

IOP's Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy & Procedures

August 2016

Introduction

This policy applies to all staff, members and volunteers who carry out activities on behalf of the Institute of Physics ("IOP"), where they come into contact with Children and/or Vulnerable Adults, and reflects the statutory framework in this area.

Definitions

A child is defined as anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. Children therefore means children and young people.

A vulnerable adult someone 18 or over who is unable to care independently for themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation. This could be due to a physical or learning disability, illness or injury or mental health issues; old age; substance addiction; domestic violence or abuse or other reasons. It can be a temporary or a permanent condition.

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare, and refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm.

Policy Implementation

Getting Checked

Checks are carried out through the Disclosure and Barring Service (the "DBS").

Only certain staff/volunteers/members taking part in or organising activities on behalf of IOP now need to be subject to DBS Checks, even where they come into contact with Children and/or Vulnerable Adults. DBS Checks are only required if the work/volunteering involves regular and/or unsupervised contact with Children and/or Vulnerable Adults.

When carrying out activities for IOP, staff, members and volunteers should:

- Ensure that there is sufficient supervision of everyone involved with running the activity so that no one without a valid DBS Check is ever left alone with any Children and/or Vulnerable Adults;
- Even if individuals are known to have had checks, maintain a safeguarding culture so all attendees avoid being left alone with a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult and be vigilant for inappropriate behaviour; and
- At events where STEMNET Ambassadors are present, ensure that the STEMNET photo ID card is seen and recorded (name, number and expiry date as part of the activity risk assessment) by the ultimate supervisor of all members and/or evidence of the person's current employment with IOP where relevant

Portable Checks from Other Organisations

Where a member or other person involved in running an activity has a DBS Check from an organisation other than STEMNET (eg a school at which they teach), then this can only be accepted if it was carried out within the previous three months and proof of identity (eg passport) and the results of the DBS Check are shown to the nominated member and recorded in the risk assessment. Alternatively, where the member or other person confirms that they have registered for portable updates of their DBS check, consent should be sought from the individual to carry out an online update.

National Differences

As with CRB checks, the new DBS Checks only apply to England and Wales. Different rules remain in place for activities taking place in Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland but in all other respects IOP's general policy remains the same.

Contact Details

STEMNET

For more information on the scheme, and to start the process of becoming a STEM Ambassador, go to <http://www.stemnet.org.uk/content/ambassadors>

Scotland

For more information on applicable checks see <http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/>

Northern Ireland

For more information on applicable checks see <http://www.dojni.gov.uk/accessni>

Garda Central Vetting Unit

For more information on obtaining an appropriate check see
<http://www.garda.ie/Controller.aspx?Page=1535>

Guidelines for Use of Photographic Filming Equipment

IOP has guidelines that should be followed at all times when photographic or any other filming equipment is being used, all of which are accessible via the Intranet.

Conduct during Work Experience Placements – Guidance for Staff

The DBS check is not compulsory for staff supervising participants aged 16–17. In the case of work experience, a DBS check will only be required if an employee's specific job description includes looking after under-16 work experience students. Staff requested to assist or provide instruction to, or supervision of, work experience students should be mindful of any risks associated with 'working' with students if this requires being in a one-to-one situation, either within our offices or outside.

Work experience placements should only be organised through, or with the full knowledge of, the HR department.

Volunteers

Use of volunteers by IOP will be subject to the Volunteers Policy.

The capitalised terms have the same meanings as in the Policy, unless otherwise stated.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE AND GOOD PRACTICE & REPORTING GUIDELINES

The guidelines set out in this document are intended to supplement the Policy and to set out how IOP's staff, members and volunteers must carry out their roles to ensure that the Policy is adhered to at all times.

Forms of Abuse

Abuse can take a number of forms and Children and/or Vulnerable Adults may also be subject to multiple abuse.

Physical abuse – involves actions that physically hurt or injure Children and/or Vulnerable Adults such as hitting, shaking, kicking, pushing, slapping, burning, poisoning, rough handling or subjecting to unwanted touching etc., inappropriate restraint, or sanctions including deprivation of food, clothing, warmth and health care needs.

