

The BBC Child Protection Policy

1 Introduction

The BBC is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people. In this respect the BBC acknowledges its position as a powerful medium of influence. The BBC works properly with many children and young people every year in a variety of ways and has developed this Child Protection Policy to support staff in putting into practice the BBC's commitment.

This policy establishes the roles and responsibilities of everyone who works for the BBC in relation to the protection of children and young people with whom their work brings them into contact. In the context of child protection, children and young persons refers to anyone under 18 years of age.

This policy is based on, and reflects, the principles of both UK legislation and guidance and other relevant BBC policies and procedures. The approach has been developed in such a way as to be consistent with 'Best Practice' within the field of child protection. The key principles are:

- The welfare of the child or young person is the paramount consideration.
- All children and young people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious belief and sexual identity have a right to protection from harm or abuse.

It is everyone at the BBC's responsibility to promote the protection of children and young people. In following the policy staff are always expected to maintain a sense of proportion, apply common sense to situations and protect the child's welfare as priority.

It is also the BBC's duty to ensure that staff are never placed in situations where abuse might be alleged. It is not intended that the policy should restrict staff from normal ways of working, but staff always need to consider how an action or activity may be perceived as opposed to how it is intended.

2 Principles of Good Practice

The BBC undertakes to:

- Treat children and young people with care, respect and dignity;
- Recognise that those working for the BBC will be perceived by children and young people as trusted representatives of the BBC;
- Ensure communication with children and young people is open and clear;
- Assess the risks to children of its activities;
- Ensure staff avoid physical contact with children and young people except for reasons of health and safety, or under supervision.

3 Recruitment and disclosure

New appointments

The BBC is registered with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) who provide a disclosure service for organisations who have staff positions which involve regular contact with children, and enables employers to make more thorough recruitment and selection checks for positions which involve working with children and young people. As part of the BBC recruitment and selection process, offers of employment to positions where working with children and young people is an expected part of the job, will be subject to CRB disclosure. This applies to persons engaged on staff, casual and freelance contracts.

Current staff

BBC staff engaged in positions which do not usually entail working with children will, on occasions where an assignment involves supervised contact with children, be required to complete a BBC Child Protection Personal Disclosure Form. Staff who disclose that they have been convicted of any offence relating to children or young people; and/or subject to any disciplinary action or sanction relating to children, will not be permitted to work on any production/project which involves contact with children.

In cases, which should be exceptional, where the position is going to entail unsupervised work, ie regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge with children and young people, a disclosure from the CRB will be required before the role may be undertaken.

4 BBC Divisional Responsibilities

In those areas of the BBC where staff work with children as part of their roles, a manager will be nominated by the Executive Director to have special responsibility for the Child Protection Policy in their Division. The nominated manager will decide which positions require CRB disclosure and be the focal point for all child protection questions within their division and will have responsibility to provide advice and guidance to staff who:

- During the course of their work, believe that a child may be at risk of harm, and/or
- Are told by a child or young person of a child welfare issue.

5 Children and the BBC

Children and young people can be involved with the BBC in a number of ways ranging from being actors and participants in BBC programmes, to being audience members, attendees at BBC events, on work experience placements or online on BBCi.

Programme Making

The child protection policy complements and supports the 'Children and Programmes' section of the BBC Producers Guidelines which set out the BBC's editorial values including the safeguarding of the welfare of children involved in the programme making.

The Internet

The BBC recognises that the internet plays an important part of children's lives for both the purposes of education and entertainment. The child protection policy complements and supports the BBC's Online Editorial Guidelines which set out the procedures to safeguard children and young people visiting BBCi internet sites.

Work Experience

The BBC offers work experience placements across the BBC to many children and young persons each year. Although primarily designed to help young people become familiar with the workplace, it is also beneficial to the BBC as it provides a direct link to an important part of the audience we serve.

The BBC has a central work experience scheme which provides forwardly planned and structured work experience placements. There are 'Work Experience Provider's Guidelines' and 'Good Practice' documents which support the scheme.

6 Health and Safety

The BBC's H&S policy gives guidance to those whose roles involve working with children and young persons. Where a child or young person is involved, the risk assessment must take account of their particular vulnerabilities which will include child protection. The risk assessment should set out what arrangements are in place for their care and supervision, eg by a school, parent, guardian or chaperone and how these will be communicated to the appropriate parties.

7 Transport

Children

When children are being transported on behalf of the BBC they should be accompanied by a parent, guardian, chaperone or teacher.

All children licenced to work with the BBC must be accompanied by their registered chaperone whilst travelling. The registered chaperone is the name that appears on the licence.

In exceptional cases where a child/children who do not require a licence are to be transported unaccompanied by a parent, guardian, chaperone or teacher, this must be with BBC Transport "approved" taxi companies, or by a member of staff who has a satisfactory CRB disclosure, and in either case only with the specific prior consent of their parent or guardian.

Young Persons

(A Young Person is someone who is officially over school leaving age, so does not require a licence or chaperone, but is under 18)

Although outside of the sphere of responsibility for local education authorities the BBC provides a duty of care for young persons when travelling on behalf of the BBC. Young persons employed on BBC productions are normally transported unaccompanied in BBC approved taxi companies. Written parental/guardian consent

should be sought for this or any other means of unaccompanied travel for a young person.

8 Accommodation

Children

Any child will be accompanied by a registered LEA chaperone if required to stay overnight on any BBC production. Should a parent prefer to accompany and stay overnight with their child then the BBC will respect their wish.

Young Persons

(a Young Person is someone who is over school leaving age, but under 18)

Written parental/guardian consent will be sought before a Young Person is asked to stay unaccompanied overnight in accommodation

9 Supporting BBC documents

To support this policy, a guide for staff and managers provides practical guidance on working with children and young persons.

It is also supported by specialist guidance in some departments, for example, the CBBC 'Guide to Audience Connection'.

HR Policy
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