

Reality Adventure Works in Scotland Ltd.

PROTECTING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VOLUNTEERS

...Towards Good Practice (Activity Breaks)

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PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

...Towards Good Practice (Activity Breaks)

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As an organisation, we need to provide a clear statement which identifies the key principles relating to the protection of children and young people. These principles are central to our work with children and young people and should affect every area of our work from staff selection to purchasing resources outwith the organisation. Thus, the following guidelines of good practice have been drawn up in conjunction with the recommendations in Volunteer Development Scotland's (VDS's) "Protecting Children" and Glasgow City Council 'Guidance for the Development of Child Protection Procedures for Voluntary Organisations/ Community Groups and Service Providers. They recognise that children and young people have rights as individuals and should be treated with dignity and respect.

2. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- ARTICLE 1** **Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children and young people.**
- ARTICLE 2** **Plan the work of the organisation so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children and young people may occur.**
- ARTICLE 3** **Introduce a system whereby children and young people may talk with an independent person.**
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- ARTICLE 10** **Ask all applicants about any conviction for criminal offences against children and young people.**
- ARTICLE 11** **Make paid and voluntary appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period.**
- ARTICLE 12** **Issue guidelines on how to deal with disclosure or discovery of abuse.**
- ARTICLE 13** **Train paid staff and volunteers, their line managers and supervisors, and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse.**

3. MANAGING THE ORGANISATION IN ORDER TO PROTECT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

3.1 ARTICLE 1

Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children and young people.

3.11 Article 1 of 'Protecting Children, Young People and Volunteers ... towards Good Practice (Activity Breaks)' dated 2008 adopts the following policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children and young people :

3.1.2 "It is the policy of Reality to safeguard the welfare of and the interests of all children and young people who come into contact with the organisation and its activities. Being committed to such young people, Reality has a deep concern for their wholeness and well being. It is the responsibility of each person within the organisation to prevent physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children and young people, including reporting any abuse discovered or suspected and also to positively encourage in a safe and supportive way, a culture of individual personal development including personal networks for each individual child or young person as appropriate."

- a) We do this by giving information on what we do and what type of service we provide, thus ensuring that service users, parents and social workers know what they can expect of us.
- b) Ensuring all volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised.
- c) Informing parents and children as to how to voice their complaints

3.2 ARTICLE 2

Plan the work of the organisation so as to minimise the situations where the abuse of children and young people may occur.

3.2.1 As an organisation, we have a duty to ensure that we minimise situations where the abuse of children and young people may occur. This means that adults should endeavour never to work alone with a young person unsupervised and that we should reduce to the minimum occasions where a single adult is in the company of a lone child and where there is little or no possibility of the activity being supervised or observed by others. The following guidelines are not exhaustive but indicate areas that adults should work through and be aware of during training.

- a) No adults sharing accommodation with children and young people, including dorms and tents.
- b) If adult alone with young person, it should be in area where easily observed.

- c) Always arrange more than one passenger in a vehicle.
- d) When challenging behaviour or attitudes, leaders should ensure there are other adults around to provide support and assistance.
- e) Team Leader and designated Team Member should rotate supervision of young persons at night until all are settled.
- f) If young person has cause to awaken and get up during the night, there should always be two leaders attending, preferably one male and one female.
- g) If young person is ill during night and needs attention, there should always be two leaders attending, one who should be the first aider (preferably one male and one female).
- h) Proviso of supervising each other, heightened awareness of Team Leader knowing who is where and also two at all times.
- i) All Reality events will be overseen by two Team Leaders, where possible one male and one female who have good experience in working with the client group assigned to their event.
- j) Any contact after the event should be discussed with the Activities Co-ordinator.
- k) Arrange all activities to protect Team Leaders/Members from wrongful accusations.
- l) Respect the young person's right to personal privacy.
- m) Be aware that physical contact with a young person, may be misinterpreted.
- n) Recognise that special caution is required in moments when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people.

3.2.2 To protect self you must not ...

- a) have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people (see under 'Definitions of Abuse')
- b) allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour, e.g. play fighting (see under 'Definitions of Abuse')

3.2.3 Note: The appropriateness of contacts both verbally and physically with children and young people is developed further during the staff and volunteer's training.