Neglect – where Children and/or Vulnerable Adults suffer because their health, physical or emotional needs are not looked after properly.

Sexual abuse – where Children and/or Vulnerable Adults are subjected to any kind of sexual activity that they have not given consent to, are unable to give consent to and/or are pressured into giving consent to.

Emotional / psychological abuse – is persistent emotional ill-treatment such as shouting, swearing, humiliation, threatening with punishment, or deliberately denying religious, racial or cultural needs causing Children and/or Vulnerable Adults to feel frightened or in danger which may make them nervous or withdrawn.

Discriminatory abuse – discrimination demonstrated on any grounds including sex, race, colour, language, culture, religion, politics or sexual orientation; discrimination that is based on a person's age or disability; harassment and slurs which are degrading, or hate crime.

Financial abuse – where Children and/or Vulnerable Adults are subjected to the theft or misuse of money, possessions, property or other goods.

Domestic Violence – is any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been intimate partners, or are family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

Recognising Abuse

The effects of abuse can be damaging and, if ignored, they may follow a young person into adulthood.

Recognising abuse is not always easy and it is not the responsibility of staff, members or volunteers to decide whether or not abuse has taken place or if a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult is at significant risk. However, staff, members and volunteers do have a responsibility to report promptly if they have any concerns.

Indicators of Abuse

Indications that a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult may be experiencing abuse include the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries;
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent;
- Fear of Parents being approached about such injuries;
- Reluctance to get changed e.g. wearing long sleeves in hot weather;
- Describing what appears to be an abusive act involving themselves;
- Flinching when touched or approached;
- Someone else (a child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another Child and/or Vulnerable Adult;
- Fear of being left with a specific person;
- Becoming increasingly dirty/smelly and unkempt;

- Displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite;
- Losing weight for no apparent reason;
- Being prevented from socialising with other children;
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour;
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden bursts of temper);
- Sudden loss of assets, property or money;
- Inappropriate sexual awareness;
- A failure to grow and thrive;
- Difficulty in making friends.

This list is not exhaustive. Many Children and/or Vulnerable Adults will exhibit some of these indicators at some time and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place.

It is crucial to note that this is a process of observation only and that at no point should any person working on behalf of IOP feel that they should be actively seeking out abuse or an abuser. The responsibility of everyone working on behalf of IOP is to ensure that if they have concerns about the welfare of a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult, they report it and never assume that others will do it.

Good Practice Guidelines

All staff, members and volunteers will be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate:

- (i) always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment with no secrets);
- (ii) treating all Children and Vulnerable Adults equally and with respect and dignity;
- (iii) always putting the welfare of each Child and Vulnerable Adult first, before the winning or achieving of other goals;
- (iv) maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with Children and Vulnerable Adults;
- (v) making activities enjoyable and promoting fair play;
- (vi) ensuring that if any form of unusual manual or physical support is required, it is provided openly and, where appropriate, according to guidelines provided by the sport or activity's National Governing Body. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult is constantly moving. Children and Vulnerable Adults should always be consulted and their agreement gained to such support. Some Parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be considered carefully;
- (vii) keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance requirements;
- (viii) involving Parents wherever possible (e.g. giving the Parents responsibility for their Children and/or Vulnerable Adults in changing areas). If groups have to be supervised in places such as changing rooms, staff, members and volunteers should always work in pairs;
- (ix) ensuring that if mixed gender groups are taken anywhere, they are always accompanied by a male and female member of staff and/or member and/or volunteer;
- (x) being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol when in charge of Children and/or Vulnerable Adults in any work related environment;
- (xi) giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism;
- (xii) recognising the developmental needs and capacity of Children and/or Vulnerable Adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will;
- (xiii) securing Parental consent in writing to act in 'loco parentis', if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment;
- (xiv) keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with any details of treatment given; and
- (xv) keep records in a safe place and conform to IOP's data protection policy.

