

Child Protection Policy – The Domino Foundation – 2012

Introduction

- A child is defined as a person under the age of 18.
- For the purpose of this policy document:
 - The term ‘child’ will be used to describe all children and young people under the age of 18 years old participating in The Domino Foundation led activities.
 - The term ‘staff’ will be used to describe those representing The Domino Foundation’s Programmes, including those working on a paid or unpaid basis.
- Staff should implement this policy using the following guidelines when conducting work that involves children. This will protect the safety and well-being of children engaging in The Domino Foundation’s Programmes and that of our own staff.
- Where staff are likely to engage with a child on a one-to-one basis, it is imperative that he/she is appropriately child protection trained.
- The Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) referred to in this Policy is **Toni Wilkins**.

Children’s Rights

All children have needs and rights:

- The need for physical care and attention
- The need for intellectual stimulation
- The need for emotional love and security
- The need for social contact and relationships
- The right to have their needs met and safeguarded
- The right to be protected from neglect, abuse and exploitation
- The right to be protected from discrimination
- The right to be treated as an individual

The Domino Foundation’s Child Protection Policy

In our provision for children, The Domino Foundation will 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 identity have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All staff have a responsibility to report concerns to the DCPO.

Policy statement

RELIEF | JUSTICE | EMPOWERMENT

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The Domino Foundation recognises the rights of children and its responsibility to safeguard children from any form of abuse, ensuring that none of its staff or volunteers engage in behaviour that could allow abuse to occur. We recognise our responsibility to create a safe learning environment that is empowering and in which each child will be valued as an individual. We will promote an environment that ensures kindness and respect towards the children. The policy has been written to ensure that The Domino Foundation takes every possible measure to prevent abuse.

Policy aims:

The aim of The Domino Foundation’s Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst participating in The Domino Foundation’s Programmes.
- Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Policy implementation:

The Domino Foundation Child Protection Policy will be implemented by adhering to the policy guidelines contained within this document. All staff who work with children must comply with this Policy, failing which disciplinary action may be taken.

All partner projects are responsible for protecting their own learners and implementing their own procedures to ensure children are safeguarded from any form of abuse. All projects we partner with will be made aware of The Domino Foundation’s Child Protection Policy.

All partner schools are responsible for protecting their own learners and implementing their own procedures to ensure children are safeguarded from any form of abuse. All schools we partner with will be made aware of The Domino Foundation’s Child Protection Policy.

Policy guidelines

The guidelines cover three main areas:

- a. Staff recruitment, support and training
- b. Staff conduct
- c. Child protection procedures

A. Staff recruitment, support and training

For staff working with children at The Domino Foundation, safe recruitment will be ensured by checking their suitability to work with children:

- At initial recruitment to The Domino Foundation an application form is completed. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past.
- Pre-activity training, including:
 - The activity requirements and responsibilities clarified.
 - Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.
 - Staff sign up to the The Domino Foundation Child Protection Policy.
- Staff are selected on their suitability for the activity requirements and responsibilities and their ability to demonstrate that they can work safely with children (as determined by the application form and pre-activity training).

Where staff will take significant responsibility for safeguarding children during participation in the The Domino Foundation Programmes they will also be required to complete a risk assessment. All appropriate staff will receive a copy of The Domino Foundation's Child Protection Policy. Awareness of child protection issues will continue to be addressed through on-going training.

B. Staff Conduct

Good practice guidelines

All staff should demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from allegations of misconduct. Staff should maintain their standards of behaviour therefore acting as a role model.

The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Always work in an open environment where possible (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Never make gratuitous physical contact with a participant (There may be occasions where a distressed participant needs comfort which may include physical comforting and staff should use their discretion to ensure that it is appropriate and not unnecessary or unjustified contact).

- Physical contact of a parental nature is necessary at Fairhavens Transition Home and the Crèche Development Programme to promote nurturing and emotional development.
- Treat all children equally, and with respect and dignity. The Domino Foundation will take positive action to eliminate discrimination against any person or group of people. Staff should ensure that children are protected from discrimination on any grounds, including ability and challenge discriminating comments and behaviour. Activities should be designed to include all children and to promote positive attitudes towards differences.
- Be clear about what the objectives of the activity are before it begins and always put the welfare of each child first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.

