

# SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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**Designated safeguard lead:**

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[www.svmentoring.co.uk](http://www.svmentoring.co.uk)

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

SV Mentoring values young people and children as being a vital part of the organisation and desires to see them grow, mature and be challenged in a healthy and safe environment.

The name of the child protection officer for the group will be displayed in the document and dated and a copy of this child protection policy will be kept with the DSL.

The policy reflects current legislation government statutory guidance and expectations and accepted best practice. It takes particular account of;

- Care Act 2014
- Children Act 1989
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Serious Crime Act 2015 **Including:**
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- LADO- allegations against staff
- Child sexual and criminal exploitation
- Procedures to follow
- Training

The following policy and procedures are to be adhered at SV Mentoring. It is mandatory that all staff have a clear understanding of the content to ensure the policy is followed relating to a Child Protection or Safeguarding incident. This policy is to be used alongside the South West Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures. This is an online document. All employees can access this online document via Gloucestershire County Council website,

[www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gscp](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gscp). The online manual is regularly updated.

Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare, the procedures at SV Mentoring defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances with the provision of safe and effective care

Child Protection is part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm. Effective child protection is essential as part of wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, all agencies and individuals should aim pro-actively to safeguard and promote welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.

### **What is child protection?**

Child protection is the response to the different ways in which a young person's or child's physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health are damaged by the actions of another person.

### **Our People**

Employees will be expected to undertake Child Protection training commencing their work at SV Mentoring. Safeguarding is questioned in the interview process and any gaps in knowledge are identified and addressed during the induction. All staff receive an induction prior to commencing

employment and condensed child protection training is included in this induction and delivered through the introductory information booklet. All staff are then booked onto Child Protection training within their first 6 to 8 weeks of employment.

We undertake to recruit sufficient people with appropriate qualifications and experience to ensure, wherever possible, that we can operate at a ratio of 1:8 for children up to the age of eight and a ratio of 1:10 for children over the age of eight

## **Shared Beliefs**

The needs of the child are paramount and should underpin all child protection work and resolve any conflicts of interests. All children deserve the opportunity to achieve their full potential. All children have the right to be safeguarded from harm and exploitation whatever their;

- ▲ Race, religion, first language or ethnicity
- ▲ Gender or sexuality
- ▲ Age
- ▲ Health or disability
- ▲ Location
- ▲ Any criminal behaviour
- ▲ Political or immigration status

Responsibility for the protection of children must be shared because children are safeguarded only when all relevant agencies and individuals accept responsibility and co- operate with one another. Statements about or, allegations of abuse, or neglect made by children, must always be taken seriously. The wishes and feelings of children are vital elements in assessing risk and formulating protection plans and must always be sought and given weight according to the level of understanding of the child.

The procedure contains guidance as to what action is to be taken when a child or young person has been or has alleged to have been abused or is at risk of abuse.

The procedure gives general principles that must be followed in all cases and goes on to cover three possible scenarios that may need a different approach by staff. These are as follows:

- ▲ Abuse of young people by staff
- ▲ Abuse of young people by other young people
- ▲ Abuse of young people by members of their family, or by others outside the home.
- ▲ Principles underpinning all work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

## **General Principles**

In all cases the priority is the welfare of the child or young person.

Their safety must be secured, and any emergency treatment sought immediately. This may involve taking the young person to a local A & E or contacting the GP direct.

The young person will need to be reassured and comforted in a sensitive way. Staff need to be available, documenting all concerns and passing on the manager.

All matters relating to actual or suspected abuse must be carefully and fully documented in line with this policy and company child protection training. The information needs to be recorded as soon as possible after the event has occurred. All recording must be signed and dated and passed to the Manager.

Staff should not deal with Child Protection and Safeguarding issues alone, consultation with the Manager must be sought at the earliest possible opportunity.

All staff have a professional duty to protect the children and young people we work with from harm. This duty is greater than any loyalties to colleagues or the children's families.

