

*Carefree Kids*

# Volunteers'

# HANDBOOK

January 2019

Our therapeutic work, informed by the principles of non-directive therapeutic play, aims to provide emotional support, and training in emotional support, to children and adults who otherwise would be unlikely to be able to benefit and/or train from this method of help. We strive to combine a friendly, locally-based organisation with the highest possible standards and have high expectations of all the volunteers and trainees; hence this handbook which sets out these expectations.

***This handbook is essential reading for everyone who is keen to work with us.  
Please read it carefully - more than once!***

## **Carefree Kids**

*Charity number 1111949*

*Company limited by guarantee number 5385823*

Registered & Main Office:

Unit DA2 Sutherland House, Sutherland Road, Walthamstow E17 6BU

Tel 020 8558 7799 /020 8531 2628 [www.carefreekids.org](http://www.carefreekids.org) [cfk@carefreekids.co.uk](mailto:cfk@carefreekids.co.uk)

### **Office Staff**

Marta Badia and Renetta Neal: Clinical Directors  
Sophia Dalley: Administrative and Finance Officer  
Alison Dunne: Volunteer Co-ordinator  
Emma McGuigan: Fundraiser

### **Supervisors**

Christine West, Marta Badia, Renetta Neal

*Honorary President: Lord David Ramsbotham*

*Patrons: Sir Richard Bowlby, Sue Palmer, Dr Sami Timimi*

# Contents

- 1- Communication
- 2- Punctuality
- 3- Training
- 4- Disclosure and Barring Service Checks (DBS Checks), CVs and References
- 5- Supervision
- 6- Absence
- 7- Confidentiality & Confidentiality Agreement
- 8- Referral Process
- 9- Getting started – Allocation, The School & Observation
- 10- Parents and carers
- 11- The first therapeutic session
- 12- Working at a school – things to remember
- 13- The library
- 14- Toys and materials
- 15- Equipment for therapeutic play
- 16- Child Protection
- 17- Nine more important things to remember
- 18- Other Carefree Kids activities and tasks
- 19- What to say instead of 'How are you?'
- 20- Ages in each school year group
- 21- Child observation sheet template (suggested format)
- 22- Session notes template (suggested format)
- 23- Session notes template to be filled out and emailed to Supervisor if unable to attend supervision.
- 24- End of Term report (to be discussed in Supervision and handed to your Supervisor)
- 25- Ending report (to be discussed in Supervision and handed to your Supervisor)
- 26- Policies and Guidelines: Child Protection, Equal Opportunities, Confidentiality, Health and Safety & Accident/Incident Report Form, Complaints & Feedback Procedure

**This handbook is amended periodically and it is based on the experiences of more than 10 years of providing therapeutic play. Please send us any additions or amendments you would like to suggest for the next edition.**

---

## 1 Communication

### Communication is of the utmost importance for all our work

a) By joining Carefree Kids, you are making a commitment to take communication very seriously. For example, we need you to check your emails and phone messages frequently, and to reply promptly when we need information from you. Do take careful note of our information sent to you, such as Study Day & term dates, when reports are required to be handed in, dates and when supervision starts and ends each term. Please ensure you keep the office, supervisors and schools you work in updated if your contact details change.

b) Once you start work at a school, you will need to be in contact with the relevant people there. But do not assume they have received your message. We are just one of many agencies they deal with. Schools are often busy and sometimes do not have time to reply or read emails promptly, or they may not have received a spoken message. You often will need to try, try and try again to contact them. 8.30a.m. or after school tend to be better times to phone. You need to ask each school when is best.

c) Please let CFK office know if there are any problems at the school e.g. someone walks into a session, the room is busy - anything that needs to be sorted out at once.

d) Let the CFK office know if toys/arts materials need replenishing. Our play rooms often run out of Art materials and items such as bubbles, balloons & play dough. Please ensure these are replenished. We aim to keep spare items at the CFK storage room.

---

## 2 Punctuality

Most volunteers are very punctual and this is appreciated. Why is punctuality so important?

- Consideration for other people (group members and facilitator) – the flow is badly interrupted by unexpected latecomers.
- CFK wants to provide the best possible training and supervision. This is compromised if people are late and miss important things
- Strict time-keeping is vital to good therapy. This is mirrored in our groups & events.
- If you are late for weekly groups, we have no evidence that you can be on time if you see children for sessions. We would be seriously concerned if this poor punctuality was reflected in your work with children
- We understand that now and then public transport can let you down occasionally. Do allow lots of time to get to sessions and appointments.

**You are asked to arrive at every group at least a few minutes before it starts, so that everyone can be there at the beginning. All Carefree Kids events start on time.**

---

## 3 Training

We welcome volunteers who have the right qualities, as well as therapy and counselling students on placement, as well as fully qualified therapists. We hope that everyone who joins us will be able to go on to work with children eventually, and we will review this sometime into your training, once we get to know

you a little better. Not everyone is suitable for the work and sometimes the work will not fit well with your current situation.

After you have attended an Information workshop, you may be offered a one-to-one meeting. We will ask you to submit a DBS check and we will take up your references. Please talk to us if this is difficult for you (ie. after a long period of childcare or unemployment etc.) Once this has been cleared, you will be given a copy of this Handbook and a Training Checklist. You will then be invited to join a weekly supervision group, to learn about the way we work. Once you have confirmed your interest, you are expected to come to the supervision group every week (term times only).

Safeguarding is a vital part of your training. Unless you have already undertaken some training within the last two years, you will need to complete one of Basic Awareness Training before we can offer you an allocation. Our training is provided by Waltham Forest Council, it is free to you, and you will receive a certificate.

During the training period, you will need to read at least three **BOOKS**:

**'Dibs in Search of Self'** by Virginia Axline (Penguin, still in print. CFK have copies)

**'Play Therapy'** by Virginia Axline (out of print. CFK have copies)

**'Play Therapy: The Art of the Relationship'** by Dr Garry Landreth (CFK have copies)

.... and to watch relevant DVDs. We own several DVDs about Play Therapy and related subjects. We do not lend them out, as they are expensive and hard to obtain. We think it is more useful to watch them in a group and discuss them. You are also welcome to watch them at Carefree Kids if a room is available.

We recommend you read the books and watch DVDs AGAIN some time after first doing so – there is always more you can learn from them.

We hold three **STUDY DAYS** a year, these are compulsory for your first year with us and then we hope you will keep attending. They give you a chance, in a relaxed setting, to meet volunteers in other groups and to learn more about therapeutic topics. Entry is free.

There is no set length of time for training: people learn at different rates. To demonstrate that you have learnt the skills of therapeutic play you should:

- show the necessary qualities, such as empathy, patience and commitment
- show your reliability by regular, punctual attendance at supervision
- contribute fully, appropriately and honestly in supervision sessions
- attend study days/DVD days, etc.
- read and understand the core books

Once you and your supervisor agree that you have done the above, a coordinator will invite you to a small role play session to experience play and think about what a session with a child might be like. Finally, one of the coordinators will meet with you to discuss allocating a child, at which point you will go through the **training checklist** together.

We also organise small training activities during the year, such as role plays and report writing. Please let your supervisor or a member of our staff team know if you have any specific training needs.

Unless you are on a course and have fixed placement dates, this is a **long-term commitment**. We cannot tell, when we begin with a child, how long is needed. We aim to continue for as long as the child seems to be benefiting, to be reviewed regularly.

---

## 4 Disclosure and Barring Service Checks (DBS checks previously known as CRB checks), CVs and References

As part of our commitment to safeguarding and child protection we need to take a few steps to check your suitability to work with vulnerable people.

**Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check (previously CRB):** Each volunteer needs to have a DBS in place before starting a Supervision group. These can be applied for from the Carefree Kids office (at no charge to the volunteer) or we can accept DBS checks that are registered on the Update Service.

**Please take your original CRB/DBS with you when you go to a school. It is suggested that you carry it with you every time as staff changes can mean the school wish to see it again, otherwise you might have a wasted journey. Schools are becoming increasingly careful about seeing them as part of their safeguarding children policies.**

---

## 5 Supervision

All our volunteers receive weekly supervision from one of our fully qualified supervisors, who come from a range of backgrounds, including drama and art therapy, psychotherapy and counselling. You will learn to be non-directive, observant and reflective. We focus on the therapeutic relationship between the volunteer and child, and much of the learning takes place through the sharing of play sessions and reflecting on the themes or issues that arise.

