

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Safeguarding Officer: Mary Fallon, Youth Team Manager

Deputy Safeguarding Officer: Jade Costello, HCC and PSG Manager

Chair of Trustees: Cathy McGuinness

The Trustees and Management Teams of Young Deaf Activities are firmly committed to the welfare of all young people who use their facilities and protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm. The safety and protection of all children and young people that YDA support is paramount and has priority over all other interests.

YDA will aim to ensure that all young people meet in a safe environment with people they can trust. It will encourage a culture of listening to 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 YDA.

“Harm” means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development.

For the purposes of this policy YDA has further defined harm as:

- Abandonment
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Racial abuse
- Sexual abuse or sexual exploitation
- Exposure to drug/alcohol misuse
- 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 YDA by actively promoting awareness, good practice and sound procedures.

All adult leaders and helpers will be provided with a copy of this policy and will be requested to indicate their commitment to it by signing that they have read and agreed with the policy. This record will be held and stored by the two managers.

Recruitment

All paid helpers and volunteers should complete an application form supplying the following information:

- Personal details
- Previous experience and/or qualifications
- Any criminal convictions
- Names of two independent referees

All leaders and helpers should complete a Disclosure Form (DBS) at enhanced level which will be processed through Action4Youth and the HR Department at Buckinghamshire County Council.

These clearances will be renewed every 3 years.

All new helpers will be closely supervised until references have been received and DBS checks completed.

In accordance with guidance from the Disclosure and Barring Service a record will be kept of the disclosure number, completion date and whether or not the check is satisfactory. The actual certificate will be destroyed within 6 months of receipt.

Code of Conduct

The Trustees and Management Teams adhere to the following guidelines as to how children and young people and adults interact with each other:

- Abusive behaviour and language, violence, aggression, bullying or discrimination will not be tolerated and leaders will respond quickly and effectively to any such reports.
- The appropriate ratio of helpers to children will be applied: no more than **1:3** with a ratio of **1:1 (or 2:1)** for those children identified as needing it.
- Children should be picked up and collected by parents or carers at the beginning and end of meetings or by identified Y.D.A. helpers.
- Parents or carers who are regularly involved in YDA sessions should be DBS checked.

Training Provision

This policy will be included in the Handbook given to all helpers and they will have the opportunity to attend Safeguarding training courses offered at regular intervals by Action4Youth.

The Managers will ensure that all helpers attend these courses or have completed one at their place of work so they understand their responsibilities with regard to issues of child protection.

Recognising Abuse and Neglect

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

- **Physical abuse**

This is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, 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**

This involves the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunity 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 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 (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, although it may occur alone.

Domestic violence is very damaging to a child's emotional development.

- **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 penetration, masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities such as children looking at 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 can be committed by adult males and females and by other children.

- **Neglect**

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

If any of these occur young people often display problems in the following areas:

- Behaviour
- Education
- Mental Health
- Drugs and alcohol
- Physical evidence e.g. bruising
- Relationships

A young person may disclose that he/she is being abused: he/she may show signs of abuse or he/she may speak about third party abuse.

The Responsibilities of all staff and volunteers

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

Never assume that others are monitoring a child or young person. Others may have suspicions but you could be the only person taking action.

If in any doubt about what action to take seek advice from the Safeguarding Officer or her Deputy or in their absence the Chair of Trustees.

YDA frequently takes photographs of children and young people participating in activities and events. Written permission from a parent/guardian will be obtained before any photographic material is used in the public domain.

Reacting to a Disclosure

- Listen rather than directly question
- Never stop anyone who is freely recalling significant events
- Do not ask leading questions
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Allow silence
- Avoid distractions
- Give only positive prompts
- Allow the child/young person to be upset
- Listen to them carefully
- Reassure the child/young person that they will be supported
- Make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to make sure the record is correct.

Reporting procedures

Any suspicion, allegation or disclosure must be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Officer. Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in a number of ways, including a comment made by a child, physical evidence such as bruising, a change in behaviour or knowledge.

The Safeguarding Officer must record the concern with the member of staff or volunteer using the Incident/Accident reporting form. The Safeguarding Officer is responsible for informing the Chairman and ensuring the Incident Form is kept confidential and secure.

The Safeguarding Officer will assess the information and is responsible for further referral if necessary. The procedure to be followed is laid out in the flow chart attached.

Allegations against staff/volunteers

The Trustees and Management Teams of Y.D.A. recognise the importance of protecting all leaders and helpers from possible allegations of abuse and recommend the following guidelines:

All leaders and helpers should not:

- Be alone with a child or young person
- Transport them in a car or mini bus without another adult being present
- Take a youngster to their own home
- Make inappropriate contact i.e. develop relationships outside the club setting
- Leave youngsters unattended
- Leave them in the presence of adults who are not suitably trained
- Leave them in the presence of adults not known to leaders
- Leave them in the presence of adults who have not had relevant DBS checks
- Show favouritism

If any allegation is made or suspicions emerge regarding any of the helpers these should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer. If an allegation is made against that Officer the report should be made direct to the YDA Chair of Trustees.

If any further action is required the following procedure will apply during which all information will remain confidential:

- A detailed factual record of the allegation and action will be made
- Information will be passed to the Chair of Trustees.
- The Safeguarding Officer or Chair of Trustees will seek advice and guidance from LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) within 24 hours of the allegation

- Consideration will be given to suspension of the person involved to enable a full and proper and full investigation to be made. The YDA Disciplinary Policy lays out procedures which may need to be followed.
- If the allegation involves a young member then contact will be made with parents to advise them of the process
- YDA will co-operate fully with Police, Social Services and all other parties involved.
- The Safeguarding Officer or Trustee will make a full written report of the incident and the actions taken. This report will be stored securely.

Confidentiality

YDA operates under a policy of confidentiality - see YDA Confidentiality Policy.

However all staff and volunteers must be aware that they have a responsibility to share any concerns with other agencies in order to safeguard children and young people – see Whistle Blowing Statement.

This Policy was adopted at the Trustees Meeting on:

Signed by:

The Safeguarding Officer, Mary Fallon:

The Deputy Safeguarding Officer, Jade Costello:

The Chair of Trustees:

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trustees.