



# Working with Children Manual and Safeguarding

Updated October 2022

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# Safeguarding policy

## Policy statement

WYA, is firmly committed to the belief that all children and young people have a fundamental right to be protected from harm and fully recognises its responsibility for child protection and to promote the welfare of children and young people. The safety and protection of all children and young people that WYA supports is paramount and has priority over all other interests.

WYA encourages a culture of listening and engaging in dialogue with young people, seeking their views in ways that are appropriate to their age, culture and understanding.

The purpose of this Safeguarding Policy is to ensure at all times, the maximum protection from any kind of harm for all young people involved in any way with WYA. For the purpose of this policy, WYA has defined harm as:

- abandonment
- emotional abuse
- neglect
- physical abuse
- racial abuse
- sexual abuse or sexual exploitation
- exposure to drug/ alcohol misuse
- bullying – Including cyber bullying
- grooming
- radicalisation
- female genital mutilation.

This policy's purpose is to protect the personal safety of all children and young people using the facilities, resources and activities provided by WYA, by actively promoting awareness, good practice and sound procedures.

The policies laid out are in accordance with Children's Act 1989, Children's Act 2004 and the guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015'.

## Responsibilities of WYA

WYA will ensure they have a designated Safeguarding Officer(s) with responsibility for child protection and the implementation of this policy. The Safeguarding Officer(s) will ensure the appropriate action is taken following any expression of concern, making any referrals to other safeguarding agencies as appropriate.

**Safeguarding Officer – Yasmin Harris: phone number: 07873 5995530, email address: [Yasmin@WycombeYouthAction.co.uk](mailto:Yasmin@WycombeYouthAction.co.uk)**

The role of the Safeguarding Officer is responsible for promoting a safe environment for children and young people. They will have the appropriate knowledge of all of the relevant legislation and keep up to date with any changes or new additions to safeguarding policy.

They will offer advice and guidance to all agencies about how to respond to concerns and allegations about people who work with children.

They know the contact details of relevant statutory agencies eg Children's Social Work Services (CSWS), Police, Local Safeguarding Children Board, and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (Jonathan Kempster - telephone: - 01296-382070, email - [Jonathan.kempster@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:Jonathan.kempster@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)).

The designated Safeguarding Officer will be someone who is in a senior management role at WYA and is good at working with others. They will have to work closely with the board and management team to implement effective safeguarding policies and will need to be approachable enough for people to come to with their safeguarding concerns.

The Safeguarding Officer will ensure all staff and volunteers are given a copy of the Safeguarding Policy and asked to confirm that they have read it. Staff and volunteers will also be asked to read the Safeguarding policy annually to refresh themselves in this.

The Safeguarding Officer will ensure the policy is kept on a public drive, such as BreatheHR or Sharepoint, so that staff can access it at any time.

**Chairman – Simon Kearey: phone number: 07956 183262, email address: [simonkearey@gmail.com](mailto:simonkearey@gmail.com)**

WYA will ensure that there is a designated Safeguarding Officer within the senior leadership team, who had the knowledge and access to the knowledge required to fulfil the role appropriately.

WYA will ensure that all staff members/volunteers receive training to update them on safeguarding every three years.

WYA will ensure that advice is sought from relevant child protection agencies when dealing with issues.

WYA will ensure that all employees/volunteers receive regular monitoring and supervision in their work with children and young people.

### ***Employees/volunteers***

All employees/volunteers of WYA have a responsibility for the welfare of the children and young people that they work with.

All employees/volunteers have a duty to ensure that any suspected incident, allegation or other manifestation relating to child protection is reported as soon as possible using the reporting procedures detailed in this policy.

Never assume that others are monitoring a child or young person. Others may have doubts but are not taking action.

Never discuss the concerns with anyone other than the Safeguarding Officer. This includes not approaching the victim or the suspect, or any other member of staff at WYA.

If in any doubt about what action to take, employees must seek advice from the Safeguarding Officer.

