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## **Safeguarding Children and Young People: Policy, Procedures and Code of Conduct**

### **Policy**

This policy applies to all staff, the board of trustees, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of OAB.

#### **The purpose of this policy:**

- To protect children and young people who receive OAB's services. This includes the children of adults who use our services
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection

OAB believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

### **Legal framework**

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

- Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- General Data Protection Regulation 2018

- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) Code of Practice: 0–25 years:
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers; HM Government 2015
- Working together to safeguard children: A guide to interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; HM Government 2015

This policy should be read alongside our policies and procedures on:

- Online Safety Policy – Children and Young People
- Risk Management
- Data Protection/GDPR
- Whistleblowing
- Anti-Bullying
- Health and safety
- Equal Opportunities
- Lone working
- Hygiene

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- all children and young people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children and young people are additionally vulnerable because of their level of dependency or their communication needs. This is particularly the case in OAB as children and young people will have visual and often other impairments.
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting children's and young people's welfare.

**We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:**

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for children and young people – Mark Upton(Chief Executive); a deputy – Margaret Simpson (Trustee).
- adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made



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- recording and storing information professionally and securely, and sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, their families, staff and volunteers
- using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers
- managing any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately and sensitively
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

## Procedures

It is important to recognise that there are different types of abuse that a child may suffer. Abuse can be seen to fall into four basic categories.

### **Neglect:**

Neglect is a persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, e.g. to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter. This may also include neglect of a child's emotional needs.

### **Physical Abuse:**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

### **Sexual Abuse:**

Sexual abuse may include non-contact activities such as involving children in viewing pornographic material as well as contact-based abuse.

### **Emotional Abuse:**

This may involve the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child conveying to them that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate. Emotional abuse often forms an integral part of all forms of child abuse.

### **Personal responsibility**

Everybody at OAB, trustees, staff and volunteers, has a responsibility to immediately report all cases of suspected abuse as outlined in the four categories above to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).



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## **Reporting procedure**

Any member of staff or volunteer who suspects a child is being abused or has concerns about the child's welfare, should inform the designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), Mark Upton or in his absence, or if the complaint is against the DSO, the Deputy DSO, Margaret Simpson. The DSO will hold responsibility to investigate and, if appropriate, report the details to Local Authority Designated Officer.

## **Procedure to be followed by DSO (or in his/her absence the Deputy DSO)**

The DSO will, in the case of concern expressed, conduct an investigation and report the findings to the Local Authority Designated Officer and the Executive Committee of OAB. In cases of an urgent need to intervene, the DSO will contact the police.

## **Recording**

The DSO will record the details of the concern expressed and all actions taken to investigate and report the concerns appropriately.

## **Data Protection**

The principles of data protection (ref: GDPR 2018) will apply to the recording and sharing of information. Included in this is the need to share information with the relevant safeguarding authorities for the protection of the child's welfare.

## **Recruitment**

OAB will maintain a rigorous recruitment procedure for both staff and volunteers, including Disclosure and Barring Service Checks (DBS) and reference checks, to ensure that OAB personnel whose role would bring them into contact with children are suitable for such work. In such cases OAB intends to ensure that at least one person on the interview panel has been trained in Safer Recruiting within the previous three years.

## **Digital/Online Safety**

All staff, trustees and volunteers should be aware of the risk of harm to children from internet forms of abuse, like online bullying.

See OAB's Online Safety Policy – Children and Young People for further information about our commitment to keeping children and young people safe online.

## **Training**

All staff and volunteers who are newly recruited and may come into contact with children as part of their role, will receive training in how to recognise and report child abuse and a copy of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. Training will include visual impairment awareness, including potential vulnerabilities related to sight impairment.



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## Overall Responsibility

The DSO will have overall responsibility for the implementation of the Policy to ensure it is properly implemented throughout the organisation by staff, volunteers and any agencies, group leaders, organisers or other individuals acting on behalf of the organisation.

## Code of Conduct

- OAB expects all trustees, staff and volunteers working with children to adhere to a code of conduct which emphasises a child centred approach:
- The interests, safety and concerns of the children should be paramount at all times.
- Those working with children will listen to them, and value all contributions made.
- Children will be valued and respected and will be encouraged to value and respect each other.
- Differences will be respected and any form of discrimination will be challenged, and, if serious, reported to the DSO.
- An anti-bullying culture will be sought where all participants are continually encouraged and praised and any incidence of bullying will be firmly dealt with.
- An environment will be cultivated where children are able to develop and grow in confidence.
- Risk assessments will be conducted for all activities, shared with participants and complied with.
- Those working with children will be vigilant to identify any potential sources of harm to children.
- And breaches of this code of conduct will be reported to the DSO and dealt with by him or her.

## Contact details

### Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and Safer Recruitment Lead:

Mark Upton, Chief Executive

Tel: 01865 725595

Mob 07936 341444

Email: [markupton@oxeyes.org.uk](mailto:markupton@oxeyes.org.uk)



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**Deputy DSO:**

Margaret Simpson (Trustee)

Tel: 01865 862873

M: 07496 062280

Email: [msimpsonoxford@gmail.com](mailto:msimpsonoxford@gmail.com)

Local Authority Designated Officer: Alison Beasley 01865 815956

For a full list of Oxfordshire County Council Officers go to:

<https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/local-authority-designated-officers>

Emergency duty team in Children's Social Care: 0800 833 408

Police Child Exploitation and Online Protection. CEOP [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000

**Review**

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually and when there are significant changes in legislation or internal to our organisation.

This policy was last reviewed on: 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Person responsible for overseeing review: Mark Upton

**Signed:**

Mark Upton

30<sup>th</sup> July 2021



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