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# FRODSHAM YOUTH ASSOCIATION

## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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## **Introduction**

Frodsham Youth Association (FYA) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation working with young people aged 8 – 19 from Frodsham and the surrounding areas. We exist to meet the needs of local young people, empowering and inspiring them to achieve their aspirations and lead fulfilling lives. We provide a safe and inclusive environment for all young people, regardless of background.

FYA is committed to the welfare and safeguarding of young people across all organisation activity. It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse and discrimination, as far as reasonably practicable, while attending FYA sessions and events.

## **Safeguarding Contacts**

A full list of safeguarding contacts are attached to this policy.

### **Designated Safeguarding Officer**

The Trustees of FYA are ultimately responsible for safeguarding and the implementation of this policy and a Trustee will be appointed to oversee this area. All safeguarding concerns and details of action taken must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

### **Safeguarding Lead & Deputy Safeguarding Lead**

The Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead will be the Lead Youth Worker and another member of the youth work team who will oversee the implementation of this policy on a day to day basis.

### **Children's Social Care Contacts**

Any concerns about a young person's welfare, including concerns that they may be being abused or neglected should be called in to Children's Social Care and/or the Police. The Designated Safeguarding Officer should then be notified.

## **Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse**

### **Key principles**

As outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015, there are two key principles that underpin effective safeguarding arrangements:

1. safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part; and
2. a child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

### **Signs and symptoms of abuse**

It is important that all staff and volunteers understand the different forms of abuse and the signs and symptoms. There is an expectation that all staff and volunteers working with young people will undertake training to help them identify and respond to signs of abuse. The following definitions are taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015, with the potential signs and symptoms from the NSPCC.

## Abuse

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, or another child or children.

Children experiencing abuse may display unusual behaviour. This could include a sudden change in behaviour; becoming withdrawn, anxious, clingy, depressed or aggressive; risk taking; missing school; soiling clothes; using drugs or alcohol; or self-harming or having suicidal thoughts.

## 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 also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Physical symptoms of abuse could include bruises; burns or scalds; bite marks; fractures or broken bones and other injuries or health problems such as scarring; effects of poisoning such as vomiting, drowsiness or seizures; or respiratory problems from drowning, suffocation or poisoning. All children have accidents, trips and falls – but if a child often has injuries, there is a pattern of injury or the explanation doesn't match the injury, this could be a cause for concern.

## 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 valued only insofar 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 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 frequently to 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, though it may occur alone.

There may not be obvious physical symptoms of emotional abuse but there may be changes in actions or emotions. As emotional changes are a normal part of growing up, it can be very difficult to tell if a child is being emotionally abused. Potential indicators could include talking about, knowing about or acting in a way that is unusual for their age; struggling to control emotions or having extreme outburst; seeming isolated from their parents; or lacking social skills or having few, if any friends.

## 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 and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging 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.

Children who are sexually abused may stay away from certain people; avoiding being alone with family members or friends or seeming frightened of a person and reluctant to socialise with them. They may display sexual behaviour that's inappropriate for their age; be engaging in sexual activity; being promiscuous; or using sexual language and knowing information that you wouldn't expect them to. Physical symptoms could include anal or vaginal soreness; or a sexually transmitted infection or pregnancy.

### 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.

Warning signs of sexual exploitation can be easily mistaken for 'normal' teenage behaviour. Young people may go missing from home, care or education; be involved in abuse relationships and be intimidated by or fearful of certain people and situations; spend time with older people, antisocial groups or other vulnerable peers; associate with other young people involved in sexual exploitation; get involved in gangs; have older boyfriends or girlfriends; spend time at places that cause concern such as hotels or brothels; not be aware of their surroundings because they have been moved around the country; be involved in petty crime such as shoplifting; have unexplained physical injuries; have changed physical appearance, e.g. lost weight.

### Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. 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 the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect can be difficult to identify making it hard to take early action. Neglected children may have poor appearance and hygiene; appearing dirty or smelly, having unwashed clothes, inadequate clothing or seeming hungry. They may have health and development problems including untreated injuries, medical or dental issues; experience repeated accidental injuries from a lack of supervision; not have access to appropriate medication; poor muscle tone or prominent joints; skin sore, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm; thin or swollen tummy; being underweight or not

achieving other developmental milestones; have poor language, communication or social skills. They may have housing and family issues including living in an unstable or hazardous home environment; being left alone for long periods or taking on a caring role for other family members.

**These definitions and indicators are not meant to be definitive but only to serve as a guide to assist you and so that you can seek further advice.**

It is important too, to remember that many children and young people may exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and that the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as a death or the birth of a new baby in their family, relationship problems between their parents/carers etc. In assessing whether indicators are related to abuse or not, the authorities will always want to understand them in relation to the child's development and context.

## **Becoming aware of safeguarding concerns**

Staff and volunteers working with young people may become aware of safeguarding concerns about a young person through a number of channels, including an anonymous report; third party information; a direct report from a young person; concerns about a child's appearance or a report about a worker's behaviour towards a child, for example through a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) referral.

