



## Safeguarding Children Policy

### Introduction

- Safeguarding is defined<sup>1</sup> as
  - protecting children from maltreatment;
  - preventing impairment of children's health and development;
  - ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and
  - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- Under the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Ride High has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people (hereinafter together referred to as "young people") in its care by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect.
- Ride High's first priority must at all times be the protection and safety of young people in its care.
- Ride High employees have a full and active part to play in protecting young people from harm.
- All employees should be able to recognise, and know how to act upon, evidence that a young person's health is, or may be being, impaired, and especially when a young person is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
- This Policy applies to all young people irrespective of race, gender, age, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2013)

## Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are:

- To raise the awareness of Ride High employees of the need to safeguard young people and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse to other agencies.
- To develop a structured procedure that will be followed consistently by all employees in cases of suspected abuse.
- To support the development of young people in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To ensure that all employees, volunteers and Trustees have been checked as to their suitability to work with young people.
- To ensure that all parents/carers are aware of how child protection issues will be dealt with.

**It is not the responsibility of Ride High employees, volunteers or Trustees to investigate suspected or alleged abuse.**

## The Children's Manager

The Children's Manager has day-to-day responsibility for child protection matters and will therefore:

- act as a source of support, advice and expertise within Ride High for any safeguarding matters that may arise;
- have a working knowledge of Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures if a safeguarding issue is suspected;
- refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating authorities;
- ensure written records of concern about a young person are kept, even if there is no need to make an immediate referral to the Child Protection Team. These records will be kept confidentially and securely in the young person's file and a reference to the written record of concern will be added to the Child Protection Incident Book;
- ensure that all employees have induction training covering child protection and are able to recognise and report concerns as soon as they occur;

- undertake relevant training every two years.

### **The Designated Trustee**

Ride High has a Designated Trustee (Hilary Solway) with relevant knowledge of, and overall responsibility for, child protection matters.

The Designated Trustee must ensure that all these requirements are adhered to by the Children's Manager; the Designated Trustee and Children's Manager will discuss child protection issues generally and review any safeguarding records at the monthly meeting of the Children's Committee (a sub-committee of the Board of Trustees) but the Children's Manager (or in his/her absence, his/her deputy) must inform the Designated Trustee of any specific child protection issues as and when they arise.

In turn, the Designated Trustee should inform the Chief Executive and Ann Whitfield (a Trustee) about any child protection issue that had arisen, and confirm to both that it has been properly dealt with in accordance with this Policy.

### **DBS checks and references**

- All employees and volunteers must complete a satisfactory DBS check before they can work unsupervised with young people.
- Satisfactory references for employees must be obtained before a post is offered and any gaps in an applicant's employment history will be investigated.
- Trustees must complete a satisfactory DBS check before they are appointed.

This information (together with safeguarding training records) will be kept in a central register and kept in the Ride High office.

### **Procedures**

Information disclosed to one of Ride High's employees (either directly or indirectly) which concerns the welfare of a young person must be taken seriously.

The flow chart in the Appendix summarises the action to be taken in the event of any concern about a young person's welfare.

Employees who suspect that a young person is being abused either through personal observation (e.g. a worrying change in the young person's behaviour or appearance), or through information passed to them (possibly from the young person concerned), must:

- First warn the young person that they cannot keep any information revealed by the young person confidential, but instead will pass it on to the Children's Manager (or in his/her absence, his/her deputy) in accordance with the Ride High Safeguarding Children Policy.
- Then, if the young person wishes to talk, listen to the young person rather than directly question him/her, and support and respond to the young person as much as possible.
- Write a record of concern, taking care to record all the details set out below, and sign it. Put the written record of concern in the young person's file and note the concern in the Child Protection Incident Book.
- Inform the Children's Manager (or in his/her absence, his/her deputy) who will in turn, if (s)he considers it appropriate, involve the parent/carer, contact the young person's referrer, and/or make a referral to the Child Protection Team. The Children's Manager (or his/her deputy) will also inform the Designated Trustee or (if the Designated Trustee cannot be contacted) the Chief Executive.
- Confirm any referral to the Child Protection Team in writing within 48 hours.
- Record all and any subsequent events in the written record of concern up to the time of seeking specialist advice from the Child Protection Team.

**If the Children's Manager (or in his/her absence, his/her deputy) has serious concerns that the young person is being abused (s)he must inform the Child Protection Team. It is not Ride High's role to investigate such allegations, and inappropriate questioning in such circumstances may risk further harm to the young person or interfere with further investigations.** If the parent/carer is the possible perpetrator, they must not be questioned, but in all other circumstances must be involved.