The Supervision group is a confidential space both for each other and the children we work with - and needs to feel like a safe space for all to share personal information when needed and appropriate. Increasing self-awareness and understanding is a crucial part of delivering effective therapeutic support, thus it is important for us to share some of our difficulties managing feelings and coping with difficulties in our lives, as these can be mirrored in our work.

It is also essential that you continue to attend a supervision group once a week during term time when you see children for therapeutic play. This is because:

- a) CFK wants to ensure the **best possible quality of work** for every child. We can do this only by knowing in detail how you are working and to make sure your work continually improves by you **receiving feedback** from group members and supervisors. It is also where you will learn the most for your own development whether personal or professional.
- b) CFK needs to know of **any problems** with the children, schools, parents etc. so they can be sorted out promptly and appropriately.
- c) CFK needs to stay in **weekly touch with you** to keep up-to-date with any issues which could affect your work with children. We respect your privacy, but do need to know of any relevant difficulties. If you prefer to tell your supervisor privately, this will be respected. The office staff are also available to be contacted if you need further support in any matters.
- d) If for an **unavoidable reason**, such as serious illness, you cannot attend, you are expected to let the supervisor know. Please do this in good time so it is known at the start of the group that you won't be there. Use a method of communication most likely to reach the supervisor in time – usually text

message is preferred. When you are working with a child and unable to attend supervision because of an unavoidable reason you will need to send your supervisor a summary of your session with the child (See section 24). This way CFK can ensure all work remains clinically safe and that safeguarding of both child and volunteer is maintained.

- e) We welcome students on placement subject to checking individual college/course requirements. You will also be expected to come to weekly supervision and contribute to CFK on the same basis, even if you also go to supervision outside of Carefree Kids.

---

## 6 Absence

If you or your dependant are seriously ill, we understand that you cannot come to supervision or see children. Apart from that, or other genuine emergencies, you are expected to attend and see your children every week. The children need you to take your **holidays during school holiday times**.

If there is a train strike, you are still expected to find your way to schools and supervision.

If you have a paid job, you are expected to get your employer's agreement about exactly what sacrosanct time you need off every single week in term time.

If you don't see your children one week, you are still expected to come to the supervision group. As we work collectively, your contribution about other people's work is important, as well as your regular development via other peoples work. Supporting each other's learning and development is an important aspect of the Supervisory experience.

**REMEMBER: If you see your children but cannot come to supervision, you need to send a written report of the sessions before the next group** (See section 23).

---

## 7 Confidentiality

Everything that goes on in therapeutic sessions, training and supervision groups is confidential and, as such, you **must not discuss the details of the content of sessions**, except in Carefree Kids supervision. If you are also receiving supervision in another outside agency, e.g. at your university, please ensure that you keep details of your therapeutic work confidential.

You must make any written notes **entirely anonymous** (no names of children, school, teachers – nothing that could identify the child) and keep them securely – these are your private “process” notes. All notes about CFK work are to be destroyed, CFK suggests that you hand all notes in for them to be shredded. Any *reports* you write will, however, need to have confidential information (full name, school attended, date of birth etc.) and so will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at Carefree Kids and shared only on a need-to-know basis. If you keep a copy, obscure any confidential information and keep them securely. CFK has rights to information about your sessions, but clients, parents and courts of law have rights to any written records, including process notes too, so think carefully about what and how you write – keeping detail to a minimum, focussing instead on themes and general developments or changes.

The only time you *must* break confidentiality is if you have a concern about the child's wellbeing (or someone else connected with the child) e.g. if you think the child is being harmed; at risk of harm; witnessing disturbing or inappropriate events or material; in danger; or if you think they may harm

someone else. Please refer to Carefree Kids Child Protection Policy (section 26) and to handbook section 16 on CP for further advice.

**You must communicate this limit to confidentiality, in age-appropriate language, to the child/young person when you start working with them (we have special age appropriate leaflets that will help with this too), and ensure (e.g. by providing CFK leaflets) that parents/carers and school staff understand it too.**

You *can* give some feedback to parents/carers and school staff but you should give **only generalised** feedback so as to maintain confidentiality – describing general trends or broad themes but not detailed information about what is said or done by the child in sessions. However, **you can provide more detailed or specific feedback if you agree this beforehand with the child.** Any perceived breach of confidentiality can seriously undermine therapeutic work.

If a child discloses something concerning, or you have a serious concern about the safety of the child or someone else, you must follow our child protection policy and procedures – but you should **first explain to the child that you will have to share this specific concerning information – and tell them exactly who you will tell.** After the session you can discuss your concerns with CFK but you must inform the school's Child Protection Officer (please see Section 16). If a concern becomes apparent after the end of the session, you still need to report it to the CP at school as soon as you can, and your supervisor, and then discuss it with the child at the next session. **This confidentiality agreement remains in place even after the therapeutic work ends and after you leave Carefree Kids; you are expected to maintain confidentiality indefinitely.**

**Please note, all our work follows the 2018 GDPR framework.**

---

## **8 Referral process**

Children are usually referred to CFK by their school, or occasionally by their parents or social services. We ask the referrer to fill in a detailed referral form, evaluation and monitoring forms, to get parental permission, and send us back the details.

We do sometimes also **work with parents** and usually they self-refer - either directly to Carefree Kids or through their child's school.

---

## **9 Getting started – Allocation, The School and Observation**

### **When you are ready to work with a child: Allocation**

Once you, your supervisor, and a CFK coordinator agrees that you are ready, one of the clinical directors will invite you to a meeting to allocate you one (or more) children initially (depending on your experience and availability).

### **Making contact with the school**

Once we have allocated a child to you, we tell the school that you will contact them to discuss arrangements. From this point on, **you** become responsible for forming a relationship with the school – and the child.

You will need to contact the link person at the school to:

- discuss a time when the sessions might take place (to suit you and to fit into the child's timetable; avoiding P.E. lessons, break times and lessons the child particularly enjoys or that the school feel cannot be missed)
- arrange a date and time to **observe** the child (anonymously) and to **meet** the SENCO (special educational needs co-ordinator) or inclusion manager and class teacher (where possible)
- agree the date to start therapeutic sessions (usually the week after the observation)

- discuss whether/how to contact parents/carers (best done **before** sessions start)
- obtain the name of the Child Protection Officer and a copy of the schools Child Protection Policy

### **Meeting staff**

When you meet school staff, give them a copy of our 'Leaflet for School Staff' (which explains CFK's ethos and is available from the office). Try to explain a bit about the sessions, why they are important and especially how they are child-led and non-directive and confidential. Tactfully explain that sessions must never be used as a bargaining tool or punishment and about **the importance of NOT saying anything evaluative** about therapeutic play to children, nor asking questions or giving praise in relation to the sessions.

### **Child's Medical Conditions**

On occasion we are referred children who have medical conditions such as asthma, epilepsy, eczema etc. This information should be on the referral form however, if a child was referred a long time ago, or has been diagnosed since referral, this could be missed.

Therefore DO ASK the person named on the referral form about any medical conditions the child may have. Do this prior to starting with the child. Request up to date information about the child's care plan for managing the child's condition, including any medication that might need to be administered, i.e. where it is kept, who administers it and when. (Please also see Policies and Guidelines-Section 26).

### **Observation of the child**

Prior to observation, introduce yourself to the child's teacher, preferably when the child is **not** present. Explain that it should be an anonymous observation - ask the teacher to discreetly point out the child - and try not to make it obvious that you are observing them. Give the teacher 'Leaflet for School Staff'; discuss how the child, each week, can be signalled to come out of class discreetly to attend the session; and agree how you will contact each other, if needed, about anything that might need to be shared.

You should then **observe the child in class and in the playground**, making notes afterwards. (See item 23 in this Handbook). The observation will give you the opportunity to test out your first impressions against the referral information – sometimes these can prove very different. Most volunteers sit quietly in the class room and, if asked, say they are a visitor, though some volunteers choose to be a bit more active/involved in the class. If the child does work out that you are there for them, you should be honest with them but discreet.

### **Introducing yourself to the child**

Introduce yourself to the child sometime **after** the observation – ensuring that you do not draw unnecessary attention to the child in their class. Tell them your name and a bit about therapeutic play. You need to use age-appropriate language and may find terms like 'special time' and 'safe space' useful. If your session times and place are confirmed you can tell them when and where you will meet, and whether and from where you will collect them. They may have questions and they may be excited/anxious etc. It is good if you warmly invite them to come rather than inform them they will/should attend.

It is not unusual to be nervous and it may help alleviate this if you discuss in your supervision group after you have been allocated a child.

