

Friends of Sir Joseph Hood  
Memorial Playing Fields

# Safeguarding Policy

Version 2 May 25

## The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is:

Martin Halsall

Email: [martinhalsall@gmail.com](mailto:martinhalsall@gmail.com)

Mobile: 07721239501

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# Safeguarding for Youth Work

This document outlines the FoSJHMPF Safeguarding policy and procedures for the protection of children and young people at risk.

A child is defined as up to the age of 18. The relevance of this document is inclusive to all staff and the policy and procedures cover all Friends activities.

The protection of young people is based on the principles outlined within the Children's Act 2004 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child and Working Together 2018 Guidance.

The principles recognise the welfare of the young person is paramount and all young people, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have the right to protection from all types of harm and abuse.

It is essential that everyone is clear how to report a concern about the welfare of young person. This means following the guidelines set out in this policy.

## Principles

- This policy is based on the legal and statutory definitions of a child (defined as being up to 18 years old).
- The organisation will safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, within the work we do by protecting them from neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse.
- All young people, regardless of age, culture, any disability they may have, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief, gender reassignment or sexual identity have the right to protection from any kind of abuse.
- All young people have the right to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.
- Young people have the right to expect appropriate support in accordance with their personal and social development.
- Working in partnership with young people, their parent(s)/carers and other agencies is essential for the protection of young people.
- Safeguarding children and young people is the responsibility of everyone within the organisation, regardless of their role.
- A timely and appropriate response will be given to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, or poor practice.
- It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Leadership Team and any external agencies involved to uphold safeguarding criteria thresholds.
- The sharing of confidential information is restricted to the necessary external agencies.
- All personal information about children & young people is shared and stored appropriately in accordance with the Data Protection Act, the Freedom of Information Act and Information Sharing Protocols.

## Implementation

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy shall be adopted by the following:

- The FoSJHMPF staff, associates, volunteers, young people and trustees
- All other bodies working in partnership with the Friends

## Monitoring Procedures

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy should be

monitored annually, and a full policy review to occur bi-annually. The following situations may also trigger a review of the policy:

- Any changes in legislation

- Any changes in youth governance
- The result of a significant case

## Supporting documents

Throughout the document there are supporting documents highlighted that provide more in-depth detail or useful templates you can use to support safeguarding practice within our organisation.

## Safe Recruitment

Youth services would not exist without the thousands of staff and volunteers who deliver provision. There are many different roles to play in delivering quality services for young people and ensuring we encourage individuals that are suitable to work with young people is essential. Getting the right people in place is key to well organised and quality services delivered in a safe and supportive environment.

Safe recruitment means taking steps to ensure only individuals who are suitable for working with young people, whilst keeping them safe from harm and risks, are appointed. Safe recruitment procedures should be adopted and applied consistently when appointing a staff member, associate or volunteer. Under the Protection of Children Act 1999, all individuals working on behalf of, or otherwise representing, an organisation are treated as employees whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity.

When recruiting the following steps will be taken to support safe recruitment:

- Draw up a role profile which highlights the key responsibilities.
- Draw up a person specification to define the skills and experience required for the role.
- Emphasise your organisations stance on safeguarding children and young people and equal opportunities.
- Use application forms to collect information on each applicant.
- Ensure that more than one person from our organisation looks at each application form.
- Ask for original identification documents to confirm the identity of the applicant, e.g. passport or driving licence.
- Ask for parental agreement

## Promoting good practice when delivering young people's activities

We will raise awareness of what safeguarding means for everyone will create a safer environment for young people. We will encourage volunteers, staff, parents/carers and trustees to get to know your safeguarding policy and procedures will increase the likelihood of good safeguarding practice.

## Good practice guidelines

All staff, associates and volunteers should demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect young people and themselves. This includes:

- Wherever appropriate, conducting one to ones with young people in an open environment, where others are present.
- Treating all young people equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of young people before organisational aims.
- Building and maintaining a safe and appropriate relationship with young people.
- Empowering young people to share in decision-making processes.
- Attending training as required.
- Positive role modelling for young people.

## Relationships of trust

The power and influence a member of staff or someone in a leadership role has over someone attending a group activity cannot be underestimated. Therefore, staff are expected to act within appropriate

boundaries with young people, in relation to all forms of communication. Staff should be mindful of any physical contact and should not have intimate or sexual relationships with young people.

“It is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to involve a child under that age in sexual activity where he or she is in a specified position of trust in relation to that child. This includes those who care for, advise, supervise or train children and young people.” (Sexual Offences Act 2003).

### **Supervision ratios**

Youth work organisations must ensure that an assessment is made, specific to the programme to ascertain staffing requirements, which will enable effective supervision of young people and effectively manage the associated risks.

The national guidance states that the level of supervision should take account of:

- The age and ability of the young people.
- The activity being undertaken.
- Children’s growing independence.
- Children’s need for privacy.
- The geography of the facility being used.
- The Risk Assessment.

The normal expectation is that staff under 16 years of age will normally work in teams of two. In addition, there will always be a responsible adult designated when the Hut is open. This person should be able to be on site within 15 minutes. In exceptional circumstances, a single under 16 years old, experienced member of staff might be permitted to work alone but additional supervisory arrangements will be required.

