



*Developing young people through
personal challenge*

Safeguarding Policy

This policy applies to all staff and adult volunteers.

This policy will be reviewed annually and is in line with Oxfordshire County procedures

The Trustees and management of Youth Challenge Oxfordshire (YoCO) recognise their responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection.

All adult leaders will be provided with a copy of this policy and will be required to indicate their commitment to it by signing a declaration to say that they have read it and will adhere to it. The declaration will be kept in the charity records.

Definition of Safeguarding (OSCB 2020)

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health and development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best chances.

SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY AND THE WELFARE OF THE CHILD IS PARAMOUNT AND MUST OVERRIDE ALL OTHER CONSIDERATIONS.

The Safeguarding Officer- Designated Lead (DL)

There is a designated lead Trustee for safeguarding called the Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer. Christine Douglas is the Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer, to whom all suspected or disclosed incidents of a safeguarding nature are reported.

The Safeguarding Officer keeps accurate written records of concerns for a young person, even in cases where a referral is not appropriate immediately.

When abuse is reported or alleged, the Chair of Trustees or the Safeguarding Officer will assess the information and, if deemed necessary contact the relevant Safeguarding service.

The Safeguarding Officer must attend the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) Designated Lead Safeguarding training, refreshed every two years.

The Safeguarding Officer ensures that this policy is reviewed annually and is in line with County procedures.

Staff and Adult Volunteers

Recruitment and training

All staff and adult volunteers must complete an application form supplying the following information:

- Personal details
- Names of two independent referees
- Previous experience
- Any criminal convictions
- Competencies and areas of interest
- Signature and date

All staff and adult volunteers who have unsupervised access to young people are safely recruited and appropriately checked through the DBS process.

All staff and adult volunteers attend a basic Safeguarding course every two years.

All staff and adult volunteers must read this Safeguarding Policy, know who the Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer is and how to contact her. They must report any concerns about unusual or inappropriate behaviour to the Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer. We recognise that staff/volunteers who work regularly with young people are best placed to notice changes in behaviour and/or physical injuries.

Procedures for identifying and recording suspected cases of abuse are implemented by staff and adult volunteers. (see appendix 1)

Protecting staff and volunteers

The Trustees recognise the importance of protecting YoCO leaders from possible allegations of abuse and strongly recommend the following guidelines:

Leaders and staff **should never:**

- Be alone with young people unless in a clearly visible place
- Lock and unlock premises without another adult present
- Transport young people in a car/minibus or other vehicle without another adult present unless as part of a group of vehicles travelling to the same destination.
- Take young people to their homes
- Make inappropriate contact with young people, i.e. develop relationships outside the group setting, including via personal social media websites such as Facebook
- Leave young people unattended
- Leave young people with adults not known to leaders or not suitably trained.
- Leave young people alone with adults who have not had relevant DBS checks
- Show favouritism to young people within the group
- Store any data relating to young people on personal devices.

Allegations about Staff/Volunteers

If any allegation is made or suspicions emerge regarding any member of staff/volunteer of the charity, this should be reported to the Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer. The following procedure will apply during which all information relating to the allegation will remain confidential:

1. A detailed factual record of the allegation and action taken to be written by the Safeguarding Officer

2. The Safeguarding Officer will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Alison Beasley at Oxfordshire County Council on 01865 815956 or email alison.beasley@oxfordshire.gov.uk

3. Consideration will be given to the suspension of the person involved, taking account of the risks to other young people and the member of staff/volunteer concerned
4. If the allegation involves a young volunteer (under 18), contact will be made with the young person's parent/guardian to advise them of the process
5. If an allegation concerns the Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer the report should be made to the Chair of Trustees who will follow the same procedure
6. All low level concerns should be reported.

Young People

The charity will provide a safe, nurturing environment for each group following the YoCO programme where young people feel secure and happy. We will ensure that young people know they can approach any adult in the charity if they are worried about something and they will receive a consistent, supportive response.

If abuse is suspected:

- Observations, conversations or concerns will be recorded, signed and dated and passed to the Safeguarding Officer (see appendix 1)
- The matter must not be investigated or discussed with anyone other than the Safeguarding Officer or Chair of Trustees.
- The Chair of Trustees or the Safeguarding Officer will assess the information and, if deemed necessary, contact the appropriate local statutory services, **within 48 hours**.

If abuse is reported/alleged:

- The young person will be listened to and encouraged to speak without interruption, comment or judgement. The adult will follow closely the procedures set out in appendix 1
- A written account of the report or allegation will be made, signed and dated and the information passed to the Safeguarding Officer. If this is not possible it will be passed to the Chair of Trustees.
- The Chair of Trustees or the Safeguarding Officer will assess the information and, if deemed necessary they will contact the appropriate local statutory service the LCSS (Locality and Community Support Service) within 48 hours. This may take the form of a no names consultation.
- If the matter is regarded as critical and an immediate safeguarding concern it should be referred immediately and directly to the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) at Oxfordshire County Council by the Safeguarding Officer or Chair of Trustees or by the Youth Group Leader if neither of the other two can be reached.

