

The Pagan Federation (England and Wales) Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Last updated: February 2014

Safeguarding Children Lead:

Introduction

The Pagan Federation (PF) is committed to safeguarding children. This safeguarding children policy is part of our drive to promote and protect children and complements the London Child Protection Procedures. This policy provides the foundation for delivery of safe and effective care for all of those who come into contact with our organisation and its' staff and volunteers. PF will liaise, co-operate and work with all statutory agencies to eradicate behaviours that may be harmful to children. PF embraces the principal of Working Together (2013) that safeguarding children and young people is everyone's responsibility.

Current PF activities that involve contact with children.

Children can and do attend monthly moots that are not held in public houses, particularly those that are aimed at Pagan families. There are also open rituals, conferences and camps where families might attend. PF is keen to develop its Children and Families Service and this policy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate.

The PF Safeguarding Children Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- A commitment to practice which protects children from harm.
- Staff adhere to a no smacking policy and no allowing of physical chastisement.
- Zero tolerance of bullying between children and between staff and children.
- To ensure that staff and volunteers recognise and accept their responsibilities in identifying behaviours that can cause children harm.

The PF Safeguarding Children Policy has in place the following procedures:

- Child protection guidelines and a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers.
- Arrangements to share information about child protection policies, procedures and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers.
- Arrangements to share information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involve parents and children appropriately.
- Set procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers.
- Effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- A commitment to review policies and identifying good practice at regular intervals.
- A named lead person for safeguarding children who has ongoing training and support in child protection.

- PF staff and volunteers have guidance on their roles and responsibilities, particularly in relation to working with children and young people. This includes physical contact, developing relationships and safe child care practice.

The role of the PF Safeguarding Children Lead has the following responsibilities:

- To receive regular training and support in child protection.
- To have an understanding of child abuse as defined by the Children Act 1989. Types of abuse as set in statute are emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. The lead will also have an awareness of the risk and impact of domestic violence, drug and alcohol problems, mental health, faith based abuse, forced marriage, child trafficking, sexual exploitation and genital mutilation.
- Provide consultation and advice to PF staff and volunteers where there are concerns of child abuse.
- Liaise with statutory organisations as appropriate where there is suspected child abuse. For authorities where there is a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) this will be the body that referrals are made for suspected child abuse and concerns about vulnerable adults. The lead will where possible, advise of referrals and seek consent, unless doing so would increase the risk of harm to the child or vulnerable adult concerned.
- Ensure that information is recorded, collated and disseminated in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Advise the PF on child protection training needs of staff and volunteers and ensure they receive relevant training as set out in Competency Still Matters 2013. Whilst the London Safeguarding Children Board state this is not mandatory, PF recognises its importance as a framework for training that enables organisations to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to work effectively within current guidance and procedures for safeguarding children.

PF will exercise Safer Recruitment by:

- An awareness of duties under the Children's Act 2004 and other legislation and regulations that disqualify people from working with children.
- The completion for enhanced pre-employment checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) prior to appointment. This will include people appointed from outside the UK. The completion of checks are compliant to the guidance issued by the Disclosure and Barring Service. DBS checks are not required for our volunteers who have only occasional contact with children or vulnerable adults.
- An effective selection processes that ensures applicants have the necessary experience, skills and qualities, and to exclude anyone unsuited to work with children.
- A request for references. Where this is for posts working with children, the reference request includes specific questions about whether there have been any concerns about the applicant's conduct or practice and whether or not these have led to formal disciplinary action or concerns.
- Anyone within the organisation who has been charged or convicted of a criminal offence will be considered as to whether this will impact on their ability to continue to work within the organisation. In these instances, risk assessments will be completed and consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer as appropriate.
- Where there are concerns about a member of staff or a volunteer of the organisation, the lead for Safeguarding Children will immediately liaise with the Local Authority (PF District) Designated Officer for advice and a referral if appropriate.

PF Vulnerable Adults Policy

PF recognises that it is the right of every adult to live free from abuse and with respect, dignity, autonomy, equality and privacy. Indicators of a vulnerable adult can include people with mental health problems, learning and / or physical disabilities and older people.

There may be a need for additional support where there are complicating factors such as: drug or alcohol problems, challenging behaviour, social or emotional problems, sensory impairment, physical frailty or chronic illness, poverty or homelessness. PF will liaise and refer if appropriate to MASH or statutory adult care services where a vulnerable adult in need of support or services is identified.