



Safeguarding Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

All employees, volunteers, students, trainees, service providers and trustees at The WHY Project have a responsibility for the safety of children and young people that use our services. Our duty extends beyond a strategic document, and incorporates clear procedures which are accompanied by training, supervision and awareness raising. Our commitment is that with the help of our partners, safeguarding is an active part of all our work at the organisation.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate how The WHY Project will meet its legal obligations to protect children and young from any harm and reassure members of the public, service users, members, employees, volunteers, students, trainees, funders, governing bodies and those working on behalf of the organisation and will cover;

- What they can expect The WHY Project to do to protect and safeguard children and young people.
- That they are able to safely voice any concerns through an established procedure.
- That all reports of abuse or potential abuse are dealt with in a serious and effective manner.
- That there is an efficient recording and monitoring system in place.
- That employees, volunteers and students receive appropriate training and supervision.
- That robust 'safer' recruitment procedures are in place.

PRINCIPLES

The WHY Project believes Safeguarding is committed to the following principles for children and young people:

- Their welfare is paramount.
- Whatever their background and culture, parental or pregnancy status, age, disability, gender, racial origin, religious belief, sexual orientation and/or gender identity, they have the right to participate in society in an environment which is safe and free from violence, fear, abuse, bullying and discrimination.
- They have the right to be protected from harm, exploitation, abuse, and to be provided with safe environments to live and play.
- Working in partnership with them, alongside their parents or carers and other agencies, is essential to the promotion of their welfare.

WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and young people, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff, volunteers, students, trustees, partners and service providers.

This policy specifically covers the safeguarding of children and young people. Although children and adults at risk can experience the same types of harm and the causes are often similar, the main difference between child protection and adult protection hinges on the right to make choices. We all have rights to make choices and live our lives the way we want to. Sometimes we may consider that

others make bad choices that put themselves and others in harmful situations. People have the right to make such choices. But where a child or young person is at risk of harm or has been seriously harmed, it is likely that action would be taken by social work or the police to protect them, whether or not the parent/carer or child agrees. Sometimes adults at risk do not want social work or the police to act to protect them from harm. Acting to protect them against their wishes is a dilemma. Although the *Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act, 2007* gives legal measures to protect adults at risk, the rights of the person need to be considered. There is a need to strike a balance between the "need to protect" and the rights of the adult.

TYPES OF ABUSE

There are a number of different types of abuse and how it might impact a child or young person, it is common for a person to experience more than one type of abuse. In this policy we refer to; neglect; physical; sexual, emotional, female genital mutilation (FGM) and on-line abuse.

NEGLECT

Neglect is the most common form of abuse experienced by children and young people. Neglect can be life threatening and should be treated with the same urgency as other types of abuse. 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, often there is no single standout indicator. Physical indicators of neglect include; constant hunger; poor personal hygiene; poor dental health; skin rashes, lice etc; constant tiredness; inadequate and/or dirty ill-fitting clothing; untreated medical problems; under/overweight. Behavioural indicators of neglect include; social isolation; poor self-esteem; frequent lateness or missing education; missed medical/dental appointments; destructive tendencies; poor relationships with peers; compulsive stealing/scavenging.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is when a child or young person is deliberately hurt or injured by another person. Physical abuse can be a one-off severe incident or may happen repeatedly. Sometimes there can be obvious signs of physical abuse but sometimes it can be hidden. A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or young person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child or young person. Accidents can and do happen, however we should be prepared to ask questions about marks and injuries that we see.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Child sexual abuse is when a child or young person is forced or persuaded into sexual activity. Child sexual abuse can happen to children of all ages, from babies to teenagers. Sexual abuse of children and young people can happen in person, online, or both. 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 or young person is aware of what is happening. Child sexual abuse may involve physical contact (for example, penetration and oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. It may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children and young people in looking at (or in the production of) sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children and young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child or young person in preparation for abuse.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse can seriously damage a child or young person's health and development. Children and young people who are emotionally abused may also be experiencing other forms of abuse at the same time. Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or young person such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child or young person's emotional development. Emotional abuse may involve communicating to children and young people that they are worthless, inadequate or unloved, including not giving them the opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may include imposing unreasonable expectations on a child or young person which are inappropriate for their age and stage of development.

