



Safeguarding Policy

Policy Statement

Introduction

Everyone, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in a safe environment. We commit to taking all reasonable steps to protect every person from harm, discrimination, and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings.

We believe safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. This policy gives all the guidance necessary for all of us to play our part. Safeguarding should not be left to one or two individuals. If you spot something you **must** tell someone.

Eternity Downham Market works with children, vulnerable adults, and families as part of its activities. These include Children clubs, Sunday School, Foodbank.

This policy applies to everyone working on behalf of the Charity, including the board of trustees, senior managers, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students. It covers anyone no matter their age or apparent vulnerability. We recognise not all vulnerabilities are obvious.

We recognise the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing concerns daily. Staff therefore shape and contribute to safeguarding arrangements and policy.

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up in accordance with legislation, such as the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004, both of which are amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Care Act 2014 and policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and vulnerable adults.

All suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Eternity Downham Market takes its duty seriously and promotes regular safeguarding training.

Definitions

The charity uses definitions of the term 'safeguarding' from statutory guidance.

1. Safeguarding children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children as:
 - protecting children from maltreatment
 - preventing impairment of children's health or development
 - ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care

- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes
2. Safeguarding vulnerable adults is defined in the Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 as:
 - protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect
 - people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect
 - people and organisations making sure that the adult’s wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, taking fully into account their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action
 - recognising that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear, or unrealistic about their personal circumstances and therefore potential risks to their safety or well-being.

Note: We recognise some adults may not be classed as vulnerable but may present signs of abuse (e.g., domestic violence) or disclose abuse. This procedure outlined in this policy can be applied to anyone.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this policy is to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive Eternity Downham Market’s services and the children of adults who use our services. It is also to provide parents, staff and volunteers with the principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
2. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who encounters children, vulnerable adults and their families has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action. To this effect, the Charity ensures that there are appropriate policies and procedures in place for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner.
3. All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, are recorded in writing and kept as a confidential record.
4. We recognise that the welfare of the child and vulnerable adult is paramount and that all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
5. We recognise specifically the vulnerabilities of children and vulnerable adults, and the additional safeguarding challenges and barriers that can exist when recognising abuse and neglect because of:
 - Special Educational Needs
 - Disability
 - the impact of previous experiences
 - their level of dependency
 - their communication needs, or
 - other issues

6. Working in partnership with children, young people, vulnerable adults, their parents, carers, and other agencies is essential in promoting welfare.
7. The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is safeguarded and promoted by the Charity by developing child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures which reflect best practice, and by the drawing up and effective implementation of our written Risk Assessment, which takes appropriate action to reduce risks that are identified. The Charity takes a proportional risk-based approach to the level of information that is provided to temporary staff and volunteers.
8. This policy also includes guidance on procedures when a member of staff/ volunteer, faces allegations of abuse.

Safeguarding Lead

To ensure effective management of this and related policies and its implementation, we have appointed a nominated child protection/ safeguarding lead, a deputy child protection/ safeguarding lead and a lead trustee/ board member for safeguarding. Safeguarding is also discussed regularly at trustee meetings. The leads are Chloe Hobday (Admin) & Aaron Loxley-Beck (Trustee)

Liaison with other bodies

We have procedures for contacting the local authority on safeguarding issues. We work in partnership with local statutory agencies, including social services, to report concerns. Using our safeguarding procedures, we can share concerns and relevant information with other agencies confidentially where appropriate.

Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers

For the avoidance of doubt, this applies to all aspects of the Charity.

1. We always aim to ensure safe and fair recruitment. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is an integral factor in our recruitment and selection and is an essential part of creating safe environments for children, vulnerable adults, and young people. All staff and volunteers who work with children will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and training in good practice and child protection procedures
2. We want to do all we can to ensure that no disqualified or unfit person works in the Charity or has access to children and vulnerable adults. Though not an exhaustive list, this will include checks via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), checks against the appropriate Barred List, prohibition checks (where necessary), employment history, appropriate references and whether a person is disqualified from working with children (including by association, where applicable to the role applied for).
3. Our recruitment procedures comply with these demands.
4. We take particular care to ensure those involved in one-to-one sessions are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.
5. Applicants for posts within the Charity are clearly informed if the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (and the Childcare (Disqualification)

Regulations where appropriate). Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed, and that any job offer will be withdrawn if any check is not satisfactory. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.

6. Volunteers who have not been through the full vetting process do not work unsupervised.
7. A number of Charity staff, such as cleaners, have little opportunity for contact with children and vulnerable adults. They are advised about safeguarding on appointment and updated within every 3 years.

External Workers and Visitors

We take all appropriate steps to ensure that checks are made on any staff employed by another agency working in the Charity.

We take security steps to ensure that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children. All visiting speakers are checked for suitability and are always appropriately supervised.

New staff, volunteers, and other workers (such as self-employed, visiting instructors etc) who join the Charity are required to participate in induction training appropriate to their role. This will include as a minimum:

- The Charity's safeguarding policy.
- The Code of Conduct for staff.
- Whistleblowing procedures/ policy.
- Specific reference to online safety and training

Such induction training will usually take place within the first few weeks of employment.