### **Training provision**

All staff members will be required to attend safeguarding training courses and this should be renewed every three years. Contents of this policy will be included in the induction process of all staff members and volunteers. They will be expected to familiarise themselves with the policy and procedure at regular intervals.

All volunteers at WYA will receive regular training and supervision with respect to Safeguarding issues.

## **Safer Recruitment Policy**

As part of WYA's commitment to providing a safe environment for all the young people they work with, WYA will only recruit staff and volunteers who are considered to be suitable to work with children.

### **Staff**

The recruitment of staff will require the following:

#### ***Advertising the role and the interview process***

- Provide an advertisement for the role which will include a statement about WYA's commitment to keeping children safe.
- WYA will provide a job description for each role, clearly setting out the responsibilities and expectations of a candidate.
- Require that all candidates provide a CV and two referees, at least one of whom must be from a previous employer or individual connected professionally to the candidate. These references will always be taken up.
- All candidates will be required to complete a Self-Disclosure form, allowing them to give details of any relevant criminal convictions, child protection investigations or disciplinary sanctions they have on their record. This form should be provided, in a sealed envelope marked 'confidential', at interview and only looked at where the individual is selected for the role, as part of the vetting process. All unopened self-disclosures should be shredded securely.
- Where there is the revelation of a criminal conviction, this should be kept confidential unless there is a safeguarding need to reveal it to another member of staff within the organisation.
- Interviews will be in two stages, the first being with the Office Manager and the second with the Chairman and one other. These will be face-to-face or one may be a telephone interview.
- Questions will be devised in advance according to the requirement of the role. Questions can be asked around any convictions that the candidate reveals.

#### ***Vetting candidates***

- Check the identity of an individual as part of the process, that they're eligible to work in the UK and that they're not barred from working with children.
- When offering the job, ensure that the offer letter makes clear that the offer is subject to the satisfactory completion of the vetting process.
- All new staff will need an Enhanced DBS before they can have any interaction with the young people. DBS's are renewed every two years.

- Where someone's vetting checks raise concerns, a risk assessment should be carried out to work out whether they are suitable to work with young people. Gather as much information as possible about the concern and then discuss it with the candidate. A third person should be present for this discussion and consideration should be taken into account that this is a sensitive issue for the candidate. Keep the conversation on whether the candidate is suitable for working with children and not on whether the conviction was justified or not.
- When making a final decision, the reasons should be objective, rational and easy to understand. A report should be made of these decisions, and this should be stored securely, along with the notes made during the investigations. Things to consider include:
  - the nature of the offence and its seriousness
  - the relevance of the offence to other staff, volunteers, children and their families
  - the length of time since the offence took place
  - the length of the sentence
  - whether the offence was an isolated incident or part of a pattern or history of offending
  - the circumstances which led to the offence being committed
  - whether these circumstances have changed (if so, do these changes increase or reduce the likelihood of similar offences happening in future?)
  - whether the individual has changed since the offence (if so, what has led to the change and does this reduce or increase the likelihood of them committing further offences?)
  - the level of remorse expressed by the applicant and/or any efforts to change
  - whether the new role provides opportunities to re-offend
  - any legal constraints relevant to the role, for example if the person has lost their driving licence and the role requires driving.
- At any time during the recruitment process, the process can be terminated on the basis of concerns about the individual around children.



### ***Staff induction***

- All new staff should have an induction which will include appraising them of the policies and procedures of WYA, the Data Protection Policy, Health & Safety Policy and Safeguarding Policy.
- Candidates will be required to attend safeguarding training.
- For the initial few months after recruitment, there will be a probation period for all candidates. During this time, they will be supervised by another WYA member when they are around young people. Employment can be terminated if there are any concerns during this period, regarding suitability to work with children. Note: for all permanent staff, employment can be terminated at any time where a concern is identified against them.
- All staff are given annual appraisals and new candidates will have objectives set for them so that they understand all that's required of them.