- a) make suggestive/derogatory remarks or gestures at all in front of children or young people.
- b) jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- c) exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- d) show favouritism to any individual
- e) rely on your good name or that of the organisation to protect you
- f) believe 'it could never happen to me'
- g) take a chance when common sense, policy and practice suggest another more prudent approach.
- h) Ignore the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures operating within the organisation.

3.3 ARTICLE 3

Introduce a system whereby children and young people may talk with an independent person.

- 3.3.1 Although Reality works with children and young people for a very short period (2-5days), it is recognised that there is still the need to provide access for children and young people to contact an independent person, particularly since the young person is leaving his/her home environment and going into what is for them an unknown and perhaps threatening situation.
- 3.3.2 Whilst the young person's Social Worker or unit may be the 'Independent Person' there is still a need to provide an alternative source.
- a) Children and young people should be allowed unlimited access to telephone to phone unit or social work. This is actively encouraged particularly at the beginning of the event.
 - b) Effective complaints procedure with name and numbers needs to be available to children and young people and Team Leaders/Members at camp.
 - c) Referring agencies should be made of aware of Reality's complaints procedure.
 - d) The independent source is an alternative point of contact should the Team Leader/Team Member be concerned about the impartiality of the designated Trustee (Article12).
 - e) To ensure parents and team members have access to an independent person we would suggest in the first instance for the parents to contact the Social Work Department and for the Team Member to contact their minister or pastor.

4. MANAGING PAID STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS IN ORDER TO PROTECT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

4.1 ARTICLE 4

Apply agreed procedures for protecting children and young people to all paid staff and volunteers.

- 4.1.1 As an organisation, we recognise that there should be no exceptions. Age, experience, status or respectability is immaterial to protecting children and young people. Volunteers fall into many categories, however **all** those coming into contact with children and young people should be subjected to the selection process for the event. This includes leaders, and team members, Trustees and staff and those visiting camp during the young person's stay. Those who are excluded would be those involved in preparations before the event, i.e. those who fundraise, etc. making no contact with children and young people.

4.2 ARTICLE 5

Give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles.

4.2.1 All volunteers are expected to be able to fulfil the basic job description. Although each job description is different, the person specification is similar.

4.2.2 Person Specification

a) An empathy with the aims and objectives of Reality.

4.2.3 Personal Qualities

- a) Warmth, an ability to engage in relationships with children and young people.
- b) Good communication/interpersonal skills (individual/group issues).
- c) A level of self-awareness, e.g. impact of loss.
- d) An ability to reflect on the relationships built up with children and young people.
- e) Some insight into the potential significance and importance of the relationship with children and young people.
- f) An ability to work on own/use initiative/common sense.
- g) Reliable, consistent, dependable.
- h) An ability to handle a level of stress.
- i) A balanced approach/awareness of own needs in working with children and young people.
- j) A capacity for empathy and understanding.
- k) Willingness to question own assumptions.

4.2.4 Personal Values

- a) Accepting a person for who they are.
- b) Respecting others as being of equal worth.
- c) An ability to respect others' choices/lifestyle, rights, self-determination, etc.
- d) Not imposing own values and beliefs.
- e) An ability to appreciate differences/race/gender, backgrounds, etc.

4.2.5 Organisational Issues

- a) A willingness to work within organisational and personal boundaries.
- b) A willingness to work within an organisation's framework and guidelines.
- c) A willingness to make use of training.
- d) A willingness to make use of support and supervision.
- e) A willingness to work within an organisation's confidentiality policy.

4.2.6 Job Description – Team Member (Accountable to Team Leader):
Acceptance at camp as a leader is conditional on attending necessary training. Your first experience of a Reality event is regarded as a probationary period. Following this, the Team Leader will discuss with you the extent to which you feel you fulfilled the job description, the training provided and the supervision and support given. Further involvement with Reality will be discussed at this time.

- a) Engage children and young people at any level.
- b) Participate in activities alongside children and young people.
- c) Motivate and encourage children and young people to participate in new activities.
- d) Engage children and young people in discussion.
- e) Take on specific responsibilities as designated by Team Leader.
- f) Work effectively in a team setting.
- g) Responsibility for ensuring young person's general health and well being are kept at an appropriate standard.
- h) Ensure that they (and other Team Members) adhere to Reality's policy documents at all times.
- i) Responsibility to communicate effectively with other Team Members, children and young people.
- j) Participate and lead small group activities.
- k) Attend all team meetings and briefing sessions.
- l) Be aware of health and safety policy.
- m) Participate in general duties to ensure maximum health & hygiene standards are maintained.
- n) Duty to prevent the abuse of children and young people in contact with organisation and ensure Protecting Children Document is adhered to at all times.

