

# hybrid: arts

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Last Updated January 2009

### Policy Statement

Hybrid Arts works to:

- Safeguard the welfare of the young people we work with by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.
- Support the creation of an environment where young people are listened to and are encouraged to talk about themselves, their lives, and any concerns they may have.

Hybrid Arts recognises:

- That children and young people suffer abuse when they are:
  - Physically abused      Actual or likely bodily injury or failure to prevent injury.
  - Sexually abused        Actual or likely sexual exploitation.
  - Emotionally abused    Persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection affecting emotional or behavioural development.
  - Neglected              Persistent or severe neglect or failure to protect from exposure to danger.

### Aims of the policy

Hybrid Arts aims to provide appropriate policies and procedures that will ensure the safety of children and young people involved with the organisation, and that will ensure that any concerns expressed about the welfare of children and young people will be taken seriously and that a prompt and appropriate response will be made.

The following steps will be taken:

- Careful recruitment and selection of paid workers and volunteers with access to children and young people
- Ensuring good practice is followed in working with children and young people by providing appropriate training and guidance
- A nominated Child Protection representative on the management committee

### Recruitment and selection of staff with access to children

Hybrid Arts will ensure that all paid workers and volunteers working with children are subject to the following checking procedures and safeguards:

- Completion of an application form
- An interview by two or more people, at least one whom will be a member of the management committee
- Identifying reasons for gaps in employment, and other inconsistencies in the application
- Checking of the applicant's identity (passport, driving license, utility bill)
- Taking up references prior to the person starting work
- Ensuring criminal record checks have been carried out through relevant local agencies approved by

the Criminal Records Bureau

- Taking appropriate advice before employing someone with a criminal record
- Allowing no unaccompanied access to children until all of the above have been completed
- A probationary period of three months for new paid workers and volunteers
- On-going supervision of paid workers and volunteers

In the event of workers employed by other organisations being used by Hybrid Arts, the Management Committee will ensure that the employing organisation has followed similar procedures and safeguards.

Ensuring good practice working with children

Hybrid Arts will ensure that all paid workers and volunteers who work with children and young people have received appropriate training in working with children and young people, and in recognising and responding to suspected abuse. The attendance on relevant training courses will be a condition of employment of paid staff or volunteers who are working with children.

Child Protection Representative

Hybrid Arts will appoint a member of the Management Committee to act as a Child Protection Representative – Stella Carr. This person will take on the following responsibilities:

- Ensuring that the policy is being put into practice
- Being the first point of contact for child protection issues
- Keeping a record of any concerns expressed about child protection issues
- Where necessary, taking further steps, such as referring concerns to other agencies
- Bringing any child protection concerns to the notice of the Management Committee
- Ensuring that paid staff and volunteers are given appropriate supervision
- Ensuring that everyone involved with the organisation is aware of the identity of the Child Protection Representative

Review of the policy

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it is meeting its aims.

Behaviour Statement

1. Always -

- Ensure all volunteers at Hybrid Arts are aware of these guidelines.
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Provide an example you wish others to follow.
- Ensure that another adult is present when you are in the company of young people (ideally mixed genders).
- Respect a person's right to privacy.
- Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes and behaviour they do not like.
- Remember someone might misinterpret your actions and your comments, no matter how well intentioned.
- Recognise that caution is required particularly in sensitive moments, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement, grief, or abuse.
- Be aware of the possible implications of physical contact with young people.
- On a residential: Ensure that there is separate sleeping accommodation for leaders and male and female young people. Ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to protect young people from 'outsiders' (check access).
- Contact your local interagency child protection officer whenever in doubt.

2. Never -

- Permit abusive youth peer activities (e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying).
- Jump to conclusions.
- Allow yourself to be drawn into any inappropriate attention seeking behaviour by young people (e.g. tantrums, crushes).
- Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.
- Show favouritism to any individual.
- Make suggestive remarks or gestures.
- Rely upon just your good name to protect you.
- Believe “It could never happen to me”, both dealing with abuse or being accused of committing abuse.

## Action Statement

### 1. You suspect or are told that a young person is being abused

- You must always refer - you must never investigate.
- Write down the facts as you know them.
- Ensure that the young person is given the opportunity to talk to you, or an independent person.
- Listen to the young person without interruption, and do not ask questions about what you may suspect.
- Do not approach a suspected abuser yourself.
- Provide support as appropriate.
- Accept at face value what the young person says.
- Do not pass judgement on what is said, but do try to alleviate and fears or guilt which the young person may have.
- Make it clear that you can offer support but that you **MUST** pass on the information.

### 2. If you receive an allegation of child abuse by an adult

- Contact your local interagency child protection officer.
- Record the nature of the allegation in detail.
- Do not try to sort it out yourself.

## Administrative procedures to support the Hybrid Arts Child Protection Policy

- All staff, committee members and other volunteers to read and refer to the document, “Safe from Harm” issued by the Home Office. Copies are available from the office, 10 Fishergate Hill, Preston, PR1 8JB.
- All staff, committee members and other volunteers will complete a Registration and Disclosure form (enclosed) providing their full name, current and recent addresses and date of birth, details of previous experience, voluntary or paid, of working with young people, details of any convictions for criminal convictions against children, including “spent” convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, permission to contact in writing and in person, at least one person who has experience of their work or contact with young people who may be asked for a reference, by signing the Registration form, and permission to check for any police criminal record (when permission becomes available to voluntary youth organisations through the establishment of the Criminal Records Agency, or other similar agency), by signing the Disclosure form.
- The process of implementing the policy is the responsibility of the person designated by the management committee.  
Staff and committee members, without a completed and satisfactory registration and disclosure forms, will not be permitted to serve with Hybrid Arts.