## **What to do if you are concerned about a child**

Effective safeguarding systems must be child centred. Problems can arise in safeguarding systems when practitioners in agencies lose sight of the needs and views of the children or place the interests of adults ahead of the needs of children. Everyone working with children and families must seek the voice of the child and reflect and respond to it in all aspects of work. This is rooted in legislation and good practice.

It is important that all concerns and allegations should be treated seriously. If you have any concerns about a child's welfare and believe they are suffering or likely to suffer harm, you must take action. Don't assume that someone else will pass on information which you think may be critical to keeping a child safe.

### **Stage one**

- Initially talk to the child about what you are observing. It's okay to ask questions but avoid leading questions.
- Listen carefully and gather as much information as possible.
- Remember it is not your responsibility to investigate the concern, but to act on it.
- Explain to the child or young person your responsibility to take action if what they tell you suggests they or another child are at risk of harm.
- Notify the Named person for Safeguarding
- Record the information you have as soon as possible. The person receiving the allegation or who has the concern should be the individual who completes the record and ensure this is signed and dated.
- Remember confidentiality and safe storage of information

### **Stage two**

- The Safeguarding Lead should take immediate action if there is any indication that a child has been abused or likely to be abused.
- In such circumstances, the Named person should contact police/Children's Social Care Integrated Access & Referral Team (i-ART). IF a referral is made direct to IART this should be followed up in 24 hours to ascertain the outcome.
- Parents and Carers need to be told about any referral to Children's Social Care unless to do so would put the child at greater risk. This should be discussed with the police and/or i-ART at the time of the referral.

## **Action statement**

Always be proactive. Recognise the signs and symptoms. If you suspect, or if you are informed that a young person is experiencing abuse NEVER try to investigate further. Do not pass judgement on what is said. Try to reassure the child or young person. Do not ask questions about what you might suspect. Make it clear that you are available to listen and can offer support but that you MUST pass on the information. Remember...do not try to sort it out yourself.

## **Safer recruitment**

FYA is committed to safeguarding and protecting children and this is reflected in our recruitment process; to reduce the risk from individuals who pose a risk to children and young people. This includes:

- A reference to our safeguarding commitment in job advertisements.
- Conducting a face to face interview with prepared questions.
- A written question about any criminal convictions, cautions or other legal restrictions on their working with children or any pending cases that could affect their suitability to work with children.
- Checking identity by requiring photographic ID.
- Seeking an explanation for any gaps in employment or educational history.
- Checking for evidence of any stated qualifications.
- Applying for a DBS check for all volunteers who have unsupervised contact with children.
- Checking references provided with specific questions about their skills and suitability to work with children.
- If recruiting from abroad, taking up additional references and a "fit persons" sought where available if a DBS is not.

## **Allegations against staff and volunteers**

### **Criteria**

This procedure should be applied when there is such an allegation or concern that a person who works with children has: behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child; possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children. These behaviours should be considered within the context of the four categories of abuse (i.e. physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect). These include concerns relating to inappropriate relationships between members of staff and children or young people.

If concerns arise about the person's behaviour to her/his own children, the police and/or children's social care must consider informing the employer / organisation in order to assess whether there

may be implications for children with whom the person has contact at work / in the organisation, in which case this procedure will apply.

Allegations of historical abuse should be responded to in the same way as contemporary concerns. In such cases, it is important to find out whether the person against whom the allegation is made is still working with children and if so, to inform the person's current employer or voluntary organisation or refer their family for assessment.

## **Procedure**

An allegation against a member of staff may arise from a number of sources (e.g. a report from a child, a concern raised by another adult in the organisation, or a complaint by a parent). It may also arise in the context of the member of staff and their life outside work or at home. If an allegation or concern is reported to you, you should treat the matter seriously and keep an open mind. You should not investigate or ask leading questions; make assumptions or offer alternative explanations; or promise confidentiality – although you can give assurance that information will only be shared on a need to know basis.

You should make a written record of the information, where possible using the words of the child or adult making the allegation, and include the time, date and place of the incident(s), people present and what was said. This written record should be signed and dated, then immediately reported to the Senior Manager. If the Senior Manager is absent, or the subject of the allegation, the report should be made to the Deputy Manager.

## **Senior Manager**

It is the responsibility of the Senior Manager (as listed in the Safeguarding Contacts attached to this policy) to ensure FYA deals with allegations in accordance with the Cheshire West and Chester LSCB Allegations Management procedure; resolve any inter-agency issues; and liaise with the LSCB in relation to the allegation.

## **Action by the Designated Senior Manager**

When informed of a concern or allegation, the designated senior manager should not investigate the matter or interview the member of staff, child concerned or potential witnesses. They should obtain the written report of the concern or allegation from the person who received it; approve and date the written details; record information about times, dates and location of the incident(s) and names of potential witnesses; and determine whether a referral to Children's Social Care is required. All discussions and decisions should be recorded.

