

# **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY**

*for*

## **RAISING MY VOICE FOUNDATION**

### **Introduction**

RAISING MY VOICE FOUNDATION (the Charity) is a registered charity run for the following purpose:

The Relief of those in need because of financial hardship and ill health by the provision of counselling, advice and assistance (including legal representation), but not exclusively, to persons who have made a disclosure in the public interest regarding malpractice or wrongdoing happening in the work place.

The Charity is based at:

Ushaw Historic House  
Woodland Road  
Ushaw Moor  
Durham  
DH7 7DW

Charity Number: 1147387

The Charity has adopted this safeguarding children policy and expects every adult working or helping at Charity to support it and comply with it. Consequently this policy shall apply to all staff, managers, trustees, directors, volunteers, students or anyone working on behalf of Charity.

### **Purpose of the Policy**

This policy is intended to protect children who receive any service from us, including those who are the children of adults who may receive services from us. Under this policy, the term children shall mean any person who is under eighteen years of age.

The Charity believes that no child or young person should experience abuse or harm and is committed to the protection of children and young people. This policy is intended to provide guidance and overarching principles to those who represent us as volunteers or staff, to guide our approach to child protection and safeguarding.

### **The Risks to Children**

Children can be vulnerable to different forms of abuse and harm. It is important to recognise that abuse and harm of children can cover a wide range of circumstances and behaviours. For example, children can be at risk of:

- physical or emotional abuse
- neglect
- sexual abuse
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- grooming and exploitation
- trafficking and modern slavery
- exposure to or infliction of domestic abuse
- bullying or cyber bullying
- exposure to other inappropriate content or behaviour, such as violence or criminal behaviour
- self-harm
- physical harm when engaging with activities without adequate supervision

The causal factors of any such harm and/or abuse can also be wide-ranging. For example, children can be placed at risk by family members or by members of the community.

### **Safeguarding Principles**

Safeguarding children from harm and abuse is an essential responsibility for our Charity. We are committed to ensuring that any child who comes into contact with our services is properly safeguarded. Every person under this policy must ensure that they play an active role in ensuring that children are properly safeguarded.

Every person under this policy holds responsibility for:

- remaining alert and aware of possible safeguarding risks to children
- guarding children against harmful environments with appropriate actions (for example, adequate supervision or ensuring safe environments)

- taking positive steps to maintain the safety and wellbeing of children engaging with us as a Charity
- reporting concerns expeditiously and appropriately, in line with child protection procedures
- understanding the duty to report specific concerns (and understanding how this interplays with confidentiality)
- challenging any inappropriate or harmful behaviour of any other adult and reporting this accordingly
- acting appropriately in the presence of children
- not taking any inappropriate risks
- not smoking, drinking or taking any form of illicit substances in the presence of children

### **Safeguarding Officer**

Any question, report or concern in relation to the safeguarding of children should be shared with our Safeguarding Officer:

**Name:** NEVRES KEMAL

**Email:** nevreskemal@rmvf.org

**Telephone:** 07932790247

### **Confidentiality and Data Protection**

All personal information we may process relating to children, shall be processed and stored in accordance with our data protection privacy policy which can be located at: ORGANISATION WEBSITE.

### **Responding to a Safeguarding Concern**

Where a child is at immediate risk of serious harm, any adult present should call 999. Thereafter, the Safeguarding Officer should be contacted as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Where there is a safeguarding concern but no immediate risk of serious harm, the

adult who has heard or witnessed this concern should consult with the Safeguarding Officer as soon as practicable and by no later than the end of that same day.

Where any child makes a disclosure relating to harm or abuse to an adult, it is important for that adult to:

- listen calmly and carefully, showing that their their views are taken seriously
- provide an appropriate and honest level of reassurance
- avoid interrogating children and asking probing, intrusive and/or leading questions
- avoid making false promises regarding secrets and confidentiality with the child (because any concern of abuse/harm must be shared with the Safeguarding Officer and any subsequent safeguarding referral)
- make a confidential *written* record of the discussion either during the discussion or immediately afterwards. The record should include the key details of the disclosure together with any relevant times, dates, places and people concerned. Audio and video recordings of children making disclosures should be avoided
- refer all relevant information to the Safeguarding Officer as soon as practicable afterwards, and by no later than the end of the day

Upon receipt of any safeguarding concern, the Safeguarding Officer shall consult with any other relevant persons and will make any appropriate referrals to the relevant authorities, such as the applicable Local Authority Children's Services department.

### **Reporting Concerns About Other Adults**

Where any person has a concern regarding the conduct of an adult connected to the Charity, which poses or may pose a safeguarding risk to children such as:

- harming a child either physically or emotionally
- exposing a child to behaviour which may cause physical or emotional harm
- engaging in criminal activity concerning a child

this must be raised in the first instance with the Safeguarding Officer (or where this is not appropriate, a different senior member of the organisation) so that the next appropriate steps may be agreed and actioned. We recognise that there could be circumstances where a person may need to report a matter that has taken place in a

setting outside of the person's engagement with the Charity.