4.2.7 JOB DESCRIPTION – TEAM LEADER (Accountable to Activities Co-ordinator and Trustees)

- a) Responsible for overall supervision of team and event.

4.2.8 AIM

To ensure the smooth running of a specific event and the well being of the children, young people and leaders who attend.

- a) To recruit and negotiate training for their team.
- b) To ensure that they adhere to the set budget for camp.
- c) To co-ordinate the number and type of referrals in conjunction with the office, and when required, to make a decision regarding the suitability of a referral, ensuring that group and task needs are not offset by an individual's need.
- d) To ensure that all young people attending the event are visited prior to them coming away from their home bases in conjunction with the Reality office.

- e) To ensure that all children and young people attending the event have the necessary documentation and authorisation.
- f) To design a programme that is suitable and flexible to meet the needs of all the children and young people who are attending the event.
- g) To ensure that there are appropriate occasions during the event which will enable each young person to begin to discover and relevantly explore something of the Christian faith as part of their own spiritual and holistic development..
- h) To provide a supportive environment to team members and an opportunity to meet together at least once a day.
- i) To ensure that only qualified instructors run all activities provided by the activity centre.
- j) To ensure that all camp accounts are kept up to date and that there are receipts for all expenditure.
- k) Ensure that all policies are adhered to at all times.
- l) Ensure that incident reports are kept and that camp reports are returned to the office no more than 2 weeks after the event.
- m) Ensure that leaders are made aware of the value of any Reality follow-up work and that suitable referrals are made to the Reality Follow-Up Scheme.
- n) After activity holiday, discuss with new team members the extent of their involvement and their general work practice, (Article11), reporting as appropriate to the Activities Co-ordinator .

4.3 ARTICLE 6

Use supervision as a means of protecting children and young people

4.3.1 Over the period of the event, it is not possible to engage Team Members in individual supervision. However, the ethos of daily group supervision should be actively demonstrated daily within the group setting whereby other Team Members can, among other things, challenge one another regarding the work practice and relationships with children and young people. Team Leaders are responsible for exploring relationships Team Members have with the individual children and young people. If talking to the Team Member does not convince them that the welfare of the child is secure, they should talk confidentially with other Team Members and with the child concerned. The issue should not be dropped until they are reassured that there is no possibility of abuse. Ongoing concerns should be passed on to the designated Trustee (see Article 12).

- a) The Team Leader should endorse a spirit of openness and challenge thus encouraging Team Members to discuss openly all aspects of relationships with children and young people.
- b) Team Leaders should take or create opportunities during the week to observe Team Members working with children and young people.

5. SELECTING THE RIGHT PAID STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS IN ORDER TO PROTECT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

5.1 ARTICLE 7

Treat all applicants for any position involving contact with children and young people in the same way.

5.1.1 The following covers Articles 7-11 of VDS Protecting Children.

5.1.2 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURES FOR TEAM LEADERS/MEMBERS FOR REALITY HOLIDAY EVENTS

5.1.3 In an effort to treat all applicants for any position involving contact with children and young people in the same way, these notes set out a general description of the approach which Reality will take to ensure good practice in recruiting all Team Members.

5.1.4 DEFINING THE ROLE:

A job description and person specification will be made available for those wishing to be Team Members at camp. (Article 5)

5.1.5 RECRUITMENT PUBLICITY:

Accurate and detailed recruitment material will be available outlining the role of the organisation and the particular responsibilities and requirements expected of Team Leaders/Team Members.

5.1.6 APPLICATION FORM:

The applicant will be asked to give relevant details including; their full name, current and previous address, date of birth and details of recent experience working with children and young people. (See Application Form). This should include information about the organisation, having a copy of the organisation's child protection policy statement attached and including a written assurance that all information received is confidential. (Article 7)

5.1.7 IDENTIFICATION:

We will ask to see identification giving the applicant's full name, date of birth and current address together with a signature and photograph. (Article 9)

5.1.8 DECLARATION:

All applicants will sign form stating that there is no reason why they would be unsuitable to work with children and young people. (Article 10)

5.1.9 REFERENCES:

References will be taken up in writing and followed through orally. (See Reference Forms) In particular, the referee should be asked to confirm that they have no concerns about the applicant working with children and young people. (Article 8)

