

# CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS PROTECTION POLICY

Guidelines to Staff May 2013

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This policy and the accompanying guidelines are intended to help us all to honour all people's basic human rights whether within their living or work environment, pivotal to this is clear understanding and practice of the following guidelines and recommendation within this company policy. Deviation from this policy could result in disciplinary action and possible prosecution.

While primarily intended to safeguard children and vulnerable adults, our Child Welfare Policy is also meant to protect staff – and others working with us including contractors and consultants – from any false allegation of improper conduct in that regard. With both these purposes in mind, the guidance given here is intended to help you understand how the policy is meant to be applied in practice.

We cannot cover every possible eventuality in these guidelines, but hopefully they do cover most situations that you are actually likely to encounter.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the Directors of this company whom are responsible for the implementation, distribution and adherence to this Policy. Designated officers are appointed to ensure guidance is met.

### **Fire & Security**

Protecting people, processes & property

## **CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS SAFETY AND WELFARE GUIDELINES**

These guidelines apply to:

- Any situation involving children and young people up to age 18, whether or not accompanied by adults. Tecserv UK Limited also recognises that vulnerable people of any age will benefit from similar safeguards. Whenever the guidelines refer to children, this broader meaning applies.
- All staff, contractors and consultants working in/on/for and on behalf of Tecserv UK Limited property. In the case of contractors and consultants it is incumbent upon the Director and General Manager of the contracting unit to ensure that they are made aware of these guidelines.

GENERAL DUTIES OF ALL TECSERV UK LIMITED STAFF in regard to the safety and welfare of children and similarly vulnerable people to:

- take all reasonable steps to protect children from hazards; take appropriate action if an accident occurs;
- strictly observe the code of behaviour given here;
- take all reasonable steps to prevent abuse of children in contact with Tecserv UK Limited; report any incident or suspicion of abuse.

## **ACCESS TO WORKING AREA POLICY**

Due to the nature of Tecserv UK's business as Security and Fire Installation and Service contractors it is inevitable that our individual employees will at some stage work within environments with children and vulnerable adults which is why all staff are CRB / DBS checked. However we realise that circumstances arise which will be dealt with as follows:

Unaccompanied children are at greater risk and staff will need to exercise discretion. Where practicable, contact details for unaccompanied children should be obtained in case of accident. The main factors to consider are:

- the nature of the site;
- age and understanding.

It would be unwise for instance, to let a young child roam unsupervised on a site or within a working area. If you are worried on that account, it is fully acceptable to refuse admission (in a friendly manner) into the working area until work has ceased. In line with the Government Guidelines if a child is under 16 they should be accompanied by a responsible adult.

## **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR ALL TECSERV UK LIMITED STAFF**

People working with Tecserv UK Limited must always observe the following requirements where children, young people or similarly vulnerable people are concerned.

### **Do's and Don'ts for Working with Children**

DO:

- Remember the child comes first
- Behave professionally
- Treat everyone with respect

- Communicate on their level
- Listen to children
- Be aware of policy and procedures
- Report any suspicions within Tecserv UK Limited guidelines
- Be aware, approachable and understanding

**DO NOT:**

- Touch inappropriately
- Use inappropriate language
- Harm a child or frighten a child
- Be alone if possible e.g. on a site visit
- Threaten or be aggressive, shout
- Mistreat, demean, ignore, make fun of
- Force a child to do something they do not want to do
- Let a child expose him/herself to danger
- Take photos of children without permission i.e. site visits

**Do's and Don'ts for Working with Vulnerable Adults**

**DO:**

- Be respectful and professional
- Listen, communicate
- Use common sense; be caring, attentive and aware
- Act in an appropriate manner
- Be sympathetic to their needs
- Be aware of your responsibility
- Be aware of policy and procedures
- Know the appropriate contacts and act appropriately
- Be responsible – report and support
- Constantly review and update all parties – positively feed into policy/procedures

**DO NOT:**

- Treat as children
- Be aggressive
- Physically restrain
- Do anything of a personal nature they can do for themselves
- Re-enforce negative emotions/behaviours
- Engage in inappropriate behaviour
- Place yourself in a vulnerable position

You have a strict duty never to subject any child to any form of harm or abuse.

Failure to honour this will be treated as gross misconduct. This means that it is unacceptable for example to:

- distress a child by shouting at them or calling them derogatory names;
- slap a child;
- hold a child in such a way that it causes pain, or to shake them;
- physically restrain a child except to protect them from harming themselves or others;
- take part in horseplay or rough games;
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind

do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves or an accompanying adult can do for them; this includes going to the toilet with a child unless another adult is present;  
allow or engage in sexually suggestive behaviour within a child's sight or hearing, or make suggestive remarks to or within earshot of a child;  
give or show to a child anything which could be construed as pornographic;  
seek or agree to meet children anywhere

### Support in exercising your best judgement

If you witness or suspect abusive behaviour towards a child, you should use the procedural guidelines that follow.

