

Safeguarding Children Policy



About with Friends



“About with Friends is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its members with learning disabilities and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.”

1. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

At About with Friends safeguarding is of paramount importance and part of our ethos. We work in conjunction with the [Norfolk Children's Safeguarding Board](#) to ensure that our provision meets robust standards. Safeguarding at About with Friends is considered everyone's responsibility and as such About with Friends aims to create the safest environment within which every member has the opportunity to achieve their full potential. About with Friends recognises the contribution it can make in ensuring that all members feel that they will be listened to and appropriate action taken. We will do this by working in partnership with other agencies in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children March 2015 and seeking to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers and other colleagues to develop and provide activities and opportunities that will help to equip our members with the skills they need. This will include materials and learning experiences that will encourage our children to develop essential life skills and protective behaviours.

Note: A child is a person 17 years or under

2. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this policy is to

- a) Ensure the welfare of the child or young person is always paramount
- b) Ensure children, young people and their families will be respected and listened to
- c) Ensure all staff and volunteers are well trained and knowledgeable about safeguarding issues and the associated procedures
- d) Ensure About with Friends policies and procedures follow and abide by the standards set out by the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board, being updated as necessary.
- e) Ensure staff have a clear understanding of the legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people.
- f) Promote and maintain a culture where staff are encouraged to share concerns and respond to those concerns and allegations immediately and appropriately via the child protection referral procedures
- g) Ensure awareness and understanding that young people with learning difficulties may be more vulnerable to abuse
- h) remain aware of any changes in legislation that affect child protection and keep staff updated with all relevant change
- i) detail how employees will be supported in the event of reporting a concern

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3. PROMOTING AWARENESS OF SAFEGUARDING

The policy forms a key part of new staff induction. It is accessible on the About with Friends website, is displayed on staff notice boards and available on request. We inform parents and carers about this policy when they join About with Friends.

The reporting disclosures, suspicions and allegations procedure is displayed in prominent areas within About with Friends

4. LEGAL CONTEXT

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- Working Together to Safeguarding Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children 2015
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their families
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children
- Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board procedures

5. SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS

- 5.1 Safeguarding Children Officer (SCO) - Martin Higgins, Deputy Safeguarding Officer Sam Harwood CEO
- 5.2 Safeguarding Adult Officer (SAO) –Sam Harwood CEO, Martin Higgins, Liam Davies & Beth Ward.
- 5.3 Safeguarding Officer for safeguarding children and adults –, Sam Harwood CEO and Martin Higgins (Designated Safeguarding Officer for Children)
- 5.4 Responsible Trustee for safeguarding children – Barbara Lloyd Smith

6. AWF REPORTING PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING REFERRALS [\(appendix 1\)](#)

- 6.1 Please read this section alongside [appendix 1](#)
- 6.2 About with Friends adheres to child protection procedures that have been agreed locally through the Norfolk Children's Safeguarding Board
- 6.3 If emergency medical attention is required this can be secured by calling an ambulance (dial 999) or taking a child to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department

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- 6.4 **Suspect Abuse** - If employees suspect [abuse](#), have identified [actual abuse](#) or have a safeguarding concern, report it immediately to the AWF Safeguarding Officer using the appropriate AWF incident / concern form.

Sometimes a [child will speak to](#) you - ***you must REFER; not investigate***. The AWF Safeguarding Officer will [consult](#) with the person raising the issue and possibly the child and decide the appropriate course of action and whether a **referral to [Norfolk Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\)](#)** is required.

A referral involves giving [Norfolk Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\)](#) or the [police](#) information about concerns.

Note

- If we are unsure to make a referral you can request a professional consultation via the MASH
 - Following a referral concerns must be put in writing to [MASH](#) within 24 hours on the [appropriate form](#) (NSCB1 form).
 - At this point the Local Authority or Police will lead any investigation and inform you how to proceed.
- 6.5 **Concerns regarding AWF Safeguarding Officer** - If one of the AWF Safeguarding Officers is implicated in the concerns then employees can discuss directly with [Local Authority Designated Officer](#) and followed up [on the appropriate form](#) within 24 hours. The LADO will lead the investigation
- 6.6 **Concerns regarding an AWF Staff Member or Volunteer** - If an allegation has been made about an AWF staff member or volunteer the [Local Authority Designated Officer](#) must be notified immediately and followed up [on the appropriate form](#) within 24 hours. The LADO will lead the investigation.
- 6.6 Prior to and after to a referral to either the MASH or the LADO accurate records of the concern made and any action required or not and the reasons for the decision must be recorded. This will be made on the AWF Incident / Concern Form
- 6.7 The information required:
- Name of the child
 - Details of the observation you have made
 - The place where you made the observation
 - Or, who passed the information to you
 - The date and time of your observation
 - Your name and role and other personnel involved
 - Facts – not opinion
 - Exact words used
 - Keep form updated with dates and with whom you spoke
- 6.8 We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. Parents/carers

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will be informed if a referral is being made except in the following circumstances; sexual abuse, organised or multiple abuse, fictitious illness by proxy (also known as Munchausen Syndrome), where contacting parents/carers would place a child, the person reporting or others at immediate risk.

