

RG spaces

Safeguarding and child protection policy, code of practice and procedures

Reviewed February 2017 with minor amendment March 2017 next review due June 2018

Background

RG spaces is a small charity, currently with no premises or staff of its own. Normally our work is done in partnership with other organizations. Our contact with the public will occur in public spaces or on others' premises and possibly under the supervision of a member of another organization.

Policy statement

The people covered by the policy include those contracted to do work for the Charity and those standing in a voluntary capacity, including trustees. This policy will be included in the induction pack for trustees.

It is RG spaces' policy that

1. It does not engage in regulated activity with service users.
2. In an activity involving children where RG Spaces is the lead organiser, a child must be accompanied by a responsible adult e.g. a parent, guardian, carer or teacher.
3. RG Spaces will have a Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) and a Deputy who know how to contact relevant authorities.
4. Concerns about the welfare of a child will be passed to a relevant authority.

In the case of an emergency

- the emergency services will be contacted

In a non-emergency:

- where the concern is raised during the child's attendance at an activity where RG Spaces is the lead organiser, the relevant authority is the local social services??this isn't true – the child may live eg in another region.
- where the concern is raised by the child's attendance at an activity where the lead is another organisation (e.g. an activity in a museum) the concern will be raised using that organisation's procedures
- as a small voluntary organisation, RG spaces cannot pretend to have the expertise required to know whether a concern merits consideration by the authorities or not. In the case where it is unsure which is the relevant authority, the police will be contacted.

5. The Children Act 1989 states that the "welfare of the child is paramount". This means that considerations of confidentiality which might apply to other situations should not be allowed to over-ride the right of children to be protected from harm. However, every

effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned when an allegation has been made and is being investigated.

6. The policy will be openly and widely available to everyone.
7. Anybody who encounters child protection concerns in the context of their work on behalf of RG spaces will be supported when they report their concerns in good faith.

Code of Practice

RG Spaces expects that all those in paid or unpaid work on its behalf will be aware of this Code of Practice and adhere to its principles in their approach to all children.

1. It is important not to have physical contact with children and this should be avoided.
2. It is not good practice to take children alone in a car on journeys, however short.
3. Do not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted.
4. It is important not to deter children from making a 'disclosure' of abuse through fear of not being believed, and to listen to what they have to say. Guidance on handling a disclosure is set out below. If this gives rise to a child protection concern it is important to follow RG Spaces's procedure for reporting such concerns, and not to attempt to investigate the concern yourself.
5. Remember that those who abuse children can be of any age (even other children), gender, ethnic background etc, and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions about people to prevent appropriate action taking place.
6. Good practice includes valuing and respecting children as individuals, and the adult modelling of appropriate conduct - which will always exclude bullying, shouting, racism, sectarianism or sexism.

How concerns may be raised

People could have their suspicion or concern raised in a number of ways, for example:

1. the conduct of a member of RG spaces or someone working, volunteering or contracting for RG spaces
2. a child "disclosing" abuse
3. bruising or evidence of physical hurt
4. unusual behaviour by a child.

Procedure for reporting concerns

*RG spaces is a charitable incorporated organisation registered by the Charity Commission (England and Wales) no. 1160023
Contact details can be found on <http://rgspaces.org.uk>*

In an emergency, dial 999.

Otherwise:

- If you are in a situation where another organisation has the lead responsibility for the activity you are engaged in, contact them and use their procedures.
- If this is not possible in practice, or if the activity is one where RG Spaces is the lead, inform the RG Spaces Designated Safety Protection officer (DSP) or their Deputy as soon as possible. Phone 0118 9268994 or if these do not respond, use the contact form on <http://rgspaces.org.uk>

RG spaces also tends not to have long-term persistent contact with the same individuals. It is possible therefore that you will not know that someone you are talking with is a child. If you have any concerns about the safety of an individual you should report them, leaving it to professionals in this specialist field to decide on further action.

Definitions of abuse

1. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may be the result of a deliberate act, but could also be caused through the omission or failure to act to protect.

2. 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. It may involve making a child feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

3. Sexual 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, or consents to, what is happening. It may involve physical contact, including rape or oral sex, or non penetrative acts such as fondling. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, and by other young people. It also includes non-contact activities such as involving children in watching or taking part in the making of pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in inappropriate ways.

4. Neglect

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 failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or failing to ensure that a child gets appropriate medical care or treatment.

Responding appropriately to a child making an allegation of abuse

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1. Stay calm.
2. Listen carefully to what is said.
3. Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – **do not promise to keep secrets.**
4. Tell the child that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
5. Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace.
6. Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer
7. Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
8. Tell them what you will do next, and with whom the information will be shared.
9. As soon as possible, record in writing what was communicated, using the child's own words. Note the date, time, any names mentioned and to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.
10. It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies.

RG spaces acknowledges the help it has received from the several other charities which, through their websites, have provided us with education and material to use in our policy.