Where the parent/carer has been involved in the discussions, the Children's Manager (or his/her deputy) will arrange to see the parent/carer to review together a written report of the incident, which must be signed by the parent/carer, and a copy given to the parent/carer.

If a volunteer or Trustee has any concern about the welfare of a young person, they should raise it immediately with the Children's Manager (or in his/her absence, his/her deputy).

### **Written records of concern**

All written records of concern are confidential and must be kept in locked files. A reference to a record of concern must be noted in the Child Protection Incident Book. Records of concern should be written as soon as possible after the observation or disclosure but in any event within 24 hours and should cover the following:-

#### ***General***

- Time, date and place of observation or disclosure
- Name, address and age of young person
- Name of parent/carer
- Name of employee/volunteer/Trustee who had the concern
- Name of any other person present at the time

#### ***What took place?***

- Source of information (e.g. direct or indirect disclosure)
- Exact words spoken by the young person as far as possible
- Observed behaviour/physical concerns

#### ***Action taken***

- Have parents/carers been contacted?
- When was the concern reported to the Children's Manager (or his/her deputy) and the Designated Trustee or Chief Executive (time and date)?
- When was the Child Protection Team contacted (time and date) and who was the contact?
- Was anyone else contacted? If so, who and when?

## **Allegations against Ride High employees, volunteers and Trustees**

No Ride High employee, volunteer or Trustees must ever be alone with a young person without another employee, volunteer or Trustee being aware. If working with a young person alone (for example conducting a review), another employee, volunteer or Trustee must be informed.

If an allegation of unacceptable behaviour or abuse is made against a Ride High employee, volunteer or Trustee by a young person or their parent/carer the Chief Executive (or in the case of an allegation against the Chief Executive, the Designated Trustee) must be informed immediately. The Chief Executive (or the Designated Trustee) will immediately inform the Child Protection Team and request them to carry out an independent investigation into the allegation. Ride High will cooperate fully with any such investigation.

The employee/volunteer/Trustee will be suspended from all activities with Ride High which involve any direct contact with young people until the investigation has been completed. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but to protect the employee/volunteer/Trustee concerned as well as young people and families throughout the process.

## **Parent/carer concerns**

A parent or carer who has concerns about unacceptable behaviour or possible abuse by other young people should contact the Children's Manager in the first instance. The Children's Manager and the Designated Trustee will discuss the concerns with the parent/carer and make a written record of concern, and a note in the Child Protection Incident Book. The action taken will be recorded in the written record of concern and the parent/carer informed. If the parent/carer still has concerns they should contact the Chief Executive.

## **Racism and bullying**

Our policies on racism and bullying by young people are set out in our Behaviour Policy. Repeated racist or bullying incidents may lead to consideration under this Safeguarding Children Policy.

## **Health and safety**

Our Health and Safety Policy sets out the consideration we give to protecting young people in our care:

- within the Ride High clubroom;
- when being transported to and from the clubroom;

- when undertaking field trips.

### **Social networking**

Our Social Networking Policy sets out the consideration we give to protecting Ride High members when using social networking applications.

### **Photographs**

Photographs and videos of young people in our care may only be taken by Ride High employees, volunteers and Trustees or their authorised agents. Such photographs and videos may be used on Ride High's website and/or in Ride High's printed material and by the media (including newspapers and broadcast media) for the promotion of Ride High and its activities, but may not be used for any other purpose, and only if we have received prior written permission from the young people's parents/carers.

### **Support for Ride High employees**

We recognise that employees and volunteers who have become involved with a young person who has, or appears to have, suffered harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such employees and volunteers by providing the opportunity for regular supervision with their line manager (or in the case of volunteers, with the Children's Manager) to talk through their anxieties and to seek further support as appropriate, in accordance with our Stress Policy.

### **Training and awareness**

A copy of this Policy will be shown to all employees and volunteers, and each must sign the list attached to the original to indicate they have read and understood it. It will also be made available to all referrers and members and/or their parents/carers.

A breach of this Policy by an employee will be regarded as misconduct that could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

Employees will be trained in child protection matters as appropriate to their roles at Ride High. Such training is designed to ensure employees are able to recognise the signs of abuse and that they know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns.

## Approval and Review

This Safeguarding Children Policy was approved at a Board Meeting of the Trustees on 17 January 2017. It will be reviewed each September thereafter, or more frequently if appropriate.

Signed.....

Date.....