Matters relating to Child Protection and Safeguarding should be dealt with as privately as possible, but confidentiality cannot and should not be promised to a young person. Promises that can't be

kept should not be made. Staff must not ask questions during a disclosure or child protection issue. It is not for SV Mentoring staff to question or investigate as this could hinder potential or future section 47 investigations.

The prevention of abuse is the best strategy and good practice is about preventing abuse. The environment will be a safe place if all staff communicate effectively; record information well and staff have clearly defined boundaries within their strong relationships with the young people. An atmosphere where children feel confident about taking their problems to staff is one that promotes safety.

It is our responsibility to work in Partnership with parents and this must be maintained throughout all our work. There is an assumption that parents should know of significant events in their children's lives and be involved in planning meetings and decisions relating to the child of young person should a Child Protection and Safeguarding issue arise. The Local Authority Social Worker for the child however is the key person in deciding the extent and appropriateness of parental involvement.

It is important to note that a staff member may be gathering evidence in listening to a child or young person's disclosure. Child Protection and Safeguarding incidents can often lead to court proceedings. Remain factual in all recordings

It is important to be aware that when informing the social worker of a Child Protection issue, the Manager must not assume it will be passed to Child protection. SV Mentoring has a responsibility to pass concerns, observations and disclosures to the local child protection team. Referrals to Child Protection teams will always be undertaken by the Manager.

The child protection and safeguarding policy will be reviewed annually, however any deficiencies identified by the Manager, will be addressed and amended immediately.

## **Definitions of Abuse**

In dealing with actual, suspected, or risk of abuse, staff need to understand what constitutes abuse and the categories used to define it. The signs and symptoms of each category are discussed within the Child Protection training facilitated by SV Mentoring.

Child abuse and neglect is a generic term encompassing all ill treatment of children including serious physical and sexual assaults as well as cases where the standard of care does not adequately support the child's health or development.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may cause or neglect a child by inflicting harm or 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 a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

'Working together to safeguard children' (July 2018) sets out definitions and examples of the broad categories of abuse which are used for the purpose of recognition;

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse.

These categories overlap and an abused child does frequently suffer more than one type of abuse. Then next section of this policy provides definitions of these categories and information to help identify potential abuse and neglect and the required response.

All staff must be aware that abuse can take other forms and may be considered to be cultural in origin; this includes FGM, forced marriage and honour killings. All staff must also be aware of the potential for Child Sexual Exploitation.

**Neglect:** Neglect is 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 and development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer:

- Failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Failing to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate Support Workers'
- Failing to access appropriate medical care or treatment
- Failing to meet at child's basic emotional needs.

Severe neglect of young children is associated with major impairment of growth and intellectual development. Persistent neglect can lead to serious impairment of health and development, longterm difficulties with social functioning, relationships and educational progress. Neglect can also result, in extreme cases, in death. Evidence is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting.

**Physical Injury:** Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricated the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child. This unusual and potentially dangerous form of abuse is described as fabricated or induced illness in a child. This rare and potentially dangerous form of abuse has also been known as Munchausen Syndrome by proxy.

**Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact including penetrative or non- penetrative acts. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Emotional Abuse:** Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment 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 s/he is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as s/he meets the needs of another person.
- Feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. This includes interactions beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child's participating in normal social interaction
- Involve seeing and hearing the ill treatment of another
- Involve serious 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 most types of ill treatment of a child, though emotional abuse may occur alone.

