

Child Protection Policy and Action Plan *cont*

What happens if you are accused of an abusive action?

In the event of an accusation:

- Make notes of all your actions/contacts with the child in question as soon as possible.
- Seek access to professional and legal advice.
- Ensure that you are no longer working with the child/children making the allegation
- Follow the procedures laid out in this and supporting documents.
- Accept that colleagues may not be in a position to discuss the matter with you while the investigation is underway.
- Accept that you may be suspended from working with any young people.

Such events are difficult for all concerned. BWT will do its utmost to remain impartial in all matters relating to an accusation. The main concern with any incident is the child's welfare. For an individual, against whom an allegation has been made this will be a difficult time. There are no easy ways to deal with such a situation, it is important that you seek help and support.

Good Practice Procedures

Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks are mandatory for all Big Wide Talk members of staff and for volunteers taking part in events such as BWT summer and winter meetings. Normally neither members of the BWT staff team nor volunteers have unsupervised access to children. However there may be occasions when children detach themselves from their parents on an expedition or other event. Children taking part in BWT must always be in the care of their parent or carer whilst taking part.

All staff employed by the Big Wide Talk Children's Project are required to adhere to the policies and framework adopted by the project, which includes this child protection policy. Local Animateurs seconded to the Big Wide Talk Children's Project are CRB checked by their line-managing local service provider.

All staff are required to follow principles of good practice to ensure that all children are listened to and taken seriously.

BWT has clear ideas about how to work with children and their parents and practitioners:

- Language and thinking develop in contexts: in the love between a parent and child; in the joy of playing with a friend; in the thrill of seeing how things work; and in the excitement of being able to take action. Big Wide Talk works in these contexts and many more.
- Language and thinking develop in the places and communities where we lead our everyday lives. Big Wide Talk works in these places and communities with the people who live and work there.

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- All children are rich communicators and thinkers. Big Wide Talk works with all children to give them space to participate and reaches out to include children with speech and language issues.
- All children constantly strive to make sense of their worlds. To do this they need people, time, space, money and ideas. Big Wide Talk works with these dimensions, giving parents and practitioners ideas and resources to make the space and time they need to explore meaning with their children.
- Children, parents and practitioners live in shared physical, social, political and economic contexts, which determine the money, time and space available to them. Big Wide Talk works in ways that require people to acknowledge these contexts and to act in ways that change the relationships between them to the advantage of children.

This means that all of our work is shared and highly contextualised delivering transparent information which is accessed by both parents and practitioners. The principles, which underpin our working methods, therefore provide a robust basis for good practice in safeguarding children.

Additionally BWT acts to:

- promote the safety of children in all aspects of the project's work,
- raise awareness of best practice in how to protect children from harm of all kinds,
- minimise opportunities for children to suffer harm,
- make safety the responsibility of all participants in the project,
- establish effective and open procedures in responding to accidents, complaints or concerns so that they can be shared and dealt with promptly,
- apply safe recruitment practices for all staff,

All children, their parents/carers, and all workers in the project are aware of what is expected of them and what will happen if abuse is suspected.

Our statement is openly available to all those taking part in the project and is reproduced on our website at www.bigwidetalk.org