### **The therapeutic space**

If you have not worked in the school before, you need to be shown the room and toys, either by a CFK volunteer who knows the room, by CFK staff or school staff. **How the room is arranged is important and needs to be kept the same every week.** We often do a mock setting-up of the toys in the room with you. If you have not arranged this in your allocation meeting be sure to contact the office arrange the support you need well in advance of your first session.



## Getting to know the school

Get to know the school, e.g. office staff especially the Child Protection leads, staff room, fire exits/procedures, toilets (child and adult: children should always use children's toilets and you must always use the adult ones as a safeguarding measure). Find out about school hours and termly timetable. Please ask for a copy of the school prospectus, the school's child protection policy and newsletters. Ask if you can use the staff room to make a drink or to write up your notes. It can be a useful way to get to know more about the school and to communicate with the staff **though not to discuss child's sessions**.

## \*\* A very important plea

Once you start to see children, please keep an accurate record of date and time of all your sessions, including details about cancellations and absences. We ask you **to write session information on a Children's Sessions Register** in your weekly supervision group. This is in order for us to invoice schools accurately. If you are unable to attend supervision, please make sure you notify the office and fill in the session details the following week. Income from schools pays for volunteers' travel, DBSs, replenishment of toys etc. It is important that schools are invoiced on time and we receive this income.

---

## 10 Parents and carers

We ideally meet with parents and school from time to time to review progress, though this is not always easy to arrange. If you meet parents **after** you have started to see their child, the child might think that you will talk about sessions, so this has to be handled very carefully. It is best to discuss any such meeting with the child before it happens and ask them if there is anything they would like you to say or they specifically don't want you to say. Remind them you will not go into details about sessions.

Some parents may need or want support for themselves (and may tell you so if you meet them). Some volunteers specifically want to work with parents and Carefree Kids does facilitate parent work; please do feedback to Carefree Kids about the parent's needs and wishes or encourage parents to get in touch with the Carefree Kids office.

---

## 11 The First Therapeutic Session

To avoid unnecessary anxiety, arrive at the school early, give yourself time to set up the room (talk to your supervisor beforehand and ask for support if you need it!), find your way about and collect the child in as relaxed a way as possible. There is nothing worse than going somewhere you are not sure of and having to rush around, especially at the beginning of a new therapeutic relationship!

Re-introduce yourself to the child, remind them about the therapeutic play and tell them where you are going (especially if they have not been introduced to the play space yet).

It's good to smile and ok to say hello but **try to avoid asking 'How are you?'** See section 19 for alternative things to say.

Child Protection is of the utmost importance and so **Confidentiality (and its limits)** is something that needs to be shared with the child in the first session. (Please see Child Protection and Confidentiality Policies in section 26 for further clarification and discuss in supervision.) Updates on Child Protection related issues are covered at each of our Study Days and in Safeguarding training.

Tell the child how long they will be in the therapeutic space; show them on the clock if appropriate.

Offer the child the materials to use and talk about conditions/boundaries: i.e. not harming themselves, you, or damaging the space/things on purpose. It is important to have talked about this with the child **before** any harm is caused; enabling you to remind the child if they become destructive; it is hard to introduce such limits when the child is flooded with strong emotion.

The foundation of our work is non-directive; some children will engage with the room and the volunteer straight away and some will not. You must accept the child as they are.

Talk about how drawings and things the child makes will be kept in a box in a safe place – right from the start. It is sometimes hard for a child to leave work they have made for someone else but it is of therapeutic value for everything to stay if at all possible. If not taking away what has been made will cause the child distress in your view, then an exception can be made. (Talk to your supervisor if you want to know more about this.)

Give gentle warnings when the time is nearly up (e.g. at five minutes to go). Some children (and adults) lose track of time when they are engaged and can get upset/angry if they are interrupted/stopped without warning.

The child **can choose** to tidy up or not.

When leaving the room close the doors so the child knows any ‘mess’ is contained. You may want/need to ask the child where they would like you to leave them, but their age needs to be considered here as it would not be appropriate to leave a reception aged child to walk back to class alone. Give only choices that are appropriate e.g. ‘I can take you to the door of your class, or I can wait in the corridor where I can see you are safely back into your class.’

---

## 12 Working at a school – things to remember

As early as you can, form the **best possible working relationships** with the class teachers of the children you see, as well as other staff involved with the children, such as learning support assistant(LSA), learning mentor and SENCO (sometimes called Inclusion Manager) and the Child Protection Officer (often called the C.P.O. and may be different from SENCO) . It is also important to be on excellent terms with office staff.

Make sure the school has all of your telephone numbers and email: give them to both the office staff and the link teacher. Make sure you have the number of the school and names of relevant people **with you all the time**. Get all possible contacts of the link person: email, mobile etc. and find out the best times to phone him/her. If you change your contact details, tell the school.

Ask at the school each week whether the child will be available for therapeutic play the following week (e.g. is there a school trip/SATS/Christmas concert?) Remember we are just one of dozens of people in the school's life, so they might forget to tell us of their own accord. You could phone the school from 9.30am on the day, by which time class registers will have reached the school office. If you see children very early in the day, you cannot find out by phoning if they are at school that day.

Always put the '**Please Don't Disturb**' notice on the door (the child might want to do this). You might also put a chair outside the door as a barrier, and a note stating what time the room will be free. If there are interruptions despite this, take time afterwards to discuss with the intruder why this is not acceptable **AND tell CFK** as soon as possible, as it needs to be taken up promptly by CFK with the school.

\* If the school gives you a **name tag** to wear round your neck: **never** wear it during your play session. You need to be just another human being for the child, not a visitor to the school. Wearing any official badge can create the wrong atmosphere.

If you find **extraneous objects** in the room, discuss it with the link member of staff and explain why it is not acceptable. Make sure you mention it at the next supervision group. If there is no time to remove the items before seeing the child, **COVER IT UP** so the children don't see it. You need to **get to the school half an hour early** so that you can set up the room and deal with any problems like this before you see the child. If you find that a volunteer using the room before you has left a mess, make sure you talk to him or her about it - and let the office know!

If there are **any problems** (e.g. our stuff is missing, the room is not available...), discuss with the link member of staff and with CFK as soon as possible. We ask you to mention problems to the school, but we can help you to sort them out. CFK needs to be kept in close touch with any difficulties - but we can only know about them through you!

Ask the school office for a copy of the school's annual timetable. **Beware** of turning up on INSET days: Mondays and Fridays are the most likely. Schools have varied term times.

Once you start work with children, we have a discretionary fund which can be used if you need to be reimbursed by CFK for your **travel expenses** to/from the school (capped amount). Please see the office for further details and keep your travel receipts. We do not normally reimburse fares to supervision, or before you see any children. However, if you are on an exceptionally low income, please let us know.

Now and then schools may ask volunteers to take on **extra duties**, either within sessions, before, after or even on another day. At these times **a discussion must be had with your Supervisor BEFORE anything is agreed**. Your Supervisor is responsible for keeping the work within appropriate boundaries and to ensure ethical safety for both child and volunteer.

---

## 13 The library

CFK has an ever growing collection of books and articles on therapeutic modalities and approaches and related subjects. Volunteers are expected to make full use of this library which is based in the supervision room. We ask for a £10 fee - this covers your borrowing items for as long as you are with CFK. **Please ensure you get a Library Leaflet for Loan Arrangements**. This explains in detail how to borrow and return books.

It is **your responsibility** to return each item on the agreed date, or ask for another period of loan. There is a list of library items on request. We welcome suggestions of additions to the library, donations of books and recommendations of articles and reviews about books you have read.