**Cyberbullying:** Cyberbullying is an aggressive, intentional act of behaviour that is carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim. UNICEF informs that cyberbullying can take place on social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms and mobile phones. It is repeated behaviour, aimed at scaring, angering or shaming those who are targeted.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) - involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves

varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

Child Criminal exploitation (CCE) – The Home Office defines Child Criminal Exploitation as exploitation that occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power or coercion, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

## Procedure

Please note the following contacts:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Sam Viggers – [svmentoring@outlook.com](mailto:svmentoring@outlook.com)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): Jenny Hawkins-  
[JH.svmentoring@outlook.com](mailto:JH.svmentoring@outlook.com)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL):

1. In all cases the staff member is required to inform the Manager if there are Child Protection and Safeguarding concerns, observations, or disclosures etc. All disclosures to be written on the Child Protection Disclosure Form/ CPOMS ( if working with School based children )
2. Child Protection and Safeguarding matters in an ‘emergency’ are always dealt with by the Local Social Services Team and/or the Local Police Child Protection and Safeguarding Team. The child’s Social Worker will be notified by the care manager.
3. In all urgent cases the first point of referral is the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, Local Social Services Duty Social Worker. They will guide staff in the next steps and will involve the Police Child Protection and Safeguarding Team if appropriate.
4. If out of office hours, the Emergency Duty team is the first point of Referral.
5. The Child’s Social Worker is the next point of contact to inform them of what is happening. If out of hours, the Emergency Duty Team of the Local Authority should be contacted.
6. There often may be non-urgent Child Protection and Safeguarding concerns, for example a arriving from home very cold or hungry, or extremely upset having been shouted at or rejected. These are matters that may constitute significant harm but the child is now safe within the home and therefore this requires a measured referral to the Child’s Social Worker.

## Action to Be Taken In All Child Protection and Safeguarding Cases

1. Secure the safety of the child or young person. Remove the person who has abused or threatened to abuse them. Call the Police if there is an immediate danger.
2. If a child needs urgent medical attention then they should be taken immediately to the local Accident and Emergency Department at the hospital. On arrival the A&E staff must be informed that the incident may be a Child Protection and Safeguarding one so that they can make notes or take photographs as dictated by their own protocols.

- 3 For other medical support, for example if there is bruising or more seriously if sexual abuse is suspected, the medical must be arranged by the investigating Social Services Department. Staff can however accompany residents to medicals to offer support.
- 4 Ask the child or young person what has happened and record their response. Do not however 'cross examine' or ask any questions. Simply record the facts that they tell you. Do not replace words used or summarise it your own words what the young person has stated.
- 5 If an emergency situation and significant harm or risk of significant harm is assessed to be present, refer the matter at once to the Local Social Services by telephone. Give them the facts clearly and follow the instructions they may give including attending medical as outlined in point 3.
- 6 Inform by telephone the child's Social Worker, if not available ask for their Manager, failing that ask for a Duty Social Worker to urgently talk to you. The Manager will undertake these phone calls.
- 7 Consideration has to be given as to whether or not it is appropriate to notify parents. This will depend on the circumstances (i.e. if they are the alleged abuser or the alleged abuse happened whilst at home). The Social Worker may wish to inform parents this needs to be clarified.
- 8 Record the events contemporaneously. Note and log all phone calls and sign, time and date each record. This information will then be recorded on the Child Protection form, completed by the Manager.
- 9 Ensure that the next shift is fully aware of the situation that they read the logbook and the records made and that they are clear on any action to be taken.
- 10 If at any time staff feel they are not able to pass on the referrals properly or they are not getting a response from the Social Worker, pass this on to the Manager at once.
- 11 A number of children will come from abusing families. Children in care, separated from families are also targets for abusers. Staff must be open to the possibility of abuse happening to children and young people.
- 12 Staff should be aware of individuals that target children centres. No unauthorised visitors should be allowed in the centre no matter how helpful they may be. ID is to be asked of all visitors to the centre. Visitors must be monitored when at the centre. It is important that they are logged out after they leave. Young People's names and addresses should always be guarded carefully and not given out without thorough checking.