- Conducting yourself in a manner that sets a good example to the participants. Be an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of/whilst responsible for children.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Never using physical force against a participant, unless it constitutes reasonable restraint to protect him/her or another person or to protect property. If it is necessary to restrain a participant because they are an immediate danger to themselves or others or to property then the minimum amount of force should be used for the shortest amount of time. Remain calm and get the attention and support of other staff. The incident should be recorded in writing, with a witness statement (where possible), immediately afterwards.

- Never using physical punishment
- Securing parental consent in writing if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment where the participant is under 16. First aid given should be recorded in writing and reported to the lead member of staff who will inform the parent or carer.
- If the need arises for first aid refer the child to the appropriate school staff member.
- Always refer any problems to the DCPO.

Practices which should never be sanctioned, include:

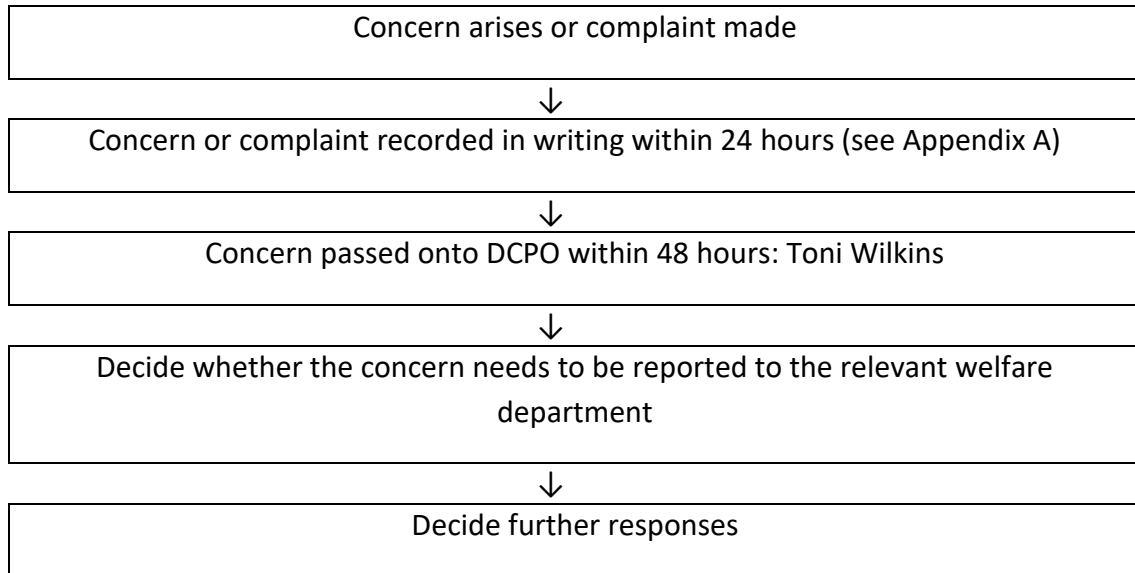
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Engaging in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Children’s inappropriate use of language and/or behaviour. This should always be challenged.
- Sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home or arrange meetings off-campus.

C. Child Protection Procedures

The Domino Foundation will:

- Ensure we have a DCPO who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
- Ensure every member of staff knows the name of the DCPO and their role.
- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the DCPO. However, staff should remember that they are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately. Ensure all records are kept securely in locked locations.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Adopt a procedure for dealing with concerns about possible abuse. (See below)

Reporting Procedure



What is abuse?

Child Abuse

A term to describe a range of ways in which people, usually adults, harm children. Often the adult is a person who is known and trusted by the child. Child abuse is neglect, physical injury, sexual abuse or emotional abuse inflicted or knowingly not prevented, which causes significant harm or death.

NSPCC (1999)

NEGLECT

Is a pattern of failing to provide for a child’s basic needs, endangering a child’s physical and psychological well-being. The end result is a child who is not getting their physical and/or emotional needs met.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is abuse which involves contact that is intended to cause pain or injury or any other physical suffering or harm to an individual. This includes hitting, kicking, punching and other ways of inflicting pain or injury such as poisoning (perhaps with harmful drugs or alcohol), drowning or smothering.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) 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.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

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. Acts of emotional abuse may include restriction of movement, patterns of belittling, threatening, scaring, discrimination, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

Awareness of actual or likely occurrence of abuse

There are a number of ways in which abuse becomes apparent:

- A child discloses abuse.
- Someone else discloses that a child has told him/her or that he/she strongly believes a child has been or is being abused.
- A child may show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation.
- A child's behaviour may indicate that it is likely that he/she is being abused.
- A member of staff's behaviour or in the way in which he/she relates to a child causes concern.

