

Title: BOH 013 Child Protection Policy

Policy: These policies and procedures will be followed to protect the health and safety of children and youth as it relates to all BOH events and activities.

Purpose: To provide guidance for safeguarding and protecting children within BOH activities.

Scope: These policies and procedures apply to safeguard all children under eighteen years of age for all BOH activities and events.

Definition:

Minors/Children– All persons under eighteen years of age.

BOH Personnel – Any BOH staff or volunteer

Procedure:

1.0 Safeguarding and Protecting Children at BOH Activities/Events

1.1 All BOH Personnel working with minors at BOH activities and events must read and sign this policy regarding safeguarding and protecting children.

2.0 BOH’s Code of Practice for Working with Children

2.1 All BOH Personnel working with minors at BOH activities and events must cultivate a nurturing and supportive attitude towards children. All interactions should allow children to feel valued, respected, and cared for as individuals. Children should be listened to, encouraged to develop their gifts and abilities, and praised for their efforts and achievements.

2.2 Physical punishment of children is not permitted under any circumstances.

2.3 Any form of abuse, including, but not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional, is strictly prohibited with interactions with minors.

2.4 All children must be treated with equal respect; favouritism is not acceptable.

2.5 Under no circumstances should a BOH Personnel give alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs or prescription medication made out to another person to minors.

- 2.6 Only age-appropriate language, material on media products should be used when working with children. Violent, sexually explicit or pornographic material is never acceptable.
- 2.7 Sexual harassment, including sexually suggestive words or sexualised behaviour of any type with children will not be tolerated and any such behaviour will be reported to the relevant authorities.
- 2.8 All BOH Personnel must not engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind including tough physical play, physical reprimand and horseplay (including, but not limited to, tickling, wrestling, touching of genitalia). This should not prevent appropriate contact in situations where it is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of a child.

3.0 Safeguarding Children

- 3.1 All children under 9 years old attending BOH activities should be accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- 3.2 All children under 9 years old attending BOH activities must be registered by a parent or guardian. Any allergies, health issues or special needs should be clearly noted by the parent/guardian and an emergency contact number recorded.
- 3.3 Children under 6 years old will be accompanied by a teacher/assistant of the same gender to the toilet. The teacher/assistant will accompany and assist the child in an age appropriate manner.
- 3.4 All children attending BOH events are not allowed to be dismissed unattended from the events unless they are 9 years old and above, or they have been given written permission from their parent/guardian. Children under 9 years old are on no occasion allowed to be dismissed from the events unattended.
- 3.5 All children attending BOH activities should be safe. If a child is behaving in a threatening or disruptive manner, the BOH discipline procedure should be followed. See Appendix I.
- 3.6 If a child is distressed and cannot be calmed, a BOH Personnel will follow the Procedure for Contacting Parents. See Appendix II.
- 3.7 BOH promotes a safe learning environment for children attending BOH activities/events. BOH Personnel should do their best to provide age-appropriate activities in a safe environment.
- 3.8 In case of an accident the first thing is to locate the First Aid Box at the Concierge Desk on the ground floor of The Vine Centre and/or call 999. Thereafter the Facilities Department

may be contacted if needed. The BOH department head should be informed and appropriate action should be taken. The incident should be recorded on the BOH Injury and Incident form.

- 3.9 In case of a fire or other emergency evacuation the BOH Personnel will follow The Vine procedure for evacuation. See Appendix III.
- 3.10 In the case of suspected child abuse or an allegation of child abuse the Procedure for Suspected Child Abuse and Procedure for Allegations against Staff and Volunteers should be followed. See Appendix IV.

4.0 Safeguarding Children in Open Access and Public Shared Space

- 4.0 All designated BOH Personnel attending to any children programmes are committed to following the Child Protection Policy. All BOH Personnel and those partnering with BOH must adhere to its practices and ensure all relevant leaders are familiar with and follow the protocols.
- 4.1 The following protocols are in place:-
 - 1) Complete disclosure of any sexual offence involving children/youth.
 - 2) Understanding of what constitutes Child Abuse. See Appendix V.
 - 3) Identification of harmful behaviours/ inappropriate interactions, for example the act of grooming.¹
 - 4) Follow a clear reporting structure. If a person identifies or suspects abuse they should report directly to a leader who is then obligated to follow the Procedure For Suspected Child Abuse outlined in Appendix IV.
 - 5) Adhering to visibility rule with no one adult alone with a minor at any time.

¹ The act of grooming may include activities that are legal, but later lead to sexual contact. The grooming is done to gain the child's trust, and the trust of those responsible for the child. Children are less likely to report a crime if it involves someone that the child knows, trusts, and cares about. Also, a relationship with the family means the child's parents will be less likely to believe any accusation.

Appendix I: Discipline Policy

BOH aims to create a safe and secure environment when implementing disciplinary actions when working with minors.

To help facilitate a disciplined environment, BOH Personnels need to:

- be prepared in their activities and lessons – plan activities well and have a variety of age-appropriate activities for minors
- be committed to the children and youth – respect them, know their names, be kind and show you care
- be consistent – display the class rules and do not show favouritism

In case of disruptive behaviour the following steps should be followed:

1. If a child is being disruptive give a verbal warning; gently and firmly.
2. If the verbal warning is ignored tell the child to sit out of the activity for an appropriate time (3- 5mins). Then ask the child to return to participate.
3. If disruptive behaviour continues the child can take a break from activities and when the minor is ready to behave, the minor is welcomed to return to the activities.
4. When a pattern of disruptive behaviour occurs over a period of time then the BOH Personnel can locate and communicate with the Parents.

