Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy

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1. OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING

1.1 YMCA Norfolk believes that every child and young person has the right to be safe, protected from harm, heard and supported to achieve their full potential. We put the welfare of children and young people at the centre of everything we do.

1.2 We are committed to creating environments where children and young people feel safe, respected, valued, and able to speak up. We listen to their views, take concerns seriously, and act when support or protection is needed.

1.3 We believe safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every member of staff, volunteer, trustee, contractor, or person working on behalf of YMCA Norfolk has a role in helping to keep children and young people safe.

1.4 We are committed to:

- Protecting children and young people from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm
- Promoting their safety, wellbeing, and development.
- Listening to children and young people and valuing their experiences, views, and wishes.
- Creating a positive safeguarding culture where concerns are taken seriously and acted upon.
- Working in partnership with families, communities, and safeguarding agencies.
- Providing environments that are inclusive, welcoming, and safe.
- Learning from experience and continuously improving safeguarding practice.

1.5 We recognise that some children and young people may face additional vulnerabilities, barriers to being heard, discrimination or inequality. We are committed to ensuring safeguarding practice is inclusive, accessible and responsive to individual needs and circumstances.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 This policy explains how we safeguard children and young people across YMCA Norfolk.

2.2 It sets out our safeguarding commitment, the principles that guide our work, and the responsibilities we share in helping to keep children and young people safe.

2.3 This policy supports a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. It helps staff, volunteers, trustees, and anyone working on behalf of YMCA Norfolk understand what is expected of them and where to seek advice and support.

2.4 We use this policy to:

- Promote a strong and positive safeguarding culture.
- Provide clear safeguarding expectations and responsibilities.
- Support safe, consistent, and effective safeguarding practice.
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding leadership, accountability, and oversight.
- Support staff to recognise, respond to, report, and record safeguarding concerns.
- Promote learning, reflection and continuous improvement across the organisation.

2.5 This policy should be read alongside our safeguarding procedures, guidance, and resources, which provide practical information about how to respond to safeguarding concerns and seek support when needed.

3. SCOPE

3.1 This policy applies to everyone working for or on behalf of YMCA Norfolk, including:

- Staff
- Volunteers
- Trustees
- Agency workers
- Students and apprentices
- Contractors and consultants
- Anyone else acting on behalf of YMCA Norfolk.

3.2 Everyone has a responsibility to help keep children and young people safe and to follow this policy and associated safeguarding procedures.

3.3 This policy applies to all children and young people who use, access, participate in, are referred to, are connected to, or otherwise come into contact with YMCA Norfolk services.

3.4 We provide a range of services which may include:

- Early years services
- Family services
- Youth and community services
- Education and learning services
- Housing and supported accommodation services
- Wellbeing services
- New and developing services.

3.5 Safeguarding responsibilities apply across all areas of YMCA Norfolk and are not limited to services that work directly with children and young people. We recognise that safeguarding is relevant in every role and every part of the organisation. This includes situations where concerns arise indirectly through families, communities, partnerships, or service delivery.

3.6 We recognise that some young adults aged 18 to 25 may continue to experience vulnerability, exploitation, or ongoing safeguarding needs. Where appropriate we take a transitional safeguarding approach and work with partners to support continuity between children and adult safeguarding arrangements.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 For the purpose of this policy:

A **child or young person** is anyone under the age of 18 years.

Safeguarding means protecting children and young people from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm. It also means promoting their safety, wellbeing, and development so they can grow up safely and achieve their potential. Safeguarding includes preventing harm, recognising concerns early, and taking action when support or protection is needed.

Child protection is part of safeguarding. It refers to the action taken to protect children and young people who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing significant harm.

A **Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)** is a trained member of staff who provides safeguarding advice, support, and oversight within YMCA Norfolk. The DSL supports staff to respond to concerns and works with safeguarding partners when required.

4.2 Further safeguarding definitions, guidance, and practical information are available within YMCA Norfolk safeguarding procedures and resources.

5. REFERENCES

5.1 This policy is supported by legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements, and YMCA Norfolk policies and procedures.