It may also involve over protection, limiting exploration and learning opportunities and/or chances for normal social interactions. It also includes the child or young person feeling frequently frightened or in danger, being bullied (including; cyberbullying) by peers or other children and young people (e.g. child on child abuse) or witnessing the ill treatment of others (e.g. domestic abuse).

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a painful, non-medical procedure undertaken on girls and young women which can seriously harm their long-term health. FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. FGM can take place at any age from infancy upwards, often when new-born, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage, or during pregnancy.

ONLINE ABUSE

Online child abuse takes many forms but can include sexual exploitation, grooming, communicating with children and young people for a sexual purpose, but also includes sexting and cyberbullying. Children and young people should be able to enjoy the benefits of the online world without fear of being abused or exploited. They should also feel empowered to recognise and avoid potential risks. Signs that a child or young person is experiencing online abuse might include noticing that they are spending lots of time online or that there is a sudden change, and they are online a lot less than normal. They might become secretive about what they are doing and who they are talking to online. Children and young people might have lots of new numbers, email addresses and more messages than normal. As with other forms of abuse you might become aware of a change in their behaviour and they may seem distracted, worried, or upset.

EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Creating a Safe Environment:** The WHY Project must ensure that the physical environment where children and young people are present (such youth clubs, outings) is safe and free from hazards that could pose a risk to their well-being.
- **Implementing Policies and Procedures:** The WHY Project should develop and implement comprehensive child safeguarding policies and procedures that outline how to prevent, recognise, and respond to child abuse or neglect. These policies should be communicated clearly to all staff, volunteers, student and trainees as well as ensuring they are easy to access.

- **Recruitment Checks:** The WHY Project are responsible for ensuring valid PVG checks are carried out and updated regularly (every 3 years) for all staff, volunteers, student and trainees who will have contact with children and young people as part of their roles. This may include verifying qualifications, and obtaining references to ensure the suitability of individuals to work with children and young people.
- **Training and Awareness:** The WHY Project should provide training annually and regular awareness-raising and issue based activities for staff, volunteers, student and trainees and on child safeguarding policies, procedures, and best practices. This training should cover topics such as identifying signs of abuse, responding to disclosures, and understanding safeguarding responsibilities.
- **Reporting and Response:** The WHY Project must establish clear procedures for reporting concerns or suspicions of child abuse or neglect, both internally within the organisation and externally to relevant authorities. Staff, volunteers, student and trainees should understand their duty to report, the process for making a report, and the protection offered to whistleblowers.
- **Supporting Children and Young People:** The WHY Project should provide support and assistance to children or young people who disclose abuse or neglect, as well as their families. This may include connecting them with appropriate services and resources for counselling, medical care, and legal assistance.
- **External Cooperation:** The WHY Project should cooperate with relevant authorities, such as social work, police, school and healthcare professionals, to ensure a coordinated response to child safeguarding concerns.
- **Monitoring and Review:** The WHY Project should regularly monitor and review their child safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices to assess their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.
- **Promoting a Culture of Safeguarding:** The WHY Project should foster a culture of vigilance, accountability, and respect for children's rights within the organisation. This includes promoting awareness of child safeguarding issues, encouraging open communication, and addressing any concerns or breaches of safeguarding policies promptly and effectively.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Awareness and Training:** Employees, Volunteer, Students and Trainees should familiarise themselves with The WHY Projects child safeguarding policies and procedures. They should participate in annual training and regular awareness-raising and issue based to recognise signs of abuse, understand reporting procedures, and know their role in safeguarding children and young people.
- **Observation:** Employees, Volunteer, Students and Trainees should be observant of any signs or indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of harm. This includes being attentive to changes in behaviour, physical appearance, or emotional well-being that could suggest abuse or neglect.
- **Reporting Concerns:** If an employee, volunteer, students or trainees has concerns about the safety or well-being of a child or young person, they have a duty to report these concerns following The WHY Projects reporting procedures.
- **Documentation:** Employees, Volunteer, Students and Trainees should accurately document any observations, concerns, or disclosures related to child safeguarding. This documentation should be detailed, factual, and recorded in accordance with The WHY Project's policies and legal requirements.