We all appreciate that this may call for fine judgement and even courage. As long as you honour this Code of Behaviour and the other guidance given here, you will have the practical, moral and legal support of senior colleagues in any situation where you have to rely on your own judgement. If you are in any doubt as to what to do then you should contact Tecserv UK Limited's Designated Officer who will be able to provide you with the necessary advice.

### PHOTOGRAPHING CHILDREN

Photographs of children should only be used if written consent has been obtained from a parent, guardian or, if referring to school groups, relevant school authority. General group photographs taken in public may be used if no individual can be identified by reason of any attached data and no-one objected at the time the photograph was taken.

Permission should be obtained firstly to take the photograph and secondly for permission if the photograph is to be reproduced. A release form is available from the Designated Officer.

If the photographs are to be stored with other personal data then the Data Protection Act will apply and Tecserv UK Limited will have to act accordingly. Further information on the Data Protection Act may be obtained from the Designated Officer.

### GUIDELINES: WHAT TO DO IN PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES

#### 1. Protecting Children From Hazards Or Rash Behaviour

We recognise that it is impossible to ensure that no child ever comes to harm on Tecserv UK Limited property. What we collectively and you as an individual must do is take all reasonable steps to protect children from likely risks arising from the nature or condition of particular sites or events. To this end you should ensure that you carry with you your company supplied mobile phones and ensure that the phone is charged enough to last for the intended site visit. This will provide you with re-assurance for any situation you may encounter when you may for example be alone with a child or out of public view. You should also at all times be alert to potential dangers, taking swift appropriate action to ensure safety, for example, getting repairs done, new warning notices etc.

'Reasonable' and 'likely' are the operative terms here.

This means allowing for factors such as the following, especially when children are unaccompanied by adults:-

Children are usually smaller than adults. So, for example, something set at a reasonable height for an adult may be dangerous for a child or above their sight line.

Children are usually less stronger than adults.

Children are primed to explore or play games. This means that we have got to do our best to anticipate adventurous behaviour and assess the risks involved.

Children have less experience of danger than adults. They can be unaware or heedless of dangers you can clearly recognise. Even when aware of danger, they may act through bravado.

You have a duty to prevent young people from coming to harm through their own rash actions.

You need to judge carefully how to intervene.

Often the best course is to guide them into a safe course of action, rather than just telling them to stop what they're doing – and it is better to give positive rather than negative instructions (e.g. “Walk on the grass, please” instead of “Get off the wall”) or it may work to distract them from something dangerous.

If you have to tell them to stop what they're doing try to be clear and definite about it. It helps to take a deep breath before you say anything!

Avoid being officious or challenging. You need to exert your authority not ‘prove’ it.

If, despite your efforts, a young person persists in jeopardising their own or other people's safety, get help if you can or consider asking them to leave the site.

If they are in serious danger and you cannot persuade them away from it, you should treat this as an emergency and contact the emergency services.

Restraint:

If you think it is necessary to restrain a child from doing something, try non-physical approaches – e.g. by talking to them, by asking them not to move if they are injured, by standing in the way. If you do have to use physical restraint, it should be the minimum necessary for their safety. If they are in imminent danger, you might need to hold them by their clothing. Whatever the circumstances, physical restraint must be appropriate and reasonable. Otherwise, it may be regarded as assault.

Alcohol & Illegal Drugs:

If there appears to be illegal drinking in or around one of our sites, or you see anyone apparently taking drugs, giving them to others or being given them you should:

not try to stop them, but;

notify the Police – and try to keep an eye that they don't otherwise endanger themselves. Police involvement does not mean necessarily that they will be charged with any offence, but it does alert the Police and should result in experienced handling of the situation.

- i. You must also take all reasonable steps to ensure that no other member of staff or member of the public compromises the health and safety of any child in contact with Tecserv UK Limited. For example, someone might move a barrier that has been placed with children in mind.

This means intervening directly to prevent this, or reporting the situation to someone with more authority to intervene.

In dealing with the person, bear in mind that the situation is more likely to arise through enthusiasm or thoughtlessness than wilful negligence.

ii. What to do if an accident happens

Depending on your judgement of the situation, go to the scene immediately if possible and/or summon First Aid assistance and/or contact the emergency services.