## Contacts and services

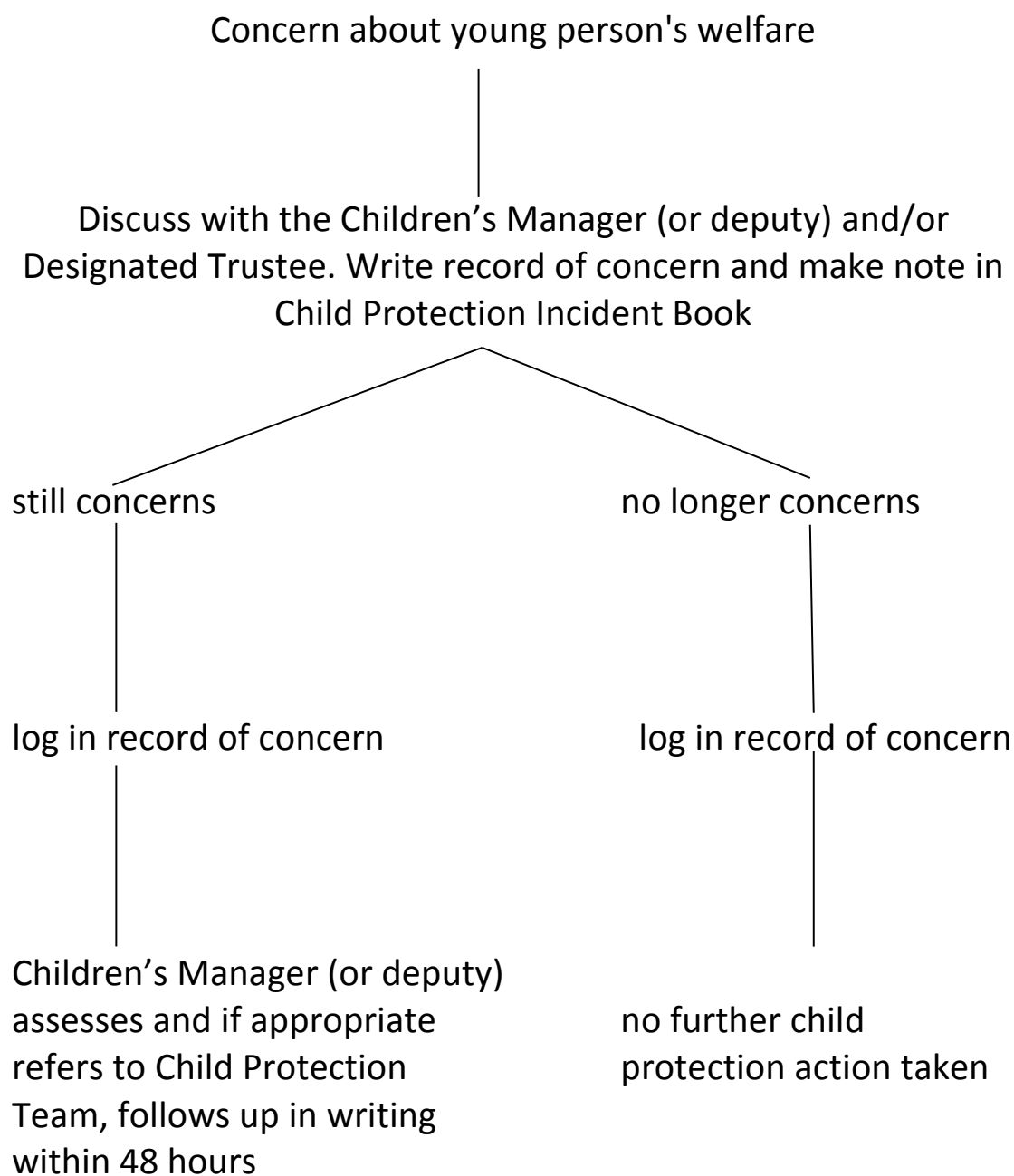
Out of hours duty desk/Child Protection Team.....	01908 253170
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.....	0808 800 5000
Samaritans.....	01908 667777
Child Line.....	0800 1111
Thames Valley Police Family Protection Unit.....	01908 868392
Milton Keynes General Hospital.....	01908 660033
Family Counselling Service.....	01908 231131
Ride High Designated Trustee (Hilary Solway).....	01908 584140
Ride High Chief Executive (Rachel Medill).....	07887 537703
Ride High Centre (for the Children's Manager).....	07507 308943

## References

Every Child Matters: Change for Children (Dept for Education, November 2004)  
What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (HM Government) (2006)



## APPENDIX



In either case, the issue should be referred to the young person's referrer, even if no further action is taken.