



Nelson Park Riding Centre Ltd



St Margaret's Road, Woodchurch, Birchington, Kent, CT7 0HJ
T. 01843 822251 www.nelsonpark.co.uk

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Nelson Park Riding Centre Ltd wishes to ensure that all children are protected from harm and to promote children's health and welfare including their physical, emotional, social and intellectual development.

Nelson Park Riding Centre Ltd fully recognise the contribution it makes to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare and have implemented this policy to reflect its responsibilities to and support of Kent Child Protection Committee's Child in Need / Child Protection procedure (**referred to hereafter as the KCPC Procedure**). Paragraphs from the KCPC Procedure are referred to throughout this policy. A copy of this procedure can be found in the appendices to the master copy of the Staff Handbook which is kept in the main office.

The policy applies to all permanent, temporary, casual and voluntary workers undertaking duties to promote our services. The word of "a child" throughout this document includes both children and young people under 18 years of age.

Nelson Park Riding Centre Ltd applies the following principles when working with children and their families:

- Treating children as individuals entitled to dignity and respect.
- Promoting effective partnerships amongst all those involved with children, including children's parents/carers, to improve children's welfare.
- Promoting the safety of children in all aspects of the programme.
- Raising awareness of best practice in how to protect children from harm of all kinds.
- Operating so as to minimise opportunities for children to suffer harm.
- Making safety responsibility of all members of the organisation.
- Establishing effective and open procedures in responding to accidents, complaints or concerns.
- Adopting and applying safe recruitment practices for all staff.
- Co-ordinating Child Protection policies with the Kent Child Protection Committee in accordance with Working Together and DOH Assessment Framework.



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AWARENESS OF ABUSE

Abuse takes many forms. It can be described as an act, or failure to act, by the person responsible for the care of the child. It may involve cruelty, exploitation or neglect.

Enquires under Section 47 of The Children Act 1989 (**referred to hereafter as S.47**) are likely to take place where the Local Authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives or is found in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

“Research and practical experience have indicated that children who have suffered abuse or neglect will usually have a range of needs additional to the direct and obvious need for protection. The families of the children at risk or significant harm frequently face a range of difficulties that may affect their ability to provide for the safety and nurture of their children. For this reason the procedures for responding to incidents and allegations of abuse and neglect are now clearly located within context of responding to children in need.

Although protecting children from significant harm is now defined as a special form of need, this does not diminish the requirement for managers and practitioners in all agencies to be alert to the possibility of abuse and neglect to follow the procedure for referral to either the Social Services Directorate or Police. Incorporating the child protection process within a comprehensive policy and procedure for all children in need is intended to ensure that responses are based in assessments of risk and the wider needs of the child and family. However, it is also clear intention that emergency action is taken whenever it is warranted by the urgency and gravity of the situation”.



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KCPC Child in Need/ Child Protection Procedure 2001.

- Child abuse and neglect require the involvement of Social Services and Police whenever a child or young person up to the age of 18 has suffered or may be at risk of suffering significant harm due to the actions of his or her parents or carers or others responsible for his or her care.
- Where abuse occurs from some other source, the matter will also require the investigation of Police and Social Services Duty Team at Thanet Local Office to ensure that future risks to the identified child and other children are minimised and appropriate services provided. The minimisation of risk may involve criminal investigation and prosecutions or the disclosure of information in accordance with agreed policies relating to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- When an employee of the Nelson Park Riding Centre Ltd is aware that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm from abuse or neglect, a referral must be made either to Social Services at Thanet Local Office or Police as described in paragraph 3.5 of the KCPC Procedure.
- This applies to all cases of risk. Where this is immediate danger to a child the Police or Social Services must be contacted immediately.

The definitions of abuse and significant harm are contained in the guidance Part 2 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. They relate to:

Physical abuse – this may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described as factitious, illness by proxy, or Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy.

Emotional abuse – is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. There is increasing evidence of the adverse long-term consequences for children's development where they have been subject to sustained emotional abuse. Emotional abuse has an important impact on a developing child's mental health, behaviour and self-esteem. It can be especially damaging in infancy. Underlying emotional abuse may be as important, if not more so, than other more visible



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forms of abuse on terms of its impact on the child. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may feature in families where children are exposed to such abuse.

Sexual abuse – involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non – penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect – is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs. Severe neglect of young children is associated with major impairment of health and development, and long-term difficulties with social functioning, relationships and educational progress. Neglect can also result, in extreme cases, in death.

A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time.