### **Guidelines on participation consent**

Any young person under the age of 18 should have consent from a parent or guardian. If this is not possible, seek advice from the DSL. Any exceptions should be recorded in the Risk Assessment.

Information provided on for the consent of the activity will not be kept longer than necessary.

### **Recognising abuse**

It is part of everyone’s role at to do everything possible to keep young people safe from abuse. There is a moral responsibility to report any concerns about a child or young person in any context. Most suspicions of abuse come about from observation of changes in the young person’s behaviour, appearance, attitude or relationship with others. Training is important to support staff and volunteers to recognise abuse.

### **Definitions of abuse**

Working together to safeguard children 2018 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. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.”

There are four major types of abuse (see appendix for definitions):

- Physical abuse.
- Emotional abuse.
- Sexual abuse.
- Neglect.

There are other types of abuse that fit into these categories and are key areas for children and young people in the UK. These include but are not restricted to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Extremism, contextual safeguarding, mental health, domestic abuse and

homelessness (Working Together guidance 2020).

Key areas will be covered in annual training, but it is important for staff to be aware of particular safeguarding areas that may affect specific programmes. The DSL will review new programmes and activities to ensure any key areas are flagged in the risk register and will identify any additional training needs if necessary.

### Signs of abuse

Signs which may indicate abuse include: - •

Unexplained bruising and injuries.

- Sexually explicit language and actions.
- Sudden changes in behaviour, such as absences, withdrawal or having unexplained material goods.
- Something a child has said.
- A change observed over a long period of time e.g. losing weight or becoming increasingly dirty/unkept.

Such signs do not necessarily mean a child or young person is being abused. Equally, there may not be any signs; you may just feel something is wrong. It is not a member of staff's responsibility to decide if it is abuse, but it is their responsibility to act on such concerns and report it accordingly.

The signs of abuse are not always obvious, and a young person may not tell anyone what is happening to them. Individuals are often scared that the abuser will find out, and worried that the abuse will get worse. Quite often they think that there is no-one they can tell or that they will not be believed.

Occasionally, individuals do not even realise what is happening to them is abuse. It is key for associates and volunteers to be able to recognise signs of abuse. This will be covered in-depth within annual training.

**Vulnerable young people** has a responsibility to be aware that some children and young people who take part in our activities may experience difficulties that adversely affect their lives at home and/or within their lives outside of the organisation and therefore be at risk of harm.

### Particularly vulnerable groups could include:

- **Children and young people with a disability** (disability can take many forms including: Physical; disability; Sensory disability; Learning disability)

Research indicates children and young people with a disability are more likely to be abused than non-disabled children. They may find it more difficult to recognise abuse. Disclosing abuse is difficult for any child; for a child with disabilities, it may be especially difficult, for the following reasons:

- their life experience may be limited, therefore struggle to recognise inappropriate behaviour
- communication difficulties can make it hard to report abuse
- they may not be able physically to leave an abusive situation
- they receive intimate physical care and, therefore, the abuse may seem 'normal'
- their self-esteem and self-image are poor
- they may not be aware of how or to whom they can report abuse
- **Children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation (CSE)**

Young people at risk of, or engaged in, sexual exploitation may not see themselves as victims. Workers need to be aware of young people who may be at risk.

The sexual exploitation of children and young people is defined in government guidance documents (2017) as follows:

*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.*

Often the exploitative situation includes contexts and relationships where young people receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of their performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities. It can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition e.g. being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

In all cases, those exploiting the child have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised by the child's limited availability of choice, resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

There are strong links between children who go missing and the internal trafficking, between towns, of young people for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Children and young people from loving and supportive families can be at risk of exploitation and workers must be careful not to stereotype specific groups of children as potential victims.

**Any concerns relating to particularly vulnerable children and young people must be raised with YOUR ORGANISATIONS designated safety officer as soon as possible. Do not make assumptions that another agency or local authority provision is already managing this because the young person is already known to them.**

### **Responding to disclosure, suspicions and allegations**

The DSL has primary responsibility for safeguarding to ensure that concerns and any relevant information is passed onto Children's social care services, the independent Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and in emergencies, the police. These organisations have the statutory responsibility to make enquiries to establish whether a child or young person is at risk of harm.

### **How to respond to a disclosure from a young person**

If a young person discloses, they, or another young person, is concerned about someone's behaviour towards them, the person receiving this information should:

- Remain calm and in control.
- Reassure the young person by telling them they have done the right thing.
- Take what the young person says seriously.
- Listen carefully to what is said.
- Keep questions to a minimum – only ask for clarification and no leading questions.
- Don't promise to keep it a secret. Let the young person know you will need to share the information with other professionals to keep them and/or other young people safe.
- Record what is said on your Incident Report.
- Tell the young person what will happen next.