5.1.10 INTERVIEW:

At least two people, one of whom should have experience in interviewing applicants in work with children and young people, will interview and explore information in the application form against the kind of qualities and skills needed for the post. This opportunity should be used to focus on the child protection policy and ensure that the applicant has the ability and the commitment to meet the standards required to put the policy into practice. (See 'Interviewing Potential Team Members') (Article 9)

5.1.11 CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS:

Reality will secure details of convictions for criminal offences against children and young people including any spent convictions under Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. (Article 10)

5.1.12 SELECTION OF TEAM MEMBERS FOR HOLIDAY ACTIVITY EVENTS

5.1.13 Our applicants will come from a variety of backgrounds and have many different experiences and opinions, which hopefully can be harnessed into ensuring that each young person has a first class break. Subsequently, there is a process of selection that potential applicants will need to go through.

5.1.14 All applicants will be required to fill in a Team Leader/Team Member Application Form. On receipt of this, the Reality office will automatically pursue references (one of which should be from their minister). On occasions, it may be necessary to share references with applicants, however, this will be done in consultation with the referee. Whilst references are being pursued, the relevant information will be passed to the nominated Team Leader who will then arrange to meet with the applicant and discuss the application further. This "interview" should be conducted in an informal setting and may include a second person of the Staff (or Trustee). Following the interview, if both the applicant and interviewers wish to proceed, the applicant will be asked to complete a Health Form, which they should return to the Reality office. They will also be asked to complete an Enhanced Disclosure form as required under the Protection of Children (Scotland) act 2003. (See Article 10)

5.1.15 As well as asking for written references, Reality staff will also make contact with the referees and pursue verbal references.

5.1.16 This will ensure a more reliable and accurate reference. In particular, referees should be asked to confirm that they have no concerns about the applicant working with children and young people.

- 5.1.17 Only after the references are received, the interview conducted and a successful police check completed, should the applicant be offered a place on the event team. However, this is dependent on them attending the appropriate training prior to the holiday event.

5.2 ARTICLE 8

Gain at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicant's paid work or volunteering with children and young people.

- 5.2.1 See Reference Form and covering letter and job description.
- 5.2.2 Before an applicant is accepted, two references shall be sought, in writing. It must be made clear that the person is volunteering to work with children and/or young people and that it is views on their suitability for this work which are being invited. All references will be followed through in person or by telephone. All referees will be sent a job description of the post applied for,
- 5.2.3 Confidentiality is an important issue at this point. It may be necessary to accept that someone is unsuitable for work with children and young people without asking for further clarification. In these circumstances, it may be possible to channel the person's offer into some other area of the organisation's work. Permission is sought from referees before any information is shared with the candidate.

5.3 ARTICLE 9

Explore all applicants' experience of working or contact with children and young people in an interview before appointment.

- 5.3.1 It is common practice for Reality to interview applicants for Team Member posts before appointment, usually to ascertain their skills and experience as an aid to selection. Also, the interview can be used to explore the applicant's experience of working or contact with children and young people as a means of preventing abuse. (See Article 10)
- 5.3.2 Should anything in an applicant's response leave the interviewer(s) in any doubt as to his/her suitability to work with children and young people, then these areas of uncertainty should be explored further through searching follow-up questions.
- 5.3.3 Two people, a member of Staff, the Team Leaders or Trustee interview all those who apply as Reality event Team Members. At least one interviewer will have extensive experience in work with children and young people in the organisation and where possible they will have

received training in interviewing applicants for work with children and young people.

- 5.3.4 In the case of a Team Leader, s/he will be interviewed by two Trustees (or one Trustee and someone designated by the Trustees) who will then follow similar selection procedures documented in Article 7.
- 5.3.5 The main purpose would be to explore the would-be applicant's experience of working with children and young people, drawing upon the information on the application form signed by the applicant. Previous contacts may have been of an arbitrary nature, or restricted to parental or family experiences, or perhaps simply some experience of baby-sitting.
- 5.3.6 The style of interview should be conversational, relaxed and should be conducted in the spirit of inclusiveness. At the same time, the seriousness and importance of the issues at stake should not be forgotten. After the interview, the interviewers will complete the Interview Summary Sheet.
- 5.3.8 If there is any doubt about the suitability of the would-be Team Leader/Member, this should be explored through more searching questions and possibly by further follow-up with the applicant's referee(s).
- 5.3.9 The interviewing process is an integral part of our selection process and it is important that the candidate is given every opportunity to explain why they want to become involved in Reality and what they believe they have to offer the children and young people. Whilst the list below is not exhaustive, it highlights the main areas that Team Leaders should be exploring.