### **Volunteer recruitment**

Volunteers should also be subject to a vetting process before being allowed to help out with any activities. This process should involve the following:

- A job description should be provided to the individual, setting out the remit of their volunteering.
- Completion of an application form.
- Provision of a Self-disclosure form to the Safeguarding Officer.
- A requirement for them to read the Safeguarding Policy and the Data Protection Policy before they start helping out.
- Volunteers will also require an Enhanced DBS certificate
- Volunteers should be supervised at all times by a member of WYA staff.

If there are any concerns during the vetting process, or at any time the volunteer is with WYA, they can be asked to leave without any further notice.

## **Visitors**

WYA often work with other youth organisations to run workshops for their young people. These organisations all have their own safeguarding procedures, and their staff and volunteers have DBS checks.

Occasionally visitors attend events run by WYA and these are generally known to the charity, such as trustees or people who are interested in funding a project. In these circumstances, visitors are accompanied by the General Manager or the Senior Project Manager at all times.

# Recognising abuse and neglect

Abuse may occur in different forms and can be split into the main categories below:

## 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.

## 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 overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from 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.

## 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 (e.g. 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.

## Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is 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.

It is vital to take action that is needed to safeguard the child/children. The decision should be discussed with the Safeguarding Officer before any action is taken or a decision made to escalate.

## **Recognising abuse?**

Identifying abuse is not a question of a simple checklist but the following may indicate child protection concerns:

- The child may say something
- Someone else may tell you what a child has told them, or that they themselves believe that a child is being abused
- A child may show some sign of physical injury for which there is no satisfactory explanation
- A child's behaviour may indicate that there is abuse taking place (staff may find identifying a change in behaviour difficult to assess unless they have known a child for a length of time).

## **Definition of harm – for staff and volunteers**

Harm means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development including, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

Domestic violence is very damaging to a child's emotional development; where a child is living with domestic violence, schools should consider making a referral to Social Care if the child shows any indicators of significant harm.

Based on the findings of the Victoria Climbié case, it is important to remember that often, it is only when information held by a number of workers is put together that a picture of child abuse emerges. In addition to this, whilst respecting cultural differences, the basic requirement that children are kept safe is universal and cuts across cultural boundaries.

## **Whistle blowing**

All staff and volunteers are made aware of the whistle blowing policy as part of the induction process.

Any suspicion, allegation or disclosure must be reported immediately (as soon as practicably possible on the day of the occurrence) to the Safeguarding Officer. The incident should not be discussed with anyone else as to do so may compromise the case.

Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in several ways, including a comment made by a child, physical evidence such as bruising, a change in behaviour or inappropriate behaviour or knowledge.

The Safeguarding Officer will decide the appropriate action to be taken, which may involve escalating the incident to another agency, such as social services, the police etc. They may take advice from the local Designated Officer or other trusted safeguarding agencies to assist them with this.

The Safeguarding Officer will not discuss the case with anyone else within WYA and any member of staff involved will be asked to maintain confidentiality.

The Safeguarding Officer must record the concern using the incident/accident reporting form and keep the Chairman informed of any cases, ensuring that a copy of the incident/accident report is kept strictly confidential and stored securely following data protection procedures.

All stages of the reporting procedure must be documented, marked confidential and stored securely following the procedures laid out in the Data Protection Policy.

## **Allegations against employees/volunteers**

When any form of complaint is made against an employee/volunteer, it must be taken seriously, and the complaint should initially be dealt with by the most senior member of the team. If the complaint is against the most senior member of the team, then the Chairman must be informed.

The senior team member must report the complaint immediately to the Safeguarding Officer, giving details of the circumstances.

The Safeguarding Officer will seek advice and guidance from the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) within 24 hours of the allegation.

The Safeguarding Officer may attend the site of the allegation to gain an initial account of what has occurred from all relevant parties, including the person against whom the allegation has been made. If this is not possible, contact will be made by telephone.