---

## 14 Toys and materials

a) If an item is broken or empty please mend it, or dispose of and replace it being aware that occasionally 'broken' things are kept on purpose (if they have therapeutic significance for a child). Please make sure to check with other volunteers using the same resources before replacing or removing something that has been broken for some time. Communications can be shared in a notebook that should be kept in the room, if there is not one in the room you use please collect one from the office. There is no CFK staff member at the school (this helps us to be affordable to the school!), so we rely on volunteer therapeutic play workers to keep the toys and equipment in good order. Please allow a few minutes each week for this. We have a volunteer, who can mend toys for us so please let the office know if you need his help.

b) If an item is missing please check with other volunteers who use the room before you ask CFK if we have another one. We carry stock in our materials and toys storage area. Keep an eye on things that need to be replenished such as paper, paints, balloons etc. – you can collect more stock from our storage area (please note what you have taken in the stock note book).

c) If it seems that someone in the school has taken an item, discuss it with the school. We need the school to replace things that go missing. Please pack toys and materials away as safely and securely as is possible at the school you work in to reduce this happening.

d) Our toys must be stored safely in the room or very near to it. You shouldn't have to transport equipment for any unreasonable distance.

e) We cover up most of the glass in doors and windows with material or paper but please make sure that some glass is left clear so that an adult is able to look into the room. This is to safeguard the child and you as it is not often that an adult and a child will work one to one in a room in a school and though we wish to maintain confidentiality we also want schools to feel that the work we do is safe and transparent. It is best if children cannot look in and that the child is not continually distracted by being able to look out.

f) If there are two sand boxes in the room you use – one for dry, one for wet sand - please make sure the wet sand is always damp, there are water bottles available for those who do not have a sink in the room in which you can take water. Some play rooms also have a Sahara sand tray, with very fine special sand which can be drawn or written in. Please keep this special sand far away from other sand.

g) It is best, if you can, to set out the toys and materials in exactly the same way every week. You could take a photo or make a drawing. Put out all the stuff so there's easy access: don't hold anything back unless you have discussed doing so with your Supervisor, this applies to new items that you would wish to add to the room too.

h) If the room is used by another CFK volunteer, bear this in mind and leave each other notes if necessary. Get each other's phone numbers.

i) Every child needs a cardboard box with a lid or a file to store paintings etc. We recommend that creations are not taken home until their sessions have finished. ('I can tell how much you want to take it home but...'). If you are struggling to keep the child's stuff in the room due to a child getting unduly distressed please do discuss with your supervisor, every child is an individual and exceptions sometimes occur and have therapeutic value. Put your **own** name on the box (for reasons of confidentiality) and store it privately at the school. NEVER have a box without your name on it: otherwise we don't know what belongs to whom! CFK has supplies of boxes. Label your boxes 'Annie 1' and 'Annie 2'. Write the name of the child and the date on the back of each painting. This helps you see **changes over time**. When you end with a child, please return the box to CFK, unless the child wants to take it home. The child might or not want to take home his or her creations, these can be put into a plastic bag.

j) Encourage and invite the child to wear an apron if painting, as paint etc. on school uniform can make us unpopular with parents or school. Explain why to the child. ('I can see you don't want to wear this but...') However, never force a child to put an apron on if they insist on not wearing it. We suggest you don't wear your best clothes as they might get messy.

k) **Bobo doll:** Please try to prevent children from kicking it with their shoes on, as this can break the plastic. In that case, it can't always be mended. You can explain that the Bobo might not be there next week if it gets broken in that way. The Bobo might need to be blown up regularly as it often loses air during the day. A balloon pump is one way, or you can blow it up by mouth. There are foot pumps in the CFK learning centre which can be collected when you come to your Supervision Group. Chris can repair some broken Bobos, please let the office know this is needed.

If you need any support setting up a new room at a school or need some more toys, please do let us know. If you would like to donate toys/materials to Carefree Kids please do check with the office as we have limited storage space and some toys are not suitable for therapeutic play.

Our main sources of toys and equipment are charity shops, 2<sup>nd</sup> hand shops, Car boot sales (very cheap), Freecycle (free: we collect), Local paper: requests, GALT & other catalogues (e.g. Tobar) if necessary.

Shops: Edufantastic, Ditchfield's, IKEA, Early Learning Centre, Lucinda's, Toys R Us etc.

---

## 15 Equipment for therapeutic play (maximum amount)

### Arts and crafts

Paints and finger paints

Brushes

Palettes and water beaker

Paper: different sizes/colours/types/crepe/tissue

Lead/coloured pencils & felt tip colouring pens

Glitter pens

PVA glue /Pritt stick

Cello tape on dispenser

Children's scissors / adult's scissors

Rubber

Pencil sharpener

Chalk & small blackboard/slate

Lolly sticks (wooden)

Pipe cleaners (various colours & types)

String

Pompoms (various colours & sizes)

Clay (in airtight container)

Play dough (can be home-made)

Rolling pin & board

Charcoal

Plastic masks

### Toys

Wooden blocks

Tool box

Cars including police/ambulance/fire engine/racing

Toy aeroplanes, boat, motor bike & road mat

2 big plastic sand boxes (one for dry, one for wet sand) with bucket, spade, funnel

Sahara sand tray with fine white sand (keep separate)

Toy soldiers

Two telephones (real ones are good)

Whisk

Toy food (wooden best) & wooden eggs  
Toy cash register (pref. not electronic) & money  
Tea set, spoons, plates etc. and toy cooking utensils  
Balloons with pump  
Bubbles  
Slime  
Percussion: e.g. drum/xylophone/cymbals/tambourine  
Natural objects: stones, shells, cones, feathers  
Buttons  
Medical kit: plasters, bandage, stethoscope  
'Gruesome' things: rubber eyes/stretchy frogs etc.  
Puppet theatre & puppets (animals and people)

## **Animals**

At least two animal glove puppets (mix of aggressive and gentle animals)  
Farm animals in families  
Zoo & wild animals in families  
Dinosaurs  
Scary animals & insects  
Cuddly animal toys, including an adult & baby set

## **Dolls / babies etc.**

White baby doll & Black baby doll with clothes  
Happy & sad dolls /ethnic dolls  
Toy buggy & cot  
Doll's house with sturdy furniture (esp. bedroom, toilet & kitchen furniture)  
Bendable people dolls (white & black) for house  
Action Man / incredible hulk etc.  
Barbie & Ken (incl. Black ones)  
Real baby's drinking bottle  
Real dummy

## **Dressing up clothes**

Large pieces of material  
Hats, bags  
High-heeled shoes  
Fairy wings  
Magic wand  
Capes etc. suitable for both boys & girls  
Police hat & firemen's hat

## **Aggression toys**

Egg boxes which can be bashed (renew often)  
Wooden mallet  
Two rubber swords  
Toy gun  
Rope  
Handcuffs & other police equipment  
Plastic blown-up figure (Bobo) + pump  
Large cushion which can be pounded

## Other equipment

Shallow wicker baskets of all sizes to keep things in

Pop-up tent

Bucket for water (especially if no sink in room)

Mirror (full-length if possible)

Large lidded cardboard box (1 for each child to store things s/he makes)

Child's painting aprons/big old shirts in suitable sizes

Real clock on the wall (make sure it shows the correct time; and does it need a new battery?)

Freestanding shelves to display toys if possible

Mixing Tins

## Domestic items (mostly for adults)

Big plastic sheeting to protect carpet if necessary

Dustpan & brush / cloths / towels / tea towel. / cleaning materials / tissues

'Please Do Not Disturb: play session in progress' notice for door

Sheet to cover stored toys if necessary

Fabric or paper to cover windows, e.g. in door

## Not essential but can be useful

Seeds, potting compost and flower pots

Children's books about feelings and situations

---

## 16 Child Protection

Even before you start working with children you MUST think about Safeguarding and Child Protection.

- Find out who the Child Protection Officer (CPO) is at your school (if there is only one CPO, ask who you should go to if the CPO is absent).
- Get a copy of the Schools Child Protection Policy
- Read and know CFK's Child Protection Policy

## Handling Child Protection Disclosures/Concerns

We tell children that the session is confidential unless they say or do something which makes us very worried about them, or think that they (or someone else) might be in danger.

If a child tells you something, or you observe something, that is a clear **child protection** concern (e.g. abuse, whether emotional, physical, or sexual; neglect; bullying, etc) you **are required** to act to protect the child. You must act within 24 hours but preferably immediately.

**Don't panic.** Don't ask probing questions but you can ask for clarification. You will need to write down verbatim, *after the session*, everything the child has said or done which has concerned you. You should include in this report what you said in response.

Here are some Do's and Don'ts when talking to children who disclose something worrying:

- DO:**
1. **Do** ensure child's safety
  2. **Do** give the impression you care – look ready to listen
  3. **Do** remain calm, even if you feel angry or upset for the child
  4. **Do** allow the child to talk freely and for as long as necessary – don't interrupt
  5. **Do** offer gentle prompts if the child stops talking but gives no sign of wanting to leave. E.g. "Is there anything else you want to say?"

6. **Do** give reassurance, e.g. “you’ve done the right thing in telling me.” “You’re not to blame.” “I want to help.” “This must be very difficult for you.”
7. **Do** tell the child that you need to tell the designated person (Child Protection Officer). You are not allowed to keep secrets
8. **Do** remember that many abusers threaten children in order to maintain their silence – the child may be very frightened
9. **Do** believe the child – this is not the time to accuse the child of making up stories
10. **Do** say what will happen next (as much as you know)
11. **Do** offer to take the child with you to tell the designated person. They may not want to go with you but **DO** give them the choice.