- **Confidentiality:** Employees, volunteer, students and trainees must maintain confidentiality and handle sensitive information related to child safeguarding concerns appropriately. Information should only be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with relevant laws and regulations.
- **Promoting a Safe Environment:** Employees, Volunteer, Students and Trainees play a vital role in creating and maintaining a safe and supportive environment for children and young people. This involves developing positive relationships, setting appropriate boundaries, and intervening to address any behaviours or situations that may compromise their safety or well-being.
- **Professional Boundaries:** Employees, Volunteer, Students and Trainees should maintain professional boundaries when interacting with children and young people, avoiding behaviours or actions that could be misinterpreted or lead to allegations of misconduct.

RISK ASSESSMENT

It is the responsibility of the senior management team and the board of trustees to undertake a risk assessment for the job description and person specification for those roles likely to involve regular and vulnerable activities with children and young people before recruitment takes place. This will ensure that only appropriate individuals are selected to undertake PVG disclosure procedures.

Senior management are responsible for ensuring robust risk assessments are carried out for the group and activities that involve children and young people, to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

PVG SCOTLAND CHECKS

As the core work of The WHY Project involves working closely with children and young people, PVG checks are required for all employees, volunteers, students and trainees. These checks are carried out through our membership with LAYC/Youth Scotland, our safeguarding body. Retention, update timescales and changes are managed through LAYC and communicated directly to senior management at The WHY Project, the board of trustees safeguarding lead is notified should and concerns relate to the senior management team.

TRAINING

Our approach to training incorporates both formal and informal elements. Formal safeguarding training, conducted in collaboration with the City of Edinburgh Council, occurs every three years to ensure that participants are equipped with the latest knowledge and best practices in safeguarding. Additionally, our in-house training sessions, held annually, provide an opportunity for ongoing learning and skill development in safeguarding practices. Prior to engaging in any activities involving children and young people, all employees, volunteers, students and trainees are guided through our safeguarding policy and procedures as part of our thorough induction process. This ensures that everyone comprehensively understands their responsibilities and the steps to take in safeguarding situations, setting a strong foundation for safe and ethical practice from the outset. This is further supported by ongoing monitoring and supervision of staff and volunteers to ensure compliance with safeguarding policies and procedures.

ENABLING REPORTS

The WHY Project will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to employees, volunteers, students and trainees we work with.



Any employees, volunteers, students and trainees reporting concerns or complaints through formal whistleblowing channels will be protected by The WHY Project's Whistleblowing Policy.

The WHY Project will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

REPORTING A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

Employees, volunteers, students and trainees members who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to their Safeguarding officer or line manager. If the employees, volunteers, students and trainees member does not feel comfortable reporting to their Safeguarding Officer or line manager (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern) they should report to the chair of the board or another senior staff member, all information which is shared as part of induction and available on the staff/volunteer shared drive.

Where possible, reports should be documented, dated and contain factual and non-led information provided by the child or young person.

RESPONSE

- The WHY Project will follow up all safeguarding reports and concerns according the legal and statutory obligations.
- We communicate with all necessary agencies in response to reports and allegations (social work, school, police).
- Where appropriate, updates will be provided where reports/allegations have been made.
- The WHY Project will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to employees, volunteers, students and trainees found in breach of policy.
- The WHY Project will offer support to children and young people that experience harm.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need to know basis only, and should be kept secure at all times.

Children and young people should be made aware that in the instance they make a report or allegation where there are concerns about their safety and well-being employees, volunteers, students and trainees have a duty to escalate and it will not be possible to maintain confidentiality.

SAFEGUARDING LEAD

Nominated Safeguarding Lead;

Kevin Brown (co-founder/Youth Work Manager)

Kevin@thewhyproject.org.uk

Board Safeguarding Lead;

Clare Gibson (chair of board)

clare-gibson@hotmail.co.uk



Safeguarding Board:

LAYC (Lothian Association of Youth Clubs)

enquiries@layc.org.uk

REVIEW AND TRANSPARENCY

The WHY Project safeguarding policy will be updated annually. To ensure full transparency it will be available on our website; www.thewhyproject.org.uk/useful-documents

DOCUMENT VERSION CONTROL

Version number	Change or update	Author or owner	Date
1.0	First version	Sabrina Tickle	January 2019
2.0	Update	Sabrina Tickle	June 2020
3.0	Review	Sabrina Tickle	Nov 2022
4.0	Review & update	Sabrina Tickle	Nov 2023
5.0	Updated to provide clarity on training	Sabrina Tickle (changed approved by Clare Gibson – Chair)	May 2024