The Chairman may suspend from duty and/or the premises, any person who is a party to the allegation until a full investigation has been made (following advice from the LADO). Where the individual is a volunteer, they will be asked to leave the premises and will not be allowed to return at least for the duration of the investigation.

This action does not imply in any way that the person suspended is responsible for or is to blame for any action leading up to the complaint. The purpose of any such suspension is to enable a full and proper investigation to be carried out in a professional manner.

WYA will co-operate fully with the Police, Social Services and all other parties involved.

An agreed statement will be prepared for the purpose of accurate communication with external sources and for the protection of the legal position of all parties involved.

The Safeguarding Officer or board member will make a full written report of the incident and the actions taken. This report will be stored securely following the procedures detailed in the Data Protection Policy.

The charity may take disciplinary action in accordance with the disciplinary procedures outlined in this handbook.

## **What to do if a young person reports abuse?**

- Believe what the person is saying and take it seriously.
- Reassure the person who has made the disclosure to you that they have done the right thing.
- Give the young person time to talk and do not probe or ask leading questions. The investigation is not your responsibility
- Do not promise to keep secrets. All allegations of harm or potential harm must be acted upon
- Explain to the young person that you will share this information with the Safeguarding Officer at WYA. The Safeguarding Officer may need to also report it to the Child Protection Officer within their school or college.
- Emails or text messages received detailing details of suspected abuse or neglect should be responded to within 24 hours by contacting the young person by phone (first checking it is okay for them to speak) or face-to-face to obtain further information
- Ensure you have taken detailed notes of the disclosure and that they are verbatim recordings. If you cannot take notes during the disclosure, take the notes immediately after

- When a referral is made to Children's Social Care, agree with them what the young person and parents will be told, by whom and when. Do not leave messages; always speak to someone. You must confirm verbal and telephone referrals in writing and within 48 hours (sometimes you will be asked to use a multi-agency referral form). Children's Social Care should acknowledge your written referral within one working day of receiving it. Should you not have had a response within three working days, contact them again
- Under no circumstances should you confront the abuser
- Do not share suspicions or information with any other person other than the Safeguarding Officer, Children's Social Care and the police. Information given to Children's Social Care, or the police will be taken seriously, handled sensitively and shared on a 'need to know' basis, wholly to protect the child.

Staff and Volunteers to whom a young person has disclosed information to may be distressed by the disclosure and counselling will therefore be available. It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Officer to ensure this is provided if required.

## Guidance for workers

The nature of much of the work that WYA is now involved with means that staff regularly work with young people with complex needs and behavioural difficulties. Young people may react quite unpredictably in certain situations, and this may include them running off or absconding.

All members of staff are urged to use common sense in these situations, but the following guidelines may assist:

- Ensure you have contact details for parents or carers of young people in your care
- Ensure you have the appropriate consents for taking pictures or videos of the young people
- Ensure you have information relating to any special conditions, needs or requirements (e.g. medical, health, diet, language assistance)
- Ensure you provide a written report of any incidents or concerns to the Safeguarding Officer and Chairman of the Board, especially if:
  - A young person is hurt
  - He/she seems distressed in any way
  - A young person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
  - A young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done
  - An allegation is made about you or a colleague.
- Ensure you have the right staff to young people ratio. This will depend on the project and risk level of the young person and should be agreed with the Safeguarding Officer prior to the start of the project
- Ensure the Safeguarding Officer or another member of staff has the contact details of all young people that are with you so they can make any necessary telephone calls if a young person has gone missing
- If a young person goes missing, spend no more than 30 minutes searching for that young person, if you are in an unfamiliar place, before you contact the police for assistance
- If possible, arrange for another member of staff to meet you to help with the search, so your colleague with you can escort the other young people back to your base
- If you know that a young person in your care may react in such a way, ensure that you have a plan in place, agreed with their parents or carers before you embark on any trips
- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity



- Involve young people in the decisions that affect them
- Always work in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with young people (e.g. not sharing tents, shower facilities or having an inappropriate or intimate relationship)
- If physical contact is necessary (e.g. in an emergency), tell the young person clearly what you are doing and why, seek their permission and give choices where possible. Have another worker present, if that is feasible
- Every activity, event or session should be risk assessed to maintain the safety of young people
- When working with a mixed-gender group, there should be staff/volunteers of both genders to manage all activities.

