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SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR UPPINGHAM YOUTH SPACE AND WHISSENDINE YOUTH GROUP

Child Protection Policy

1.1 Introduction

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children’s Act 1989)

Everyone who participates in The Uppingham Youth Space (UYS) /Whissendine Youth Group (WYG) is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. UYS/WYG has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, staff and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

The UYS/WYG is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone in the UYS/WYG accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children and young people (CYP) from harm and abuse. This means following procedures to protect CYP and reporting any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing CYP with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of UYS/WYG and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

1. Policy Statement

This Policy has regard to the documents listed in the appendix and also takes account of the procedures and practice of Rutland Social Services Prevention and Safeguarding Team.

Rutland First is committed to the following:

- the welfare of CYP is paramount.
- all CYP, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in activities in a safe environment.
- taking all reasonable steps to protect CYP from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings.
- all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- all UYS/WYG employees and volunteers who work with CYP will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and child protection procedures.
- working in partnership with parents and CYP is essential for their protection.

2. Monitoring and reviewing the policy and procedures.

The Youth Leader should regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements, gaps and areas where changes are required to the management committee.

The policy should be reviewed every 2 years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.

Any issues arising and resultant action should be anonymised and used to inform this policy going forward

Specific risk assessment and safeguarding concerns for UYS/WYG should be identified and addressed in this policy.

2. Promoting Good Practice

2.1. Introduction

To provide CYP with the best possible experience in the UYS/WYG, everyone must operate within a safe and child-centred environment.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse and it is NOT the responsibility of employees or participants to make judgements about whether abuse is taking place. It is, however, their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse, and act appropriately if they have concerns about the welfare of the CYP, as explained in Section 4.

2.2. Good Practice

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and actions:

- always put the welfare of the young person first.
- treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity.
- make participation in the Youth Group fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying.
- promote online safety.
- discourage inappropriate language and behaviour and promote adherence to the Code of Conduct for the group.
- maintain a safe and appropriate distance with participants/children (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a CYP).
- avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and without unnecessary physical contact.
- be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- recognise the developmental needs and capacity of the young person.
- display H & S guidance where appropriate, eg. the kitchen area.
- obtain written parental consent to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises. This information should be kept following GDPR guidance.
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given, following GDPR guidance.
- to have access to supervision and support,

2.3 Poor Practice

The following are regarded as **poor** practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others.
- engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any form.
- allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun.
- reducing a young person to tears as a form of control.
- allowing allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- doing things of a personal nature that the young person can do for themselves.

3. Defining Child Abuse

3.1. Introduction

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to physical and/or mental injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power and a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

There are four main types of abuse:

- physical abuse,
- sexual abuse,
- emotional abuse, including bullying and cyber bullying.
- neglect.

The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. An individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person.

Abuse in all its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that, if not treated, they may follow the individual into adulthood.

Disabled Young People may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse has occurred.

All young people taking part in Youth Group activities should read and sign up to the Youth Groups' Behaviour Policy.

For types and indicators of abuse: see Appendix 1.

4. Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

4.1 Introduction

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in UYS/WYG in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place.

However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person.

In the first place this contact should be with the UYS/WYG Leader who will report to the appropriate authorities.

This applies **BOTH** to allegations/suspicions of abuse occurring within UYS/WYG and to allegations/suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

4.2 Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways: we may see it happening; we may suspect it is happening because of signs such as those listed in Appendix 1 of this document; it may be reported to us by someone else, or directly by the young person themselves.

The safety of the CYP is paramount. It is important to distinguish between low-level and high-level concerns and, in the latter case, where immediate intervention is required, it is important to respond promptly. If the CYP needs urgent medical attention, call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern, and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue.

If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- **stay calm** so as not to heighten anxiety in the young person.
- **not promise** secrecy.
- **reassure** the CYP that they are not to blame and that it was right to disclose.