In all cases consider the welfare of the young person who has disclosed as the highest priority. If there is a concern the young person is in immediate danger:

- Contact the police and explain the situation to them.
- Stay with the young person.
- If necessary, move to a safe place away from immediate harm and that no situation arises which could cause any further concern.
- Call for immediate medical attention if the young person requires it.
- Contact your DSL to let them know what is happening and ask for further advice and guidance.
- Make a factual record of events as soon as possible by using the Incident Form.
- Do not investigate further, share confidential information with others, or take any further action unless authorised to do so. The police will now be in charge and anything you do without their authorisation may harm their investigation.

If a young person is not in immediate danger but a disclosure has been made:

- Follow the disclosure process as above. Send the incident form to the DSL at Your Organisation within 24 hours and notify your manager and/or DSL that you have done so.
- The DSL will then contact you to talk through this if necessary.
- The DSL will inform you of next steps to be taken and you will receive support from your manager.

**Emergency:** If a young person is in immediate danger you should contact the police on 999 **Non-emergency:** If there is no immediate danger or advice or information is needed the DSL can contact the relevant LADO or Children's Social Care Team. If the concern is about a young person, contact the relevant LADO for the local authority where the incident occurred. If the concern relates to a staff member, the LADO of their registered place of work should be contacted (the details can be found on the Children's Local Partnership Board website).

### Responding to concerns

If there are any concerns about a young person, an Incident Form should be completed and email this to the DSL at Your Organisation. This form will be used if an incident occurs that causes concern for the safety of a young person who is not in immediate danger. The DSL will then advise of next steps.

### Recording of a Safeguarding concern

If anyone has concern about a child or young person's welfare or safety, it is vital all relevant details are recorded. This must be done regardless of whether the concerns are shared with the police or other agencies.

Keep an accurate record of:

- The date and time of the incident/disclosure.
- The date and time of the report.
- The name and role of the person to whom the concern was originally reported and their contact details.
- The name and role of the person making the report (if this is different to the above) and their contact details.
- The names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses to an event.
- What was said or done and by whom.
- Any action taken to investigate the matter.
- Any further action taken (such as a referral being made).
- The reasons why the organisation decided not to refer those concerns to a statutory agency (if relevant).

The report must be factual. Any interpretation or inference drawn from what was observed, said or alleged should be clearly recorded as such. The record should always be signed and dated by the person making the report.

### **If an allegation is made against a staff member**

Any concerns involving the inappropriate behaviour of a staff member towards a young person will be taken seriously and investigated. The LADO will be informed where the incident occurred. The situation will be explained to the staff member (if deemed appropriate) who is at the centre of the allegation. They may be asked to cease working on a temporary basis until the matter is formally resolved, and after investigation this could lead to dismissal and further action being taken against the member of staff. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Support will be provided for the person who the allegation has been made against.

### **If an allegation is made about the Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Any concerns involving the DSL directly should be reported to the Senior Manager. It is important that all staff are aware of staff reporting structure.

### **Malicious allegations**

An allegation may be classified as malicious. Care should be taken in dealing with such an outcome, as some facts may not be wholly untrue. Some parts of an allegation may have been fabricated or exaggerated but elements may be based on truth.

Where a preliminary enquiry / investigation was undertaken and the allegations were deemed to be **malicious**, a record should be made stating that:

- An allegation was made (but not what the allegation was).
- Date the allegation was made.
- The allegation was fully investigated.
- The outcome was that it was found to be malicious or unsubstantiated and that no further action was taken.

Please refer to LADO guidelines for classifications of outcomes following investigations.

### **Whistleblowing**

Whistleblowing is the process whereby an employee raises a concern about malpractice, wrongdoing, risk, or illegal proceedings, which harms or creates a risk of harm to the people who use the service, employees, or the wider community.

Whistleblowing is not the same as making a complaint or raising a grievance. Whistleblowing is different because it involves a situation where an employee raises a concern about some form of malpractice that they have witnessed in their workplace.

A whistleblowing concern is when a person witnesses an issue or risk that affects someone other than themselves. A young person maybe directly affected by an act or decision within their organisation or that the organisation has a safeguarding issue which is not being addressed.

Your organisation's Whistleblowing Policy should include processes that:

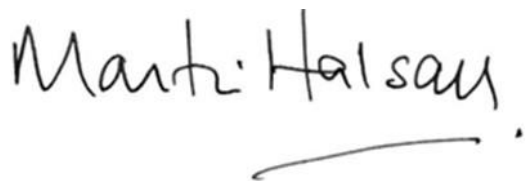
- Encourage an open culture where people feel comfortable raising concerns with their managers.
- Give people the confidence that if they raise an issue that their name will not be revealed without their consent.
- Give people the option to raise concerns anonymously.

Your organisation's whistleblowing Policy should be read in conjunction with Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

**Data Protection and management of confidential information** is committed to the safe and secure management of confidential information. All personnel information, including volunteer information, is stored securely and can only be accessed by those that require it to carry out their

role. Only relevant information is stored and this is regularly reviewed and outdated information destroyed appropriately.

We are also committed to the rights of children and young people to confidentiality. However, where a worker feels that the information disclosed by a child or young people should be referred to their line manager for investigation by an appropriate agency, the young person should be told that confidentiality cannot be kept.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin Halsall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Name: Martin Halsall

Position: Committee Chairman

Date: 19 May 2025