## **Supervising young people**

When organising activities staff must ensure that arrangements are in place that safeguards children, volunteers and themselves from potential allegations.

Organisers arranging activities must be satisfied that all staff who directly supervise are competent to do so.

Children will be safer, there will be less potential for abuse and false allegations about staff or volunteers if they are supervised by two or more adults.

Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment must have parental consent and constant supervision. Children should be given training on using the equipment prior to use and any dangerous behaviour by children must not be allowed.

If first aid needs to be administered, the injured child should be treated within the vicinity of others. A fully stocked first aid kit should be available and to hand at all times.

Staff must never:

- Be with a child alone in a non-public environment
- Engage in rough or physical games including horseplay
- Engage in sexually provocative games
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching
- Allow staff or volunteers to use inappropriate language unchallenged (if children use inappropriate language, the supervising adult must challenge the child and highlight the language used)
- Refer to a child's ethnicity, disability, sexuality in a way that is derogatory

- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to children even in fun
- Let allegations a child makes go unrecorded and unreported
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves. If a member of staff does carry out such actions, then they must ensure that other staff are aware of the situation and that the parents are fully informed of the situation.

## **Adult/child ratios**

The level of supervision must be assessed by the organiser. The ratio will depend upon a number of factors. These include the type of activity, the number of children involved, their ages, abilities and the venue. When a group of children consists of both sexes, both female and male staff should be available to supervise wherever possible.

## **Practices to be avoided**

- Workers should not give lifts in their car or travel alone with individual children or young people. Where not doing this would compromise WYA Health and Safety Policy (e.g. leaving a young person alone at a venue), you should attempt to phone the parent/guardian of the young person to confirm what you will be doing. You should also ask the young person to sit in the back seat
- Workers should not take young people to their home or that of another worker
- Avoid favouritism
- Workers should avoid situations where they are alone with young people. Where a private meeting with a lone child/young person is unavoidable it should be held in an open place in view of others, or in a room visible to those outside and where a colleague has agreed to visually monitor the meeting. If a young person participates in a review of their involvement in a programme as a result of disruptive or unacceptable behaviour, it is advisable that this review is witnessed by a second staff member/volunteer
- Workers should not use their own 'personal' social networking sites for contacting young people, unless agreed by the management committee. With regards to the use of mobile phones, see the guidance below.

## **Unacceptable practice**

- Invading the privacy of children and young people when they are toileting or showering, changing or dressing
- Inappropriate physical or sexually provocative games
- Sharing sleeping accommodation with an individual child or young person
- Making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person, even in fun

- Inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form
- Scapegoating or ridiculing a child or young person
- Allowing inappropriate, foul, sexualised or discriminatory language to remain unchallenged
- Any form of physical punishment
- Illegal use of drugs
- Use of alcohol during an event
- Bullying of any form, including name calling or constant criticism
- 'Picking on' a young person because of their family background, manner of dress or physical characteristic
- Racism or sectarianism of any form
- Favouritism and exclusion - all young people should be equally supported and encouraged
- Abusive language or gestures.

## **Restraining young people**

WYA may in the future offer members of staff control and restraint training, delivered by a qualified trainer. Currently staff are not trained in this area.