- **listen** to the CYP, showing that you are taking them seriously.
- **keep questions to a minimum**, so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the CYP has been led, or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning.
- **not ask leading questions:** only ask questions to clarify.
- **inform** the CYP that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the CYP this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- **record** all information (see 4.3 below).
- **report** the incident to the UYS/WYG Leader

In all cases, if you are not sure what to do you can gain help from Rutland Social Services Prevention and Safeguarding Teams (01572 758341).

4.3 Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, clear written and dated records should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish between your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Record information and ensure that it is used in accordance with GDPR.

Information should include the following:

- the CYP's name, age, and date of birth.
- the CYP's home address and telephone number.
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's.
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information.
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- details of witnesses to the incidents.
- the CYP's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred.
- have the parents been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser?

4.4 Reporting the Concern (See Appendix 2)

All low-level and high-level concerns, suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused, particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern. (See Appendix 2)

The UYS/WYG expects its volunteers and staff to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child **immediately with the person in charge** and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

If the UYS/WYG Leader is not available you should take responsibility and seek advice from: the Rutland Social Services Prevention and Safeguarding Teams; NSPCC helpline; the duty officer at your local Social Services Department, or the police. Telephone numbers can be found at the end of this policy.

A summary of reporting procedures is provided below. Where there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation:

- **Criminal**, in which case the police are immediately involved.
- **Child protection**, in which case Social Services and possibly the police will be involved.
- **Disciplinary or misconduct**, in which case UYS/WYG will be involved.

As mentioned previously in this document the UYS/WYG employees and volunteers are not child protection experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection.

Social Services have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the CYP and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the CYP and making inquiries jointly with the police.

Any suspicion that a CYP has been abused by an employee or a volunteer should be reported to the Rutland First Safeguarding Lead (07973 782520), who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the CYP in question and any other CYP who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- Rutland First Safeguarding Lead will refer the matter to Social Services Department.
- the parent/carer of the CYP will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Social Services Department.
- the Chair of Rutland First should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings.
- if the UYS/WYG Leader is the subject of the suspicion/allegation the report must be made to the Rutland First Safeguarding Lead, who will refer the matter to Social Services.

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to Social Services. This is because other CYP may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with CYP

4.5 Concerns outside the immediate environment (e.g. concerns involving a parent or carer)

- It is important to distinguish between low-level concerns and high-level concerns. Lower-level concerns should be reported to the UYS/WYG Leader as soon as possible.
- higher-level concerns should be reported immediately. If the Group Leader is not available, the person being told, or discovering the abuse, should contact their local Social Services Department or the police immediately,
- Social Services and the Group Leader will decide how to inform the parents/carers.
- The Group Leader should also report the incident to the Rutland First Board. The Board should ascertain whether the person(s) involved in the incident play a role in the organisation and act accordingly, with regard to the Rutland First Safeguarding Policy.
- You should maintain confidentiality, following GDPR, on a need-to-know basis (see section 5, below).

5 Confidentiality and data protection

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with Data Protection Laws (GDPR, 2018) to ensure that 'information is used for explicit purposes and in a way that is adequate, relevant, and limited to only what is necessary'

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The UYS/WYG Leader.

- The parents of the CYP.
- The person making the allegation.
- Social Services/police.
- Rutland First Board .
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a CYP).

Seek Social Services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

6. Internal Inquiries and Suspension

The UYS/WYG Leader in consultation with Rutland First Board will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of the Social Services or police inquiries, the Rutland First Board will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, if the Board deems the allegations to be sufficiently serious, it reserves the right to terminate employment.

The welfare of the CYP should remain of paramount importance throughout.

7. Recruiting and Selecting Personnel to work with Children

7.1 Introduction

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with CYP. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, both full and part-time. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with CYP the following steps should be taken when recruiting:

- All staff and volunteers must complete an application form.
- DBS checks must be carried out for all staff and volunteers.
- Two confidential references including, where possible, one regarding previous work with CYP should be obtained. These references **MUST** be taken up and confirm that the referees are not aware of any reasons why the applicant should not work with young people (NLCF guidelines). Confirmation should be made through telephone contact and recorded appropriately.