Issues of Disclosure

Becoming aware of abuse can cause a multitude of emotional reactions, which are personal to each individual. Whatever the reaction and however the abuse has become apparent, actual or suspected, it must be responded to in the correct manner according to the procedure outlined here. Even if the truth of the disclosure is uncertain – an appropriate response has to be made. A response in accordance with the procedure outlined here will be supported by the DCPO and ultimately The Domino Foundation.

What to do upon suspicion or disclosure:

There are some basic principles in reacting to suspicions, allegations, and/or disclosures.

What to do	What not to do
Stay calm	Don't panic. Don't over-react. It is extremely unlikely that the participant is in immediate danger.
Listen, hear and believe	Don't probe for more information. Questioning the participant may affect how the participant's disclosure is received at a later date.
Give time to the person to say what they want	Don't make assumptions, don't paraphrase and don't offer alternative explanations
Reassure & explain that they have done the right thing in telling. Explain that only those professionals who need to know will be informed	Don't promise confidentiality to keep secrets or that everything will be OK (it might not)
Act immediately in accordance with the procedure in this policy	Don't try to deal with it yourself
Record in writing as near as verbatim as possible what was said as soon as possible	Don't make negative comments about the alleged abuser
Report to the DCPO	Don't 'gossip' with colleagues about what has been said to you
Record your report	Don't make a child repeat a story unnecessarily

It is the duty of anyone who works with children to report disclosure of abuse. It is not for staff to decide whether or not a suspicion or allegation is true. All suspicions or allegations must be taken seriously and dealt with according to this procedure.

Responsibility

Staff made aware of suspicions, allegations or actual abuse, **are responsible to take the appropriate action according to this procedure .**

- The primary responsibility of the person who first suspects or who is told of abuse is to report it and to ensure that their concern is taken seriously whilst adhering to the dos and don'ts above.
- The incident should be reported immediately to the DCPO who is then responsible for dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse.

Staff should never **try to deal with a suspicion, allegation or actual incident of abuse by him/herself.**

Reporting suspected, alleged, or actual incidents of abuse

It may sometimes be difficult to accept that something that has been disclosed in confidence by a child or anyone else should be passed on to a colleague. But the welfare of a child must be paramount and you therefore have a duty to report suspicions, allegations or actual incidents to the designated member of staff.

Information should also be reported if you yourself have concerns that a child may be suffering harm or at risk of abuse, even if you are unsure about your suspicions.

Once this initial report has been made, the lead member of staff will consult with the relevant agencies.

The following information may be required:

- Staff name, address, telephone number, position/role within The Domino Foundation.
- As many details about the child as possible, e.g. name, date of birth, address, home telephone number, school.
- What the reasons are for telephoning, e.g. the suspicions, allegations, what has been said, giving details of times and dates and the child's emotional state, or what the child has said in response to the suspicions/concerns. Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- What's been done so far.
- Where possible referral to the police or 'Durban Children's Society' or 'Child Line' should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

The relevant agency will then give instructions as to what to do next and take the responsibility for further action.

Recording suspected or actual incidents

No matter what happens to a suspicion, allegation or actual incident of abuse, (that is whether or not it is processed through an agency or not), all details must be recorded.

Important information to record includes:

