



WORKING TOGETHER FOR

**CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD
SAFEGUARDING**

INTRODUCTION

This policy reflects Pro Corda's active commitment to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the children and young people who attend its courses.

In all the work we do the rights, safety and welfare of children are paramount.

This booklet outlines Pro Corda's approach to the recognition, consultation and referral of suspected child abuse to the appropriate agencies.

The CEO and Artistic Director, **Andrew Quartermain**, is responsible for child protection and welfare matters for all Pro Corda courses. His role is to co-ordinate the Child Protection processes within Pro Corda, organise effective training of all Pro Corda employees and take the lead in referral to outside agencies.

All Pro Corda employees have a responsibility to protect children from abuse and Andrew Quartermain will ensure that all employees are conversant with Pro Corda's Child Protection Procedures and know how to access and implement them, independently if necessary.

Pro Corda will keep Child Protection records confidential on a need to know basis and these will be kept separately from any other records.

This policy is publicly available on Pro Corda's website, www.procorda.com for parents and anyone associated with Pro Corda in order to facilitate open and effective communication between parents, children, teachers and outside agencies responsible for the well being of children.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The management of confidentiality is an essential factor in all issues relating to child protection if Pro Corda is to maintain the trust of its students and staff.

It is better to try to negotiate with a child beforehand about where you both stand in relation to confidentiality. Whatever happens you should always be honest with a child about what you intend to do.

You should never give a student an absolute guarantee of confidentiality, but must ensure that the information is disclosed only to those who need to know. Do not discuss concerns and fears with the parent(s) or indeed with anyone who is involved with the care of the child. The student coming forward should always be asked what s/he would like to happen now that an allegation has been made.

Any member of staff who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that abuse may have occurred has a **legal duty** to report it as soon as possible to the designated person for child protection issues.

If the suspicions in any way involve the designated person, then the report should be made in the first instance to the Chair of Trustees.

It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make direct referrals to the local social services department or to the police. However, we strongly advise Pro Corda staff to use the guidelines contained in this policy. If, however, you feel that the designated teacher or the Chair of Trustees has not responded appropriately to your concerns, then it is open to any member of staff to make a direct referral to the social services department.

Pro Corda hopes, that by making this statement, it demonstrates its commitment to effective child protection.

DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE.

Physical Abuse.

Where a child is physically hurt. It can involve hitting shaking, squeezing, burning and biting. It also involves giving a child poisonous substances, inappropriate drugs and alcohol. Physical abuse can leave signs – look out for children with frequent bruising, burns, fractures and cuts – all without reasonable explanation of cause.

Sexual abuse.

Where children are exploited sexually by adults who use them to meet their own sexual needs. It includes sexual intercourse, fondling, masturbation, oral sex and exposing children to pornographic materials. Children who have been sexually abused often become depressed and withdrawn, they display unusually aggressive behaviour, may have eating problems and relationships with adults that exclude others. They may display over-sexualised behaviour inappropriate for their age.

(Children cannot give consent to a sexual act because of their dependent condition. However the question of consent may be more complex with older children or when there is a small age gap between 'abuser' and 'abused'. The key issue is assessing whether sexual abuse has occurred is that of exploitation. Exploitation is considered to have occurred if the activity was unwanted when it first began and/or involved a misuse of conventional age, authority or gender differentials.)

Emotional abuse.

Where a child consistently faces a lack of love and affection, or is continually threatened by verbal attacks, taunting and shouting. Children who have been emotionally abused may seem sad, cry a lot and display apathetic or aggressive behaviour. They may well have a lack of confidence and low self-esteem.

Neglect.

Where parents fail to meet the basic and essential needs of their children – like food, clothes, warmth and medical care. Leaving children alone is another form of neglect. Children who have been neglected suffer a number of difficulties, they may seem unusually withdrawn and miserable, be over aggressive, have eating and nutrition problems and be dirty and smelly.

INDICATIONS AND RECOGNITION OF ABUSE

Listed below are a number of signs which **may** help in the recognition of a child in difficulties. **It is vital that staff appreciate that these signs can do no more than give rise to suspicion; they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred.** The word **may** is emphasised, because it is of crucial importance that adults do not read into a student's behaviour 'evidence' that may not signify abuse at all but is instead the result of some other, possibly innocent, factor.

Nevertheless the following behaviours **can, with other indicators, point to the possibility** of abuse.

- sudden changes in behaviour and/or deterioration of performance.
- anxiety and low self esteem, or continual self depreciation.
- inability to make friends within own peer group.
- knowledge of sexual matters beyond what would be expected for his/her age.
- continuing need for affection sometimes expressed in physical terms.
- difficulty in trusting or defiance of staff.
- vague pains and aches possibly arising from psychosomatic illnesses and possibly fearing medical help.
- drug or solvent abuse.
- compulsive stealing.

Any concerns coming to your attention should be shared with the nominated liaison person in the first instance and immediately. Pro Corda staff at courses held outside Leiston should telephone Andrew Quartermain on 07823 885336.

MAKING AN ALLEGATION

Some staff feel that reporting alleged abuse is disloyal to a student who has chosen to confide in them; others fear that such disclosure will damage the relationship with the student's parents, could involve disloyalty to another staff member, or that they are simply making a fuss about nothing.

Staff are under a duty to report all suspicions of abuse to the designated person in Pro Corda; it is then the responsibility of the designated person to pass these concerns on to the social services. This is an inescapable personal and professional responsibility for the protection of children from harm.

The following information is intended to assist you if you become involved in a potential child protection situation.

1. Always **stop and listen** straight away to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse. Take what is said seriously; it is rare for children to make false allegations.
2. If you can, **write brief notes** of what they are telling you while they are speaking, - (these may help later if you have to remember exactly what was said) - and keep your original notes, however rough. It's what you wrote at the time that may be important later – not a tidier and improved version you wrote up afterwards. If you don't have the means to write at the time, make notes of what was said as soon as possible afterwards.
3. **Never make a promise** that you will keep what is said confidential or secret. If you are told about abuse you have a responsibility to report it so that action can be taken. Give reassurance that only those who need to know will be told.
4. **Do not ask leading questions** that might give your own ideas of what might have happened, (e.g. "Did he do X to you?") - just ask - "What do you want to tell me?" or "Is there anything else you want to say?"
5. **Never attempt to carry out an investigation** of suspected or alleged abuse by interviewing people etc. – Social Services are the people trained to do this. You could cause more damage and spoil possible criminal proceedings.

6. **Never think abuse is impossible** or that an accusation against someone you know well and trust is bound to be wrong.
7. **Inform the Child Protection Officer, Andrew Quartermain.** Immediate action enables you to share the anxiety about what you have heard and reduces the risk of misinterpretation. None of us has to carry child protection responsibilities on our own.

Some helpful things you can say to a child who decides to confide in you:

- I believe you/ or I will take seriously what you say.
- It's not your fault. (A child can never be held responsible for abuse received at the hands of others).
- I'm glad you told me.
- I'm sorry this happened to you.
- Let's both see if I can help you.

**CHECKLIST FOR INDUCTION TO
CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES
IN PRO CORDA**

Nominated liaison person: **Andrew Quartermain.**
Contact details: andrew@procorda.com

Date this booklet was discussed with the above:

Signed

Position held at Pro Corda