5.3.10 SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Below is a list of questions the interviewers may want to explore with the potential candidate. This may be useful in completing the Interview Summary form.

- a) Level of experience
 - i. what age
 - ii. what setting; Group, Street, Children/Young People, Youth Fellowship, Sunday School, etc.
- b) What is your contact with children/young people
 - i. in a working capacity
 - ii. in a voluntary capacity
 - iii. in a personal capacity
- c) Levels of responsibility

- d) Personality
 - i. how do they present
 - ii. how are they with a group of children and young people
- e) Value Base
 - i. are they able to sensitively communicate their values to others, in particular their Christian values, without intimidation or sense of infliction
 - ii. how do they cope with differing opinions and compromise
- f) What are their expectations
- g) Understanding of their Leadership Role
- h) Understanding of the difficulties they will face
- i) Understanding/experience of the type of children and young people they will be dealing with
- j) How they deal with difficult behaviour
- k) How they deal with stress
- l) How do they function in a team
- m) What training do they need

5.4 ARTICLE 10

Ask all applicants about any conviction for criminal offences against children and young people.

- 5.4.1 All applicants are asked on the application form to declare any criminal conviction. However, all Team Leaders/Members to Reality's holiday events will be asked to secure an SCRO (Enhanced Disclosure) check. Whilst this is not a substitute for good selection and recruitment practices, it is a necessary part of the process. All information accessed in this way will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be used to discriminate in any manner. The only reason such information is sought is to establish if there is any reason why the candidate is unsuitable for working with children.
- 5.4.2 While this is an important and necessary step in the process of seeking to select 'safe' candidates for posts associated with work among children and young people, it should be recognised that this in itself is an inadequate mechanism for identifying potential abusers. Only a small percentage of abusers is ever convicted and consequently many such people are not on record. At the same time, it should be noted that convicted abusers have admitted that they constantly seek

new opportunities to abuse. Clearly, the organisation is obliged to take steps to safeguard children and young people from such persons.

- 5.4.3 A persistent, convicted abuser may well tell a lie and it is for this reason that references should be sought.

5.5 ARTICLE 11

Make paid and voluntary appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period.

- 5.5.1 As all our Team Members are volunteering for a short-term task, Team Leaders will supervise them as if they were undertaking a probationary period. Acceptance at camp as a Team Member is conditional on attending necessary training. Their first experience of a Reality holiday event is regarded as a probationary period. Following this, the Team Leader will discuss with them the extent to which they felt they fulfilled the job description, the training provided and the supervision and support given. Further involvement with Reality will be discussed at this time. (See Article 5)

6. DEALING WITH ABUSE WHICH HAS BEEN DISCLOSED OR SUSPECTED

6.1 ARTICLE 12

Issue guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discover of abuse.

- 6.1.1 Reality will ensure that one designated Trustee will have the responsibility of co-ordinating policy and procedures should the disclosure of abuse or actual incidents or such abuse occur. In practice, some of this responsibility may fall to the Project Manager
- 6.1.2 Any allegations of abuse made by a young person whilst at a Reality holiday event will be passed on to the Social Work Department and all co-operation will be given with any ongoing investigation.
- 6.1.3 A parent, sibling or other relative, a carer, an acquaintance or a stranger may abuse children and young people. "The child is considered to be abused or at risk of abuse by parents or carers when the basic needs of the child are not being met through avoidable acts of commission or omission." [British Association of Social Work 1985]
- 6.1.4 Good Child Protection practice means ensuring that all staff and volunteers know how to recognise child abuse. This does not mean that they are responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred, but

they do have a responsibility to be alert to behaviour by children, or young people or adults, which suggests something, may be wrong.

- 6.1.5 There are several categories of abuse officially defined in social work. It is helpful to be aware of these definitions since they are central to the statutory child protection system. Any action taken by social work will be based on these definitions.
- 6.1.6 All staff and volunteers should be aware that essentially “child abuse” occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater power than a child causes harm.