All staff should be clear about the following:

- Only use control and restraint if you have been trained in the procedure correctly
- Any form of restraint must be a last resort
- Control and restraint must only be used when a young person is at risk of harming themselves, another young person or a member of staff
- An incident report must be written as soon as possible after the event, detailing exactly what happened and all other attempts that were made to calm the situation prior to the use of control and restraint. The report should be submitted to the Safeguarding Officer or Chairman
- Only experienced staff should intervene in violent situations, but they should not put themselves at risk
- Should an incident occur involving physical violence between young people, seek assistance from the appropriate authority immediately

- Never place yourself at risk

## **Young people and illegal activities**

**DRUGS:** If you know that a young person in your care is in possession of drugs you must make an informed decision based on the information available to you as to what action you take. Your main concern must always be for the safety of yourself and the young person.

**ALCOHOL:** If a young person arrives at a session you are running under the influence of alcohol, you must make an informed decision as to whether you are happy to allow them to participate. This must be based on whether it is safe and appropriate for the young person in question, other young people participating and members of staff.

**WEAPONS:** If you are aware or suspect that a young person may be carrying a weapon, whether they have any intention of using it inappropriately or not, the sensible option is to report this to the police and have the young person removed. Under no circumstances should you attempt to remove a dangerous weapon from a young person unless you are experienced or qualified to do so. Your safety is paramount and you are responsible for it.

An Incident Report must be written as soon as possible after the event, detailing exactly what happened, and submitted to the Safeguarding Officer or Chairman. An Incident Report must be completed after all incidences involving drugs, alcohol or weapons, regardless of the severity or outcome.

## **Bullying**

WYA is committed to providing a caring, friendly, stimulating and safe environment for all of the young people it works with. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur, young people should be able to tell staff / volunteers and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Bullying can be described as deliberate hostility or aggression towards another with the specific intention of hurting that person either physically, mentally or emotionally. It usually takes place over a period of time and can result in physical and emotional distress to the victim. It is recognisable in many forms:

- Physical – kicking, hitting, pushing or any other form of violence
- Verbal – name calling, spreading rumours, teasing, racial abuse, making threats
- Emotional – excluding, tormenting, humiliating
- Sexual – unwanted physical or sexually abusive comments
- Cyber – threatening or abusive phone calls, texts, emails

An Incident Report must be written as soon as possible after the event, detailing exactly what happened, and submitted to the Safeguarding Officer or Chairman.

### **Responding to bullying**

All members of staff have a responsibility to respond quickly and effectively to incidents of bullying. In order to ensure that this responsibility can be met, it is advised to follow these guidelines:

- Ensure that the young people you are working with are aware that bullying will not be tolerated or ignored
- Ensure that young people know that they will be supported if they disclose an incident
- Where appropriate, invite parents or carers of all young people involved to a meeting to discuss the problem and if necessary and appropriate, inform the police
- Ensure that all incidents are recorded appropriately, and any agreed actions are followed through

### **Supporting victims of bullying**

- Offer an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff
- Reassure the young person that appropriate action will be taken.
- Support the young person in rebuilding their self-esteem and confidence

### **Supporting young people who bully**

Young people who bully others must learn that bullying is unacceptable and that there are consequences for this type of behaviour. Provide support and encouragement to change their behaviour through discussion, trying to establish why the young person has resorted to bullying and explaining why their behaviour needs to change.

### **Electronic communication**

In our society, electronic communication is a main channel, however there are a number of guidelines for use, in order to protect the young people and youth workers at WYA , and to eliminate any misinterpretation.

Electronic communication includes social media, mobile phone, text/instant messaging, email, webpages, Skype and any other form of electronic communication that may arise in the future.

It must never become a substitute for face-to-face contact with young people and the following should be considered:

- Parents or carers and children and young people themselves have the right to decide if a worker is to have email addresses, social media accounts or mobile phone numbers etc.

