Reporting Harm/Suspicion of Harm Procedure

Handling Disclosures or Suspicions of Harm
Against Persons Under the Age of 16

It is essential to report any suspicion of harm to ensure the protection of all persons associated with Multiply Movement. This includes all persons of all ages.

Harm

'Harm' is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a persons physical, psychological or emotion wellbeing. Harm can be caused by physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or sexual abuse or exploitation. Harm can be caused by a single act or omission or a series or acts or omissions.

Identifying Harm

Types of Harm

Physical

- Hitting
- Shaking
- Burning
- Scolding
- Biting
- Causing bruises or fractures by excessive discipline

- Poisoning
- Giving children alcohol, illegal drugs or inappropriate mediation
- Domestic and family violence

Psychological or emotion abuse

- Scape-goating
- Persistent rejection or hostility
- Constant yelling insults or criticism
- Cultural offence
- Teasing
- Bullying
- Domestic and family violence

Resulting Harm

Physical abuse may result in:

- Bruising
- Factures
- Internal injuries
- Burns

Psychological abuse may result in:

- Learning and developmental delays
- Impaired self image
- Depression

Emotional abuse may result in:

- Hyper vigilance
- Poor self esteem
- Self harm
- Fear
- Anxiety

General Indicators of Abuse

- Showing weariness or distrust
- Demanding or aggressive behaviour
- Sleeping difficulties
- Low self esteem
- Difficulty relating to adults and peers
- Abusing drugs or alcohol

- Seemingly incident prone
- Unexplained broken bones, bruising, burns or welts
- Unexplained, inconsistent, vague or unbelievable explanations of injury
- Suicidal – feeling suicidal or attempting suicidal
- Concentration difficulties
- Being withdrawn
- Overly obedient
- Reluctance to go home
- Creating stories, poems or artwork about abuse

General Indicators of Neglect

- Malnutrition, begging, storing or hording food
- Poor hygiene, matted hair, dirty skin, or poor body odour
- Unattended physical or medical problems
- Concerning comments
- Constant tiredness
- Inappropriate clothing especially in winter
- Frequent illness, infections or sores

- Being unsupervised for long periods of time

Disclosure of Harm

A disclosure of harm occurs when someone including a child tells you about harm that has happened, is happening or is likely to happen. Disclosures of harm may start with:

- "I think I saw…."
- "Somebody told me that…."
- "Just think you should know….."
- "I'm not sure what I want to do but…."

Suspicion of Harm

Suspicion of harm is when someone has reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm.

You have a duty of care to follow up any disclosures of harm or any suspicions of harm to children or young people in your care.

You can suspect harm if:

- A child or a young person tells you that they have been harmed;
- Someone else tells you that harm is likely to occur;
- A child or a young person tells you that they know of a person that may be harmed (it is possible that they may be referring to themselves);

- You are concerned at significant changes in the behaviour of a child or young person or the presence of new unexplained or suspicious injuries;
- You see the harm happening.

2.0 Managing or recording a disclosure of suspicion of harm

- If there is potential that risk may escalate, notify emergency services immediately by calling **000**.
- Remain calm, listen intensively, actively and nonjudgmentally.
- Insure there is a private place to talk.
- Encourage the person to talk in their own words while actively listening.
- Do not ask leading questions.
- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing by telling them.
- Advise the child that they need to tell someone who can help them
- Complete an incident report form documenting the disclosure clearly and accurately, including:
    - Dates;
    - Times;
    - Locations;
    - Who was present and what happened;
    - Detail exactly what the person said using I said, they said statements;
    - The questions you ask;

- Any comments you made;
- Your actions following the disclosure;

- Do not attempt to investigate or mediate an outcome.

- Immediately notify a senior member of staff who will decide on the necessary steps to take.

Steps to take when notified of disclosure

1. Consider whether the disclosure or reasonable suspicion needs to be reported to the Queensland police. For example, an individual may reasonably believe that a person is or will be in eminent danger then Queensland police should be contacted immediately. A list of potential criminal offences can be found at: https://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/serious-offences.html .

2. Consider whether the disclosure or reasonable suspicion needs to be reported to child safety.

   Child services should be contacted if a person forms a reasonable suspicion that a child including an unborn child has, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering harm and does not have a parent willing or able to protect them from harm.

   Child Safety Services can be contacted during office hours on 1300 682 254 or after hours or on weekends on 1800 177 135 or 3235 9999.

3. Consider whether referral is required to other support services including Family and Child Connect. This option is preferred when there is no reasonable suspicion of harm. Their number is 133 264.

3.0 Disclosure or suspicion of harm may attract media attention

All media inquiries should be directed to Joel Shaw.

4.0 Inappropriate physical contact between minors

- Inappropriate contact may involve acts that may be sexual in nature, sexual intent, or even acts that may be aggressive between two persons under the age of 16.

Steps to follow

- Ensure that there is no risk of further harm to the parties involved
- If there is a chance of escalation the Emergency Service must be contacted on 000 and instructions should be followed.
- The two minors involved should be separated and should remain under individual supervision while parents are contacted and should remain under that supervision until parents arrive.
- A senior member of staff will need to be contacted.
- If at any time there is uncertainty surrounding what actions should be taken contact the emergency services – police link on 13001444.
- An incident report should be filled out immediately. Two leaders need to accompany the minors involved establishing a chain of events with the intention of identifying whether consent was given and by which minors.
- Establish a pastoral care procedure to ensure the wellbeing of the minors involved. This may involve contact calling the children's parents.

- In the event that the person involved was transported to the event, the leader with knowledge of the incident that took place may need to accompany them home to the parents to further explain the situation.