



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 who use our services. Our duty extends beyond a strategic document and incorporates clear procedures, accompanied by training, supervision, and awareness-raising. Our commitment, with the support of our partners, is that 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 people from harm and to reassure members of the public, service users, employees, volunteers, students, trainees, funders, governing bodies, and those working on behalf of the organisation. This policy covers:

- What individuals can expect The WHY Project to do to protect and safeguard children and young people.
- How they can safely voice any concerns through an established procedure.
- That all reports of abuse or potential abuse are taken seriously and handled effectively.
- That there is an efficient system for recording and monitoring concerns.
- That employees, volunteers, and students receive appropriate training and supervision.
- That robust 'safer' recruitment procedures are in place.

PRINCIPLES

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

- Their welfare is paramount.
- Regardless of background, culture, parental or pregnancy status, age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity, all children and young people have the right to participate in society in a safe environment free from violence, fear, abuse, bullying, and discrimination.
- Children and young people have the right to be protected from harm, exploitation, and abuse and to have safe environments to live and play.
- Working in partnership with children and young people, their parents or carers, and other agencies is essential for promoting their welfare.

WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing, and human rights and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect. In our sector, this involves protecting children and young people from harm arising from contact with our staff, volunteers, students, trustees, partners, and service providers.

This policy specifically addresses the safeguarding of children and young people. While adults at risk can experience similar harms, the key difference lies in the right to make choices. Adults may choose to take risks, whereas children and young people require protection from harm, even if this goes against parental or child consent. Legal measures such as the Adult Support and Protection



(Scotland) Act 2007 exist to protect adults, but safeguarding decisions always consider balancing the “need to protect” with individual rights.

TYPES OF ABUSE

Children and young people may experience more than one type of abuse. This policy addresses: neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, female genital mutilation (FGM), and online abuse.

Neglect

Neglect is the most common form of abuse and can be life-threatening. It is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, often resulting in serious impairment of health or development. Indicators may include: Physical - constant hunger, poor personal hygiene, poor dental health, skin rashes or lice, constant tiredness, inadequate or ill-fitting clothing, untreated medical issues, underweight or overweight. Behavioural - social isolation, low self-esteem, frequent lateness or missing school, missed medical/dental appointments, destructive tendencies, poor peer relationships, compulsive stealing/scavenging.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child is deliberately hurt or injured by another person. It may be a single severe incident or repeated harm. It includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, or fabricating illness. Accidents occur, but staff must question suspicious marks or injuries.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is forced or persuaded into sexual activity, in person or online, with or without physical contact. It may involve penetration, masturbation, kissing, touching, or non-contact acts such as producing/viewing sexual images, encouraging inappropriate sexual behaviour, or grooming.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is persistent maltreatment affecting a child’s emotional development. This includes: being made to feel worthless, inadequate, or unloved; being silenced or mocked; facing unreasonable expectations; overprotection; limiting learning or social opportunities; frequent fear; bullying (including cyberbullying); or witnessing domestic abuse.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM involves partial or total removal of female genitalia or other injury to female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-term consequences. FGM can occur from infancy through adolescence, prior to marriage, or during pregnancy.

Online Abuse

Online abuse includes sexual exploitation, grooming, sexting, and cyberbullying. Children should enjoy online benefits safely. Indicators include excessive or reduced online activity, secrecy, new contacts or accounts, and behavioural changes such as distraction, worry, or upset.



EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

The WHY Project must:

- Ensure physical environments (youth clubs, outings) are safe.
- Implement clear child safeguarding policies and procedures accessible to all staff and volunteers.
- Conduct PVG checks every three years and verify qualifications and references.
- Provide annual training and ongoing awareness-raising on safeguarding.
- Establish clear reporting procedures internally and externally.
- Support children and young people who disclose abuse and connect them to appropriate services.
- Cooperate with relevant authorities for coordinated safeguarding responses.
- Monitor and review policies regularly.
- Promote a culture of vigilance, accountability, and respect for children's rights.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees, volunteers, students, and trainees must:

- Familiarise themselves with safeguarding policies and participate in training.
- Observe signs of potential harm or abuse.
- Report concerns following The WHY Project's procedures.
- Document observations or disclosures factually and accurately.
- Maintain confidentiality and share information only on a need-to-know basis.
- Promote a safe environment and maintain professional boundaries.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Senior management and the board must conduct risk assessments for roles involving children to ensure only suitable candidates undergo PVG procedures. Risk assessments must also be conducted for all activities involving children and young people.

PVG SCOTLAND CHECKS

PVG checks are required for all employees, volunteers, students, and trainees working with children, managed through LAYC/Youth Scotland. Senior management and the board safeguarding lead are notified of concerns.

TRAINING

Formal safeguarding training occurs every three years with the City of Edinburgh Council, supplemented by annual in-house training. All staff, volunteers, students, and trainees undergo safeguarding induction prior to working with children, supported by ongoing monitoring and supervision.

ENABLING REPORTS

Safe, accessible reporting channels are provided for staff, volunteers, students, and trainees. Whistleblowers are protected under The WHY Project's Whistleblowing Policy. External complaints from the public or partner organisations are also accepted.

REPORTING A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

Concerns should be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Officer or line manager. If uncomfortable, staff may report to the chair of the board or another senior member. Reports should be factual, dated, and documented.



RESPONSE

- All reports are followed up according to legal obligations.
- The organisation communicates with relevant agencies (social work, school, police).
- Updates are provided when appropriate.
- Disciplinary action is taken against policy breaches.
- Support is offered to affected children and young people.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality must be maintained at all stages. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis. Children should understand that safeguarding reports may require escalation and cannot always remain confidential.

SAFEGUARDING LEADS

Staff Safeguarding Lead;
Kevin Brown (co-founder/Youth Work Manager)
Kevin@thewhyproject.org.uk

Board Safeguarding Lead;
Clare Gibson
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	May 2024
6.0	Review, grammar, punctuation update – content remained the same	Sabrina Tickle	June 2025