- Only workers who the charity has appointed under safeguarding procedures, should use any electronic means of communication and then only with those young people from whom appropriate consent has been given
- Workers should not put any pressure on young people to reveal their email address or mobile phone number
- Contact with young people by electronic communication should only be for information-giving purposes and not for general contact
- Where a young person in need or at a point of crisis uses this as a way of communicating with a worker:
  - significant conversations should be saved as a text file if possible
  - conversations should be moved to face-to-face as soon as possible
  - the Safeguarding Office or Chairman should be kept informed of the situation
  - a log should be kept of who and when they communicated and what was written
- Workers should not share any personal information with young people and should not request or respond to any personal information from the young person other than that which is necessary and appropriate as part of their role
- Workers should be careful in their communications with young people so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives
- Clear, unambiguous language should be used, avoiding the use of unnecessary abbreviations
- Electronic communication should only be used between the hours of 8.00 am and 10.00 pm

### **Mobile phones**

- Mobile phone usage should be primarily about information-giving
- 'Text language' should be avoided so that there is no misunderstanding of what is being communicated
- 'Text conversations' should usually be avoided (that is a series of text messages/emails being sent to and fro between mobile phones)
- The phone camera should not be used for photographing the young people
- Workers should not retain images of young people on their mobile phone

### **Instant messaging services (IMS)**

- The use of instant messenger services should be kept to a minimum
- Where a young person in need or at a point of crisis uses this as a way of communicating with a worker:
  - significant conversations should be saved as a text file if possible
  - conversations should be moved to face-to-face as soon as possible
  - the Safeguarding Office or Chairman should be kept aware of the situation
  - a log should be kept of who and when they communicated and what was written
- Any communication should ideally be made via the Charity's social media pages
- Lower age limits of social networking sites should be adhered to (this varies for each site)
- Be aware of the content of photos that may be uploaded on to your site and where possible, choose the option for the administrator to approve content before it is posted to the site
- Be aware that young people could view photos and communications of other people linked to that social networking site
- All communication with young people should be kept within public domains
- Workers should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny
- Copies of communications should be retained and where possible other workers should be copied in on communication

## **Data protection**

This section in conjunction to the Data Protection Policy, can be found in the Policies and Procedures Manual. However, where there are Safeguarding concerns, this overrides GDPR. Note that in this manual the term 'children' is referring to anyone under 16 years old.

The GDPR in the UK states that anyone over the age of 13yrs may give consent for their data to be stored and processed. However, it also is clear that, where there are safeguarding concerns the regulations around safeguarding override those of GDPR.

The young people that WYA work with would often be referred to as vulnerable and therefore anyone under the age of 16yrs old must have the consent of an adult to have their data stored and processed by WYA.

## **Photography**

Since young people may be photographed while participating in events and activities, permission must be obtained from parents or the young person, if they are old enough. Staff members, volunteers and trustees must not use personal equipment to photograph or record a young person and no photos should be retained on a personal mobile phone.

When obtaining permission to take photos, it is important to be specific about the circumstances in which the photos will be used for or who they will be shared with. This permission should be sought on a regular basis, in line with the Data Protection Policy in the Policy and Permissions Manual.

## **Right to erasure**

There are extra requirements when the request for erasure relates to children's personal data, reflecting the GDPR emphasis on the enhanced protection of such information, especially in the online environment.

In processing personal data of young people, special attention is given to existing situations where a young person has given consent to processing and they later request erasure of the data (regardless of age at the time of the request), especially on social networking sites and internet forums. This is because a young person may not have been fully aware of the risks involved in the processing at the time of consent and therefore their request should be dealt with positively.

Where services are offered directly to a child, a privacy notice, written in a clear, plain way that a child will understand, will be displayed.

## **Confidentiality**

WYA operates under a policy of confidentiality. This statement relating to confidentiality must be made known to all who access any provision of WYA.



All staff/volunteers will follow the GDPR guidelines except where they have a responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and young people in accordance with the Information Sharing Policy of the Children's Trust. This will override all other agreements for the process of data as it may be necessary to share information without the young person's or parents/guardian's knowledge to ensure safeguarding of that individual.

### **Young people**

WYA is committed to ensuring that young people can share information with youth workers in a confidential manner.