**DON'T:**

1. **Don't** ask leading questions, such as “What did he do next?” “Was your Mum around?” “Has he done this before?” You must **not** investigate.
2. **Don't** blame the child
3. **Don't** push the child to say more than they are ready to
4. **Don't** promise confidentiality – you must pass on the concern
5. **Don't** try to decide whether injuries are accidental or not 18
6. **Don't** ask the child to show you injuries
7. **Don't** make promises it is not within your power to keep – you can promise that you will help, you can't promise that the abuse will immediately stop
8. **Don't** make notes while the child is talking. Write a few words to aid your memory if you feel it is absolutely necessary, but give the child your full attention

**After the session** where a disclosure has been made:

- In most cases it should be fine to let the child go back to class as normal, but do consider whether this is safe or appropriate for the child in the specific circumstances.
- Immediately after the session write down your reason for concern. What exactly did the child say that concerned you? If it was not something said, write what you observed that concerned you. Stick to concrete facts as much as possible and, if you are speculating, say so. Include only details that relate specifically to the disclosure/concern and no other issues/content from the session. Write what you said/did in response. Sign and date this report. Call CFK Office if you need help.
- Find your CPO without delay. Do not discuss your concern with anyone at school other than the CPO or, in their absence, the next recommended person (this may be the Head, Deputy Head or SENCO but is unlikely to be the child's class teacher). Describe your concern and give a copy of your report to the CPO and ask them to countersign and date the statement. Please make sure you ask for a copy of this report and hand it in to CFK office.
- Once you have handed over your concern to the CPO you have fulfilled your duty of care, though you are able to chase it up with the school if you wish to make sure it was followed up. In years past we would have left it with the school but now we are each able to follow up on our concerns. If appropriate, CFK can and will follow up with the school to check what is being done about the concern.
- It is fine to discuss the experience with your CFK supervision group - these sessions are confidential.

**Cause for Concern**

If you have concerns about a child but have not had a clear disclosure or seen clear evidence of a child protection issue what can you do? Even if the concerns seem less concrete or less serious than a clear child protection disclosure, you can and should:

- Record what your concerns are and why. Be specific, concise and factual. Sign and date this information under the heading “Cause for Concern”.
- Call the CFK office if you need advice on what to write or do on 020 8558 7799



- Try to discuss your concerns with the CPO and offer them a copy of your mini “Cause for Concern” report for the child’s file
- Discuss your concerns at your next CFK supervision group

If you just “have a feeling” that something is wrong, do still record the feeling and the reasons for it, with a date, and inform your supervisor of the feeling and date you felt it. Over time there may be evidence to support your feeling and your record of relevant dates may prove significant.

If you find your concerns are raised over more than one session approach your CPO again and provide a further report of the reasons for your concern (and all relevant dates).

These less concrete concerns may not lead to any immediate action being taken but **they may prove essential** in building up a body of **evidence** that in time identifies a child as being neglected or abused.

Carefree Kids will support you, at every stage, if you have concerns about a child. We take seriously our responsibility to ensure everything possible is done to safeguard a child’s wellbeing.

It is possible that you will be asked to attend meetings or submit further reports about the child, if you have raised concerns. It is unlikely, but not impossible, that you will be asked to appear in court if you have reported a Child Protection concern and if the school then contacts Social Services. Carefree Kids Team is there to support you with this and you will NEVER have to do this alone. Courts can subpoena all notes written about a child/young person and this is why it is so important to write factual, formal reports that are always signed and dated.

Carefree Kids will provide Safeguarding Training, as it relates to our work, through training days, supervision and at study sessions – please do try to attend all training available. Please also read our Child Protection policy.

PLEASE TAKE A BLANK COPY OF THIS FORM TO SCHOOL WITH YOU WHENEVER YOU HAVE A THERAPEUTIC PLAY SESSION

# Carefree Kids Child Protection Form

---

Name of the child:

Year group:

Gender:

---

Date and time of the disclosure / concern:

---

What you saw or heard: (please continue on a separate sheet as necessary)

---

Details of what you said to the child:

---

Who did you tell about your concern? (this must be the school child protection officer or in their absence, a named deputy)

---

Therapeutic Play Worker Name

School Child Protection Officer Name

Therapeutic Play Worker Signature

School Child Protection Officer Signature

Date and Time

Date and Time

PLEASE ENSURE A COMPLETED AND SIGNED COPY OF THIS FORM IS TAKEN BEFORE YOU LEAVE TO BE HANDED TO THE CAREFREE KIDS OFFICE.

P.T.O for a brief summary of the CFK child protection procedure.

If you feel uneasy about something you have observed / heard during a therapeutic play session:

- Record what you heard or saw on a CFK or school child protection form
- Hand the completed form **directly** to the school CPO (or *named* deputy)
- Make sure the form is signed and dated by you and the school CPO/deputy and take a copy of the fully signed version with you when you leave.
- REMEMBER - DO NOT LEAVE THE SCHOOL PREMISES WITHOUT HANDING YOUR COMPLETED FORM DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOOL CPO (OR DEPUTY) AND OBTAINING A SIGNED COPY.
- Phone the CFK office to inform them of what has happened and arrange to hand in your copy of the completed form.

NB. This is a brief summary of the full Carefree Kids Child Protection procedure, and should be used only as an aide memoire.

Please **read and keep a copy of the full procedure** with you whenever you work in schools and refer to as necessary.

---

## 17 Nine more important things to remember

1. Put your **mobile phone** to silent or switch off before entering every CFK event and session!
2. Always **acknowledge the child's feeling** before addressing anything else.
3. Try to avoid clichés and assumptions such as 'How are you?' or 'Have a nice holiday' etc. See '**What to say instead of How Are You?**' in this handbook.
4. Don't ask the child **questions** - and be wary of answering them, as usually this has no therapeutic value. Use reflection and other techniques to empathise. Discuss in supervision.
5. It is important for the volunteer to **feel comfortable** during sessions. For instance, if you do not want to be handcuffed, tell the child. This needs to be discussed in supervision.
6. Always start and end sessions **bang on time**. It is useful to let the child know when there are ten and five minutes of the session left.
7. Respect **confidentiality**. Keep notes **anonymous and locked away**. Resist the temptation to discuss details of your work with your nearest and dearest.
8. Make notes **soon after** seeing the child – **never during** a session or observation
9. **Look after yourself in every way! If you need support talk to your supervisor or staff in the office, we are here to help if we can.**

---

## 18 Other Carefree Kids activities & tasks

- a) Termly trustee meetings (at present 6.30pm on a weekday evening.), plus trustee training days
- b) Annual General Meeting, Study Sessions, Fundraising Events. Any help welcome, e.g. publicity beforehand.
- c) email networking / social events when volunteers organise these.
- d) Support/counselling/advice/information to parents. We welcome students from a range of disciplines and also welcome volunteers that choose to work with parents too.
- e) Counselling, drama or art therapy, especially for older children in primary schools and those in secondary school.
- f) Buying toys and taking to schools. Removing them from schools where we no longer work.
- h) Courses for school staff and foster/adoptive parents on everyday therapeutic responses to children and therapeutic methods.
- i) Occasional group visits to relevant low-cost or free events.
- j) Publicising Carefree Kids, e.g. at summer fayres.

k) Fundraising: running 'Friends of CFK', local events, applying to funders etc.

*If you might like to get involved in any of the above, please tell CFK office on 0208 558 7799 or via email at [cfk@carefreekids.co.uk](mailto:cfk@carefreekids.co.uk)*

---

## **19 What to say instead of 'How are you?'**

*We often repeat what 'everyone else' says without considering if it means anything at all to children, or whether it is helpful to them. Asking 'How are you?' calls for a fairly standard answer such as 'Fine', it glosses over how they might be feeling.*

### **Instead you could say...**

'You look really pleased with yourself today'

'You seem a bit sleepy today'

'You look as though you might be feeling angry at the moment.'

*..... These are not questions and they shouldn't show you are certain how they feel, they ought to be delivered as a tentative suggestion.*

### **Instead of 'That's nice!' (e.g. in response to news of a new baby in the family or some other event which people assume is 'nice' for the child).....**

*'I wonder what that feels like for you'.....not asking a question (which children are usually unable to answer) but showing your interest in the child's feelings and showing that you understand that the child might well have complicated feelings about an event.*

### **Instead of 'What a lovely picture!' ( this makes a child depend on adult's opinion to feel good)**

'I notice you've decided to put lots of red on your picture today'

'I remember that you usually paint in yellow'

'It looks as though you are very proud of your picture'

### **Instead of 'Have a nice weekend' (assuming the child will do something 'nice'. Their weekend might be boring, violent etc...)**

'We have Saturday and Sunday with no school and we will see each other again on Monday.'

