

The Old Bath House and Community Centre

Safeguarding Children Policy

The Old Bath House and Community Centre (OBHCC) believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice that protects them.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

The purpose of the policy:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who receive OBHCC services, including the children of adult members or users.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on Safeguarding procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of The Old Bath House and Community Centre (OBHCC).

It is our policy that no-one shall work with children and young people within OBHCC who:

- Has been convicted of or has received a formal police caution concerning an offence against children as listed in the First Schedule of the Children and Young People's Act 1933; or
- Has been convicted of or has received a formal police caution concerning sexual offences against children and young people.
- Is registered on either of the two new DBS barred lists for children & vulnerable adults. (previously known as the protection of Children Act list, protection of Vulnerable Adults Act list and List 99)

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers and undertake regular safeguarding & child protection courses and training as identified by the MK Safeguarding Children's Board.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made obtaining verification of an individual's identity and details of the individual's enhanced Disclosure and Barring check, to ensure that persons who have been convicted or have received a formal police caution concerning sexual offences against children or young people shall not undertake work with children and young people under the auspices of OBHCC.

Those responsible for the appointment of such workers must take all reasonable steps, including:

- Working in reference with OBHCC recruitment policy and MK Safeguarding Board Safer recruitment guidance.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents/carers, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents/carers and children appropriately.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

The role of staff, volunteers and trustees

All staff, volunteers and trustees working on behalf of OBHCC have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of children.

Staff, volunteers and trustees may receive disclosures of abuse and observe children who are at risk. This policy will enable staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

What is abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

The 'Working together' report suggests the following as the main types of abuse:-

- **Physical abuse-** is the physical mistreatment of a child which may or may not result in physical injury. It can be the use of force that results in an unwanted change in a person's physical state, including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- **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.
- **Emotional abuse-** Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.
- **Neglect and acts of omission-** 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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.
- **Bullying -** Bullying is not always easy to define, it can take many forms and is usually repeated over a period of time. The three types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racism or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from activities).

Procedure in the event of a disclosure

It is important that children are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously.

This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a 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 individual.

A full record shall 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, the account which has been given of the allegation.

What to do if a child or adult discloses harm to you

Receive

- Listen to the child
- If you are shocked by what they are saying, try not to show it
- Take what they say seriously
- Accept what the child says
- DO NOT ask for (other) information

Reassure

- Stay calm and reassure the child that they have done the right thing in talking to you
- Be honest with the child so do not make promises you can't keep
- Do not promise confidentiality – you have a duty to refer the child who is at risk
- Acknowledge how hard it must have been for the child to tell you what happened

React

- React to the child only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but do not interrogate them for details
- Do not ask leading questions
- Explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk
- Explain and if possible seek agreement that you will have to discuss the situation with someone else and will do so on a 'need to know' basis.

Record

- Make some brief notes at the time and write them up more fully as soon as possible – use the Record of Concerns Template attached
- Take care to record timing, setting and personnel as well as what was said
- Be objective in your recording – include statements and observable things rather than your interpretations or assumptions

Act Now

- Discuss the matter with the Child Protection representative immediately

Responding appropriately to an allegation of abuse

In the event of an incident or disclosure:

DO

- Make sure the individual is safe
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen
- Offer support and reassurance
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Follow correct procedure
- Explain areas of confidentiality; immediately speak to your manager for
- Support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for ongoing support.

DONT

- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Assume Information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation
- Elaborate in your notes
- Panic

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional adult protection agencies, following a referral from the designated Safeguarding Lead.

Responding to an allegation

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the safeguarding lead who is Lee-Anne Styles and can be contacted on 07961 545537 / leea74@hotmail.com by a member of staff or volunteer as appropriate.

The nominated safeguarding lead shall telephone and report the matter to the Milton Keynes Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) who can be contacted on 01908 253169 or 01908 253170 during working hours Monday - Thursday 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 4.30pm or out of hours contacting the Emergency Social

Work Team on 01908 265545. Alternatively, contact can be made by emailing children@milton-keynes.gov.uk.

A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority adult social services department within 24 hours. Milton Keynes City Council have a Multi Agency Referral Form (MARF) that is located on the MASH webpage [Milton Keynes Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\) | Milton Keynes City Council](#)

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Child protection raises issues of confidentiality that should be clearly understood by all.

Staff, volunteers and trustees have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies and adult social services.

Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all.

All personal information regarding a child will be kept confidential. All written records will be kept in a secure area for a specific time as identified in data protection guidelines. Records will only record details required in the initial contact form.

If a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the child sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies.

Within that context, the child should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

Where possible, consent should be obtained from the child before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the child is the priority.

Where a disclosure has been made, staff should let the child know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result.


Staff should assure the child that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why. The child's involvement in the process of sharing information should be fully considered and their wishes and feelings taken into account.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- The Children Act 1989 (England & Wales) and s.31 (9 and 10) as amended by the Adoption & Children Act 2002
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
- Protection of Children Act 1999 and The Police Act 1997
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Rehabilitation of offenders Act (NI order) 1974 (UK wide)
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Chair of Trustees: David Lovesy 

Adopted on: 13th January 2025

Review date: 9th January 2026