Non Acceptable Practices

The following practices are not acceptable:

- (i) engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
- (ii) sleeping in the same room as a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult;
- (iii) allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate touching;
- (iv) allowing Children and/or Vulnerable Adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- (v) making sexually suggestive comments to a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult, even in fun;
- (vi) reducing a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult to tears as a form of control;
- (vii) allowing allegations made by a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- (viii) doing things of a personal and intimate nature for a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult that they can do for themselves;
- (ix) taking Children and/or Vulnerable Adults to the member of staff/member's/volunteer's home unchaperoned;
- (x) transporting Children and/or Vulnerable Adults unchaperoned;
- (xi) applying sun cream to a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult;
- (xii) administering medication to a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult unless specifically trained and approved to do so; and
- (xiii) taking a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult to the toilet unchaperoned.

The above guidance should not be considered exhaustive and more detailed guidance may be required for specific posts/activities. If staff or members have any concerns regarding the appropriateness of any practice/action, they should contact the Head of Human Resources. Volunteers should consult their volunteer co-ordinator. Each branch/group of IOP should appoint an individual to liaise with the Head of Human Resources on matters covered by the Policy.

It may sometimes be necessary for staff, members or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for Children and/or Vulnerable Adults, particularly if they are young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the Parents and, where possible, the Child and/or Vulnerable Adult for whom the task is being carried out.

There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on a member of staff, member or volunteer, they should talk to the Child and/or Vulnerable Adult about what they are doing and offer choices where possible. This is particularly the case when any dressing or undressing is involved, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting of a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult to carry out particular activities. Staff, members and volunteers should avoid taking responsibility for tasks for which they are not trained appropriately.

There may be instances where the Children and/or Vulnerable Adults are unable to understand the situation or unable to make choices, particularly in the case of young and/or disabled Children and Vulnerable Adults. In such cases the parents/carers of the Child and/or Vulnerable Adult should be consulted in advance to make them aware of, and gain their consent for, any activities to be carried out.

If any of the following incidents occur, staff, members and volunteers must report them immediately to another colleague and must record the details fully. Where necessary, Parents should also be informed of the incident in the following circumstances:

- (i) if a member of staff, member or volunteer hurts a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult accidentally;
- (ii) if a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult seems distressed in any way;
- (iii) if a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult appears to be sexually aroused by a member of staff's or member's or volunteer's actions; and/or

- (iv) if a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult misunderstands or misinterprets something a member of staff or member or volunteer has done.

The Procedure For Reporting Suspected Abuse

If you suspect abuse, a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult confides in you, or a complaint is made about any person or about you, it is your responsibility to report it.

If a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult tells you about abuse by someone else

- react calmly and listen carefully
- reassure them that they were right to tell
- explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared
- ensure their safety
- allow them to continue at their own pace
- do not interview them or other witnesses
- keep questions to an absolute minimum and make sure that they are not leading questions
- tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared
- make a full written record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible which must be signed and dated
- relay the information immediately to the Head of Human Resources /the volunteer co-ordinator if it relates to a volunteer)
- maintain confidentiality and do not discuss with other persons
- do not contact the Parents until advice is taken from Social Services

In an emergency (where a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult is at immediate risk of harm) contact the school child protection lead/headteacher, police or Social Services directly. Inform the Head of Human Resources/volunteer co-ordinator (as appropriate) of the action you have taken and why.

If you have a concern about a Child and/or Vulnerable Adult's safety and well-being

- record the concerns and any conversations with them and their Parents. The written record must be dated and signed
- report the concerns to the Head of Human Resources (if the concern relates to a member of staff or member/ the volunteer co-ordinator (if the concern relates to a volunteer) immediately

If you receive a complaint or allegation about any person, including yourself

- write careful notes of what you have witnessed, heard or are told. Sign and date them
- pass your notes to the Head of Human Resources (if the complaint/allegation relates to a member of staff or member)/the volunteer co-ordinator (if the complaint/allegation relates to a volunteer) immediately

Anyone working for or on behalf of IOP has the right to report any concerns or suspicions about any of their colleagues in confidence and free from harassment.

IOP does not expect its staff, members, volunteers or representatives to be experts at recognising potential abuse nor should they investigate any alleged abuse. However, you do have a responsibility to act in accordance with the Policy if you have any concerns about the behaviour of anyone (adult or child) towards Children and/or Vulnerable Adults.