In deciding whether the harm caused to a child is significant, the definitions contained in the Children Act 1989 should be considered:

The question of whether harm is significant relates to the individual child's health or development compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar agreed child.

- **Harm means ill treatment or the impairment of health or development.**
- **Development means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.**
- **Health means physical or mental health.**
- **Ill-treatment includes sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment that are not physical.**



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There are also no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill treatment may include the degree and extent of premeditation, degree of threat and coercion, sadism, and bizarre unusual elements in child sexual abuse. For this reason, any worker who is in doubt as to whether a referral should be made to either Social Services or the Police should seek consultation with experienced colleagues. Social Services are also available for consultation to assist professionals in their decision regarding referral. In the latter case, it will not be necessary to identify the child or family unless a formal referral is made (see paragraph 3.3 of the KCPC Procedure)

All suspicions and allegations of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

- The Nelson Park Riding Centre Ltd has a legal responsibility to refer any Child Protection concerns to Social Services or the Police.
- The Nelson Park Riding Centre Ltd must not investigate
- The Nelson Park Riding Centre Ltd cannot maintain confidentiality.

The Nelson Park Riding Centre Ltd has to act on suspicions, facts and disclosures.

Workers are not expected to know everything concerning child protection but it is their duty to:

- **Be alert and responsive to problems and the potential indicators of abuse or neglect.**
- **Be alert and responsive to the risks which individual abusers or potential abusers may pose to children.**
- **Share and analyse information to enable informed assessments and good practice.**
- **Keep clear, detailed and accurate records.**
- **Discuss issues and concerns with line managers or designated people.**
- **Use appropriate language and behaviour.**
- **Go on relevant training to enable them to have the necessary knowledge.**

REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS.

If an allegation of abuse or neglect is made or concerns are raised they should always be brought to the attention of the identified person for child protection.

Mr Graham Catterall or Mrs Sarah Catterall

If the designated person is not available you must contact Social Services Department for a consultation.



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REFERRAL TO SOCIAL SERVICES

- An Nelson Park Riding Centre Ltd employee or member of the public, who believes that a child is in need of support and services, or is at risk of suffering or has suffered significant harm, should make a referral to social services.
- In most circumstances the agreement of the parents/carers of the child should be sought before a referral is made, providing this will not place the child at an increased risk of harm. **If a professional has any concern that informing a parent may place a child at risk or may compromise Police evidence, immediate advice must be sought from either the Social Services or the Police.**
- Should a parent or carer withhold their agreement to a referral being made consideration should be given to the impact this may have on the level of concern for the child's welfare, and the parents or carer's ability to meet the child's needs.
- Any professional referrer having doubts regarding the need to refer to Social Services should consult with the named professional with special responsibility for child protection matters within their own agency. Where further advice or consultation is necessary Social Services will be available for consultation.
- If a member of the public has doubts regarding the need to make a referral to the Social Services Directorate or requires more information about the process that will follow a referral, local Social Services Duty System should be contacted.
- The purpose of the consultation is to assist the potential referrer to decide whether or not to make a formal referral to the Social Services Directorate. The child and family should not be identified for the purposes of the consultation. The Social Services Directorate will make a record of the consultation and any advice or agreed action; a copy will be sent by Social Services to the professional who has initiated the consultation.



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MAKING A REFERRAL

- In situations where there is no immediate risk to the child, professionals should make the referral in writing, using the agreed standard format in the child protection procedures, which may be posted or faxed to the appropriate Social Services office. The referral should give full details of the child and all other family members, information about the family's circumstances, composition and history, which other agencies are involved with the family and whether, if known, there have been previous referrals to Social Services. It is important to clarify the reason for the child being referred, the exact nature of the concerns, why and how they have arisen and what assessment, support or services referring professional considers may be required.
- **Concerns about abuse or neglect should be clearly identified.**

EMERGENCY PROTECTION

- **In a situation where anybody believes a child may be in need of emergency protection, or that urgent action is necessary, either the Police or the Social Services should be contacted by telephone.** The referrer should give details of the child, and family if known, the reason why immediate action may be necessary, where the child is and whether s/he should remain there or be removed to a safe place.
- The referrer should also clarify whether the parents / carers have been made aware of the concerns and the referral.
- If there is any indication of a risk of violence or aggression towards the staff who will be responsible for the referral this should also be communicated.
- Referrals made by telephone must be followed up in writing within two working days using the standard referral format.

IDENTIFIED PERSON FOR CHILD PROTECTION

The identified person is trained to deal with Child Protection and make referrals. They have the following responsibilities regarding the coordination of Child Protection issues:

- To receive concerns and disclosures made to workers.
- To make referrals to the Social Services Department or Police as necessary.
- To participate in Child Protection procedures as necessary.
- To advise and support workers.
- To assist workers in making a referral.



