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# Safeguarding Children

**Updated September 2021**

Haxby & Wigginton Youth & Community Association is fully committed to safeguarding and the welfare of all children and young people. It recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. HWYCA acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. Paid staff and volunteers will endeavour to work together to encourage the development of an ethos that embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people and adults.

**In implementing this Child Protection Policy HWYCA will:**

- Ensure that all staff and volunteers understand their legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation;
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers understand their responsibility to work to the standards that are detailed in the organisation's Child Protection Procedures and work at all times towards maintaining high standards of practice;
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child or young person, or a worker's conduct towards a child/young person, to the organisation's named person for child protection;
- Ensure that the Named Person and Safeguarding Lead understand their responsibilities to refer any child protection concerns to the statutory child protection agencies (i.e. Police and/or Multi Agency Safeguarding Team);
- Ensure that any procedures relating to the conduct of staff are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner;
- Provide opportunities for all staff and volunteers to develop their skills and knowledge particularly in relation to the welfare and protection of children and young people;
- Ensure that children and young people are able to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues and will have access to the organisation's *Complaints procedure*;
- Ensure that parents/carers are encouraged to be involved in the work of the organisation and, when requested, have access to all guidelines and procedures;
- Endeavour to keep up-to-date with national developments relating to the welfare and protection of children and young people.

## Guidelines and Procedures

### Section 1 – Outline

These procedures have been designed to ensure the welfare and protection of any child and/or young person who uses the services provided by HWYCA. The procedures recognise that child

protection can be a very difficult subject for staff to deal with, to the extent that it is sometimes easier to close your eyes to what is happening or believe that it is somebody else's problem to deal with. HWYCA is committed to the belief that protecting children and young people is everybody's responsibility and therefore the aim here is to provide guidelines that will enable all staff and volunteers to act appropriately to any concerns that arise in respect of a child/young person.

## Section 2 – Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Staff working with children and young people will be required to familiarise themselves with the following definitions: Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Neglect. (See appendix 1) HWYCA will ensure that all staff members paid or unpaid undertake training to gain a basic awareness of child safety and the signs and symptoms of child abuse through a Safeguarding training course. It is recognised that concerns about a child or young person's safety can come to light in the following ways:

- A child or young person alleges that abuse has taken place or that they feel unsafe;
- A third party or anonymous allegation is received;
- A child or young person's appearance, behaviour, play, drawing or statement cause suspicion of abuse and/or neglect;
- A child or young person reports an incident of alleged abuse which occurred some time ago;
- A report is made regarding the serious misconduct of a worker towards a young person.

## Section 3 – A Named Person and Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection

Haxby & Wigginton Youth & Community Association has appointed individuals who are responsible for dealing with any child protection concerns. In their absence, a deputy will always be available for workers to consult with. The Named Person for Child Protection within the Association is **Mairi Taylor-Gibson** and the Safeguarding Lead is **Alysha Smith-Bednall**.

The role and responsibilities of the named person and Safeguarding Lead are:

- To ensure that all staff are aware of what they should do and whom they should go to if they are concerned that a child/young person may be subject to abuse/neglect.
- To ensure that any concerns about a child/young person are acted on, clearly recorded, referred where necessary and followed up to ensure the issues are addressed.
- To record any reported incidents or breach of Child Protection policies and procedures. This will be kept in a secure place and its contents will be confidential.

## Section 4 – Stages to Follow if you are worried about a Child

Haxby & Wigginton Youth & Community Association recognises that it has a duty to act on reports or suspicions of abuse. It also acknowledges that taking action in cases of child abuse is never easy. However, it believes that the safety of the child should override any doubts or hesitations. When worrying changes are observed in a child's or young person's behaviour, physical condition or appearance staff will:

**Stage 1-** Initially talk to a child/young person about what you are observing. It is okay to ask questions, for example: "I've noticed that you don't appear yourself today, is everything okay?" But never use leading questions.

- Listen carefully to what the young person has to say and take it seriously;

- Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a child/young person makes a Disclosure;
- Always explain to children and young people that any information they have given will have to be shared with others. Notify the organisation's Named Person for Child Protection.
- A full written record of what was seen, heard and/or told should be completed as soon as possible after any disclosure; The person who receives the allegation or has the concern should complete the form, and ensure it is signed and dated.. This record should be an accurate factual description of what took place. The Safeguarding Lead can, if appropriate, support the worker during this process but must not complete the report. This report must be available on request to any necessary services who may request a copy.
- Respect confidentiality and file documents securely.

**Stage 2-** The member of staff who had handled a disclosure must contact the Named Person. It is the Named Person who decides if the disclosure should be escalated to the Safeguarding Lead.

**Stage 3-** The Safeguarding Lead will take the steps to contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) of York (see appendix 2 for contact details) if they feel the disclosure should be further escalated or contact North Yorkshire police on 999 if there is an immediate concern for the safety of the young person.

The Safeguarding Lead can also seek advice and clarity about a situation through the NSPCC 24-hour National Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000.

***Any staff member who will need to make a disclosure will need to tell the young person they will be sharing this disclosure.***

## **Section 5 – Managing Allegations made against a member of Staff or Volunteer**

Haxby & Wigginton Youth & Community Association will ensure that any allegations made against a member of staff or volunteer will be dealt with swiftly and in accordance with these procedures:

- The worker must ensure that the child is safe and away from the person against whom the allegation is made.
- The Named Person and Safeguarding Lead should be informed immediately. In the case of an allegation involving the Named Person or Safeguarding Lead, alternative arrangements should be sought to ensure that an independent person deals with the matter. (Note: this could be the Centre Manager, a board member or anyone within the organisation that is in a senior position and believed to be independent of the allegations being made).
- The Safeguarding Lead should contact MASH for advice on how to proceed with the immediate situation. Outside of working hours the Emergency Duty Team (contact number appendix 3) can give advice and/or in the event of an emergency situation arising, the police should be contacted.
- The individual who first received or witnessed the concern should make a full written record of what was seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible in line with regular safeguarding procedures.
- Regardless of whether or not a police and/or social services investigation follows, **HWYCA** will ensure that an internal investigation takes place and consideration is given to the operation of disciplinary procedures. This may involve an immediate suspension and/or ultimate dismissal, dependent on the nature of the incident.

## **Section 6 – Recording and managing confidential information.**

All information that is shared will be recorded and kept in confidentiality. Please see the Confidentiality Policy and Data Protection policy for further information.

Staff members will be given a form for reporting disclosures which will be held in a locked cabinet and shared with only the Named Person and Safeguarding Lead.

## **Appendix 1**

Definitions of Abuse as cited in: Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2006, Chapter 1, P37-38).

**PHYSICAL ABUSE:** 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/carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE:** Is 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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection 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, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**SEXUAL ABUSE:** Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of sexual outline images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**NEGLECT:** Is 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).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## Appendix 2

### MASH Contact information

Contact MASH Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.00pm:

- telephone - **01904 551900**
- email - [mash@york.gov.uk](mailto:mash@york.gov.uk)

Contact MASH Early Help Team to make an early help referral or access advice:

- telephone - **01904 551900**
- email - [earlyhelp@york.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelp@york.gov.uk)

### Appendix 3

MASH Emergency Contact information

Outside office hours, at weekends and on public holidays, contact the emergency duty team

- telephone - **01609 780780**
- email - [edt@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:edt@northyorks.gov.uk)