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# **SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**Purpose**

Freedom Camps is a Christian charity, aiming to work with other Christians and Churches to promote and advance the Christian faith with families with children through activities and events. We aim to encourage Christian families as well as engaging families who are not Christian and connecting them with local Churches.

Freedom Camps recognises that, under the Children Act 1989 and 2004, it has a duty and responsibility for making arrangements to ensure all its functions and activities are discharged having regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children/young people in their care. Freedom Camps also recognises and meets its responsibilities under Working Together 2018 and The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 for safeguarding children. A child is anyone up until their 18th birthday.

“Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children” is defined in Working Together 2018 as:

* protecting children from maltreatment
* preventing impairment of children’s health and development
* ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
* taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

The purpose of this policy statement is therefore:

* to protect children and young people who receive services from Freedom Camps from harm.
* to provide volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

**Safeguarding Responsibilities**

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. Freedom Camps is committed to ensuring that every child who comes into contact with the organisation is protected from harm. Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm. Everyone working for Freedom Camps whether as paid staff, volunteers or trustees are made aware that everyone has a responsibility to safeguard children and promote their welfare. We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

• valuing, listening to, and respecting them

• appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people, and a lead trustee for safeguarding

• adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, including risk assessments, procedures, and code of conduct for staff and volunteers

• developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures

• providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training, and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently

• recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made, including DBS checks

• recording and storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance

• sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions

• making sure that children, young people, and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern

• using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families, and carers appropriately

• using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately

• creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise

• 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

• building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people, and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

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**Procedure in the event of the disclosure**

Definitions of abuse and neglect:
Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by 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. (For definitions of abuse see Appendix 1. Appendix 2 describes some of the signs). All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously. The following procedure must be followed whenever an allegation is made that a child is being abused or when there is suspicion that a child has been abused. Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the child.

● Questions should be kept to the minimum necessary to understand what is being alleged and leading questions should be avoided. The use of any leading questions can cause problems for the subsequent investigation and any court proceedings.
● A full record should be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information. This should include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the child who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, and the account which has been given of the allegation (please see appendix 3).
● Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Director on that working day where possible. If the Director is not available, then the report must go to the Safeguarding trustee and Chair of Trustees.
● The Director shall telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local Social Services Department duty social worker.

**Responding appropriately to the child making an allegation of abuse**
● Stay calm.
● Listen carefully to what the child says.
● Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information would need to be shared with others - do not promise to keep secrets.
● Tell the child that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it.
● If the child can understand the significance and consequences of making a referral to social services, she/he should be asked his or her view.
● Regardless of the child’s view it remains the responsibility of the staff member/volunteer to take whatever action is required to ensure the safety of that child. Responsibility for making enquiries and investigating allegations rests with Child Social Services along with other relevant agencies.

Child protection issues are highly sensitive and volunteers who receive information about children or their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts. All child protection records should be kept secure.

To report a concern over the safety or welfare of a child or young person (aged under 18): **ring the Single Point of Advice (SPoA) at East Sussex County Council on 01323 464222, or**. **email them at 0-19.SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk**.

**Other useful information;**

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

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

**For children**

[www.childline.org.uk/pages/yourplace](http://www.childline.org.uk/pages/yourplace)

**Contacts**

Childline - 0800 1111

NSPCC – 0808 800 5000

Our Designated Safeguarding Officer is the Charity’s Director.

Our Lead Trustee for Safeguarding is Josh Booth.

**Document Accepted:** June 2023 **Next Review**: June 2024

**APPENDIX 1**

**Glossary taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children, July 2018**

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf)

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| **Item** | **Definition** |
| Children  | Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.  |
| Abuse  | A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by 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 others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.  |
| Physical abuse  | A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.  |

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| **Item** | **Definition** |
| Emotional abuse  | The persistent emotional maltreatment 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 they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meets the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber 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 all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.  |
| Sexual abuse  | Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.  |
| Child sexual exploitation  | Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation can also occur through use of technology.  |

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| **Item** | **Definition** |
| Neglect  | 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 or development. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.  |
| Extremism  | Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society. Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.  |

**Appendix 2**

Taken from the NSPCC website.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/spotting-signs-child-abuse/>

**What are the signs of child abuse?**

The signs of child abuse aren't always obvious, and a child might not feel able to tell anyone what's happening to them. Sometimes, children don't even realise that what's happening to them is abuse.

There are different types of child abuse and the signs that a child is being abused may depend on the type. For example, the signs that a child is being neglected may be different from the signs that a child is being abused sexually.

**Common signs**

Some common signs that there may be something concerning happening in a child’s life include:

* + unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
	+ becoming withdrawn
	+ seeming anxious
	+ becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
	+ lacks social skills and has few friends, if any
	+ poor bond or relationship with a parent
	+ knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age
	+ running away or going missing
	+ always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body.

These signs don’t necessarily mean that a child is being abused, there could be other things happening in their life which are affecting their behaviour – but we can help you to assess the situation.

You may also notice some concerning behaviour from adults who you know have children in their care, which makes you concerned for the child/children’s safety and wellbeing.

**Appendix 3: Child Protection Internal Recording Pro Forma**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**The following information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Full name, including any aliases** |  |
| **Gender** |  |
| **Date of Birth** |  |
| **Address** |  |
| **Who has Parental Responsibility?** |  |
| **Details of disclosure or concern, include date, time, full names, actual wording used)** |  |
| **Any special needs of the child/ren.** |  |
| **Actions Required** |  |
| **Consent Given by child/young person/parent:** **Yes / No****If consent not given, please state clearly reason for overruling the need for consent.** |  |
| **Follow Up** |  |
| **Your Name** |  |
| **Your Role** |  |
| **Signature** |  |
| **Date, time and place:** |  |

Our commitment to protecting children and young people is set out in our Safeguarding Policy