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- To make a record of the facts surrounding the concerns. What action was taken and why?
- To ensure records are filed securely.
- To feedback appropriate information to staff on a need to know basis.
- To liase with local Social Services Department, Police and LCPC to ensure staff have adequate training on Child Protection issues.

REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT.

Nelson Park Riding Centre Ltd employees must **not** investigate the allegation of Child Protection concern. They should take a record of what was said or seen and refer it to Social Services or Police who are trained to make enquiries that will indicate whether further investigations are necessary.

The record should include:

- Name of child
- Parents/carers details
- Child's address, D.O.B. and G.P
- Relevant telephone numbers
- What is said to have happened or what was seen
- When it occurred
- Who else was there
- What was said by those involved
- Whether there is any actual evidence e.g. bruising, bleeding, changed behaviour, include body map.
- Who has been told about it
- Who was concerned
- Was the child able to say what happened
- Whether the parents have been advised.



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WHAT TO DO IF ABUSE IS SUSPECTED

- Worker to discuss with supervisor or identified person immediately.
- Worker to complete a written record of concerns to include:
 - Reason for recording this incident, hunch, feeling
 - What are the facts, who, what, where, when etc
 - Your opinion – how and why might this have happened
 - Action taken
- All suspicions should be reported regardless of how minor they may seem.
- One small concern raised and noted may fit together with others recorded centrally. Records will be held centrally by Geraldine Smyth to collate such information.
- If it is urgent and a manager or identified Child Protection person is not available, you must call the Social Services or Police direct.



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WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

At the point of contacting the Police or Social services, the KCPC Children in Need / Child Protection procedure comes into effect.

- It is the responsibility of the Duty Manager, Social Services, to make a decision about what course of action will be taken within 24 hours of the referral being received.
- This decision will be made following discussion with the referring professional and consideration of any records of previous or current involvement with the child and other family members (including a parent's or carer's involvement with Adult Services).
- The Duty manager will make one of the following decisions:
 - No further action by Social services.
 - Provision of information and advice or referral to a more appropriate service, but no further action by Social Services.
 - Initial Assessment required.
 - Immediate S.47 enquiry and/or emergency action to protect the child, in accordance with S.47 of the Children Act 1989.

Should there be a dispute with a professional referrer or any other agency regarding the decision, the matter should be resolved using the agreed process set down in Section 1 of the KCPC procedures.

The referral and the decision of the Duty Manager will be recorded on the DoH Referral and Initial Information Record or other agreed records and will specify the reason for the decision. The professional referrer (and the parents or carers of the child, if appropriate) will be notified of the decision and the reasons, in writing. If the decision is to conduct enquiries under S.47 of the Children Act 1989 or to take emergency action to protect the child, the Strategy Group will decide on the timing and means of informing parents and any other relevant family members or professionals (see also paragraph 8.6 of the KCPC Procedure)



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INITIAL ASSESSMENT

- If a decision is made to gather further information following a referral this constitutes an Initial Assessment.
- An Initial Assessment is defined as a brief assessment of each child referred to Social services for support of services.
- The Initial Assessment should be undertaken by a qualified Social Worker, **completed within a maximum of seven working days** of the referral being made and should address the dimensions specified in the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families*.
- The information gathered during the Initial Assessment will be recorded on DoH Initial Assessment Record.

The purpose of the Initial Assessment is to gather enough information about the child, and the family circumstances to allow an informed decision to be made about whether support and services should be provided to maintain and promote his or her welfare. Depending on a child's circumstances, an Initial Assessment could be very brief but should always include gathering information from all agencies to whom the child and family are known, including historical information. Information gathered during the Initial Assessment should include the strengths and positive attributes of family members and functioning, as well as any problems, difficulties or concerns.

In the process of an Initial Assessment the child should be seen and their views and feelings ascertained as appropriate to his or her age and understanding. Observations should also be made of the child's appearance, demeanour and behaviour. Parents / carers should also be interviewed, as should other significant people in the child's life where relevant. Where there are concerns about the level of care provided for the child, the family home should be visited to ascertain whether the basic amenities and hygiene standards are appropriate and suited to the child's needs.

The information gathered during the Initial Assessment should be significant to answer the following questions:

- What are the needs of the child?
- Are the parents or carers able to respond appropriately to the child's needs?
- Is the child being adequately safeguarded from significant harm, and are the parents or carers able to promote the child's health and development?
- Is action required to promote and safeguard the child's welfare?