All existing staff, volunteers, and other workers (such as self-employed, visiting instructors etc.) who work with children receive updated training at regular intervals. We aim to ensure this happens at least once every three years.

Those staff, volunteers, and other workers (such as contractors) who do not work directly with children receive training as deemed appropriate to their role. This training and supporting guidance will also be updated at regular intervals. We aim to ensure this happens at least once every three years.

A record of training in safeguarding/child protection is kept on a central record by Administration.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

Anyone working directly with children and/or vulnerable adults, or who is likely to come into contact with them will be asked to have a DBS check done before commencing their role with us. Your employment or volunteer agreement is subject to a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders act 1974 and the Police Act 1997.

You are further required to notify the Charity immediately if at any time during your employment, you are charged with or convicted of any criminal offences or are in receipt of any indictments or cautions. Failure to notify the Charity of any such charges, convictions, indictments, or cautions, may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal for gross misconduct.

Staff Obligations

1. All staff in our Charity are required to notify their manager immediately if there are any reasons why they should not be working with children/ vulnerable adults. This includes any staff who are disqualified from childcare or registration including 'by association' i.e., they live in the same household (or someone is employed in their household) as someone who has unspent cautions or convictions for a relevant offence (please see a list of the relevant offences set out here): <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-barring-referrals-to-the-dbs>
2. The 'by association' requirement also applies if a member of staff lives in the same household as or someone is employed in his/her household who has been disqualified from working with children under the Childcare Act 2006.
3. The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 apply to those providing early years' childcare or later years' childcare, including clubs, to children who have not attained the age of 8 AND to those who are directly concerned in the management of that childcare.
4. The Charity takes its responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults very seriously and any staff member who is aware of anything that may affect his/her suitability to work with children must notify the Charity immediately. This will include notification of any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands, or warnings he/she may receive, or if he/she is living in a household where anyone lives or works who has been disqualified from working with children or from registration for the provision of childcare.
5. Staff who are disqualified from childcare or registration, including 'by association', may apply to Ofsted for a waiver of disqualification. Such staff may not be employed in the areas from which they are disqualified, or involved in the management of those settings, unless and until such waiver is confirmed.
6. The Charity will promptly report to the DBS any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used for regulated activity and the DBS referral criteria are met; that is, they have caused harm or posed a risk of harm to a child.

Allegations of Abuse Against Members of Staff or Volunteers

By this we mean allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person working or looking after children/ vulnerable adults in our Charity (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere) or of any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises or elsewhere. Allegations must be reported immediately.

1. The Charity will adhere to the statutory guidance on dealing with allegations of abuse in force at the time, with any further action - including investigation.

2. We will consider and thoroughly investigate any allegation expeditiously, fairly, and consistently, avoiding all unnecessary delays. The aim will always be to ensure a quick resolution to the benefit of all concerned; the nature, seriousness and complexity of the allegation will have a bearing on timescales.
3. In the case of serious harm, the Police will be informed from the outset.
4. Where appropriate, the person who is subject of an allegation will be notified as soon as is practicable and will be provided with as much information as possible at that time (NB: in some instances, the Charity may not be permitted to disclose full details).
5. Suspension will never be a default option; the Charity will always consider whether the circumstances warrant suspension and/or reasonable alternative arrangements (such as redeployment or working under supervision) are appropriate before a final decision is given in this regard. The individual will be notified of the reasons and justification for suspension and provided with a named contact within one working day.
6. Allegations that are found to have been malicious will be removed from personnel records. We will not refer to any unsubstantiated, unfounded, or malicious allegations in employer references.
7. Whilst care will be taken to ensure the effective protection of the child making the allegation, we will always provide appropriate support to the person who is the subject of the allegation.
8. There are restrictions on the reporting or publishing of allegations against staff, and the Charity will take all reasonable steps to ensure that confidentiality is maintained and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated. These restrictions apply up to the point where the accused is charged with an offence.
9. If the subject of an allegation chooses to resign their employ, the Charity will continue with its investigation and will make every effort to reach a conclusion regardless of whether the individual chooses to assist the investigation.

Whistleblowing

The Charity aims to create and maintain an environment where staff feel supported in their safeguarding role and able to raise concerns, including about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the Charity's safeguarding regime.

All staff are required to report to the line manager / Safeguarding Trustee any concern or allegations about Charity practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put children/ vulnerable adults at risk of abuse or other serious harm. There will be no retribution or disciplinary action taken against a member of staff for making such a report if it is done in good faith.

The Charity has a separate Whistleblowing policy (please see above).

Further Government advice on whistleblowing can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>

Suspicions of Abuse or Concerns About a Child's/Vulnerable Adults Welfare

On appointment, and as part of the regular training to update staff on child welfare and safeguarding issues, all staff learn how to report suspicions of abuse or concerns about a child/vulnerable adult's welfare to the line manager/ Safeguarding Trustee.

When a member of staff wishes to report a suspicion or concern, they are asked to complete a written record, which is always given to the Safeguarding Lead/ Trustee, who will take action as appropriate. All records are kept confidential and reviewed regularly so that concerning patterns of behaviour can be spotted.

