the designated Child Protection file.

If information around safeguarding or a child's welfare must be shared with outside agencies or professionals, the parents' permission will be requested (unless the DSO has been advised not to as this might risk more harm to the child).

Safeguarding awareness

Safeguarding children at Coed Cariad Learning Community includes having an awareness of risk associated with health and safety (including first aid), bullying and

Coed Cariad Learning Community

harassment, intimate care and internet safety as well as protecting children from deliberate physical, psychological and emotional abuse.

Abuse can take place in any setting; institutions, the home and online. It can be perpetrated by any person; those who work with the child, family members, peers or other minors they come into contact with and by strangers.

Abuse is not always easy to recognise in children because lots of other factors may affect their happiness, mood or typical behaviours across the short or long term. Because of this, it is important that adults are appropriately trained to recognise any signs of abuse and be alert to potential incidences of harm or abuse. Abuse includes physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect.

How to act if you have a safeguarding concern:

Disclosures

If a child or another adult makes a disclosure or allegation of abuse against an adult or another child or young person, you should:

- Remain neutral and calm ensuring you maintain the role of a 'good listener'
- Tell them that you have done the right thing in telling you.
- Do not promise that you will keep their disclosure a secret
- Do not ask leading questions or investigate
- Let them know you will need to tell the DSO
- Inform the DSO as soon as possible
- Make a written statement to record the disclosure. Sign and date it and ensure you hand it over to the DSO so they are kept securely in the Child Protection File.
- Do not disclose the safeguarding concern to any other person, including other members of staff.
- Do speak to the DSO if you need to discuss the disclosure further as the event of disclosure can be upsetting for those who are part of the incident.

Whistle Blowing

If you are concerned that a member of staff or adult in a position of trust poses a risk to a child or young person or that they might be abusing a child or young person, report your concerns to the DSO. If your concern involves the DSO then report your concerns to the Gwendreath Environmental Education Workers Co-op Safeguarding officer (insert name here).

Roles and Responsibilities

Coed Cariad Learning Community is managed by the Gwendreath Environmental Education Workers Co-op (C.N. 05130982). Coed Cariad's Lead Facilitator (insert name) is the *nominated responsible individual* as required by CIW and is therefore legally responsible to ensure there is a Safeguarding policy and procedures in place and with the support of the project's trustees, will monitor those procedures to ensure the project complies with them.

Coed Cariad Learning Community

It is also the responsibility of Lead Facilitator as the nominated responsible individual that they ensure all staff and volunteers are properly checked to ensure they are safe to work with children and young people. The Lead Facilitator must also ensure there are procedures in place for any member of the community to report concerns or allegations of harm / abuse made against members of staff (including the Lead Facilitator) or volunteers.

The Lead Facilitator must also ensure there are procedures in place to ensure the safe and appropriate use of photographs, cameras, recording equipment and the internet (see Media and internet Policy, 2018). Data protection including personal and medical details of children, staff and volunteers is also overseen by the Lead Facilitator (see Data Protection Policy, 2018) for further information.

The Lead Facilitator is the Designated Safeguarding Officer. (Insert name) and works every day that the project runs. In (Insert name) absence, the deputy Safeguarding Officer who is Gwendreath Environmental Education Workers Co-op Safeguarding Officer (insert name) can be contacted with any safeguarding concerns.

The Designated Safety Officer is responsible for ensuring that any safeguarding concerns or incidents are responded to, recorded and referred to the appropriate agency.

The Designated Safety Officer (DSO) is responsible for arranging Safeguarding training for all adults who work at Coed Cariad. This training needs to be updated / refreshed every year. The DSO should also ensure that children and young people at the project are informed of safeguarding procedures and how they report their concerns. The methods and arrangements chosen for informing the children and young people should be done in an age appropriate manner, drawing on best practice recommendations from recognised safeguarding expert bodies such as Safeguarding Board Wales and from other similar Democratic Learning settings across the UK.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) should ensure that they liaise effectively with any outside agencies working with a child who attends Coed Cariad. This might mean, where appropriate, attending child protection case conference reviews or other meetings or contribute to reports or discussions to promote the child's welfare.

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