With children it can be hard to tell whether they have been injured or whether an injury is serious. If you have any doubt about this, you should err on the side of caution and contact the emergency services. Even if a child is accompanied and you think an accident is not being treated seriously enough, get medical assistance on your own initiative if necessary.

The normal accident recording and reporting procedure applies, as in the Site Manual or Health & Safety Manual.

First Aid

- Unless there is good reason, First Aid should not be administered without the permission of the child's parent, teacher or accompanying adult. A child cannot give consent. If the parent is not on site, get their phone number, if possible.
- However, if a child is alone and say, unconscious, the situation should be dealt with as for any other person.
- If at all possible, treatment should only be given by a trained First Aider or Appointed Person.
- Provided this does not in itself put the child at risk, always try to administer First Aid within sight and sound of other adults.
- Always tell the child exactly what you are doing and why.
- For minor injuries, it is all right to use a non-fluffy cloth, but you may not offer any medication, including antiseptics or pills of any kind. If you have any doubts about helping someone to use their own medication, phone the emergency services.
- Any treatment should be as little as necessary without threatening the child's well-being.

If a child comes to you for comfort because of a minor accident or fright, it is perfectly in keeping with the Code of Behaviour to hold their hand or put your arm around them. Just make sure:

- you know about any injury and do nothing to make it worse.
- physical contact is what the child wants, and the kind of contact between you is appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- you do your best to stay in sight of other adults.

If a child needs a doctor or hospital, call the emergency services.

It is nearly always best to stay on site with them and wait for the ambulance. You should only take the risk of bringing in the child yourself if the emergency services ask you to do so because of exceptional circumstances.

iii. What to do if a child is unattended or lost

- you know about any injury and do nothing to make it worse.

If you see a child who seems unattended or who is definitely lost, introduce yourself, find out their name, and try to establish whom they are with and where they last saw them. Ask them to come

with you to the reception point /main entrance/designated meeting place of the site. Remember that the adult(s) will be looking for the child too, so stay within obvious places.

Make sure to keep the child in your sight, and if you have to leave them, only pass them on to someone you can rely upon to look after them.

- If a child is reluctant to come with you, explain that you are going to look for their accompanying adult – but try to keep them in sight while you do so. Don't try to force a child to come with you. If necessary, call for help or stay with the child until they have been reunited with someone that the child recognises and is willing to be with.

## CONTACT WITH UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

Try to avoid situations where you are alone with children, especially anywhere you are unlikely to be seen or heard. This is as much to protect yourself from suspicion as to protect the child.

If you can't avoid being alone with a child, you should take prudent precautions, for example;

- try to move with the child to a place where there are other people; avoid unnecessary physical contact;
- if you do have to touch the child, make sure to get their agreement beforehand, and try not to be over-familiar.
- If whomever the child is with has not been found after a reasonable time, you should notify the Police. You have to judge how long to wait before doing this; it depends on the child and the circumstances. (If the police have been notified, it is important also to let them know if a lost child has been reunited with whoever accompanied them.)
- If you find a child in distress, do your best to comfort and reassure them without compromising their dignity or privacy. Again, it may help to distract them while you take practical steps to help them, but be careful that what you do is openly in their best interests. If you come across a lost child who doesn't speak English, they probably have been accompanied and other visitors may be able to help find whoever that is.

### **Key details if reporting a lost child:**

1. Child's name
2. Child's age
3. Accompanying person's name
4. Child's address or name of school / group
5. Physical description of the child (height, colour of hair, distinctive clothing)
6. Where the child is now
7. Where & when the child was last seen

### **What to do if someone is being violent to a child**

If you come across someone hitting, hurting or violently shouting at a child, you should try to prevent the abuse, if you can do so without unreasonable risk to the child or yourself.

- You have to judge whether it is a fleeting incident, which warrants showing your disapproval or a threat of actual harm that requires someone to intervene.



- You also have to judge whether intervening is likely to stop the abuse or to inflame the situation. This can be even more complicated if one child is being abused by another.
- So long as you are mindful of the child's welfare, you are entitled to intervene by:
  - asking or telling the perpetrator to stop.
  - explaining that such behaviour is not acceptable on Tecserv UK Limited properties/sites.
  - restraining a child from abusing another.
  - saying that you will report the incident – as a matter of fact, not a threat. summoning help.
  - notifying the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) or the police.
  - asking the perpetrator to leave the property.
- While you have to be firm, it can only help if you are calm and un-antagonistic. Bear in mind that you are probably dealing with an upset or angry adult as well as a distressed child. Never use or threaten physical force as this could inflame the situation and result in further violence.
- If you have any doubt about what to do, consult one of the Designated Officers or one of the following:
  - 24 hour NSPCC Protection Helpline 0808 8005000
  - Police Service
  - the local Social Services, there is normally a duty social worker available at all times.
- If you are worried about any incident, you should record the details and report it to a Designated Officer.

The same principles apply if there is a 'flasher' on site or someone behaving suspiciously towards children.

## 8. If you suspect a colleague or receive an allegation of child abuse;

We hope that you will never encounter any situation of child abuse while you are with Tecserv UK Limited. However, you must know what to do if you discover an incident of abuse, suspect a colleague of abuse or receive an allegation of abuse.

*If you suspect a colleague:*

It is your duty to report your suspicions to the Tecserv UK Limited's Designated Officer. It is not your responsibility to investigate your suspicions. Nor should you concern yourself with looking for evidence of abuse. This requires expertise you are not expected to have; your role is to respond appropriately.

If an allegation is made to you about a colleague:

It is not your responsibility to investigate any allegation. Nor should you concern yourself with looking for evidence of abuse. This requires expertise you are not expected to have. Your role is to respond appropriately and to report what you have been told to the Tecserv UK Limited's designated officer.



If a child makes a disclosure to you about abuse not involving Tecserv UK Limited's staff:

It is not your responsibility to investigate any disclosure. Nor should you concern yourself with looking for evidence of abuse. This requires expertise you are not expected to have. Your role is to respond appropriately and to report what you have been told to the NSPCC, Police or the local social services. You should also inform the Tecserv UK Limited's Designated Officer.

If a disclosure or allegation is being made to you:

- i. Listen carefully and sensitively, stay calm, and offer understanding and reassurance.
- ii. Check your understanding of the situation, without being investigative.
- iii. Record what you have been told.
- iv. Alert a senior colleague at the earliest opportunity within 24 hours.

### **Guidance on responding to a disclosure of abuse:**

#### **DO YOUR BEST TO**

- Stay calm
- Receive the information
- Listen, reassure
- Record the information
- Report to an appropriate colleague
- Accept your own feelings and consider getting support for yourself

#### **DO NOT**

- Probe in an investigative way or ask leading questions.
- Make a child repeat the story unnecessarily.
- Promise confidentiality

If you become suspicious about the behaviour of a colleague or someone associated with Tecserv UK Limited where children are concerned, steps 2, 3 and 4 above also apply.

If you think the situation is sufficiently serious and urgent, contact a Designated Officer or, failing that the Police.

Don't let anxiety that you might have jumped to a wrong conclusion deter you from reporting any genuine worries that you have. Procedures put in place will be used to follow up any such report, and we will not hold it against you should a well-intentioned but mistaken report be made.

If you feel you need expert support, because you come across child abuse while working with us, we recommend that you discuss it with the Tecserv UK Limited's Designated Officer.

#### **9. If an allegation of abuse is made against you**

If an allegation is made directly to you, you should advise the Tecserv UK Limited's Designated Officer even if you think it is trivial. If we receive an allegation against you, we will inform you. All allegations of misconduct will be subject to standard Tecserv UK Limited disciplinary procedures.

You are entitled to the moral and practical support of your line manager, the personnel unit and senior colleagues if an unwarranted allegation of misconduct is made against you. As long as your behaviour is in line with the policy and these guidelines, we cannot envisage any allegation of misconduct being justified.

Any allegation will be scrupulously investigated, with due regard for confidentiality. In itself this should not be interpreted as indicating culpability. It is part of our duty to protect people working with us from any unfounded allegation.

If your behaviour contravenes this policy and guidelines, it could be treated as gross misconduct.

If you have concerns about how an allegation against yourself or anyone else is being dealt with, you should inform a colleague at the most senior level you think appropriate.

## SUPPORTING THE POLICY

### **Confidentiality**

We recognise that it is important for us all to feel that any information about alleged or actual child abuse will only be disclosed where it is in the best interests of the child to do so. No such disclosure will be made without careful consultation.

### **The role of the Designated Officer**

Their role is twofold: to serve as a centre for information and guidance on the policy and to support managers and staff in dealing with any suggestion of misconduct or need for expert advice.

### **Disseminating information about this policy**

Everyone working or applying to work for Tecserv UK Limited is to be made aware of our policy for children's welfare. Furthermore, these guidelines are being issued to all staff and other people who are likely to have contact with children as part of their work with us. Copies of the policy and guidelines are available from Tecserv UK Limited, Apex House, 1 Mansfield Road, Underwood, Nottinghamshire, NG16 5FF.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Grahame Tilley".

Grahame Tilley

CEO

1st June 2021