Model repentance and forgiveness at all times and encourage other children and youth to do so also.

Appendix II: Procedure for Contacting Parents

If there is a need to contact a parent, the following procedure should be followed:

- BOH Personnel should text parent.

Example: *"Your presence is needed in Multi-Function Room 1"*



- The supervising BOH Personnel should also advise the department head of the activity/event that the parent has been notified.



- If the parent does not respond after 20 minutes, try to contact the parent again.
- If the parent continues not to respond, the department head will decide how to assess and control the situation.

Appendix III: Fire and Safety

All BOH Personnel should familiarise themselves with the location of all fire exits in The Vine Centre and at event locations.

In case of a fire, the alarm will sound and the following procedure should be followed:

- 1) BOH Personnel will make immediate contact with the Facilities Manager to confirm the emergency.
- 2) BOH Personnel, with the help of all adult assistants in their class, will evacuate all the children from the location and guide them down the nearest Fire Exit. One adult will lead and one adult will be at the back of the group of children to ensure no child is left behind from their group. The BOH Personnel will take the class register with them and at the same time count the number of children evacuating the classroom.
- 3) Upon exiting the building, BOH Personnel, children and all adults accompanying the children will make their way to the entrance of Wan Chai Playground or other safe location and line up for a head count.
- 4) The BOH Personnel will take a head count and advise the BOH department head.
- 5) If a child is missing, the BOH Personnel will take appropriate action. BOH Personnel will remain with the children until they are released into the care of their parents/guardians.

Appendix IV:

Procedure for Suspected Child Abuse

Suspected child abuse cases or child abuse victims should come to the attention of BOH staff and leaders.

A possible victim of child abuse should not be promised confidentiality by the BOH Personnel.

When an abuse incident has occurred or is suspected, concerned BOH Personnel should report it immediately to BOH department heads who will then follow it up immediately with relevant parties.

In circumstances that suggest a criminal offence may have been committed, the BOH department head will report the case to the Police to safeguard the welfare of the child. Suspected abuse cases will be reported to Family Child Protective Services Unit.

In handling child abuse cases, the paramount concern is the welfare of the child. Therefore children should not be required to describe the abuse incident to different parties and agencies unnecessarily.

Allegations against Staff and Volunteers

Where there is suspicion or an allegation of abuse by a person who works with children in BOH activities (either paid or voluntarily), the following principles should be followed:

- When a BOH Personnel suspects an incident of child abuse has occurred or has received an allegation of such abuse he/she must report it to the BOH department leaders.
- BOH will ensure that the allegation is investigated and that any justifiable action is taken to ensure that the child/ children are safeguarded.

- Upon receipt of an allegation, the BOH department head will request the accused suspend all paid/unpaid duties within BOH until further notice.
- Enquiries must be conducted in the strictest confidence so that information can be given freely without fear of victimisation and in a way that protects the rights of the staff and volunteers concerned.

Information about an allegation must be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to:

- Protect the child/children
- Facilitate enquiries
- And protect the rights of the alleged perpetrator

In circumstances that suggest a criminal offence may have been committed, the case should be reported to the police to safeguard the welfare of the child.

Where there is insufficient evidence to determine whether the allegation is substantiated, the outcome of enquiry should be recorded. The accused paid staff or volunteer should receive counseling and support if needed and their duties resumed if considered appropriate.

Consideration should be given to support or counsel the child / children and where appropriate their parents, taking full account of a child's needs particularly if a seemingly false or malicious allegation has been made.

All parties involved in the allegation procedure should be informed of the findings of the investigation and conclusion.

APPENDIX V: Understanding Child Abuse

The term child abuse is defined as “any act of commission or omission that endangers or impairs the physical/psychological health and development of an individual under the age of 18”.²

This may include:

- physical abuse, the deliberate use of force on a child’s body which may result in injury, e.g. hitting, burning, shaking, choking;
- Sexual abuse, should be understood not only as violent sexual assault but also other sexual activities, including inappropriate touching, where the child does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared.
- emotional abuse, persistent attacks on a child’s sense of self, e.g. constant belittling, taunting or humiliation, isolation and intimidation.

Child neglect is rather an act of omission, the failure to provide for the child’s basic needs. Again this can include:

- physical neglect, the failure to adequately meet the child’s needs for, for example, nutrition, clothing, health care, and protection from harm; and/or
- emotional neglect, the failure to satisfy the developmental needs of a child by denying the child an appropriate level of affection, care, education and security.
- exploitation is the abuse of a child where some form of remuneration is involved or whereby the perpetrators benefit in some manner – monetarily, socially, politically, etc. Exploitation constitutes a form of coercion and violence, detrimental to the child’s physical and mental health, development, and education.

² Procedural Guide on Handling Child Abuse Cases (2007)
Social Welfare Department, Hong Kong

APPENDIX VI

Declaration to be signed by all BOH personnel working with children for BOH activities and events.

I have read and understood BOH's **Child Protection Policy** and I agree to abide by its contents.

Name of BOH Personnel: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Supervising Department Head: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____