### **Instead of 'What did you do in the holidays?' (why assume the child did anything s/he wants to talk about?)**

'It's been XX weeks since we last saw each other. I have been thinking about you though...'

'Let's imagine what we would like to do on holiday if we could choose anything we wanted in the whole world' .... *.....a chance for imaginations to flourish.*

### **Instead of 'good girl' or 'good boy' .....**

'I can see you wanted to tidy away very carefully. I noticed how you wiped this table with a cloth until it was absolutely clean' .....*specifying what you noticed about the child's OWN decisions, choices and actions and giving the child credit and respect, rather than praise, for what s/he has achieved*

These ways of communicating help children to address THEIR feelings, and not add anything about what WE think is 'nice' or how things should be done.

---

## **20 Ages in each school year group**

### **Primary school**

Reception	ages 4 – 5
Year 1	ages 5 – 6
Year 2	ages 6 – 7
Year 3	ages 7 – 8
Year 4	ages 8 – 9
Year 5	ages 9 – 10
Year 6	ages 10 – 11

### **Secondary school**

Year 7	ages 11 – 12
Year 8	ages 12 – 13
Year 9	ages 13 – 14
Year 10	ages 14 – 15
Year 11	ages 15 - 16

---

## 21 Child Observation Sheet (to be handed to your supervisor)

Name of Child:

Date of Observation:

Observed by: [volunteer name]

### *In the classroom and the playground*

- How does the child present? (e.g. clean clothes etc.)
- Relationship of child to peers and vice versa
- Relationship of child to teacher and vice versa
- Personality of child and teacher (is this the child's usual class teacher?)
- Relationship of child to the work or activity
- How child behaved
- Is this behaviour typical?
- Counter-transference (my gut feelings about the child)
- Any further comments

---

## 22 Session Notes (suggested format)

*(NB Confidentiality: Never write the child's name, school or any other details which could identify him/her on paper or in emails. Refer to 'boy S', for example.)*

Session number:                  Date:                  Initials of child:

- Central emotional themes of the session:
- Objective outline of what happened/content
- Changes in the child (behaviour, emotionally, first time child does something in sessions)
- What went well
- What did not go so well / what I would do differently
- Thoughts / ideas of how I want to be in future sessions (e.g. firmer with boundaries / relax more etc.):
- Reflections/counter-transference (my thoughts and feelings) / any theory that supports my thinking or intervention
- Practical issues / any other issues (e.g. school, staff, toys that need replacing, interruptions...)



---

## 23 Session notes (template to be filled out and emailed to supervisor if unable to attend SV)

Child's Initial :

- Volunteer's Name:
- Date of session:
- How child responded to therapist and any developments/changes in the therapeutic relationship:
- Communication with the therapist / in sessions:
- Use of play resources/therapeutic materials:
- Any specific problems or Child Protection concerns:

---

## 24 End of Term Report *(to be discussed in supervision and handed to your supervisor)*

Child's Full Name:

Volunteer's Name:

Date therapeutic work first started:

Term/Session Dates this report relates to:

Sessions Attended:

Report Date:

- How child responds to and communicates with the therapeutic play worker (and any changes):
- Use of resources and materials (any changes?)
- Any themes?
- Any developments or other changes observed:
- Dates of Safeguarding reports logged with the school and name of person they were logged with.
- End date of therapeutic work (if known/planned), reason for ending and number of sessions remaining:
- Any recommendations for future therapeutic support (if applicable):

Has the child shown any positive response to therapeutic play? (circle)    Y    N    Don't know

Has the child demonstrated improved confidence and coping skills?    Y    N    Don't know

Has the child's family/ carer reported an improvement in their behaviour?  
know    Y    N    Don't

Has the school noticed any improvement in the child's behaviour/attitude?  
know    Y    N    Don't



---

## 26 Carefree Kids Policies and Guidelines

### Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Carefree Kids is a registered charity which exists to ameliorate the emotional health of babies, children and young people and their parents/carers, mainly in the London borough of Waltham Forest, also in neighbouring boroughs, and uses a variety of therapeutic methods to this end.

Carefree Kids is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children in line with best practice and guidelines set out by Safeguarding Children in Waltham Forest. It is the duty of all paid staff, volunteers and committee members to safeguard the children and young people we work with at all times.

Most of our therapeutic work is carried out in a separate room with one adult and one child. Some children whom we help have already been victims of physical, sexual or emotional abuse. In our work with especially vulnerable children, we aim to offer them encouragement and hope, as well as the opportunity to disclose their situation to a sympathetic adult.

To these ends, we have adopted recommended practice for:

#### **i) The recruitment and supervision of staff and volunteers**

All people working with children will have a Disclosure and Barring Service Check (previous CRB check). We will apply for one before a volunteer starts attending Supervision/training groups or working with children unless they have one online that can be updated. We will also take two references for these volunteers. All those working with children will attend weekly supervision/training groups (during term time).

#### **ii) Training staff and volunteers in the skill of listening sensitively to children who might seek to express themselves about the situation they are in**

This training is provided through procedures identified in the Carefree Kids Volunteers Handbook and reinforced during weekly training/supervision groups, termly study days, DVD days, safeguarding training days and via access to our specialist library.

#### **iii) Accusations against volunteers**

Staff and volunteers will be alerted to aspects of their role which could potentially lead to accusations of child abuse. For their own protection, adults will be advised to avoid such situations as far as possible.

#### **iv) Physical contact between adults and children**

All physical contact should be initiated by the child not the adult. All touching must be age-appropriate. Adults response should be minimal but not rejecting. Examples of physical contact are to be brought by volunteers to their weekly supervision. This issue will be explored at study days, through safeguarding training and other training events.

#### **v) Explaining to the child about disclosure**

All staff and volunteers will be trained to tell every child on beginning work with him or her that the content of sessions will be confidential unless the child gives the adult cause to suspect that the child or someone else is at risk, in which case the appropriate person from the school and Carefree Kids will be notified immediately.

#### **vi) Dealing with disclosure or the discovery of abuse**

Staff and volunteers will receive training in supervision, on safeguarding training days and at study days on how to deal with disclosures, including child protection procedures and the name of the person they should inform immediately and how s/he can be contacted. To this end all volunteers working in schools will know the CPO at their school and obtain a copy of the schools child protection policy. The named person within Carefree Kids whom volunteers should contact immediately is Marta Badia or Netty Fake (T: 0208 558 7799) or in their absence their clinical supervisor, or another staff member who will ensure your support through this process.

The volunteer will immediately write down what they have seen, what the child has said to them, verbatim, and what they have said to the child. Where the adult is paraphrasing, this should be indicated. Adults will be advised not to ask leading questions, to probe or to attempt in-depth interviews with the child. If what the child has said is unclear, it is reasonable for the adult to ask for what was said to be repeated or clarified. Parents should not be informed of the proceedings.

#### **vii) Premises**

All premises where work is carried out with children will be furnished and equipped with a view to optimal safety, e.g. no glass or dangerous objects, broken toys to be removed for repair. Be aware of where fire exits and assembly points are in case of fire.

#### **viii) Work out of doors**

Every precaution will be taken to ensure the safety of children, e.g. Hand to be held while crossing roads. Be aware of road safety when using the bus (making sure door child enters is parked towards the pavement).

#### **ix) Medical emergencies**

Staff and volunteers must know where and how a qualified first aider can be contacted and must have telephone numbers of parents/carers when appropriate. Information about any allergies and medical conditions of children must be included in referral forms and be available to staff and volunteers.

#### **x) Distribution of Child Protection Policy**

A copy of this policy (included in the Carefree Kids Volunteers Handbook) is to be given to every Carefree Kids volunteer, paid employee and committee member. We provide ongoing training in child protection policy and best practice. All volunteers and staff are to attend annual retraining in child protection policy and best practice.

#### **xi) Review of this policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually at trustees meetings and Trustees will be notified of changes at Annual General Meetings.