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CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of the Initial Assessment, and in consultation with the Social Worker who undertook the Assessment, the Duty Manager will make a decision about appropriate further action. This may be:

- No further action is required.
- Where Core Assessment judged not necessary – refer for specified service by an identified agency.
- Child in need – multi – agency Core Assessment to be co-ordinated by Social Services.
- S.47 enquiry to be initiated.
- Emergency action to protect child.

INFORMING REFERRER OF DECISION

- The Duty manager will ensure that professional referrers are informed of the decision and that parents or carers are informed when no further action, referral to another agency, or a Core Assessment is required.
- The strategy group should make decisions about informing parents of enquiries under S.47 or if emergency child protection action should be taken (see paragraph 8.6 of the KCPC Procedure).
- Should there be a dispute with a professional referrer or any other agency regarding the decision, the matter should be resolved using the process in section 1 of this procedure.
- Where the Initial Assessment concludes that the child is in need **and** requires a Core Assessment, consideration should also be given to what services or support it will be necessary to provide for the child and his or her family while the Core Assessment is being undertaken.

It may become apparent at any time during an Initial Assessment that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, significant harm. In this case, a S.47 enquiry must be initiated immediately (see sections 6 and 8 of the KCPC Procedure).

Nelson Park Riding Centre Ltd employees will assist enquiries as required. They will seek advice, help or support in this from their line manager or identified Child Protection person.

Consideration will always be given to taking action designed to protect the child from abuse and the effects on the child and their family caused by unnecessary intervention.



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Social Services Department may need to make an application to Court for an order authorising removal of the child or children from the environment where the alleged abuser lives or has contact with them. Police have similar powers under Police Protection. This is, however, unusual and every alternative will be made to work in partnership with the parents / carers to prevent further abuse occurring (or the likelihood).

TRAINING

All Nelson Park Riding Centre Ltd employees need to undertake training designed to raise awareness of child protection, the DOH Assessment Framework for assessing Children in Need and their family and Kent Child Protection Committee proceedings for Children in Need and Child Protection.

The Project Manager/identified person will take responsibility to brief new workers as necessary and arrange any additional training requirements as part of the Induction Programme for individuals.

The Project Manager should identify training and development needs of staff to ensure each has the skill and understanding to fulfil their responsibilities.

SAFE RECRUITMENT.

Nelson Park Riding Centre Ltd is **committed** to **safe recruitment** processes that ensure:-

- All workers, professional and volunteer workers are suitable to work with vulnerable children and young people.
- All workers are carefully selected and vetted.
- All workers are adequately supervised.
- Workers identify our needs.
- All workers wear Nelson Park Riding Centre Ltd photo ID's when undertaking home visits and other Nelson Park Riding Centre Ltd work.

Proposed appointees to any post where there will be substantial unsupervised access to children will be subject to an enhanced disclosure from the criminal records bureau. All employees have an obligation to disclose any further additions to their Criminal Record but as an added security measure the Nelson Park Riding Centre Ltd will repeat the Criminal Record Bureau check every 3 years.



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ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST NELSON PARK RIDING CENTRE LTD TEAM MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

All complaints from any source against Nelson Park Riding Centre Ltd employees or volunteers, which amount to physical, verbal, sexual or emotional abuse of young vulnerable persons will be taken seriously and dealt with immediately.

The Project Manager or Project Worker will immediately notify the appropriate member of the Management Committee. A decision will be reached on whether the Social Services, Children and Families Social Work team and/or the police should be notified.

A decision will be made in discussion with the Management Committee as to whether the employee/volunteer against whom the allegation/complaint has been made should, for their own well being and for the safety of the vulnerable young persons, be suspended, placed on Special Paid Leave (SPL) or leave for volunteers.

The period of suspension, SPL or leave for volunteers will enable a preliminary investigation to be carried out into the allegation/complaint and the employee or volunteer will not be expected to continue with any Nelson Park Riding Centre Ltd business until the Management Committee is satisfied that the matter has been dealt with appropriately.

In accordance with KCPC Procedures, a strategy discussion will be held and a decision made as to what investigation needs to be followed and which agencies need to be involved.

If an allegation/complaint is made, the management committee will be responsible for any formal investigations required and will be responsible for the on-going management of the employee until the investigation has been carried out. It will be for the management committee to decide whether or not to instigate formal suspension arrangements as and when appropriate.

Should the management committee find substance to the allegation/complaint following the formal investigation it will be their responsibility to take the appropriate action.