

Exploding Words Festivals: Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

Exploding Words Festivals (Exploding Words) has a duty of care to safeguard from harm all children involved in activities that it organises. All children have a right to be safeguarded. A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989). All organisations who work with Exploding Words and which make provision for children must ensure that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual orientation or identity have the right to be safeguarded from abuse
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all trustees, staff/volunteers have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.
- trustees, staff/volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.

Policy Aim

The aim of the Exploding Words' Safeguarding Policy is to promote good practice to allow all trustees, staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child safeguarding issues.

Policy Provisions

1. Designated officer

Exploding Words has an officer to monitor and coordinate child safeguarding procedures and act as the designated safeguarding officer (DSO). The DSO is Deborah Hilborne, who can be contacted on deborahjhilborne@gmail.com

2. Partners

Exploding Words will ensure that any partner organisations will provide evidence that those responsible for the group have clear policy and procedures for safeguarding children and that their staff have appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

3. Recruitment

In recruiting staff, the trustees in consultation with the DSO, will agree whether a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check should be undertaken. If so,

- an application form must be completed that will elicit information about the applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record,
- carry out an enhanced DBS check for relevant roles. or provide details of membership to the DBS update service prior to starting work with us,
- robust interviews that cover safeguarding, equality and diversity knowledge and skills,
- two confidential references should be sought, including one regarding any previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact,
- evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo) must be provided,

4. Induction/Training

All Exploding Words staff, including trustees and core volunteers, will complete mandatory Safeguarding training (at least every three years), to refresh their awareness of child safeguarding procedures. A record of the training (certificates with dates) should be kept by the DSO.

Good Practice Guidelines

Good practice means:

- Creating a culture of informed vigilance which takes safeguarding seriously.
- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all young people equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance from children (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to local guidelines. Young people and their carers should always be consulted and their agreement gained.
- Ensuring that activities involving males and females are always accompanied appropriately by a male or female member of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.
- Teachers from attending schools will be responsible for securing parental consent in writing, to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Avoiding spending time alone with children away from others

Reporting Concerns about Suspected Abuse

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a trustee or a volunteer or another adult or child should be reported to the Exploding Words DSO, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child or adult in question and any other child or adult who may be at risk.

It is not the responsibility of anyone working at Exploding Words to decide whether or not a child/young person is being abused or might be abused. However, there is a responsibility to act on concerns to protect children and young people, in order that appropriate agencies can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the child/young person.

The Exploding Words DSO will refer the allegation to the local authority social care department who may involve the police.

The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social care department.

Exploding Words will ensure all trustees, staff and volunteers are aware that there is a policy for whistle blowers and if any of the team have concerns about a team member or supervisor, they are empowered and encouraged to go to the DSO, one of the trustees or approach the NSPCC
Whistleblower Advice helpline: help@nspcc.org.uk