7.2 Interview and Induction

To ensure safer recruitment, all employees and volunteers will be required to undertake an interview carried out by a Board member. Uppingham Youth Space, Whissendine Youth Group require that all employees and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- They should sign up to the organisation's Code of Conduct and this should be recorded in the Single Central Record.
- Child protection procedures should be explained, and training needs identified, e.g. basic child protection awareness and behaviour management.
- All external contractors (and visitors) to have, and adhere to, their own safeguarding policies.
- All employees, volunteers, coaches, welfare officers and team managers to undertake relevant child protection training to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of positive culture towards good practice and child protection.

- Online training is acceptable, certificate of training to be accepted by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- All staff and volunteers receive advisory information outlining good/bad practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.

Declaration

On behalf of **Uppingham Youth Space/Whissendine Youth Group** we, the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

Signed:

(Youth Leader)

Date:

Appendix 1

1.1 Types of Abuse

- **Physical Abuse:** where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse.

This category of abuse can also include when a parent/carer reports non-existent symptoms or illness or deliberately causes ill health in a young person they are looking after (Munchausen's syndrome by proxy).

- **Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the CYP's emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted, which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn.

Ill treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

- **Bullying** may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are four main types of bullying.

It may be **physical** (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), **verbal** (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), **emotional** (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or **sexual** (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

- **Neglect** occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the CYP's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect
- **Sexual Abuse** occurs when adults (male and female) use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include: full sexual intercourse, masturbation; oral sex; anal intercourse and fondling. Showing young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse. Sending text messages, photos and videos of a sexual nature, (sexting).
- **Peer on peer abuse** - includes but is not limited to:
 - Physical and sexual abuse
 - Sexual harassment and violence
 - Emotional harm
 - On and offline bullying
 - Teenage relationship abuse
 - It can even include grooming children for sexual and criminal exploitation

1.2 Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a CYP is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries,
- an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent.
- the young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them.
- another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person.
- unexplained changes in a young person's behaviour e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.

- inappropriate sexual awareness.
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour.
- distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- difficulty in making friends.
- being prevented from socialising with others.
- displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite.
- losing weight for no apparent reason.
- increasing lack of self-care.
- behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, an unexplained drop off in performance.
- physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes.
- a shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions.

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, and that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is **NOT** the responsibility of those working in UYS/WYG to decide that child abuse is occurring. It **IS** their responsibility to act on any concerns.

Appendix 2

If you have a Safeguarding Concern, ALWAYS err on the side of reporting it. NEVER assume someone else will report it.

Contact Numbers:

If you believe a child or young person is at risk of IMMEDIATE danger, call the Police on 999, reporting a vulnerable child or young person in danger.

Information for reporting a concern relating to a child can be found here:

<https://www.rutland.gov.uk/rutland-information-service/directory/g5whniufjq>

Phone:	01572 758 407
Email:	ChildrensReferrals@rutland.gov.uk
Website:	Visit the Rutland County Council website

For concerns about a professional or volunteer who works with children and young people, contact: LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) email: lado@rutland.gov.uk call: 01572 758454.

Appendix 3

References

- The Children Act, 1989 and 2004.
- The Data Protection Act, 2018..
- The United Nations Convention on Human Rights of the Child. (Ratified by the UK, 1989).
- Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership Policy.
- NCVO.
- NSPCC Safeguarding Standards and guidance.
- NSPCC example of a safeguarding Policy Statement Feb. 2022.
- National Body for Youth Work (NYA Network) Safeguarding for Youth Work.

- National Lottery Community Fund.
- Uppingham Community College (UCC) Behaviour for Learning Policy . June 2022.
- Uppingham Community College (UCC) Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy September 2023.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, updated December 2020.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education - September 2023.