

The Alice Cross Centre

Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy

Version 1

Date 28 September 2023

**Policy Revisions Record**

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| Version | Date  | Review due  | Version | Date  | Review due  |
|  1 |  28 September 2023 |  September 2024 |  |   |   |
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| **Role** | **Name** | **Email** |
| Safeguarding Leads | Jackie O’BrienCentre Manager | j.obrien@thealicecross.co.uk |

**Worried that a child is a risk? If you think it, report it.**

If you are concerned about the safety of a child or young person and want to speak to someone, or if you are a child or young person worried about your own safety, you can contact any of the following agencies for support:

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| **MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)**Tel 0345 155 1071 email mashsecure@devon.gov.uk | **LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)**Tel 01392 384964email childsc.localauthoritydesignatedofficersecure-mailbox@devon.gov.uk |
| **NSPCC**Website <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/> Tel 0808 800 5000 | **Childline**Website <https://www.childline.org.uk> Tel 0800 1111 |
| **If you think a child or young person is at immediate risk, contact the police on 999** |

**Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

1. **Safeguarding statement**

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. The Alice Cross Centre recognises our responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children and young people are respected, valued, and always feel safe.

1. **Terminology**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children/young people is defined as:

* protecting children/young people from maltreatment,
* preventing impairment of children/young people's mental and physical health or development,
* ensuring that children/young people grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
* taking action to enable all children/young people to have the best outcomes.

**Child Protection** is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children/young people who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Staff/Volunteer** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the organisation, full or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity, including self-employed individuals.

**Child** includes everyone under the age of 18 or 25 if a care leaver.

**Parents** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example stepparents, foster carers, adoptive parents and LA corporate parents.

1. **Legal framework**

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children/young people, namely:

* Children’s Act 1989
* United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
* Data Protection Act 1998 and subsequent data protection guidance
* Human Rights Act 1998
* Sexual Offences Act 2003
* Children’s Act 2004
* The Mental Capacity Act (2005)
* Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
* Protection of Freedom Act 2012
* Children and Families Act 2014
* The Care Act (2014)
* The Care Act (2014) Care and Support Statutory Guidance (specifically the safeguarding section of this)
* Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0 to 25 years – Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children/young people who have special educational needs or disabilities; HM Government (2014)
* Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children/young people, young people, parents and carers; HM Government (2015)
* Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015
* Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; HM Government (2015)
* General Data Protection Regulations (European Union) (2017)
1. **The purpose of the policy:**
* To demonstrate our commitment to safeguarding and child protection to children/young people, parents, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders. We recognise that all staff and volunteers have a duty to protect children/young people from harm and have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child/young person is at risk of harm.
* To provide all staff and volunteers with guidance on the procedures they should adopt if they suspect a child/young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of experiencing, harm. Including (by Safeguarding Leads and supporting agencies) consideration to the use of appropriate assessments and resources.
* To provide clarity and expectations on professional behaviours and ensure all staff and volunteers have been checked as to their suitability, including verification of their identity, qualifications, and a satisfactory DBS check, and that appropriate records are maintained.

**We recognise that:**

The welfare of the child/young person is paramount:

* All children/young people, regardless of age ability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.
* Some children/young people are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
* Working in partnership with children/young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people’s welfare.

**We will seek to safeguard children/young people/young people by:**

* Appointing a Safeguarding Leads for children/young people.
* Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
* Sharing information about safeguarding and child protection measures with staff, volunteers, parents and children/young people and other stakeholders.
* Sharing concerns with other agencies who need to know and involving parents and children/young people appropriately.
* Providing effective support and training for staff and volunteers.
* Drawing on support from other agencies to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers.
* Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for children/young people and staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
* Reviewing our policy and Code of Practice annually.
1. **Responsibilities of the Safeguarding Leads**
* When there are concerns about the welfare of any child/young person, staff and volunteers are expected to share those concerns with the Safeguarding Leads.
* The Safeguarding Leads are responsible for:
	+ Monitoring and recording concerns.
	+ Seeking advice and support from other agencies without delay.
	+ Liaison with staff and volunteers, parents (where appropriate) and other agencies.
	+ Arranging appropriate child protection training for staff and ensuring all necessary checks are in place.
	+ Ensuring this policy is implemented; communicated to staff and volunteers, parents and other stakeholders; and reviewed annually.

