

Sticky Fingers Early Years Arts Child Protection Policy

Statement

Sticky Fingers is an organisation that promotes creativity and arts participation for children aged from birth, their families, carers, childcare professionals, educators and policymakers.

Sticky Fingers is committed to practice that keeps children safe. Staff and artists in this organisation accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues around keeping children safe. In all Sticky Fingers' work involving children the welfare of the child is paramount. Our work is based on the belief that children are to be valued and respected as individuals and that they deserve encouragement and praise. It is important that children are listened to and involved in decision making as appropriate.

Code of Behaviour

For Management:

The company will endeavour to safeguard children by:

- Following a responsible recruitment procedure that abides by the current employment legislation, including the procedures regarding individual background checks for those working directly with children (currently operated by Access NI);
- Adopting child protection guidelines through our Code of Behaviour including the provision of effective management of staff and contracted artists through supervision, support and training;
- Ensuring that a clearly understood reporting procedure is in place;
- Arranging for permanent staff to attend child protection training courses with a recognised organisation and to update and renew this training on a regular basis;
- Encouraging contracted artists to attend a recognised child protection course in their own time;
- Reviewing our Child Protection Policy on an annual basis and updating as necessary;
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with parents, staff, teachers and artists.

For Staff and Contracted Artists:

- Staff and artists must make the welfare of the child paramount at all times.
- Staff and artists must undergo the necessary background checks (currently Access NI Enhanced Disclosure Certificate, 2011);
- Staff should not put children into situations where they or the child may be at risk of physical injury or personal danger;
- Given the nature of the company's work it is highly unlikely that staff and artists would ever need to spend time alone with a child. If this situation does arise contact time should be as brief as possible and other staff should be informed this is happening. Staff should make every effort to remain in view at these times.
- Staff and artists should not find themselves in sole charge of the children in a regulated setting such as a school. If this happens staff should raise their concerns

with the school authority, organiser or group leader and report the incident to the Director of Sticky Fingers.

- The company has a positive attitude in favour of physical contact (when used appropriately and with the child's permission, for physical comfort, reassurance and assistance) and does not favour a complete ban on personal contact, especially with very young children.
- If staff or artists have concerns regarding the welfare of a child or a disclosure has been made they should contact the Director of Sticky Fingers immediately.
- The only time it is acceptable for staff or artists to take a child somewhere in their own car is in the event of a medical emergency and with the full knowledge and consent of the child's parent/carer.
- It is sometimes necessary for staff or artists to take photographs or video film of a workshop or activity. These are for media, publicity or archive purposes or at the request of funding organisations supporting the company's work. Staff and artists must inform parents, carers and/or teachers before taking photographs or video film and ask for written permission on a photo permission form (available from the office). Any images inadvertently taken of a child whose parent/carer has not given consent must be deleted at the earliest opportunity.

Sticky Fingers management, staff, artists or volunteers must not:

- Physically, verbally, emotionally or sexually abuse or threaten a child. In a case of suspected abuse the matter will be reported immediately to the relevant authorities.
- Engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games;
- Allow children to use offensive or insulting language or bullying behaviour;
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child;
- Ignore disclosures made by a child;
- Fail to report a disclosure made by a child;
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves;
- Take photos or video of a child without the parent/carer's permission;
- Take photos or video of a child with his/her own personal phone. If using a personal camera all images taken (with permission) must be submitted to the company and immediately deleted from the artist's camera;
- Make any personal contact with a child via a social networking site, text messaging or email.

For Parents/Carers:

When Sticky Fingers agrees to take charge of a child we take responsibility for the child's safety and welfare. We will issue a Parent's Handout in advance detailing the company's duty of care and the agreement of trust between parent/carer and Sticky Fingers. Any concerns should be addressed immediately to the Director.

When leaving a child in our care it is a parent/carer's duty to inform us of the following:

- Any medical conditions the child may have and any medication the child needs to carry or be administered in an emergency;
- Emergency contact numbers;
- Who will be collecting the child and at what time;
- Provide everything asked for in the Parent's Handout;
- Accept or decline the company's photo permission consent.

For Schools and Regulated Settings:

The majority of the work undertaken by Sticky Fingers with children is done in the presence of parents, carers or educators and takes place in a recognised community or educational setting. Children's safety and welfare at these times remains the responsibility of the main carer or person in charge, for instance the parent or the school. Sticky Fingers will provide a

school with a contract for the work to be done and this will include a copy of our Child Protection Policy. In turn the school should provide Sticky Fingers with a copy of its own Child Protection Policy for reference.

Reporting Procedures

Grainne Powell (Director) is the designated officer in Sticky Fingers for dealing with concerns or suspicions of child abuse.

In the event of a disclosure by a child or suspicions of alleged or actual abuse these procedures should be followed:

- Stay calm and listen carefully to what is being disclosed;
- Offer support without making false promises;
- Allow the child to recall events freely and do not interrupt or overreact;
- Record the discussion accurately, as soon as possible after the event, even if the information is not understood or liked. Write it down.
- Contact the designated officer at Sticky Fingers who will assess the information and refer concerns to Social Services, the police or a child protection service such as the NSPCC.
- If the designated person is not available contact should be made with the Programme Manager.
- Any discussions or actions must be recorded within 24 hours.
- Written reports of disclosures, actual abuse or suspicions of abuse will be treated confidentially and kept in a secure place by the designated officer. These will include a note of what was said or happened, where and when it occurred, who was present and any action taken.
- If the incident occurs within the formal education system any concerns will be reported directly to the head teacher by the designated officer and followed by a written report. The designated officer must be kept informed by the school regarding the report and will ascertain with the school what action is to be taken. If Sticky Fingers is unhappy with the process undertaken by a school, the designated officer will report any concerns to the relevant Education and Library Board.

Sharing information

Sharing information with parents/carers:

In the event of parents/carers leaving children in the care of Sticky Fingers information will be provided about the activities and our duty of care in the form of a Parent's Handout. Our Child Protection Policy is available to view on request.

Sharing information with contracted artists:

Information will be made available to contracted artists to enable them to deal with emergencies and child protection issues. Contracted artists are issued a contract and a copy of the company's Child Protection Policy and referred to the Code of Behaviour and the Reporting Procedures.

Sharing information with regulated settings:

Schools, nurseries, playgroups etc working with Sticky Fingers will be provided with a copy of the Child Protection Policy.

Any concerns relating to this policy should be raised with:

*Grainne Powell, Director, Sticky Fingers Early Years Arts, Granite House,
31-35 St Mary Street, Newry, Co Down BT34 2AA.*

Tel: 028 3025 7885. Mobile: 075 9573 5283.