6.9 Inability to inform parents for any reason will not prevent a referral being made.

7. RECOGNITION OF ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

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 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 (for example, 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.

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Neglect

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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

8. CONSULTING THE CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

The purpose of consultation is to discuss concerns in relation to a child and decide what action is necessary. It is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused, or respond to a child wanting to talk to you. This practice can help clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action. Consultation is not the same as making a referral but will enable a decision to be made as to whether a referral to Social Services or the Police will progress.

9. WHAT TO DO IF CHILDREN TALK OPENLY ABOUT ABUSE OR NEGLECT

It is recognised that a child may seek you out to share information about abuse or neglect, or talk spontaneously individually or in groups when you are present. In these situations you must:

- Listen carefully to the child. DO NOT directly question the child.
- Give the child time and attention.
- Allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed as evidence.
- Use the child's own words where possible.
- Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
- Reassure the child that: you are glad they have told you; they have not done anything wrong; what you are going to do next.
- Explain that you will need to get help to keep the child safe.
- Do NOT ask the child to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.

10. RECORDING INFORMATION

It is important to record injuries or behaviour which alert or worry. About with Friends has two forms:

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11.1 Concerns form

The concerns form is completed if staff or volunteers have any concerns regarding a change in behaviour of a members including - change in patterns, unusual behaviour or wellbeing. If the Concern is regarding bruising or markings the body map is completed. The form is completed immediately after a concern arises and handed to a line manager or the relevant safeguarding officer.

The concerns form allows managers to build up a picture of a member and decide on the necessary course of action

11.2 Incident form (About with Friends disclosure form)

The incident form should be completed on every occasion when an incident, accident, illness, action of inappropriate or challenging behaviour takes place or when a disclosure is made. The form should be completed in full detail within 24 hours of incident occurring, signed and dated by the member of staff completing the form. The form should be given to line manager or relevant safeguarding officer immediately after completion.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

All records made in relation to a referral will be kept confidentially and in a secure place. Information in relation to child protection concerns will only be shared on a “need to know” basis. However, the sharing of information is vital to child protection and, therefore, the issue of confidentiality is secondary to a child’s need for protection.

12. USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

CADS (Children’s advice & Duty service)
0344 800 8021
Norfolk Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
0344 800 8020
Mash@norfolk.gcsx.gov.uk

Martin Higgins – 07776 596667
Sam Harwood – 07778 145726

For specialist police advice you can contact the Duty Detective Sergeant
MASHsupervisors@norfolk.pnn.police.uk
01603 276151
Norfolk Police - 101

Local Authority Designated Officer
01603 223473

13. INDUCTON

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All new starters receive a days induction where key policies and procedures are read through and understood and welfare arrangements are pointed out. Part of About with Friends induction is a 'Safeguarding Induction Presentation' an interactive presentation with key parts of the policy highlighted.

14. TRAINING

Following induction, Safer programme training will be arranged as soon as possible, in cohorts of five, specific courses run by Norfolk Childrens Safeguarding Board.

All staff and volunteers at About with Friends receive safeguarding refresher training every year which raises their awareness of processes and procedures agreed by the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board. Training also covers areas such as 'signs and symptoms' and 'internet safety'.

About with Friends Safeguarding Officers for Child Protection receive training on an annual basis including LSCB facilitated courses.

About with Friends Trustees are offered safeguarding training.

15. SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES

About with Friends will ensure that employees who raise concerns are:

- Listened to and supported and provided with counselling if required
- Provided with ongoing support and reassurance during any investigation
- Supplied with information about external sources of support including consulting legal advice if needed
- Not treated in any that may be regarded as discriminatory

Court proceedings involving personnel

- In the case of any employee being summoned to court as a witness to give evidence, Trustees and the CEO will be informed immediately
- Once an employee is summoned, it is obligatory to co-operate and any claim of confidentiality is not permitted
- Any formal requests to release a member's or employee's personnel file will be referred to the CEO and Trustees
- Legal advice/support will be provided if necessary

16. RELEVANT ABOUT WITH FRIENDS POLICIES

Confidentiality Policy
Data Protection Policy
Disciplinary procedures
Equality and Diversity Policy
Grievance Policy & Procedure
Health & Safety Policy
IT policy (includes social media)
Membership rules
Professional boundaries

Safeguarding Children Policy

- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Staff Handbook
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Working with our Members handbook
- Support and Supervision
- Touch Policy
- Trustee code of conduct
- Volunteer guidelines

17. SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

About with Friends has a Safer Recruitment Policy that is reviewed and approved by Norfolk Children's Safeguarding Board. This Policy encompasses all aspects of Safeguarding and seeks to ensure that appropriate policies & practices are in place, and that About with Friends recruitment process is rigorous and all information is gathered and checked at every stage.

End of policy