6.2 Definitions of Abuse

Because children and young people can be abused in a number of ways, the harm caused cannot be easily categorised. Any information has to be seen in the context of the child or young person’s whole situation and circumstances. Different types of abuse may overlap or co-exist. However, it can include;

6.2.1 *Physical Injury*

Where the nature of the physical injury to a child under the age of 16, is not consistent with the account of how it occurred or where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that a person having custody, charge or care of a child, inflicted or knowingly did not prevent the injury.

- 6.2.2 Physical injury may include the suspected administration of poisonous substances, attempted drowning, smothering and accidents, which have occurred when a child has been left unattended or inadequately supervised.

- 6.2.3 Signs of possible physical abuse may include :

- a) unexplainable injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent
- b) improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- c) refusal to discuss injuries
- d) untreated injuries or delay in reporting them
- e) excessive physical punishment
- f) arms and legs being covered even in hot weather
- g) fear of returning home
- h) aggression towards others
- i) running away

6.2.4 *Physical Neglect*

This applies to those who have been persistently or severely neglected physically to such an extent that their health and development are impaired. Particular attention is drawn to good hygiene, warmth, clothing, supervision, stimulation, safety precautions and medical care.

Inadequacy of care in these areas resulting in persistent or severe exposure to circumstances which endanger the child, may constitute a serious neglect.

- 6.2.5 Signs of possible physical neglect may include :
- a) constant hunger or inappropriate / erratic eating patterns
 - b) poor personal hygiene
 - c) constant tiredness
 - d) lack of adequate clothing
 - e) failure to seek appropriate / necessary medical attention
 - f) unhygienic home conditions

6.2.6 *Failure to Thrive*

This applies to those who have been persistently or severely neglected physically to such an extent that their health and development are impaired that they fail to reach normal growth and developmental milestones (ie physical growth, weight, motor skills) and that this can be medically diagnosed as non-organic.

- 6.2.7 Signs of possible non-organic failure to thrive may include :
- a) significant lack of growth
 - b) weight loss
 - c) hair loss
 - d) poor skin or muscle tone
 - e) circulatory disorders
 - f) lethargy

6.2.8 *Emotional Abuse*

The failure to provide for the child's emotional needs eg by persistent coldness, hostility and/or rejection by the parent or caregiver occur to such an extent that the child's behaviour and development are impaired. In some cases, an unnaturally intense and overprotective attitude on the part of the caregiver may also have an adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of the child and may be considered abusive.

- 6.2.9 Signs of possible emotional abuse may include :
- a) low self esteem
 - b) continual self-deprecation
 - c) sudden speech disorder / refusal to speak
 - d) fear of carers
 - e) severe hostility / aggression towards other children
 - f) significant decline in concentration span
 - g) self harm

6.2.10 *Sexual Abuse*

The involvement of the child in sexual exploitation (including pornography) with a parent, caregiver or other person within their acquaintance in a trusting relationship. The exploitation will normally

violate social taboos and the victim will not be able to give informed consent because of their dependence or developmental immaturity.

- 6.2.11 Signs of possible sexual abuse may include :
- a) Sleep disturbances or nightmares
 - b) Complaints of genital itching or pain
 - c) Self harm
 - d) Eating disorders
 - e) unexplained pregnancy
 - f) Acting in a sexually explicit manner
 - g) Anxiety / depression / withdrawn
 - h) Fear of undressing eg for physical exercise
 - i) Low self esteem
 - j) Inappropriate sexual awareness
 - k) Running away
 - l) Developmental regression
 - m) Lack of trust in adults or over familiarity with adults

6.3 Training on Abuse

- 6.3.1 Reality considers it a priority to ensure that Team Leaders/Members are provided with training about the nature and the effect of abuse. Some Team Leaders/Members may find it difficult to discuss the whole issue of child abuse. Our natural defence mechanisms sometimes make it very hard for us to admit that abuse is taking place, especially to children and young people we know and particularly by people we trust. Because we naturally assume that people who work in voluntary organisations are caring individuals, this can lead to blocks in hearing and recognising and dealing with the possibility of abuse. It is important that all Team Leader/Members receive some training to help them to recognise the unconscious mechanisms and be alert to the possibility that abuse may be taking place. This will be done in the training immediately prior to the holiday event (usually held during a weekend.)
- 6.3.2 Making Team Leaders/Members frightened of any physical contact with children and young people is not an effective way of reducing abuse. Physical contact of a comforting and reassuring nature is a valid way of expressing your concern and care for children and young people and they should feel comfortable with this. In practical terms, a certain amount of physical contact may be essential depending on the nature of the work. In training sessions, it is important to indicate what physical contacts are appropriate and inappropriate and to make workers aware of actions, which might be misunderstood, and situations, which might render them vulnerable.
- 6.3.3 Team Leaders/Members will also need training to help them understand and deal with their feelings about children and young people being abused. They will then be better equipped to handle and respond effectively to situations with which they may be faced.