If the allegation is about a youth group member, contact will be made with the young person's parent/guardian by the Safeguarding Officer to advise them of the process unless this puts the young person at increased risk.

Reporting concerns

There are five ways in which to report a safeguarding concern depending on the urgency and the type. The five ways are as follows:

1. If there is an urgent and serious safeguarding concern for example:

- Allegations/concerns that the child has been sexually/physically abused
- Concerns that the child is suffering from severe neglect or other severe health risks
- Concern that a child is living in or will be returned to a situation that may place them at immediate risk
- The child is frightened to return home

- The child has been abandoned or parent is absent

If possible, report immediately to the charity’s Safeguarding Officer or Chair of Trustees:

Safeguarding Officer: Christine Douglas	Contact number: 07879 468 157
Chair of Trustees: Jane Cranston	Contact number: 07771 867 205 or 01865 863681

OR If they cannot contact the Safeguarding Officer or Chair of Trustees, they must call the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (**MASH**) immediately on **0345 0507666** Or they can email a report to MASH on the secure email; mash-childrens@oxfordshire.gcsx.gov.uk

2. To discuss an on-going concern

To talk to someone about an already open case contact the relevant Children’s Social Care Team at:

North Oxfordshire – 01865 323039 or cassessmentnorth@oxfordshire.gov.uk
South Oxfordshire – 01865 323041 or cassessmentssouth@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Oxford City – 01865 328563 Or cassessmentcity@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Emergency Duty Team (out of hours) – 0800833 408

3. If you are unsure about whether to make a referral

Contact the Locality and Community Support Service (LCSS) and ask for a ‘**no names consultation**’ (you don’t give the child’s name) You can then discuss the situation with them and they will advise you what to do next.

LCSS Central (Cowley) 0345 2412705
LCSS North (Banbury) 0345 2412703
LCSS South (Abingdon) 0345 2412608

4. To report concerns about child exploitation

If a child or young person has made a disclosure about sexual exploitation or if you think a child might be at risk of being sexually exploited contact the **Kingfisher Team on 01865 309196**. Out of hours calls will be diverted to the Thames Valley Police Referral Centre.

5. To report concerns about child radicalisation

This could be in regards to a far right movement such as the English Defence League (EDL) animal rights activists such as the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) or religious extremism such as the Islamic State (IS)

Follow guidance in the document; Oxfordshire Prevent Referral and Contacts Oct 2015.

Photography

Since young people may be photographed while participating in youth group events and activities, written permission from parents/guardians will be obtained which will also allow photographic material to be used in the public domain. The written permission will be stored by the Operations Manager.

This policy was adopted and agreed by Trustees via online agreement on: 25th Mar 2021, Updated 25th Nov 2022

On behalf of the Board of Trustees :..... Jane Cranston

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees; Date of review Nov 2023

Appendix 1: PROCEDURES FOR IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE

ALL STAFF have a responsibility for action in cases of suspected child abuse. The following procedure should be followed if you have concerns about the safety of a child/young person or if a disclosure is made.

1) If a young person asks to speak to you about a problem, DO NOT promise confidentiality, but explain that it may be necessary to consult a senior colleague. Explain this as soon as possible to the young person.

2) RESPOND

Stop and listen if someone wants to tell you about suspicions of abuse. Listen quietly and actively, giving your undivided attention. Allow silences when needed. Do not show shock or disbelief and take what is said seriously. It is important to allow the child to talk and not to interrupt.

Stay calm and give reassurance to the young person. Explain to the young person that they have done the right thing by telling you and that what has happened is not their fault.

Establish the facts of what has happened but do not use leading questions. Think T.E.D. instead – Tell me.....Explain to me.....Describe to me....Keep questioning open, e.g. 'Is there anything else you want to say?' or 'Can you tell me more about that?' It may be appropriate to ask further questions to clarify rather than jumping to conclusions. Questions such as what happened, when did it happen and where were you are valuable for this.

Where possible clarify what the young person means when using certain terms – do not take it for granted that their understanding of a term is the same as yours or of a legal definition.

Do not criticise the perpetrator.

Explain to the young person what you will do next, e.g. you will need to pass this information to your Safeguarding Officer.

If the young person does not want to say anything further they do not have to.

3) RECORD

If possible, make brief notes about what the young person is telling you as they are speaking. If this is not appropriate write down what was said as soon as the young person has left. Record the date, time, place, your name and role and what was said, (rather than your interpretation of it). Use the young person's language wherever possible. **Note** - In most cases it is more appropriate to listen and record immediately afterwards. This written account of the report or allegation will be signed and dated and passed to the Safeguarding Officer.

4) REPORT

This written account of the report or allegation will be signed and dated and passed to the Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

You may wish to discuss this with other adults who are directly concerned with the young person but this needs to be well judged and in the interest of increasing the understanding of the problem and its context .

I have read Youth Challenge Oxfordshire's Safeguarding Policy including Appendix 1 and agree to adhere to it.

Name Signature.....Date