The allegation should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in order to discuss the decision within one working day. Referrals should not be delayed in order to gather information and a failure to report an allegation or concern in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter. If an allegation requires immediate attention, i.e. the perpetrator could present an immediate risk of harm and they have their own children, or the allegation relates to foster carers, and is outside of office hours, the Emergency duty team or out of hours should be notified along with the police.

LADO will advise as to whether parents of the children involved should be informed and how much information should be disclosed to the accused person. The accused member of staff should be treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed and the process involved; be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation and the implications



for any disciplinary or related process; and if suspended, be kept up to date about events in the workplace.

## **Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. Apart from keeping the child, parents and accused person (where this would not place the child at further risk) up to date with progress of the case, information should be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to protect children, facilitate enquiries, manage related disciplinary or suitability processes.

## **Managing and supervision of staff and volunteers**

All staff and volunteers at FYA will be appointed a line manager who is responsible for conducting regular supervision meetings appropriate depending on the frequency and number of hours worked. The Lead Youth Worker will receive monthly supervision meetings. Staff regularly working over 5 hours a week will receive supervision meetings every 6 – 12 weeks. All other staff can request a supervision meeting at any time and one will be arranged where a need is identified. It is recognised that some staff and volunteers work on a more casual basis, so the frequency of these may vary in line with hours worked and this will be agreed on an individual basis.

In addition to formal supervision meetings, session evaluation forms will be completed after each session which is an opportunity for staff and volunteers to highlight any concerns and decide whether action is needed. These will be sent to and reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

## **Recording and managing confidential information**

The form which should be filled out to record concerns or allegations of abuse, harm or neglect is attached to this policy. The information collected in these forms is sensitive and confidential and must be treated as such. This is also true of the membership forms which are collected from young people. These will be stored in a locked file, in a locked cabinet on site at FYA by the Safeguarding Lead. Where it is necessary to scan any documentation and send electronically, as in the case of concerns and allegations where immediate review is required, this must be sent and stored securely.

Children and young people have the right to confidentiality unless they are considered to be at risk of harm. The general principle is that information will only be shared with the consent of the subject of the information. However, there are circumstances when sharing confidential information without consent can be justified in the public interest, for example seeking consent would be inappropriate or unsafe.

Always follow the seven golden rules to sharing information as set out in Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services (March 2015):

1. Remember that the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.

2. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice from other practitioners if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
4. Share with informed consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is good reason to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be certain of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.
5. Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles).
7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

Each situation should be considered on a case-by-case basis. If you continue to have concerns about whether to share information or not, seek advice from your supervisor, manager, nominated person within your organisation or area, or from a professional body.

## **Walking home alone**

Youth club allows young people to walk home after youth club only if a parent has signed the bottom part of the membership form to take parental responsibility for their child once they leave the club. If in doubt the staff always contact a parent to confirm. Also in winter during the darker nights, youth club advise junior members' parents to pick up and not allow their child to walk home.

## **Children in Care at youth club**

Young children (below 18 years of age) who want to attend and become a youth club member must communicate this prior to attending youth club. Youth Club requires a minimum 5 working days prior notification and be addressed to the lead youth worker. This communication must be accompanied with a copy of a suitable risk assessment. This communication must also come from a senior figure within the care home - and a staff member of the care home must be present in the car park in the eventuality of an issue arising.

## **Reviewing and disseminating policies**

### **Accessing the policy**

This policy will be posted on the notice board in FYA and listed on the FYA website.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the board of Trustees. While day to day implementation of this policy will be carried out by the staff and volunteers at FYA, ultimate responsibility for its implementation rests with the Trustees.

## **Safeguarding Contact Details**

### **Designated Safeguarding Officer**

Sara Wakefield, Trustee

Phone:            Email: [admin@frodshamyouthclub.co.uk](mailto:admin@frodshamyouthclub.co.uk)

### **Safeguarding Lead**

Nicola Mikoleizik, Lead Youth Worker

Phone: 07786 963575      Email: nicolarileychicago@yahoo.com

### **Deputy Safeguarding Lead**

Gaz Saunders, Senior Youth Worker

Phone: 07817 131452      Email: admin@frodshamyouthclub.co.uk

### **Children's Social Care Contacts**

Any concerns about a young person's welfare, including concerns that they may be being abused or neglected should be called in to:

**Integrated Access & Referral Team (i-ART):** 0300 123 7047

Monday to Thursday 8:30 – 17:00 and Friday 8:30 – 16:30

**Emergency Duty Team (EDT):** 01244 977277

Monday to Thursday 16:30 – 8:00, Friday from 16:00 and all weekends/bank holidays

**Alternatively call Cheshire Police:** 0845 458 0000/01244 350000

(999 in an emergency)

### **Designated Senior Manager for allegations against adults**

**Liam Jones – Trustee**

Phone:            Email: admin@frodshamyouthclub.co.uk

### **Deputy Manager for allegations against adults**

**Sara Wakefield - Trustee**

Phone:            Email: admin@frodshamyouthclub.co.uk

### **LADO contact**

**Catherine Appleton – Local Authority Designated Officer**

Phone: 0151 337 4570

# Safeguarding Concerns Recording Sheet

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