Online Safety Policy

The purpose of this policy statement is to:

• ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount when adults, young people or children are using the internet, social media or mobile devices

• provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to online safety

• ensure that, as an organisation, we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use online devices.

The policy statement applies to all staff, volunteers, children and young people and anyone involved in Darjeeling Children's Trust activities.

We believe that:

• children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind

• children should be able to use the internet for education and personal development, but safeguards need to be in place to ensure they are kept safe at all times.

We recognise that:

• the online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however, it can also present risks and challenges

• we have a duty to ensure that all children, young people and adults involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online

• we have a responsibility to help keep children and young people safe online, whether or not they are using Darjeeling Children's Trust network and devices

• working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare and in helping young people to be responsible in their approach to online safety

• all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

• appointing an online safety coordinator

• providing clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on how to behave online through our behaviour code for adults

• supporting and encouraging the young people using our service to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others

• supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online

• developing an online safety agreement for use with young people and their parents or carers

• developing clear and robust procedures to enable us to respond appropriately to any incidents of inappropriate online behaviour, whether by an adult or a child or young person

•reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly

• ensuring that user names, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively

• ensuring personal information about the adults and children who are involved in our organisation is held securely and shared only as appropriate

• ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given

• providing supervision, support and training for staff and volunteers about online safety

• examining and risk assessing any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation.

If online abuse occurs, we will respond to it by:

• having clear and robust safeguarding procedures in place for responding to abuse (including online abuse)

• providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of abuse, including bullying or cyberbullying, emotional abuse, sexting, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation

• making sure our response takes the needs of the person experiencing abuse, any bystanders and our organisation as a whole into account

• reviewing the plan developed to address online abuse at regular intervals, in order to ensure that any problems have been resolved in the long term.

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Bullying & Harassment policy

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