Young people can expect that any information they give to a worker will be treated as sensitive. However, under no circumstances will any individual who is employed by, or volunteers for, WYA keep confidential any information that raises concerns about the safety and welfare of a young person. Circumstances in which information may be shared are where:

- The worker believes that the young person, or another young person, is in danger or is being harmed. In this case the young person will be told that the information must be shared with the appropriate agencies and will be encouraged to agree with this
- The young person discloses that they are involved, or plan to become involved in acts of terrorism

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a young person that they will keep secrets.

### **Parents/guardians**

Parents/Guardians of young people attending WYA can expect that the information they provide (e.g. medical information, contact information) will:

- Be kept in a secure, confidential manner and only used for the purpose provided (i.e. to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the young person)
- Enable the club to ensure that parents receive information from the club that is necessary, e.g. newsletters, letters and emails regarding information about upcoming events, fundraising activities or club activities
- Not be sold
- Will not be shown to other organisations without prior consent.

## **Sexual health and relationships guidance**

WYA believes that all young people have a right to accessible advice, guidance and information on sexual health and relationships. It will endeavour to ensure that any advice, guidance and information given to young people is non-judgemental and aimed at supporting young people to make the best possible life choices and decisions.

WYA recognises that each young person is an individual with individual needs and circumstances and that sexual health and relationships are central to the personal development of young people. It also recognises that it is extremely important to the personal development of young people that they are able to make independent decisions relating to their own sexual health and well-being. WYA also believes that parents and carers have a right to know what advice, guidance and information is available to their child, and in recognition of this, WYA operates within the framework of current legislation and adheres to the current guidelines. It will always encourage and support young people under the age of 16 to communicate with their parents or carers in relation to their sexual health and relationships. WYA will also promote positive links with other agencies that specialise in providing advice, guidance and information to young people in relation to sexual health and relationships.

There is still much debate about when a young person is competent enough to make their own decisions and seek advice and guidance from services relevant to sexual health and relationships. There are also a number of concerns as to whether adequate efforts have been made to involve the parents or carers of young people under the age of 16 in any decisions that may need to be made.

All employees of WYA (if appropriate) will receive training in delivering advice and guidance to young people on issues of sexual health and relationships. All information provided to young people will be relevant and up to date.

WYA recognises that some young people have more complex needs and issues or may find themselves in situations special to them (being the subject of a supervision order for instance). Young people who have learning difficulties or other disabilities and young people in special situations retain the same rights to appropriate sex education, contraceptive information, treatment and confidential advice and guidance as any other young person. WYA will support all young people to access the appropriate advice, guidance and information, regardless of their circumstances or situations.

With regard to confidentiality and the need to seek advice on sensitive issues, WYA recognises that not all young people choose to seek support from their parents or carers on these matters and will ensure that only information and data that is relevant to the safety and well-being of young people will be stored. Following the Child Protection Procedures, young people will be made aware that in some cases it is our statutory duty to pass on information to other relevant agencies.

In many cases, employees will be required to use their own judgement when deciding whether or not the advice, guidance or information is appropriate to the individual young person's needs.

## **Policies and procedures**

All information contained in this document has been taken from the NSPCC guidelines and Government guidelines as set out on their websites.

### **Implementation**

The Safeguarding Officer is responsible for ensuring that the Policy is implemented. Implementation will be led and monitored by the Safeguarding Officer, who will report to the Chairman of the board, who has overall responsibility for ensuring the charity is complying with all safeguarding procedures.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually, in autumn, and may be altered from time to time in light of legislative changes or other prevailing circumstances. All staff will be informed of any changes to the policy.

Date of next review: October 2023

**Reviewed By:** Sarah Lawton  
**Designation:** Data Protection Officer  
**Review date:** 26 October 2022

**Reviewed By:** Sarah Lawton  
**Designation:** Data Protection Officer  
**Review date:** 8 December 2021

**Name:** Sarah Lawton  
**Designation:** Data Protection Officer  
**Date:** 19 November 2020