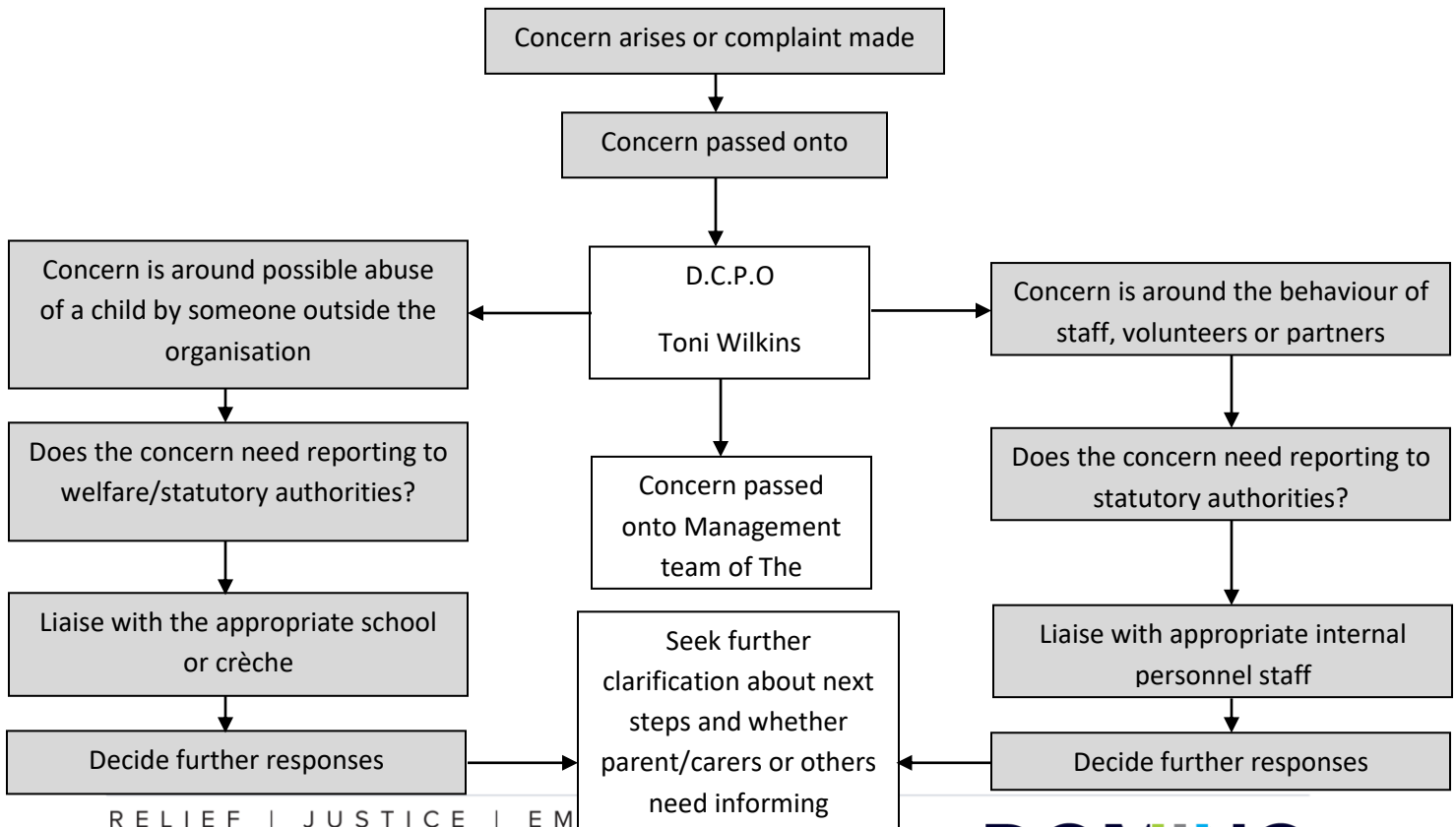
- The date and time of disclosure, suspicion, allegation or actual abuse incident.
- Details given to you about the above e.g. date & time of when things occurred.
- An indication of the parties involved.
- Details of what action you and the DCPO have taken.
- Details of reporting on, e.g. who to and when.

If for any reason it is decided not to consult with a relevant agency, a full explanation of why must be documented.

Recording should be factual, that is no reference made to your own subjective opinions. Records should be kept completely confidential and secure (always locked away) and only shared with those who need to know about the suspicion, allegation or actual incident of abuse.

Child protection reporting procedure

The procedure for responding to reports of concern is as follows:



The Domino Foundation Reporting Form – Child Protection Policy

1. Staff Details			
Name:		Contact number:	
Date:		Time:	
Position:			
2. Child's Details (include as much information as possible)			
Name:		Contact number:	
Date of birth:		School:	
Address:		Grade and Teacher:	
3. Details of incident (Please include suspicions, allegations, what has been said, giving details of times, dates & child's emotional state, what the child has said in response to the suspicions/concerns.) Make clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay)			
4. Action taken (please include dates)			

Signature: _____ Date: _____

DCPO Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____