## Check-list of Action to be Taken

- Secure the safety of the child or young person • Listen but don't ask any questions; never stop a young person who is freely recalling an incident. Explain you are concerned for their well-being and help them understand what happens next
- If required arrange for emergency treatment. Assist in facilitating non-urgent examinations as arranged by the Social Services Department
  - Comfort and support the victim
  - Consult Management immediately
  - Carefully record events at the time or as soon as possible afterwards. Sign and Date each entry. Record on the Child Protection Disclosure Form.
  - Believe children and young people as a matter of course, but never promise to keep a disclosure 'secret'.
  - Staff will be suspended without prejudice in the event of an allegation being made against them, see LADO procedures.

- Whistleblow if necessary. It is the duty of all staff to do so if there is abuse happening and action is not being taken. You can do this through contacting the Manager.

## **LADO and the allegations management process**

SV Mentoring will report any allegations against any employees to the LADO and suspend the employee immediately pending an investigation. The allegation process advised by the LADO will be followed and any disciplinary procedures will be sanctioned in line with the advice received. If the LADO advises a referral to the DBS in regards to any allegations this will be followed immediately.

### **Taking, storing and sharing photographs of children**

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

- always asking for written consent from a child and their parents or carers before taking and using a child's image
- always explaining what images will be used for, how they will be stored and what potential risks are associated with sharing images of children
- making it clear that if a child or their family withdraw consent for an image to be shared, it may not be possible to delete images that have already been shared or published
- changing the names of children whose images are being used in our published material whenever possible (and only using first names if we do need to identify them)
- never publishing personal information about individual children and disguising any identifying information (for example the name of their school or a school uniform with a logo)
- making sure children, their parents and carers understand how images of children will be securely stored and for how long (including how we will control access to the images and their associated information)
- reducing the risk of images being copied and used inappropriately by:
  - only using images of children in appropriate clothing (including safety wear if necessary)
- avoiding full face and body shots of children taking part in activities such as swimming where there may be a heightened risk of images being misused
- using images that positively reflect young people's involvement in the activity.

If children, parents and/or carers do not consent to photographs being taken, we will respect their wishes. We will agree in advance how they would like to be identified so the photographer knows not to take pictures of them, and ensure this is done in a way that does not single out the child or make them feel isolated. We will never exclude a child from an activity because we do not have consent to take their photograph.

This policy was adopted by Sam Viggers on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023



Signed on behalf of SV Mentoring by:

Signature.....S.Viggers.....

Name in Capitals.....SAM VIGGERS.....

The policy has been reviewed and updated if necessary on:

Date.....16<sup>th</sup> January 2024.....

## **EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT**

**Purpose** The purpose of SV Mentoring children and young people's programme is to offer the children a safe and welcoming environment with fun activities where the children can grow and learn. Whether this be through academic or social educational activities or through other independent groups working in partnership with SV Mentoring.

### **Aims**

- To provide activities for children and young people to help them develop from childhood into adulthood and to provide support for them.
- To enable the children to express themselves.
- To assist the children in integrating into the community.
- To help children/young people appreciate the diversity of their cultures.

### **Organisation: SV Mentoring**

1. Each child and young person should be formally registered within the group. The information includes an information/consent form which their parent/guardian must complete. These forms have vital information about health and emergency contacts and should be kept securely and brought to each session.
2. Attendance register: a register should be kept for each session.

For activities for under 8s, which run for more than two hours in any one day, OR if you run a holiday club for six or more days a year, you must register the activity. To register, contact your

local Social Services Office and ask for the local Day Centre adviser. The law assumes that registration will be granted unless there are good reasons why it should not be.

### **Child Protection Representative**

SV Mentoring has appointed a child protection representative, whose name is displayed *within contact details and given to each provider*. If any worker has any child safety concerns, they should discuss them with them. They will take on the following responsibilities:

- Ensuring that the policy is being put into practice;
- Being the first point of contact for child protection issues;
- Keeping a record of any concerns expressed about child protection issues;
- Bringing any child protection concerns to the notice of the Management Committee and contacting the Local Authority if appropriate;
- Ensuring that paid staff and volunteers are given appropriate supervision;
- Ensuring that everyone involved with the organisation is aware of the identity of the Child Protection Representative.