### **Carefree Kids Procedure in the event of an allegation made against a Carefree Kids volunteer or staff member**

If a client, parent or other relevant person makes allegations to Carefree Kids against any person working for Carefree Kids, whether paid or unpaid, or a member of the management, the following procedure will come into force - incident reports will be made at all stages as appropriate:

- a. The person receiving the complaint will contact co-ordinators Marta Badia or Netty Fake (020 8558 7799) who will at once contact the Chair, or any other trustee.
- b. If the complaint is a criminal allegation the co-ordinator will contact the police.

- c. The Chair should inform the person against whom an allegation has been made as soon as possible UNLESS THERE APPEARS TO BE A CASE THAT THIS MIGHT PREJUDICE A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION. This will require consultation with the police to ascertain.
- d. The course of action to be taken from thereon will be decided by the nature of the allegation(s).
- e. If a criminal allegation e.g. of sexual abuse and impropriety is made, or physical assault, or inappropriate behaviour, the Chair will activate the Disciplinary Procedure and suspend the person from any activity in Carefree Kids under the heading of alleged Gross Misconduct. If it is warranted, this may be without pay, should the evidence appear strong enough to justify the matter. The suspension will remain in force unless and until the police and/or social services confirm there was no substance to the report. An incident report will be made and treated as confidential.
- f. If there is no criminal allegation the co-ordinator will gather as much detail from available sources of information as possible, by way of investigation, but not including seeking to interview the client if there is a criminal allegation (which is a matter for the authorities). Where appropriate, the co-ordinator should consider whether suspension of the worker is advisable and recommend accordingly to a panel consisting of at least one trustee (not the Chair) and a member of staff or of the committee. . This may include a situation which, though non-criminal, could lead to a decision of gross misconduct.
- g. The Co-ordinator will report to the panel on the outcome of such an investigation and will recommend whether any further steps should be taken.
- h. The person against whom such non-criminal allegations are made should have opportunity to give an explanation or answer to any allegation at an interview conducted by the co-ordinator and the course of such an interview should be minuted.
- i. The suspension will remain in force on completion of the co-ordinator's enquiries if the panel is of the view that the misconduct is so serious as to constitute grounds for immediate termination of employment or voluntary service until the dismissal procedure has been implemented. The person suspended should be advised by the panel of a person in Carefree Kids with whom s/he can communicate during the period of suspension on matters relating to their employment, and the person so appointed should be told clearly, as should the person suspended the address to which any communication should be made, whether or not communication includes personal contact, and the hours/times of contact.
- j. The person suspended can appeal any decision by the panel to the Chair who will consider the representations of the person and the decision making by the panel in accordance with the existing disciplinary procedure.
- k. If legal proceedings result in the conviction of the person for a serious offence involving a client, the Chair shall consider any report or information from the police and /or social services and shall recommend to the trustees the appropriate course of action up to and including instant dismissal. If the proceedings do not result in a conviction but there is evidence to suggest misconduct, the procedure in article f. may be invoked.
- l. The Chair shall write to the person concerned to inform them of the outcome of the investigation and will inform the person of any decision to terminate employment or of the date and conditions, if any, of a return to duties, where a disciplinary offence has been committed but is not of a nature as to warrant immediate dismissal.
- m. Under no circumstances is any person suspended to re-enter Carefree Kids premises or property or attend a session site (school, bus or other) whilst under suspension. This prohibition includes activities where there are no vulnerable adults, children or young persons present.
- n. In appropriate circumstances, in consultation with the trustees, and with other Officers as available, the Chair may effect an instant dismissal if the evidence warrants it. For example, someone caught in the act of committing an offence involving a client or child. This will be reported in the manner detailed above. The personal file of such a worker will have the necessary note of action taken entered in it.

## Equal Opportunities Policy

1 Carefree Kids recognises that many different groups of people within society face direct and indirect discrimination. We are committed to the values of justice and equality. We therefore are committed to providing equal opportunities for all people irrespective of their gender, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion, sexual orientation, disability, class, age, marital status or domestic circumstances, in accordance with our service aims.

2 We will ensure that action is taken at all levels within the organisation in order to identify and develop systems and practices that are anti-discriminatory. All people connected with Carefree Kids, in the management and delivery of services, are made aware of, and required to work within, this policy.

3 Carefree Kids will strive to ensure that all employees and volunteers are treated fairly in all matters.

4 Carefree Kids aims to work with people in emotional distress, which includes suffering through disadvantage and social exclusion. Therefore our approach needs to ensure a welcome for all.

5 Carefree Kids aims to ensure equality of opportunity throughout employment, volunteering and all services by providing resources, encouragement and specific training necessary to enable people from all groups to play an active role and achieve their maximum potential.

6 Carefree Kids strives to provide a working environment which is fair, accepts differences and is free from intimidation, harassment or victimisation.

7 All equipment provided for children is carefully selected to enable children to represent themselves and others; for example, ethnically diverse dolls.

## Confidentiality Policy

Everything that goes on in a therapeutic play session is confidential. Details of sessions will not be discussed by Carefree Kids' therapeutic play workers, except in Carefree Kids supervision groups or with Carefree Kids Coordinators - and all material discussed remains confidential. Therapeutic play workers can give limited feedback to parents and school staff provided it does not breach confidentiality. Details of the sessions can be shared, **only** as agreed with the child. The child can share as much or as little about the sessions as they want.

However, if a child makes a disclosure which constitutes a child protection issue, or a therapeutic play worker has concerns about the safety of a child, then the Carefree Kids therapeutic play worker has a duty to act. The therapeutic play worker can immediately discuss their concern with Carefree Kids Coordinators, or their Carefree Kids Supervisor. The therapeutic play worker must then report their concern to the school's designated child protection officer (or deputy if absent) before leaving the school's premises, or at the very latest within 24 hours. Full guidance on handling such concerns is given in the Carefree Kids Volunteers Handbook.

Carefree Kids therapeutic play workers will explain to children about confidentiality - and the limits/exceptions to it - ideally during the first therapeutic play session. We will also inform Parents/Carers of confidentiality and its limitations when we obtain their consent to work with their child.

When requested, therapeutic play workers are expected to write brief, factual reports about their work with each child, which are kept confidentially by Carefree Kids and a copy is provided to the school. Carefree Kids provides a format for reports but their purpose is to confirm attendance, summarise the work in general terms and any relevant developments but not to refer to the specific content of the child's play or in any other way breach confidentiality.

All other correspondence with school and volunteers should use the child's initials.

Carefree Kids therapeutic play workers are permitted to make their personal "process" written notes, for the purpose of their learning and for presentation at supervision groups, provided those notes remain always entirely anonymous. Carefree Kids encourages volunteers to destroy these notes after their work with a child has ended.

- Everything that goes on in a therapeutic session is confidential, apart from discussion in group or individual supervision. All material discussed in supervision is confidential.
- If there is a concern about the safety of the child or someone else, the volunteer will immediately discuss the matter with CFK and the school's child protection officer before the volunteer leaves the school.
- Volunteers can give limited feedback to parents and others, as agreed beforehand with the child.
- Volunteers will make their written notes anonymous.
- All notes will be kept locked up or in a hidden place.
- All notes will be given back to CFK once a volunteer finishes work with a child.
- The child will be told that the sessions are confidential
- CFK has rights to the information, but the court can over-rule this.
- Volunteers can keep two sets of notes: one consisting of their own reflections and speculations, the other recording actual events and words used.

#### **Confidentiality**

- Everything that goes on in a therapeutic session is confidential and, as such, volunteers will not discuss the details of the content of sessions, except in group or individual supervision; or where there is a specific concern about the safety of the child or someone else (in which case Child Protection Policies and Procedures will be followed). All material discussed in supervision is confidential.
- This confidentiality agreement will be communicated to the child/young person by the volunteer in age-appropriate language, as well as to parents/carers and school staff.
- Volunteers can give only generalised feedback to parents/carers and school staff so as to maintain confidentiality; or volunteers can provide limited specific, or more detailed feedback if agreed beforehand with the child. Any perceived breach of confidentiality can seriously undermine therapeutic work.
- If there is a concern about the safety of the child or someone else, the volunteer should explain to the child that – and why – they have to share this specific information. The volunteer will then, **immediately after the session**, discuss (only) the specific concern with CFK and/or inform the school's child protection officer (please see Child Protection Policies and Procedures).
- CFK and Volunteers will make any written notes entirely anonymous and keep them securely. Such notes should be destroyed or returned to CFK once the work is completed. Any reports will be kept



in a locked filing cabinet and shared only on a need-to-know basis. CFK has rights to the information, but courts of law can over-rule this.

- The confidentiality agreement remains even after the work ends and the volunteer is expected to maintain confidentiality indefinitely.