Usually, any appropriate steps following a safeguarding referral in respect of an individual connected to the Charity will include either:

- further initial enquiries
- escalation to the applicable Local Authority Children's Services department for assessment and/or the police for investigation
- instigation of any appropriate disciplinary, formal investigation processes and suspension of any person concerned within the Charity
- a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service, Disclosure Scotland or Access Northern Ireland, or any other relevant regulatory bodies

Any person within the Charity who has allegations made against them shall be informed properly in a formal meeting of the particulars of the allegations and the relevant next steps which shall be taken. Such a meeting should ordinarily be held by the Safeguarding Officer. On certain occasions, such a meeting may not be convened until this has been approved by any authorities involved (such as the police or the relevant Local Authority).

Any person from within the Charity who has allegations made against them shall be treated fairly. All enquires, investigations and decisions taken shall be just and fair, with the safety of any child concerned at the heart of the process.

Any person from within the Charity who makes an allegation against another person from within the Charity shall be listened to, taken seriously and shall be treated fairly and justly throughout the process of enquiries, investigations and decision making.

### **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Access Northern Ireland, Disclosure Scotland Checks**

Checks under the appropriate legislation should be undertaken wherever required. The groups of people we will usually undertake checks with the DBS, Access Northern Ireland, and Disclosure Scotland (whichever is applicable) in relation to are:

All employees, who undertake activities with children, all service volunteers, all service providers who provide services accessed by children.

Wherever we deem it is necessary and appropriate to remove any individual from a position of work in a activity which is regulated under the relevant legislation, we shall also be obliged to make a referral to the DBS, Access Northern Ireland and

Disclosure Scotland.

## **Safeguarding Children at the Charity**

### Responsibilities and Planning

Although the Safeguarding Officer will hold ultimate responsibility for overseeing the safety of children present at the Charity, all individuals under this policy must also play an active role in ensuring the safety of children at all times.

Where a certain type of events, activity or trip is taking place, we may issue an additional code of conduct, policy, or some specific other requirements which is specific to that occasion. Any such additional documentation will be made available to all those concerned (staff members, parents, guardians etc.) in advance. They should be read carefully and adhered to.

Appropriate background checking shall be undertaken wherever we are legally required to do so in respect of adults who are engaged by us (see the relevant section above).

### Venues

We are typically based at:

Located in Refugee/safe secure accomdation for women and children fleeing / experiencing Domestic Violence.

We have carried out a health and safety risk assessment in relation to the premises, in reference to its safety and suitability for children. Where any events, activities or trips are to take place at other locations, we shall also carry out a further risk assessment.

The fire safety procedure in relation to the premises can be found in the following location:

In the reception area,communal areas, kitchen and in the residential areas within the building, including directions to all external Fire safety areas.

### First Aid

We have the following first aid procedure within the Charity:

In the reception area and in the office.

Any accident or injury concerning a child should be brought to the attention of the

nearest first aider and should thereafter be formally reported to the Safeguarding Officer.

Wherever a child attend our premises alongside their parent or guardian, parents and guardians should ensure that children are properly supervised.

### **Managing Behaviour of Children Generally**

Whenever any adult engaged by us is faced with challenging or inappropriate behaviour from a child or with conflict between children, they must:

- treat each child fairly and equally
- approach the situation in a calm and neutral manner
- only ever use physical restraint/intervention in order to protect the immediate safety of a person, for example to prevent an injury or harm either to the child or others
- wherever it is justified to physically restrain a child or to physically intervene, the amount of force used should be kept to the absolute minimum taking into account the risk posed
- make a written record of the incident and ensure this is reported appropriately to the Safeguarding Officer

### **Managing Risks Posed by Other Children**

It is important for all adults engaged by us to recognise that children can face harm from their peers. This can commonly take the form of bullying. Bullying can be defined as any behaviour which is:

- repeated; and
- has the intention of hurting somebody either physically or emotionally.

Bulling can sometimes be motivated by prejudices based on certain groups, for example gender, race, religion or sexual orientation. Bullying can often include:

- physical harm perpetrated against another child
- name calling and threats
- cyberbullying (threats and abusive comments made via technology)

Any instance of bullying or concern relating to possible bullying between children at any event or activities arranged by us will usually be dealt with by us in the first instance as follows:

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Where any behaviour amounting to bullying continues following this, the following steps will be taken:

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All steps in relation to the prevention or management of bullying should be taken in consultation with the Safeguarding Officer.

### **Photography**

We operate a strict no photo policy. We will not take any photographs and ask that members of the public, parents or guardians and children do not take any photographs when attending our premises, activities and/or events.

### **Other Policies**

We have referred within this document to the following other important policies which should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Our data protection policy
- Our first aid policy

This policy should also be read in conjunction with:

Health and Safety Policy provided to all residents, office and employee's hand book.

### **Legal Framework**

This policy has been drawn up in accordance with all relevant and applicable legislation and guidance available to the Charity in the jurisdictions it operates within.

This Policy is approved and robustly endorsed by RAISING MY VOICE



FOUNDATION and is due for review every 2 YEARS (REVIEWED IF AND WHEN LEGISLATION CHANGES ARE MADE).

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ NEVRES KEMAL (Safeguarding Officer)

**Date:** 16th July 2023