

Northern Circuit: Safeguarding Procedures

1. Introduction – Purpose and Scope

1.1 The following procedures seek to ensure that the Northern Circuit promotes and protect the welfare of all children that we work with, in reflection of the fact that children should never experience abuse of any kind¹.

1.2 The following procedures apply to all Northern Circuit staff, members and any barristers volunteers, pupils or students.

1.3 In addition to familiarising themselves with and acting in compliance with the following procedures, all staff and volunteers who attend schools (or other external organisations with responsibility for children) should familiarise themselves with and act in compliance with the procedures of that school (or other organisation). This will usually require supervised contact with children, signing in and out of premises and wearing an ID badge.

2. Strictly Prohibited Behaviour

2.1 Arranging to meet with a young person in a personal capacity, even if it is in a public place;

2.2 Arranging to meet with a young person alone outside of normal programme activities;

2.3 Engaging in rough/physical activity or sexually provocative games;

2.4 Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate touching;

2.5 Providing alcohol to any young person.

2.6 Making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, or

2.7 Failing to report witnessing any of the above.

3. Appointing a named person or ‘designated safeguarding lead’

3.1 To demonstrate our commitment to safeguarding the young people we work with, the Northern Circuit appoints a named person responsible for ensuring the validity of and adherence to our policy and procedures.

¹ See Annex B of this policy for our definition of ‘abuse’

3.2 The duties of the named person are to include:

3.2.1 Ensuring staff members who regularly work on an unsupervised basis with young people ('regulated activity') undergo checking through the Disclosure and Barring Service, to the appropriate level;

3.2.2 Being the point of contact with Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools/colleges, and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if necessary;

3.2.3 Ensuring that new staff who will work with young people in the course of their duties are aware of the Northern Circuit's safeguarding policy and procedures.

3.3 Further to paragraph 3.2.1, as above, the Northern Circuit will act in accordance with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (DfE, 2016).

3.3.1 DBS or barred list checks are required on people who supervise a child under the age of 16 on a work experience placement (paragraph 140). Schools decide what checks are necessary for work experience placements involving children under the age of 16. The Northern Circuit will cooperate with any requests from schools to ensure that a Northern Circuit member of staff or volunteer who conducts regulated activity with a child under the age of 16 is not a barred person. **It is worth adding that none of the Northern Circuit's existing activities involve unsupervised contact between Northern Circuit staff or volunteers, and children under the age of 16.**

3.3.2 DBS checks are not required for post-16 work experience.

4. Handling concerns, allegations and disclosure

4.1 This procedure for responding to safeguarding and child protection concerns, disclosures and allegations is in line with statutory guidance. If a young person makes a disclosure to you, as an adult working with the Northern Circuit, you should:

4.1.1 Make it your priority, as such issues need to be dealt with as quickly as possible;

4.1.2 Listen carefully to the concern that is being raised or disclosures, and try not to ask leading questions;

4.1.3 Record the concern in writing, making an effort to use the exact words the young person has used in order to be as accurate as possible. Details such as names, dates, times, and location should all be recorded;

4.1.4 Once you have established the problem, reassure the young person and indicate how they will act in a way that is best for the young person's safety;

4.1.5 Make it clear that you cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality as (at least) the Designated Contact must be informed. Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools/colleges and other authorities, such as a Local Authority Designated Officer, may also need to be notified. It is important to show the young person that such information will only be shared with people that will help to ensure the young person's safety and well-being;

4.1.6 Inform the Designated Contact immediately (or the Secondary Contact if the Designated Contact is not available or is involved in any way with the allegations).

4.2 The Designated Contact should not carry out an investigation but should review the evidence and consider the seriousness of the allegations. They should then refer the case to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the appropriate school, college or other education provider, and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), if the allegations are that an employee, volunteer, or other person working with the Northern Circuit has:

4.2.1 Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a young person;

4.2.2 Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a young person; or

4.2.3 Behaved in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with young people.

4.3 The Designated Contact, the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the appropriate school or college, and the LADO will consider whether the Police or any external agency should be contacted. Every possible assistance should be provided to any external investigator in the carrying out of the investigation.

4.4 Provided that it is possible to do so without impeding the investigation or posing any risk to the young person's safety:

4.4.1 The parents/carers of the young person involved should be informed of the allegation(s) and kept informed of any progress. If there has been any physical injury to the young person, the parents/carers should be informed immediately.

4.4.2 The subject of the allegations should be informed of them, and of the progress of the investigation. Given the potential damage to career/reputation, the Northern Circuit will always aim to treat matters sensitively and to keep an open mind.

5. Good Practice

5.1 The following list, whilst not exhaustive, gives examples of behaviours and practices that the Northern Circuit deems good practice in working with young people:

5.1.1 Giving young people enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism;

5.1.2 Basing the young person in an environment where they can be around lots of people (i.e. not confining them to an office space with only one or two other adults in it for long periods of time);

5.1.3 Thinking of oneself as a role model and behaving accordingly (e.g. not consuming alcohol in front of a young person);

5.1.4 Avoiding being alone with a young person where possible, but keeping doors open and blinds up where this is the case;

5.1.5 Any online meeting must have no less than two adults and two young people at any one time²;

5.1.6 Treating young people with respect and dignity at all times;

5.1.7 Thinking carefully about how any comments or behaviours will be perceived by a young person;

5.1.8 When interacting remotely, if any of the other participants do engage in inappropriate language or behaviour, you should let us know immediately. If the behaviour is ongoing, ask that the young people leave the session;

5.1.9 If a young person suffers an emergency while participating in a programme, reassure them that they can leave to deal with the emergency; and

5.1.10 Immediately informing the Northern Circuit of any problems or concerns arising.

6. DBS checks on volunteers

6.1. The Northern Circuit does not expect its volunteers to have DBS checks in place.

6.2. Certain members of the Northern Circuit's staff members are required

² In exceptional circumstances where this is not possible, please contact the Northern Circuit, so we can consider other arrangements.

7. Designated Contacts

Primary Contact

Lena Amartey, Northern Circuit
EDSM Officer

edsm@northerncircuit.co.uk

T: 07387693344

Secondary Contact

, Northern Circuit
EDSM Committee Member

Annex B: Definition of Abuse

Child abuse is any action by another person that causes significant harm to a child. This can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect, and abused children often experience more than one form of abuse. Abuse generally happens over a period of time – rather than being a one-off occurrence – and it increasingly occurs online.

Physical abuse

This is when someone physically hurts a child or young person on purpose. Physical abuse can include: hitting; shaking; poisoning; burning; drowning; suffocating; cutting; making a child ill.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is when a child or young person is told, asked or forced to take part in sexual activity. The ways in which a young person can be sexually abused include: making them do sexual things either to themselves or with other people; involving them in the making of films or taking photos that involve sexual activity; making them watch sexual behaviour.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse can damage self-esteem and severely affect relationships, school and home life. Examples of emotional abuse include: being made to feel worthless, wrong or unhappy; being unfairly blamed; being bullied; being made to feel frightened or in danger; seeing or hearing domestic violence within the home.

Neglect

Neglect is when a child or young person is not properly looked after. This could damage their health or wellbeing. A child's basic needs include: food and shelter; safety within the home; proper clothing; good cleanliness; warmth; receiving necessary medical treatment; protection from physical and emotional harm or danger. Any failure to provide these things to a child is considered neglect.

Source: NSPCC³

³ <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/>