



## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### *Introduction*

Bedlam, as a company that makes provision for children between the ages of 12 and 18 years, ensures at all times that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All staff working at Bedlam have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer

Staff are not trained to deal with situations of abuse nor decide if abuse has occurred

### *Policy Statement*

Bedlam has a duty of care to safeguard all children, involved in Game Bedlam paintball activities, from harm. Bedlam will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in Game Bedlam through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by Bedlam. A Child is defined as any person under the age of 18, according to the Children Act 1989.

### *Policy Aims*

The aim of Bedlam's Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Bedlam
- Allow all staff to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues

## Promoting good practice with children

### *Guidelines*

All personnel are encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are measures that are taken by Bedlam staff in order to create a positive culture and climate, within the Game Bedlam environment:

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoid private or unobserved situations);
- Treat all children equally and with respect and dignity
- Always put the welfare of the child first, before winning or achieving goals
- Make the day fun and enjoyable whilst promoting fair play
- Ensure that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to company guidelines. The child in need of assistance should be consulted and their agreement gained, if at all possible
- Keep up to date with qualifications and training
- Be an excellent role model
- Do not use inappropriate language in front of children
- Give constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of children, avoiding excessive training or competition and do not push them against their will
- Keep a written record of any injury, regardless of how small it may seem, along with a record of any treatment administered
- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with a child, away from others. If a case arises where this is unavoidable (such as escorting a child to hospital or if a parent is late to pick up their child) then the consent of the site manager, or equivalent, must be obtained

### *Practice Never to be Sanctioned*

Bedlam Staff members are instructed never to:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually proactive games
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in jest
- Reduce a child to tears as form of control
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature for a child who is capable of doing it for themselves

If any of the following occur, staff are to report the incident immediately to a colleague and record it. The parents/guardians are also informed:

- If a member of staff accidentally hurts a player
- If a child seems distressed in any way
- If a child seems to be sexually aroused by your actions
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done

### ***Responding to Suspicions or Allegations***

It is not the responsibility of anyone working within Bedlam to take responsibility or to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

Bedlam will assure all staff that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports their concern that a colleague is, has or may be abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff, there may be three types of investigation

1. A criminal investigation
2. A child protection investigation
3. A disciplinary or misconduct investigation

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

### **Suspected Abuse**

- Any suspicion that a member of staff has abused a child is reported to the Bedlam Child Protection Officer. He/she will then take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The Bedlam Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police, or go straight to the police if out of hours.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following the advice from the social services department.

### **Confidentiality**

Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information will be handled and disseminated on a *need to know basis* only. This includes the following people:

- Bedlam Senior Managers
- Bedlam appointed Health and Safety Managers – Peninsula Business Services Ltd
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Social services / police
- The alleged abuser