5.2 We work in line with current safeguarding requirements and review our policies and practices to reflect changes in legislation, guidance, and learning.

YMCA Norfolk Policies and Procedures

5.3 This policy should be read alongside:

- Policy 56 - Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Policy 55 - Professional Boundaries Policy
- Policy 61 - Staff Code of Conduct
- Policy 68 - Whistleblowing Policy
- Policy 02 - Data Protection Policy
- Policy 19 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Other safeguarding-related policies and guidance
- Safeguarding training materials
- Safeguarding posters and awareness resources
- Safeguarding reporting guidance flowchart.

Legislative and Statutory Framework

5.4 We have developed this policy in line with relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Online Safety Act 2023
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (where applicable).

6. SAFEGUARDING ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

YMCA Norfolk Safeguarding Structure

6.1 We maintain safeguarding arrangements to provide leadership, advice, support, and accountability across the organisation. Details of current safeguarding contacts and designated safeguarding roles are available in YMCA Norfolk safeguarding resources.

6.2 Current safeguarding contacts, designated safeguarding roles, and out-of-hours arrangements are available on Y-Net within Document 03 - Responsible Staff and Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Board of Trustees

6.3 The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for safeguarding within YMCA Norfolk. The board provides oversight, scrutiny, and challenge to help ensure safeguarding arrangements remain effective and that children and young people are protected.

6.4 Safeguarding performance, incidents, themes, audit findings, risks and learning are reviewed through YMCA Norfolk's governance and assurance arrangements and reported to the Board of Trustees.

6.5 The board is supported by a designated safeguarding trustee who provides additional oversight and assurance and supports the board in fulfilling its safeguarding responsibility.

Chief Executive Officer

6.6 The Chief Executive Officer is the Executive Lead for safeguarding and has overall accountability for strategic safeguarding risk across YMCA Norfolk. The Chief Executive Officer ensures appropriate safeguarding arrangements, resources and leadership are in place and receives assurance regarding safeguarding performance, compliance, risk and learning across the organisation.

Strategic Safeguarding Leads

6.7 Strategic Safeguarding Leads provide strategic leadership, oversight and assurance for safeguarding across YMCA Norfolk. They support organisational learning, quality assurance and continuous improvement and help ensure safeguarding arrangements remain effective.

Designated Safeguarding Leads

6.8 Designated Safeguarding Leads provide safeguarding advice, support and guidance to staff. They support safeguarding decision-making, coordinate safeguarding responses and work with safeguarding partners when required.

Managers

6.9 Managers help create environments where people feel confident to speak up and seek advice. They encourage staff to act on concerns and ensure appropriate safeguarding training, guidance and support is available.

6.10 Managers are responsible for ensuring recruitment is carried out in line with YMCA Norfolk's safer recruitment policies and procedures where applicable to their role.

Staff, Volunteers, and Contractors

6.11 Staff, volunteers and contractors play an important role in keeping children and young people safe. They recognise concerns, trust their judgement, seek support when needed, and share concerns without delay. They help create environments where children and young people feel safe, respected, and listened to.

6.12 While some roles carry specific safeguarding responsibility, everyone working for or on behalf of YMCA Norfolk has a responsibility to help keep children and young people safe.

6.13 We expect everyone to take concerns seriously, seek support when needed, and play their part in creating a safe and positive culture for children and young people.

7. HOW WE KEEP CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE

7.1 We create safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments where children and young people feel respected, valued, and able to speak up about anything that worries them.

7.2 We listen to children and young people and take their views, wishes, feelings, and lived experiences seriously. We recognise that children communicate in different ways and that changes in behaviour, presentation, or engagement may indicate that something is wrong.

7.3 We recognise that abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm can happen to any child or young person. We understand that some children may face additional vulnerabilities and barriers to being heard. This may include very young children, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), children experiencing mental ill health, children affected by domestic abuse, children in care, young carers and children at risk of exploitation or social exclusion.

7.4 We encourage staff to trust their instinct and professional judgement, notice when something feels wrong and ask questions when they are concerned about a child's safety or wellbeing. Staff do not need proof that harm has occurred before sharing a concern. We believe it's always better to raise a concern and seek advice than remain silent.