- 6.3.4 Team Leaders will be given training in the handling of allegations being made about a team member. The Trustees will also attend training in how to put into practice the policy on an allegation being made against a Team leader or Team member.

6.4 CODE OF PRACTICE

- 6.4.1 The Code of Practice detailed below is to be used by the appropriate Trustee of Reality in the event of a Team Leader reporting an alleged incident of abuse committed whilst the young person is on a Reality event. It highlights the responsibility of both Team Leaders and Team Members and details the necessary steps that each should take if they become aware of an incident of abuse whilst at camp. It is the Team Member's duty to prevent abuse and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

6.4.2 Team Members – How to Respond

As a Team member, you may become aware of an alleged instance of abuse through a number of ways:

- a) A child may tell you.
- b) Someone else may tell you a child has told him or her.
- c) You or someone else may strongly believe a child has been or is being abused.
- d) A child may show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation.
- e) A child's behaviour may indicate that it is likely that s/he is being abused.

6.4.3 Confidentiality

With particular reference to child abuse, the issue of confidentiality is one which arises particularly when abuse is disclosed. However, you should be aware that Reality's Child Protection Policy is based on the fundamental policy that the welfare of the child is paramount. Thus:

Do

Listen
Believe
Reassure that they have done the right thing
Record
Inform
Support the young person

Don't

Panic
Promise to keep secrets
Inquire into details of the abuse

6.4.4 The task of the Team Member is not to decide if the abuse occurred, that is the task of the professional agencies. The primary aim of the Team Member is to report it and to ensure that their concern is taken seriously. If in doubt, pass it on.

6.4.5 Team Leaders – How to Report

On receipt of an allegation of abuse that has happened at the event, the Team Leader will notify the Reality office and inform the Designated Trustee of the allegation.

- a) Designated Trustee will record key facts on appropriate form.
- b) Team Leader will be asked to continue leading, as normally as possible.
- c) Team Leader will be told a telephone call will be returned within the hour.
- d) Within that time, the Trustee will notify Chair of the Trustees and advise of situation.
- e) They will then arrange a visit to the site to check the facts with the Team Leader and Team Member to ensure the Team Leader is supported. It is only at this stage should the Team Member be informed of the allegations against him/her and only when there are two people present.
- f) Note: It is not appropriate for delegated Trustee to interview the child.
- g) Once the Team Member has been told, they must be suspended from any further activity which has access to the children and young people. This in effect means sending them home. At this stage, the young person's Social Worker should be informed as should the Duty Senior Social Worker at the local area team (Kirkintilloch).

6.4.6 Allegations Against Team Leader

If the young person discloses to a Team Member that the Team Leader has been involved in abuse, or if the Team Member suspects the Team Leader is or has acted inappropriately, they should immediately contact the Designated Trustee whose name and contact number is available on the Team Support Cards.

6.4.7 Alternatively, if the young person discloses to his/her social worker or unit allegations of abuse against the Team Leader, then again the Reality office should be informed and the designated Trustee contacted.

6.4.8 Action by Trustee Where Allegations of Abuse Against Team Leader Exists

Once informed the Trustee should endeavour to make contact with the Team Member who has the concern to assure them that they will look into the allegations.

6.4.9 At the same time, the Team Leaders should be informed that the Trustee intends to visit camp that day and arrangements made as to the time children and young people are on site, etc. No mention should be made at this stage as to the nature of the visit.

6.4.10 The Delegated Trustee will visit the campsite as soon as possible after the initial phone call. Given the geographical distance of the sites from Reality's office, the suggested time is between 4-6 hours after the first call has been received.

6.4.11 Once on site, the Trustee will speak to the Team Member who has the concerns and, where necessary, other Team Members and children and young people. If he considers that any inappropriate behaviour has taken place, the designated Trustee has the authority to ask the Team Leader to terminate their involvement and return home. One of the Trustees will assume absent Team Leader's role and communication will be made to the Reality office and the appropriate social work departments.