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it is meeting its aims.

### **Trips/Outings**

1. When organising a trip/outing make sure a trip/outing slip is completed. This includes details about the trip and a section for parents to give their consent. These slips must be returned before the event takes place and must be brought on the trip with the completed group information/consent forms. (If a group information/consent form has not already been completed for a child or young person, then it will need to be completed).
2. Ensure that there is adequate insurance for the work and activities.

### **Personal/Personnel Safety**

- A group of children or young people under sixteen should not be left unattended at any time.
- Avoid being alone with an individual child or young person for a long time. If there is a need to be alone with a child or young person (e.g. first aid or he/she is distressed) make sure that another worker knows where you are and why.
- At no time should a volunteer or worker from any external organisation arrange to meet a young person away from the activity without someone else being there.
- As such meetings should be planned and have the approval of a member of the Committee (this must be someone other than the organiser themselves).
- Teenage assistants should always be supervised.
- Gifts or money should never be given to any child unless permission has been granted.
- Personal belongings and mobile phones should never be shared with any child. If a child needs to talk to somebody the mentor will be in control of the device and on loud speaker use so the whole conversation is heard.

## **Child Safety**

1. Make sure that the area you are using for activities is fit for the purpose, e.g. remove furniture, which could cause injury in energetic games.
2. Make sure that all workers and assistants know:
  - Where the emergency phone is and how to operate it
  - Where the first aid kit is
  - Who is responsible for First Aid and how to record accidents or injuries in the incident book
  - What to do in the event of a fire or other emergency
3. Once a year there should be a fire practice (if necessary)
4. Do not let children go home without an adult unless the parent has specifically said they may do so. Never let a child go with another adult unless the parent has informed you that this will happen.
5. If private cars are used for an outing, the drivers must be approved by the committee, be properly insured, have rested before driving, and should have clean licenses. All vehicles should be fitted with full seatbelts, not just lap belts. Full seatbelts should always be used.

Under normal circumstances, workers should only give a lift home to a young person from group activities if the parents of the young person have specifically asked for them to do so. (If workers are asked to give a young person or child a lift home, they are not obliged to do so, it is left to their discretion).

In the case of trips or outings, it should be made clear if workers' cars will be used and where the children or young people will be returned to.

## **What you should do**

1. Listen to the child/young person
2. Look at them directly and do not promise to keep any secrets before you know what they are, but always let the child/young person know if, and why, you are going to tell anyone
3. Look at them directly and do not promise to keep any secrets before you know what they are, but always let the child/young person know if, and why, you are going to tell anyone
4. Take whatever is said to you seriously and help the child/young person to trust his/her own feelings. Take notes of exactly what is said to you avoiding assumptions and conjecture.
5. It is not the role of the worker to investigate any allegations (this would contaminate evidence if a situation went to court). Any disclosure by a child/young person must be reported to the named child protection officer.
6. Speak immediately to the Local Authority or NSPCC for further advice and guidance.

### **What you should *not* do**

1. Project workers/volunteers should not begin investigating the matter themselves.
2. Do not discuss the matter with anyone except the correct people in authority.
3. Do not form your own opinions and decide to do nothing.

### **Things to say or do:**

- ‘What you are telling me is very important’
- This is not your fault’
- ‘I am sorry that this has happened/is happening’
- ‘You were right to tell someone’
- What you are telling me should not be happening to you and I will find out the best way to help you’
- Make notes soon after the event. Try to write down exactly what the young person or child said. Avoid assumptions or conjecture.

### **Things *not* to say or do:**

- Do not ask leading questions – Why? How? What?
- Do not say ‘Are you sure?’
- Do not show your own emotions e.g. shock/disbelief
- Do not make false promises

### **Staff declaration**

I .....{ staff name }..... have read and understood SV Mentoring's safeguarding policy and will ensure that this policy is actioned to ensure the safety of each and every young person I support.

Name:

Signature:

Date: