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Safeguarding Policy for the Protection of Children/Young People and Vulnerable Young Adults

Introduction

Chocolate Films Limited (CF) is a film production and learning company producing films and learning projects on social, community, educational, and ethical issues.

The normal work of Chocolate Films' employees and workers involves intensive contact with children and young people in a training environment.

Our Mission Statement

Chocolate Films' staff have a professional duty to take such steps as are reasonable to see that any child/young person or vulnerable young adult is safe from harm while involved in CF activities.

Our Safeguarding Policy is designed to protect the safety and well-being of children/young people and vulnerable young adults who engage in work and activity with CF as well as that of our own staff.

Our Safeguarding Pledge

CF believe that children/young people and young vulnerable adults should be treated equally with dignity, respect and consideration. Appropriate attitude, language used and actions taken should reflect balanced and empowering relationships between staff/workers and children/young people and young vulnerable adults and a basis of mutual trust and respect developed with the opportunity for children/young people and young vulnerable adults to be involved in any decision-making processes. We aim to develop and nurture an environment of positive and constructive criticism.

We are committed to ensuring that our children/young people and vulnerable young adults and their parents or carers are confident that the safeguarding of children/young people and vulnerable young adults is of paramount importance to us and for them to feel confident that CF is a safe environment for them. In addition, we want those who take part in our filmmaking workshops and their parents or carers to feel confident in their participation and to know that the staff filming them are honest, well-meaning individuals who do not pose a threat.

CF will endeavour to do everything within its power to ensure that the children/young people and young vulnerable adults who come into contact with its services are free from all kinds of abuse – physical, emotional, sexual and through reasons of neglect.

This policy shall apply to all areas of the company as well as to all aspects and areas of the Internet sites, to all staff who are responsible for the creation or moderation of workshops, the management, and those who have direct contact with children or vulnerable young adults.

Policy Implementation

The CF Safeguarding Policy for the protection of children/young people and vulnerable young adults will be implemented by adhering to the policy guidelines contained within this document. All staff who work with children/young people and vulnerable young adults must comply with this policy. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken.

The guidelines cover three main areas:

- I. Staff/Worker recruitment and support
- II. Staff/Worker conduct
- III. Child/Young Person and Vulnerable Adult Protection Procedures

I. Staff/Worker recruitment and support

Lead Member of Staff/Support

All staff/workers must refer any problems/issues to the Lead Member of staff.

Rachel Wang, Director of Chocolate Films, is the lead member of staff for Child Protection at CF. Her role involves raising awareness of the Safeguarding Policy for the protection of children/young people and vulnerable young adults and its guidelines among staff and where appropriate with the children/young people and vulnerable young adults.

Staff/workers will be supported in their understanding and awareness of the importance of safeguarding children/young people and vulnerable adults by providing appropriate training and making available resource materials that can be referred to as well as providing a supportive attitude to staff/workers that recognises that child/young people and vulnerable adult safety can involve difficult issues and that no member of staff/worker should take action which is beyond their experience or outside of the procedures as agreed by the company.

Checks

Any member of staff/worker who will be involved in regular activity with children/young people or vulnerable adults will go through pre-selection checks including:

1. They may either present a current CRB certificate from another organization that has been issued within the past two years.
2. Consent should be obtained from the applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.
3. Evidence of identity (Passport or driving license with photo).

CRB checks are redone every two years.

The director of CF maintains a file that records details of what child/vulnerable young adult checks have been done on every employee/worker employed or engaged at CF. It is the Director's responsibility (and he/she will be held accountable) to ensure that all necessary documentation is up-to-date before an

employee or worker begins work. Anyone who is employed/engaged to work at CF must be in this file. This information is saved in the Chocolate Films office file.

Induction

All new employees/workers will be given a safeguarding induction which will include a detailed and thorough explanation of this policy. The Director must ensure this happens as part of their induction process.

All staff/workers are held responsible and accountable for establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries and good practice. CF encourages staff/workers to demonstrate good standards both to provide a safe and positive working environment but also to avoid and protect them from false allegations. Staff are encouraged to build balanced relationships based on mutual trust, which will empower children/young people and vulnerable young adults to share in any decision-making process.

In addition to the standard terms and conditions of employment and engagement and company rules, regulations and policies contained in the CF staff handbook, all persons employed or engaged by CF agree to abide by the following rules when working with children/young people and vulnerable young adults:

1. In all circumstances staff must try to avoid being left in a position whereby they are alone with a child/young person or vulnerable young adult. When on location, whenever possible, staff/workers will work in pairs and where this is not possible, staff/workers will make sure they are always visible at all times to other members of the team or to the parent/carer e.g. by leaving a door open or a window open.
2. Staff must always work in an open environment – encouraging open communication with no secrets.
3. Under no circumstances must staff/workers have any physical contact with a child/young person or vulnerable young adult, which could be perceived to be in any way sexual or anything other than platonic.
4. Staff/workers must not smoke, drink alcohol or use offensive language in the presence of children/young people or vulnerable young adults.
5. It is entirely prohibited for staff/workers to offer to give or to accept any gifts or loans of any kind to or from any child/young person or vulnerable young adult. If any gift is offered, and staff/workers require advice/support on how to deal with the situation, they should contact the Director immediately.
6. It is entirely prohibited for staff/workers to have any kind of contact or to arrange to meet with a child/young person or vulnerable young adult whom they have met through the company either on their own or outside the boundaries of the company and its projects.
7. It is entirely prohibited for staff/workers to engage in any inappropriate behaviour with a child/young person or vulnerable young adult taking part in company projects or visiting the company including but in no way limited to the following:
Grooming for sexual contact, suggesting sexual or offensive activities, touching in a sexual manner, allowing yourself to be touched in a sexual manner, allowing or encouraging the viewing of sexual or offensive material, allowing or encouraging the creation of sexual or offensive

material, allowing or encouraging the discussion of sexual or offensive acts, allowing or encouraging the use of illegal substances, allowing or encouraging the consumption of alcohol by those under the age of 18.

8. It is entirely prohibited to communicate with any child/young person or vulnerable young adult via a personal account on a social networking site such as Facebook or Twitter. Staff/workers must always use the CF account.
9. It is entirely prohibited to give out a personal email address. Staff/workers must always use the a CF account.
10. It is entirely prohibited to give out a personal mobile number without the permission of the Director. Staff/workers must always use the CF office line unless otherwise authorized by the Director.
11. It is entirely prohibited for staff/workers to store in any format outside of the company, any images, footage, recordings, or any other personal information visual or otherwise relating to children/young people or young vulnerable young adults visiting the company or taking part in CF projects.
12. It is entirely prohibited for staff/workers to repost on any website or forum or any media or anywhere any images, footage, recordings or any other personal information, visual or otherwise relating to those taking part in CF projects including all footage shot by CF without the prior permission of the Director.
13. It is entirely prohibited for staff/workers to use any user-name or screen-name associated with CF on any website or in any way outside of their employment/engagement within the company.
14. It is entirely prohibited for staff/workers to use any CF information outside of the company including but in no way limited to the distribution of the personal and contact details of those taking part in company activity.
15. It is entirely prohibited for staff/workers to release to any 3rd party either within the company or otherwise any passwords, screen-names, user-names or login details related to the Company.
16. On receipt of an unsatisfactory CRB check, the company reserves the right to terminate employment immediately.
17. Should an accusation of improper conduct be levied against any member of staff/worker, a full and immediate investigation will take place. This may involve the suspension of the member of staff/worker accused of impropriety.
18. As per the employment/engagement contract, the company reserves the right to terminate employment/engagement immediately (without notice) if a member of staff/worker is found guilty of any act of gross misconduct, or convicted of any criminal offence (other than a driving offence not carrying a custodial sentence). Should a member of staff/worker be arrested or charged with any offence they must inform the Head of HR immediately charges are levied against them.

Failure to comply with any of the above may lead to your immediate dismissal without notice and in extreme cases could lead to a criminal conviction.

Child/Young Person and Vulnerable Adult Protection Procedures

Parental Permission

Written parental permission is required in advance before any young person under the age of 16 is allowed to work with CF. The template on the staff intranet should always be used. This includes information about the administering of first aid in case of an emergency.

A written record must be kept and immediately passed on to the Director of any injury that may occur to a child/young person or vulnerable adult, along the details of any treatment given.

Use of Images including Photographs and Video Footage

Written consent to take and use images of children/young people/or vulnerable adults must be obtained prior to the taking of photographs and/or video footage.

Parental permission is required for children under 16.

The template permission form available on the staff intranet should always be used.

Abuse – Suspicion/Allegations of Abuse – Reporting Procedure

All children/young people and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief, and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.

It is the responsibility of each individual member of staff/worker to act on any concerns of suspected abuse.

All allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse must be reported as soon as possible to the Director.

The Director will take all suspicions and allegations of abuse seriously and respond to them swiftly and will inform the statutory authorities where appropriate.

The actions taken including the suspected incident and procedures followed should be fully recorded and include:

- Ø The date and time of the alleged incident
- Ø The name and role of the person/s involved
- Ø The name and date of birth of the child/young person
- Ø Contact details for the child/young person
- Ø An outline of the concern
- Ø Where possible, the testimony or parts of it in the child/young person's own words
- Ø Note the names and role of any witnesses
- Ø Note who else has been informed
- Ø Record the name and details of the alleged abuser
- Ø The record should be signed and dated by both the author and CF Director

If the child, young person or vulnerable adult has disclosed information to a member of CF staff/worker, proper communication with the child/young person or vulnerable adult is also important and it should be

stated to the child/young person or vulnerable adult that there is no promise to keep a secret but that you will only communicate with the appropriate people who need to know and reassure the child/young person or vulnerable adult that they have done the right thing in telling someone and clearly explain the next steps that will be taken including the written record of the action.

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Director will contact Social Services Assessment and Advice Teams or the Police Child Protection team directly and will not speak to the parent/carer or anyone else directly, as there is always a possibility that they could be involved. If named people are innocent, talking to them before contacting the authorities may make it more difficult for them to be cleared. It is not the responsibility of the Director or any other member of staff/worker to attempt to carry out any investigation into allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, only to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to Social Services, whose task it is to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act (1989).

Definitions of Abuse

In The Children Act (1989) a child is defined as up to and including the age of 18. The term 'young person' is not a legal term and refers to the age ranges of the official definition of a child. There is no standard definition of 'vulnerable adult' in law, but Arts Council England uses the following definition: "Vulnerable adults are people who are or may be in need of community care services because of mental disability or other disability, age or illness, and who are, or who may be, unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

The government guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children categorises abuse as:

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children or causing them to feel frightened or in danger.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encourage children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

SELF-DECLARATION FORM FOR A POSITION THAT MAY REQUIRE A DISCLOSURE

Please note – this form must be signed and returned to CF with your application form.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

At CF we undertake to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act and all other relevant legislation.

All applicants are asked to complete this form and return it to the Director of Chocolate Films.

To: Rachel Wang, Director

Your Name:

Address:

Post code:

Position applied for:

Have you ever been charged with, cautioned or convicted in relation to any criminal offence; or are you at present the subject of a criminal investigations/ pending prosecution? (Please tick)

Yes:

No:

If yes, please give details including the nature of the offences and the dates. Please give details of the court(s) where your conviction(s) were heard, the type of offence and sentence(s) received. Could you also give the details of the reasons and circumstances that led to the offence(s). Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

POLICE INVESTIGATIONS

This should include relevant police non-conviction information. Please complete this section if the post you are applying for requires an Enhanced Disclosure check.

Have you ever been the subject of a police investigation that didn't lead to a criminal conviction? (Please tick)

Yes:

No:

If yes, please give the details below, including the date of the investigation, the Police Force involved, details of the investigation and the reason for this, and disposal(s) if known.

To your knowledge, have you ever had any allegation made against you, which has been reported to, and investigated by, Social Services/Social Work Department (Children's or Adult Social Care)? (Please tick)

Yes:

No:

If yes, please provide details, we will need to discuss this with you.

Has there ever been any cause for concern regarding your conduct with children, young people or vulnerable young adults. (Please tick)

Yes:

No:

DECLARATION

To help us ensure that we are complying with all relevant safeguarding legislation, please read the accompanying notes and complete the following declaration.

I (full name)

of (address)

Confirm that I am not barred from working with children/young people/vulnerable adults or from engaging in regulated or controlled activity.

I consent to a criminal records check if appointed to the position for which I have applied. I am aware that details of pending prosecutions, previous convictions, cautions, or bindovers against me will be disclosed along with any other relevant information which may be known to the police, and Lists held in accordance with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

I agree to inform the Director if I am convicted of an offence after I take up any post within CF. I understand that failure to do so may lead to the immediate suspension of my work with children, young people or vulnerable young adults and/or the termination of my employment/engagement.

I agree to inform the Director if I become the subject of a police and/or a social services/(Children's Social Care or Adult Social Services)/ social work department investigation. I understand that failure to do so may lead to the immediate suspension of my work with children, young people and vulnerable young adults and / or the termination of my employment.

Signed:

Date:
