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# Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

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## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 YMCA Norfolk is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children, young people and families who use or are connected to our services. The organisation fully recognises the contribution it can make to protecting children from harm and supporting and promoting the welfare of all children. Our policies and approaches to safeguarding will cover prevention, protection, and support.
- 1.2 YMCA Norfolk is committed to working within The Norfolk Threshold Guide, and the policies and procedures of Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Partnership (herein after referred to as NSCP).
- 1.3 The policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:
- Children Act 1989
  - United Convention of the rights of the Child 1991
  - Data protection Act 1998
  - Human Rights Act 1998
  - Sexual Offences Act 2003
  - Children Act 2004
  - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
  - Children and Families Act 2014
  - Working together to Safeguard Children 2018
  - Keeping Children Safe in Education Act 2022
- 1.4 The policy should be read in-conjunction with our associated policies and procedures listed in section 5.
- 1.5 This policy covers all services in YMCA Norfolk, including our Housing services, Youth and Community services, Families Team services, nursery, and the E Learning Service.

## 2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of our safeguarding policy is to ensure every child and young person is safe and protected from harm. This means we will always work to:
- Protect children from maltreatment
  - Prevent impairment of children's health and development
  - Ensure that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
  - Take action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

- 2.2 This policy will give clear direction to staff, volunteers and parents about the expected behaviour and our legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people at our organisation.

### 3. SCOPE

- 3.1 This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors, or any person delivering services for YMCA Norfolk at all times.
- 3.2 This policy applies to all those who use or are connected to our services.
- 3.3 A child or young person is someone under the age of 18 years old. We refer to them as Child or Children throughout the policy.
- 3.4 The policy is intended to deal with the definitions of abuse as set out in the Working Together 2018 and listed in section 4 of the policy.

### 4. DEFINITIONS

#### Working Together to Safeguard Children (DoE, 2018), Definitions

- 4.1 **A child** is someone under the age of 18 years old.

- 4.2 **Working Together** defines abuse as:

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g., via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, another child, or children.

- 4.3 **Physical Abuse**

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

- 4.4 **Emotional Abuse**

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or undervalued in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or making fun of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying) causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child although it may occur alone.

- 4.5 **Sexual Abuse**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is

happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, or touching outside of the clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encourage children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

#### 4.6 **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

#### 4.7 **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

#### 4.8 **Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including use of adequate care givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

#### 4.9 **Child Protection**

Part of safeguarding and promotion welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

### **Further Definitions we recognise:**

#### 4.10 **Domestic Violence**

The act of or witnessing of violence in the home. Domestic Violence is ‘any incident or pattern of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those who have been intimate partners, regardless of gender or sexuality.’ Even though the young person

may not be physically harmed themselves, witnessing the ill treatment of another can have a significant impact on their welfare. Up to 75% of Child Protection cases involve an element of domestic violence.

#### 4.11 Peer on Peer Abuse

Young people are also vulnerable to physical, sexual, and emotional abuse by their peers or siblings. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyberbullying), gender-based violence, sexual assault and so-called 'initiation ceremonies.' Abuse perpetrated by young people and children can be just as harmful as that perpetrated by an adult, and such abuse must always be taken seriously.

#### 4.12 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Mutilation of the female genitalia as a 'rite of passage' FGM, also known as female circumcision, is when parts or all of the external female genitalia are removed or injured for no medical reason. Practiced widely across Africa, parts of the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Europe, and America, this process is believed to curb a woman's sexual urges to allow her to remain pure for her husband, amongst other reasons. There is a requirement to report any suspicions to the police where they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under eighteen or could potentially happen. Further guidance and reporting procedures can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information>

#### 4.13 Financial Abuse

Usually associated with the misuse of money, valuables or property, unauthorised withdrawals from a young person's account, theft, fraud, exploitation are all examples of financial abuse. We recognise that young people and children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges; there may be an assumption that any mood change, or injury relates to the disability, and the idea of abuse is dismissed too readily. Young people with SEN are also much more likely to suffer social exclusion and tend to show a disproportionate response to bullying. Additionally, those with communication difficulties may not be able to express themselves well enough to explain any distress. Any concerns about potential abuse or suicidality must be taken very seriously.

4.14 The following categories apply to young people and children of any age, and any concerns must be passed to a Designated Safeguarding lead:

#### 4.15 Forced Marriage

Forcing an individual to marry against their will A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence, and sexual violence) or emotional (for example, when someone is made to feel like they are bringing shame on their family). Honour-Based Abuse (or Violence) Physical or verbal abuse directed at a (usually female) member of the family or community who has been judged to have brought shame upon the other members. This can be in relation to the above categories; where an individual has refused to participate in a marriage or 'cutting' ceremony but can also be punishment for perceived transgressions such as neglecting religious duties or conforming too much to Western standards.

## 4.16 Radicalisation

Radicalisation is a process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals and aspirations that

1. reject or undermine the status quo or
2. reject and/or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice.

## 4.17 Prevent

PREVENT Agenda is one of four elements of CONTEST, the Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The Prevent duty guidance is also aimed at reducing the risk of radicalisation of vulnerable people by other groups, including some Animal Rights Groups and Far Right groups. Radicalisation is the process by which individuals come to support terrorism or violent extremism. Young people and vulnerable groups are particularly targeted by groups who may promote violent extremist activity. There is no typical profile for a person likely to become involved in extremism, or when they move to adopt violence in support of their particular ideology. Any concerns that a young person or child is becoming radicalised and involved in an organisation which could ultimately harm the young person and the community should be recorded as per Procedure 06 - Safeguarding Concerns Procedure.

## 5. REFERENCES

5.1 The following references are associated with this policy:

- Norfolk Threshold
- Norfolk County Council Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Procedures
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused? 2018 (DOE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (DOE)
- The Children Act 1989/2004
- Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Signs of Safety Assessment and Planning Form (NSCP)
- Policy 02 - Data Protection Policy
- Policy 09 - Health and Safety Policy
- Policy 12 - Sudden Death Policy
- Policy 19 - Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- Policy 20 - Complaints and Compliments Policy
- Policy 22 - Lone Working Policy
- Policy 36 - Client Confidentiality Policy
- Policy 38 - Protection of Non-Vulnerable Adults Policy
- Policy 39 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy
- Policy 52 - Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Policy 55 - Professional Boundaries Policy
- Policy 61 - Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Policy 64 - Training and Development Policy
- Policy 65 - Supervision Policy
- Policy 68 - Whistle-blowing Policy
- Procedure 03 - Lone Working Procedure

## 6. RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 YMCA Norfolk have a safeguarding team as follows:

- Organisational Lead – Chief Executive Officer, Head of Housing and Head of Communities
- Safeguarding Lead for Housing – Housing Managers
- Safeguarding Lead for Families Team – Community Services Manager
- Safeguarding lead for Youth and Community – Assistant Community Manager (Partnerships)
- Safeguarding Leads for Muddy Puddles Nursery Aylsham Road – Nursery Manager and Nursery Deputy Manager
- Safeguarding lead for E learning – E learning Service Manager
- Safeguarding appointed trustee

6.2 The responsible staff and designated safeguarding leads are listed in Document 03 - YMCA Norfolk Responsible Staff and Designated Safeguarding Leads with their contact information.

6.3 Further details around the responsibilities and actions of the relevant staff members can be found in the Safeguarding Concerns Procedure.

## 7. POLICY DETAILS

### Our Ethos

- 7.1 YMCA Norfolk will establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, are listened to and are safe. Children will be able to talk freely to any member of staff, volunteer, or external agencies if they are worried or concerned about something.
- 7.2 YMCA Norfolk will deliver its safeguarding functions from an asset-based approach using the 'Signs of Safety' practice model (Turnell, 2012). We will recognise and promote the strengths, contribution and autonomy of all children, young people, and families.
- 7.3 YMCA Norfolk as an organisation is committed to working with children in a Trauma Informed Way
- 7.4 All staff, volunteers or contractors through training and induction, will know how to recognise a disclosure from a child and how to respond to this. We will not make any promises to any child to 'keep secrets.' Every child will know what the adult will do with whatever they have been told.
- 7.5 We will provide information, support and opportunities that will equip children young people and families with the skills they need to stay safe (Empowerment).
- 7.6 At all times we will work in partnership and try to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers, and colleagues from partner agencies.
- 7.7 At all times concerns will be recorded in the Safeguarding Concerns area on INFORM. All information will be treated confidentially and stored in a secure drive. Information will be shared on a 'need to know basis's for the protection and best interests of the child, young person, or family.
- 7.8 We will utilise the Norfolk Threshold Guide as a tool to ascertain the concern raised and assess the requirement to make a referral to CADs or the most suitable option to reduce the risk presented at the time.

## Induction and Training

- 7.9 On commencing employment with the YMCA every member of staff will undertake YMCA Norfolk's safeguarding and professional boundaries training. This training is supplemented with access to the Safeguarding toolkit which places all information relating to the policy and procedures for safeguarding in a central place.
- 7.10 Depending on the role a staff member has training will be refreshed as a minimum annually for frontline staff and every 2 years for other staff. This training is mandatory for all staff, volunteers, and trustees.
- 7.11 YMCA Norfolk will ensure all frontline managers are trained as Designated Safeguarding Officers with the NSCP. This training is refreshed every 3 years.

## Safer Staff and Volunteers

- 7.12 All adults who come into contact with children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of children are competent, confident, and safe to do so.
- 7.13 We adhere to the principles of safer recruitment as per our policy and also the guidance from NSCB. We ensure that we:
- Carefully consider the job description and person specification
  - Circulate all vacancies widely
  - Prepare an information pack
  - Ask for a written application form
  - Define our selection criteria
  - Ask for a written declaration with regards to criminal convictions, spent or otherwise
  - Ask applicants whether they have been subject to disciplinary action, allegations to Social Services or Police investigations that did not lead to convictions
  - Ask for identification
  - Conduct interviews with at least two people present
  - Ask for at least two references, one from the last employer
  - Gain enhanced DBS checks where required
  - Organise a comprehensive induction period which includes familiarisation with our safeguarding policy and procedures, and safeguarding training
- 7.14 For the E Learning Service, alongside DBS checks there will also be Quality Teacher Status (QTS) checks carried out. When the organisation becomes registered for Prohibition checks, the organisation will carry out Prohibition checks on potential teachers.
- 7.15 All staff information is recorded on our secure information management system, and this enables us to monitor when DBS checks, other required checks or training needs to be renewed.

- 7.16 Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the wellbeing and very best outcomes for our children and young people. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.
- 7.17 Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur, they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.
- 7.18 We will take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults in our organisation are safe to work with our children. We will ensure that NSCB procedures are followed.

## Local Authority Designated Officer

- 7.19 All adults who come into contact with children will be made aware of the steps that will be taken if an allegation is made. We will seek appropriate advice from the Local Authority Designated Office (herein after referred to as LADO) within 24 hours of an allegation being made.

In any incident requiring LADO opening a case involving **Muddy Puddles Nursery** then at the same time we would contact OFSTED.

- 7.20 YMCAN staff will not investigate these matters unless directed to by LADO. We will seek and work with the advice provided.
- 7.21 The Head of Service or Director will take action to determine the status of the staff member to ensure that the young person and the Staff member are kept safe. This could be suspension of the staff member or removal from role until any process has been completed.
- 7.22 There are sensible steps that every adult should take in their professional conduct with children. These are covered in the following YMCA Norfolk's Policies:
- Policy 55 – Professional Boundaries Policy
  - Policy 61 – Staff Code of Conduct Policy

In addition, we work within NSCP Safer Working Practices Guidance

## Handling Disclosures

- 7.23 All staff are trained to treat a disclosure sensitively and to not be judgemental and will treat a disclosure seriously.
- 7.24 A child may decide to disclose information that may indicate they are suffering abuse or neglect. A child chooses to speak to an adult because they feel they will listen and that they can trust them. The adult needs to listen to what the child has to say and be very careful not to 'lead' the child or influence in any way what they say.
- 7.25 We are clear that the Local Authority and Police must lead in any investigation to any allegation regarding safeguarding.
- 7.26 Child protection and safeguarding referrals should be made to the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) by contacting the service directly with the numbers below:
- Telephone: 0344 800 8021 and ask for the consultation line
  - Out of hours: 0344 800 8020 for Emergency Duty Team

- 7.27 The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (herein after referred to as MASH) should be used in the event of adult safeguarding concerns. A young person who is 18+ will be covered by MASH. Telephone: 0344 800 8020 and ask for MASH.
- 7.28 Staff should consult Procedure 06 - Safeguarding Concerns Procedure for further details on the process for logging concerns on INFORM and taking appropriate action in reporting and responding to them.
- 7.29 If we had concerns about a child's care, and that child was leaving the county and moving to a different local authority area then we would inform the CAD's service of our concerns to reduce the risk to the child.

## **Professional Reporting (Whistleblowing)**

- 7.30 YMCA Norfolk is committed to developing and operating within a positive, open and transparent environment and within this context, a person who 'professionally reports' (also called 'whistleblowing') reveals information to call attention to poor or bad practice that may include abuse or negligence in the workplace.
- 7.31 Being a person who professionally reports is often difficult and whilst staff have an individual responsibility to raise concerns about poor or bad practice, they also have a right to know that their employer will support them if they are acting in good faith. YMCA Norfolk encourages a culture that values good practice and encourages speaking out.
- 7.32 YMCA Norfolk will ensure that staff who may raise concerns are:
- Supported and reassured when information is shared
  - Provided with ongoing support during any investigation that may follow
  - Supplied with information about external sources of support
  - Given open support in the workplace if necessary, and,
  - Not treated in ways that might be regarded as a punishment
- 7.33 Further details on the process of Whistleblowing can be found in Policy 68 - Whistleblowing Policy

## **8. MONITORING & EVALUATION**

- 8.1 YMCA Norfolk is a learning organisation and will review cases, including Serious Case Reviews, and implement measures where needed to continually improve our approach to safeguarding. Regular meetings are undertaken by safeguarding leads to review and quality assure our own processes to ensure compliance with policy and procedure.
- 8.2 Safeguarding concerns are also reviewed in monthly supervision with staff.
- 8.3 YMCA Norfolk will hold a log of all safeguarding concerns raised across the organisation on INFORM and continue to monitor numbers and trends of the safeguarding issues we are responding to
- 8.4 A Safeguarding report is presented to the Performance and Monitoring Committee and Board of Trustees every quarter providing information on the safeguarding issues being dealt within the organisation.

- 8.5 A summary of our safeguarding is submitted to each Board meeting which is held quarterly. The Board has appointed a trustee as a safeguarding lead who is listed in the YMCA Norfolk Responsible Staff and Designated Safeguarding Leads (Document 03) of relevant staff. Our safeguarding policies are reviewed every 3 years, or as required following a change in legislation or incident review.
- 8.6 YMCA Norfolk will review this policy in line with our organisational review schedule or sooner in conjunction with changes in local and national legislative or policy guidance.

## 9. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

9.1 The following document is associated with this policy:

- Procedure 06 - Safeguarding Concerns Procedure
- Document 03 - YMCA Norfolk Responsible Staff and Designated Safeguarding Leads