## Health and Safety Policy

### Introduction

Carefree Kids is committed to creating and maintaining a safe working environment within its premises and all premises and vehicles which it uses, to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health & safety of all its volunteers, students, service users & paid employees.

### Statement of intent

The Trustees of Carefree Kids recognise and accept their responsibilities in providing a safe and healthy environment for volunteers, students, service users, paid staff and anyone else who attends our events or services. All reasonable actions will be taken to fulfil these responsibilities within the framework of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and regulations made under this legislation. The Health and Safety at Work Regulations which came into force in 1993, implementing six European directives, also apply.

### Responsibilities of volunteers and paid staff

Every volunteer, student and paid staff member must remember that there is a personal and collective responsibility under the Act and under this Health and Safety policy statement.

All volunteers, students and staff, while carrying out Carefree Kids business, have a duty to take reasonable care, both physically and psychologically, of themselves and anyone who might be affected by what they do. They also have a duty to co-operate with Carefree Kids and all venues where we operate in the interests of health & safety, e.g. fire drills, first aid etc.

All volunteers, students and staff must inform themselves of the contents of Carefree Kids' Health and Safety policy and familiarise themselves with its arrangements and especially with factors which could affect children and vulnerable adults.

All volunteers, students and staff members have the right to seek and to have independent advice on matters which might affect their health and safety.

### Safety procedures

All volunteers, students and paid staff will pay particular attention to:

- \* The dangers of wet floors & other risks of children or adults falling or hurting themselves.
- \* The whereabouts of **first aid** equipment at every venue and how to find a person qualified in first aid.
- \* The possibility of volunteers being physically hurt by children or adults during the work.
- \* The **psychological stress** of carrying out therapeutic play and other work with distressed people, and the essential use of regular supervision in groups and/or individually. Volunteers, students and paid staff have a duty to ask for the support they need to prevent undue stress and anxiety. Volunteers, students and paid staff should tell their supervisors if there are, or begin to be, personal factors which affect, or might affect, their work and ability to carry out their work and attend supervision, in order that support can be given where needed.

The play rooms, and other spaces used should be neither too hot nor too cold. All electrical equipment, such as heaters and fans, should be kept out of the reach of children whilst in use and be inspected from time to time by a qualified electrician.

### ***Work with adults***

When adults are seen for therapeutic work, it is important to ensure that another adult within Carefree Kids is aware of the therapeutic session and its timing. The therapist should be aware of how to leave the room in an emergency and should behave in an empathic way least likely to provoke aggressive behaviour. Therapists who work with adults should discuss with their supervisors strategies for defusing potentially aggressive or violent behaviour.

All adult clients will be assessed by Carefree Kids paid staff or another suitable person before a volunteer or student begins work with them.

Any worries the volunteer or student has about the safety of adult clients or the safety of the therapist during sessions, should be reported to the supervisor as soon as possible.

## **LONE WORKING POLICY**

### ***Background***

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Carefree Kids Health and Safety Policy.

Volunteers normally see children within a school environment, where their training in boundary setting will enable them to deal with potentially dangerous situations. In addition the class teacher and/ or SENCO will know that the session is taking place.

There may be occasions where children are seen in different locations, such as community centres or at the CFK office. Additionally, parents may be seen in their own homes, in public buildings or in the CFK office. In all instances where the session takes place outside school premises (or outside the normal school day) additional measures must be taken to promote safe working conditions. In every instance, the following guidelines will apply, regardless of whether the client is considered to be a low risk.

### ***Sessions in the Client's Home***

One-off assessment sessions and meetings with parents might happen at home. Where this happens two people will go, no visits are to be done alone. CFK Coordinators will carry out assessments and volunteers who are meeting parents may ask another member of their Supervision Group to go with them (at times when a coordinator is unable to go). Where possible it is recommended that parents are met in a public place or in a pre-arranged room.

CFK recommends that volunteers working with adult clients inform a responsible adult (e.g. partner/ family member) when and where they are meeting a client and arrange to make contact after each meeting. If there is no responsible adult available for the worker to contact, then CFK staff are willing to be the contact person, but this is expected to be on exceptional occasions only.

A CFK Co-ordinator will undertake a Risk Assessment (on paper and held on file, of each parent due to be seen individually and will make this information available to the volunteer so, together, they can make informed choices about where to meet clients. If a client has a history of violence, or has a violent family member or is likely to have violent visitors, the Co-ordinator will require the meeting to be held in a public place (i.e. not in the client's home)

### ***Sessions in CFK offices***

If sessions are held at CFK offices, either with children, parents/carers, it is important that there is at least one member of staff available in the office. When sessions are arranged outside normal working hours, coordinators are to ensure that suitable staff cover is arranged to ensure staff availability during that time.

### ***Advice to Volunteers***

- Do not turn your mobile phone off during sessions but silence them.
- Use the CFK mobile phone for meetings if you do not have one available.
- In the event of an emergency, dial 999 or 101

### ***Sessions in other Non-School Premises or in Schools after Normal Hours***

The same guidelines apply as for sessions in the client's home.

## Carefree Kids: Accident/Incident report form

In the event of an incident or accident involving health & safety, please complete this form as soon as possible & give it to the Carefree Kids supervisor & the school's health & safety officer.

Date of accident or incident:

Time:

- Area in which it happened:
- Detail of injury/condition if applicable:
- Part of body affected, if relevant:
- Please describe in detail how it occurred:

Form completed by: (Print name)

Position:

Signature:

Date:

# Complaints & Feedback Procedure

## ***Introduction***

Carefree Kids aims to provide high quality services. In order to ensure that our services remain at a high and improving standard, we have a procedure through which you can let us know if for any reason you are not satisfied in your dealings with us. This complaints procedure sets out the steps we will take when we receive a complaint from a school, a volunteer, a parent/carer or any other person or organisation that has dealings with us.

The procedure also sets out how we receive feedback, both positive and negative. Our trustees undertake to make sure all complaints are investigated and resolved to the best of Carefree Kids' ability.

Often we will be able to give you a response straight away. When the matter is more complicated, we will give you an initial response within ten working days.

All complaints will be treated confidentially.

## ***Making a complaint – general***

When a formal complaint is made, the following procedure should be adopted. Where the complaint is against the Carefree Kids co-ordinator, the same procedure will be followed, but with the chair of trustees substituting for the co-ordinator at all stages.

The complainant should be given a copy of the complaints form and invited to complete it. If the complainant does not wish to, or is unable to put the complaint in writing, a verbal statement of complaint will be accepted. It will be the duty of the co-ordinator to ensure that details of any verbal complaints are noted and that the complainant agrees with the notes. This will be recorded on the complaints form.

Informal complaints will also be noted in the Complaints and Feedback Book. The co-ordinator will deal with informal complaints in a speedy but informal manner.

## ***Making an initial complaint stage 1***

The complainant should be invited to speak to the co-ordinator to discuss the complaint. This can be done in person or by telephone. The co-ordinator will keep a record of the conversation on the complaints record, which details the complaint, the action taken to address it and the outcome of the complaint.

At this stage, all possible attempts should be made to resolve the complaint on the same day or as soon as possible. The outcome will normally be given in writing. The co-ordinator will be available to explain the outcome verbally if the complainant wishes. The complainant will be informed of the next stage of the complaints procedure if s/he remains dissatisfied.

Stage 1 should be completed within ten working days of receiving the complaint.

## ***Making a further complaint – stage 2***

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the initial complaint, s/he should be invited to make a written complaint to the trustees either by completing a complaints form or writing a letter. If the complainant is unable to put the complaint in writing, the co-ordinator or other delegated person should help by writing down the complaint and the reasons for wishing to progress to stage 2. This should be read back to the complainant for agreement as to its accuracy.

The trustees will notify the complainant in writing that they are dealing with the matter. They will review the events in stage 1 and might seek further clarification from any party involved. They will notify the complainant of their

decision and reasons for the decision within 28 days of having received the complaint, unless they notify the complainant of a reason for delay. The trustees decision is final.

### ***Redress***

Options could include:

- a) An apology, written or verbal, from the chair.
- b) An undertaking and subsequent report on improving or developing policies or procedures if necessary.

### ***Recording and monitoring complaints***

All formal complaints will be recorded and kept in a file marked 'Complaints'. The co-ordinator will make a report once a year to the trustees summarising the nature of complaints and how they were resolved. Informal complaints and other feedback will be kept in the Complaints and Feedback Book.

### ***Communication about this procedure***

We will tell school, parents/carers and other relevant people and organisations about our complaints policy in our literature.