7.5 We support staff to do the right thing. We want people to speak up when they are worried about a child's safety or wellbeing. Anyone who raises a safeguarding concern in good faith will be listened to, supported, and taken seriously.

7.6 We provide safeguarding training, refresher training, guidance, supervision and support appropriate to each role. We want staff to feel confident recognising concerns, responding appropriately and seeking advice whenever they need it.

7.7 We respond to safeguarding concerns promptly and work with relevant agencies, partners, and families when it's appropriate to do so. We put the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at the centre of decision making.

7.8 We record concerns clearly, accurately, and without delay. Good record-keeping helps us understand risk, share information appropriately, and ensure children receive the right support.

7.9 We report safeguarding concerns through appropriate channels and follow organisational procedures. If there is any doubt about whether a concern should be reported, we encourage staff to report it and seek advice.

7.10 We encourage people to raise concerns about safeguarding practice, staff conduct or organisational issues that may affect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We want people to speak up without fear of being ignored or treated unfairly.

7.11 We promote a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding is not limited to frontline roles. Every member of staff, volunteer, trustee, contractor, or agency worker has a responsibility to help keep children and young people safe.

7.12 We provide clear safeguarding leadership and support across YMCA Norfolk. We regularly review safeguarding activity to strengthen practice, identify learning and ensure our safeguarding arrangements remain effective.

7.13 We promote positive and safe use of technology. We recognise that children and young people spend significant parts of their lives online and that harm can occur both online and offline. We help children and young people stay safe online and remain alert to risks such as

online abuse, exploitation, bullying, harmful content, inappropriate contact and misuse of technology.

7.14 We recognise that safeguarding risks continue to evolve. We remain responsive to emerging concerns and changing patterns of harm, including exploitation, abuse within relationships, serious violence, radicalisation and risks associated with technology and online activity.

7.15 We work in partnership with children, young people, families, carers, communities, and safeguarding agencies. We believe children are best protected when people work together, share information appropriately, and take coordinated actions when concerns arise.

7.16 We follow safer recruitment practices and carry out appropriate checks to help ensure that people working with or around children and young people are suitable for their role.

7.17 We support this policy through safeguarding procedures, guidance and resources that explain how to recognise, respond, report and record safeguarding concerns. Staff are expected to follow these procedures whenever they have a concern about the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person.

7.18 We learn from safeguarding concerns, audits, reviews, feedback, and experience. We use learning to strengthen our practice, improve our services, and maintain a strong safeguarding culture.

8. LEARNING, REVIEW & IMPROVEMENT

8.1 We are committed to continually strengthening safeguarding practice across YMCA Norfolk. We use monitoring, learning, and review activities to help ensure children and young people remain safe, receive the support they need and achieve positive outcomes.

8.2 We review safeguarding practice through:

- Audits and quality assurance activity.
- Safeguarding supervision and reflective practice.
- Review of safeguarding concerns, themes and trends.
- Monitoring of safeguarding training and compliance.
- Learning from incidents, reviews, and feedback.
- Engagement with staff, children, young people, families, and partners, where appropriate.

8.3 We use learning to strengthen safeguarding practice, improve services and support positive outcomes for children and young people.

8.4 We regularly review safeguarding activity, risks, and emerging themes. This helps us identify areas of good practice, respond to new risks, and continuously improve our safeguarding arrangements.

8.5 We share safeguarding learning through appropriate governance and assurance arrangements to support accountability, oversight, and continuous improvement.

8.6 We review this policy in line with YMCA Norfolk's policy review schedule or sooner where changes in legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding arrangements, or organisational learning require an earlier review.

9. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

9.1 This policy should be read alongside the safeguarding procedures, guidance and resources that support safeguarding practice across YMCA Norfolk. These documents are available

through Y-Net and provide practical information to help staff recognise, respond, report and record safeguarding concerns, seek advice and access support when needed.

9.2 Associated documents include:

- Procedure 06 - Safeguarding Concerns Procedure
- Document 03 - Responsible Staff and Designated Safeguarding Leads