



## **LIFESIGNS GROUP CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

The Lifesigns Group is committed to providing the best safeguards for children and young people who are involved in Lifesigns Group activities. This means that we must be satisfied that our instructors are properly trained and adequately vetted to work unsupervised with those we have an obligation to protect. This policy forms part of the Lifesigns Group guidelines, which should be adopted by all Lifesigns instructors and volunteers.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people (under 18 years of age) by protecting them from physical, emotional and sexual abuse or harm.

The Lifesigns Group want to make sure that children and young people are kept safe from harm whilst they are participating on its training courses/programmes and that Lifesigns Group instructors and volunteers are protected against false allegations.

Lifesigns Group staff should do this by:

- Making sure that instructors are carefully selected and aware of child protection procedures.
- Observing the correct ratio of adults to children and young people.
- Observing rules for an appropriate balance of male and female instructors.
- Ensuring that a single adult is never alone with a child for any length of time when teaching in schools, ensuring that the teacher or other responsible adult is present at all times.
- Following guidelines for demonstrating, teaching and practising “hands on” skills such as BLS.

### **RECRUITMENT**

All instructors working with children and/or teaching in schools should complete a declaration of offences form and must produce when asked an original Criminal Records Bureau or Disclosure Scotland disclosure certificate at “standard” disclosure level.



## **LIFESIGNS GROUP CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN**

Taking measures to avoid potentially compromising situations or opportunities for allegations/misunderstandings is an important aspect of child protection. Remember that child protection is also about adult protection.

### **SUPERVISION**

- Never run a Lifesigns Group course/session single-handed and try to ensure an appropriate balance of male and female instructors. Where one or more male instructor runs a course, a female instructor or appropriate adult must be present. Any instructor working in schools MUST ensure that a teacher is always present.
- Always try to ensure suitable ratios of instructors to children and young people (1:8).
- Never drive or walk a child or young person home alone unless there are the most exceptional circumstances or without prior written parental agreement. Never take a child or young person to your own home. In any one-to-one situation you may put yourself at risk of false accusations.
- Plan the arrival and departure of children. Ensure that a responsible adult is at the premises before children or young people are expected to arrive. Do not leave the premises until all parents/carers have collected their children or young people.

### **BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES**

- Be aware of individual needs and personalities, and never make any derogatory or discouraging remarks.
- Never dismiss or trivialise bullying.
- Avoid inappropriate language and subject matter. Be aware of the potential impact of the behaviour and opinions of others (helpers, other volunteers, parents, staff etc.) The opinion, prejudices, actions and comments of adults, particularly those in authority, can easily influence children and young people.
- Be careful not to do or say something that could create a false impression or be misunderstood or interpreted as an 'innuendo'.
- Avoid showing favouritism or singling individuals out in any way.

### **SAFETY PROCEDURES**

- Ensure that all instructors have signed the Declaration of Offenders form, are aware of their Child Protection responsibilities and if required have undergone a satisfactory CRB or Disclosure Scotland check. Make sure they know who the company's child protection officer is and how to contact him/her.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of and have access to an up-to-date copy of this child protection policy.



## INSTRUCTOR PROTECTION

- Avoid all one-to-one situations with a child or young person. Where such a situation is unavoidable, always keep a door open or ensure someone else is close by.
- Ensure that all helpers are aware of do's and don'ts of physical contact.
- Remember that if a young person discloses information to you, or if you suspect any form of abuse or inappropriate behaviour, it is your legal duty to report your concerns.

## ALLEGATIONS

- Never let allegations by a child or young person go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- If a child does disclose to you, it is important to reassure him or her and to tell him or her that what he/she has said will be taken seriously and everything possible done to help.

For further advice or in the event of an allegation/disclosure/concern, contact your child protection officer and/or expedition manager. In the event of an emergency (i.e. where there is an imminent risk of significant harm), contact the authorities immediately.

## PHYSICAL CONTACT

- Where physical contact is necessary (e.g. BLS demonstrations and practice) be sensitive and always avoid touching the children and young people yourself. Demonstrate on a colleague or teacher with his/her pre-arranged permission. Alternatively ask an experienced young person to demonstrate on another pupil.
- When a child is upset, try to seek ways to provide comfort and support without unnecessary or excessive physical contact.
- Where physical contact is unavoidable, ensure that another adult is present.
- Be aware of children's and young people's sensitivity during BLS practical work. Where possible, give prior notice so that children and young people may wear suitable clothing. In schools, make teachers aware of the practical work involved in Lifesigns Group programmes (especially BLS) so that they may inform pupils (and parents, if appropriate).
- Horseplay and potential violent games should be avoidable.

Remember that most of these guidelines are common sense and aim to help you as well as the young people with whom you work.