6.4.12 Team Member/Team Leader Suspended from Camp

Any Team Member or Team Leader who has been asked to terminate their involvement during a Reality event will be offered the 'support' of another Board member who will liaise and inform with the Team Leader/Team Member and the organisation.

6.4.13 Any contact the Team Leader/Team Member has with the organisation should be through this person.

6.4.14 Contact with such a person will continue for the duration of the investigation or until the Team Leader/Team Member indicates that they no longer want such contact to continue.

6.4.15 Actions by Trustees Where Allegations of Abuse Are Made Against an Outside Party

The Team Member/Team Leader may find that young people will share all kinds of personal problems and experience, which may include sensitive issues such as bereavement, bullying, divorce/separation, etc. A sympathetic listening non-judgemental ear may be all that is required. However, they may disclose information about current or past abuse in their normal home setting.

- 6.4.16 In this instance, it would be essential to ensure that the young person is supported and that appropriate steps are taken if necessary. The procedure in our Code of Practice should be followed until the Trustees have ascertained that the situation has already been reported and is being dealt with by the relevant Social Work Department. In this case no further official action is required. Should the Trustees ascertain on checking with the relevant Social Work Department that they have no knowledge of the situation then the Trustees and the appropriate Team Member/Team Leader would co-operate fully with any investigation instigated by the Social Work Department.

6.4.17 Internal Complaints Procedure for Young People

Within any activity break or Reality event, any young person has the right to be treated with respect and treated as an individual. Where the young person considers that this has not happened, then they have the right to put forward a formal complaint. In the first instance, the complaint will probably be raised verbally with a volunteer. If the situation cannot be resolved at this stage, the matter should be passed on to the Team Leader.

- 6.4.18 At the beginning of the activity break or event, the young people should be informed that they have the right to make a formal complaint should they feel the need to do so.
- 6.4.19 If a young person has a complaint whilst on a Reality event, s/he should raise that issue with the Team Leader. Where it is a fairly minor complaint, e.g. food, activities, or other matters relating to the programme, every effort will/should be made to resolve the issue. If the young person remains unhappy with the issue, s/he can take the complaint further by asking for a formal complaint to be logged. At this point, the Team Leader should assist the young person in completing the necessary paper work and remind the young person that they may want to contact their social worker. Once a Team Leader has completed the Incident Form they should notify the Reality office to discuss the matter further and look at ways of resolving the situation.
- 6.4.20 If the issue is still unresolved during the holiday event, then the matter will be passed on to the Project Manager. Each Reality representative will always take the complaint seriously and all attempts will be made to

resolve the situation before it is felt necessary to go on to the next stage. The level of processing is as detailed below. On receipt of the complaint, Reality will endeavour to ensure that it is dealt with within five working days. If it is unresolved at any level, it will continue to the next stage (see diagram).



- 6.4.21 A young person would always have the right to attend any of these meetings with someone else or get them to attend on their behalf. [There may, however, be limitations on our action if they do not attend or write themselves.]
- 6.4.22 At any stages they will receive a written acknowledgement of their complaint, along with indication of any action taken.

7. TRAINING

7.1 **ARTICLE 13**

Train paid staff and volunteers, their line managers or supervisors, and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse.

- 7.1.1 Effective protection of children and young people requires of those who work with them particular skills and knowledge. Some they may already have and some they may see as nothing more than good common sense. But other skills and knowledge may have to be acquired through training.
- 7.1.2 Training in the prevention of abuse and the action to take if abuse occurs, should be included as part of the training programme provided for all workers with children and young people.
- 7.1.3 Suitable training and awareness-raising should be provided for all those who at any time come into contact with children and young people. These should include Team Leaders/Members, Trustees and paid Staff. Again, it is stressed that it is insufficient to give workers guidelines without equipping them with the skills and understanding to carry them out.
- 7.1.4 Training and awareness-raising programmes might be pursued along the following lines:
- a) planning the work of the organisation to prevent abuse

- b) becoming an independent person to whom children and young people may make presentation
- c) using supervision as a means of protecting children and young people
- d) interviewing applicants for positions involving work with children and young people
- e) dealing with abuse which has been disclosed or suspected

APPENDIX

Enclosed copies of Application and Reference Forms