## **Our Code of Practice**

* Inappropriate physical contact with children/young people must be avoided.
* It is not good practice to take children/young people alone in a car on journeys, however short, unless with the prior consent of the child/young person’s parent or carer, and then only in exceptional circumstances.
* Do not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child/young person, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted. Inappropriate remarks include innuendo, swearing, and discussing their or your own intimate relationships.
* Other than in exceptional circumstances, do not communicate directly with children/young people by email or text messages and only then with the prior consent of the child/young person’s parent or guardian. If electronic communication is necessary, best practice would be to communicate directly with parents or guardians.
* Never communicate with children/young people via Twitter, Facebook or other social media.
* Do not engage in behaviour which could be construed as ‘grooming’ a child/young person (for example giving a child/young person money, presents or favours or talking or behaving in an inappropriate or unprofessional manner towards children/young people).
* Do take a disclosure of abuse from a child/young person seriously. It is important not to deter children/young people from making a ‘disclosure’ of abuse through fear of not being believed, and to listen to what they have to say. Guidance on responding to an allegation of abuse is set out in point 7 of this document. If the allegation gives rise to a child protection concern it is important to follow the procedure for reporting such concerns, and not to attempt to investigate the concern yourself.
* Remember that those who abuse children/young people can be of any age (even other children/young people), gender, ethnic background or class, and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions about people to prevent appropriate action taking place.
* Good practice includes valuing and respecting children/young people as individuals, and the adult modelling of appropriate conduct - which will always exclude bullying, shouting, racism, sectarianism or sexism.

## **Guidance for staff and Volunteers on responding to a child/young person making a disclosure:**

## Stay calm.

* Listen carefully to what is said and show that you are taking it seriously.
* Find an appropriate and early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
* Tell the child/young person that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
* Allow the child to continue at their own pace.
* Ask questions for clarification only and avoid questions that suggest a particular answer.
* Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
* Tell them what you will do next, and with whom the information will be shared.
* Make no judgement about what you have heard.
* Record in writing what was said, using the child’s own words as soon as possible – include the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.
* Remember that whilst you may have been the first person encountering an allegation of abuse it is not your responsibility to decide whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies.
1. **How to report your concerns**
* Staff and volunteers could have their suspicion or concern raised in several ways, the most likely of which are:
* The conduct of another member of staff or adult.
* A disclosure from a child/young person.
* Bruising or evidence of physical hurt.
* Unusual behaviour by a child.
* Any concerns should be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Lead, who should seek advice and support from other agencies without delay.
* If a child in your care has suffered a serious injury as a result of abuse, seek medical attention immediately and then inform.
1. **Urgent enquiries**
* If you believe that urgent action is required, contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Tel 0345 155 1071 and give as much information as you can.
* Your information will be passed immediately to a manager who will decide the action needed and will normally respond to you within one hour.
* You must follow up your telephone call by sending a [completed referral form](https://www.dcfp.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/multi-agency-safeguarding-hub-in-devon/) to MASH within 48 hours.
* **If you think a child or young person is at immediate risk, contact the police on 999.**
1. **Further guidance and support**
* [Devon Education Services](https://www.devon.gov.uk/support-schools-settings/safeguarding/guidance-policy-and-tools-2/) publish a series of [One Minute Guides](https://www.devon.gov.uk/support-schools-settings/safeguarding/guidance-policy-and-tools-2/safeguarding-one-minute-guides/) that cover a wide range of pertinent topics and provide a useful resource for staff and volunteers.
* Advice and support can also be accessed via the [NSPCC website](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection) or free 24-hour Child Protection Helpline Tel **0808 800 5000.**

This policy is to be reviewed annually.

Signed by a Trustee:

Signature: 

Name: SUE HALFYARD Date: 2 October 2023