Use of Email

Staff are advised not to use email to write down or report abuse or concerns. If for any reason email is considered appropriate to communicate to another party, the child's full name or other features that would identify him/her should not be included. The Safeguarding Lead may use email to report to authorities as long as it is a secure system e.g., local authorities have provisions for this. The key thing is to check how authorities want the information.

Responding to Suspicions of Abuse

We acknowledge that abuse can take different forms - physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.

- When children are suffering from physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, or neglect, this may be demonstrated through changes in their behaviour, or in their play.
- When adults are suffering from physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, or neglect, it will also likely be demonstrated through changes in their behaviour.

Where such changes in behaviour occur, or where children's play gives cause for concern and there is a possibility of a child suffering significant harm, the Safeguarding Lead may consult Children's or Adult Services.

We allow investigation to be carried out with sensitivity and follow due process. Staff in the Charity take care not to influence the outcome, either through the way they speak to children or ask questions of children.

Where a child or vulnerable adult shows signs and symptoms of neglect or of a failure to thrive, we make appropriate referrals.

Regarding children, if at any time, it is considered that the child may be a child in need as defined in the Children Act 1989, or that the child has suffered significant harm or is likely to do so, a referral will be made immediately to Local Authority's children's social care. This referral can be made by any professional but would usually be made by the Safeguarding Lead/ Trustee. If any member of staff makes a referral directly to Local Authority's children's social care, they should notify the Safeguarding Lead/ Trustee as soon as possible thereafter.

Disclosures

Where a child or adult makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff:

- Offers reassurance
- Listens.
- Gives reassurance that she or he will take action.

- Does not question the child/vulnerable adult.
- Must not promise confidentiality.
- Must always refer the matter to their line manager/ Safeguarding Lead and complete a written safeguarding report.

Recording Suspicions of Abuse and Disclosures

Using the Safeguarding Concern Sheet, staff make a written record of:

- The person's name.
- The date and time of the observation or the disclosure.
- An objective record of the observation or disclosure.
- The exact words spoken by the child.
- The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and
- The names of any other person present at the time.

These Safeguarding Concern records are signed and dated and kept in a separate confidential file. All members of staff are trained in the procedures for recording and reporting by written record.

Whilst cases are active, confidential records are kept and updated regularly by the Safeguarding Lead.

Taking Concerns Forward

Where a safeguarding concern exists, the Safeguarding Lead on duty will notify the matter to the appropriate services using the specified forms and procedures. Records will be kept securely and with limited access.

Informing Parents/Guardians/Caregivers

Subsequent to a referral to Children's social care, a relevant Duty Social Worker (DSW) will advise next steps. The responsibility for communication to the parents would usually be exercised by the Safeguarding Lead or by a suitably trained deputy. In cases where the parent is the likely abuser, the Local Authority investigating officers/ Police will inform parents.

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Safeguarding Lead.

Confidentiality cannot be promised.

Summary

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and we expect you to have read all policies and undertake training so you are aware what to do should you spot it, or it be disclosed to you. If you are uncertain about anything in this policy, please speak to the Safeguarding Lead.

Information on Safeguarding and Confidentiality at Eternity Downham Market and The Downham Market Foodbank

If you are ever worried that you or someone else may be in danger, or if someone is doing something to you or them that makes you or them feel uncomfortable, it is very important that you go to a responsible adult for help. Abuse can take many forms including physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.

Who can I talk to in the Charity?

We would always encourage you to talk to any member of staff at any time if you are worried about something or if you or someone you know is being abused in any way, even if it is happening outside of Charity. The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for Safeguarding within the Charity, but you must talk to whoever you feel most comfortable with. We will always make appropriate opportunities for you to talk to someone if you need to.

What happens next?

Whoever you talk to in Charity will take you seriously but won't ask too many questions. If we feel that you are at risk, we may have to get the right people, who are experienced in keeping children/ vulnerable adults safe, to come and help you. We promise to do all we can to ensure that the other parts of your life are not disrupted more than is necessary.

Please remember no one can keep this type of information to themselves. They must pass it on so that help can be obtained. However, only those who need to know will be told. We will explain this at the time and tell you who must be told and the reason. We will suggest that you talk to them yourself.

REMEMBER - nobody has the right to abuse children/vulnerable adults. It is very important that you tell someone.

Who can I talk to outside of the Charity?

If you would prefer not to talk to anyone in the Charity, there are other agencies you can contact:

- NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- Child-Line: 0800 1111
- Thirtyone:eight: 0303 003 1111
- Police 101

Confidentiality with outside agencies

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. When sensitive information is shared, which may give rise to a safeguarding concern, it is important that everyone knows that no one can ever offer absolute confidentiality.

Role of the Safeguarding Lead

The Safeguarding Lead (along with trustee) is responsible for the implementing this policy. This Policy will be reviewed annually or earlier in the case of a significant change in any relevant legislation or regulatory guidance. We have a Lead and Deputy/Trustee Lead. Details are as follows:

The Safeguarding Lead is Miss Chloe Hobday

Contact details: office@eternitydownham.co.uk /01366384474

The Trustee Safeguarding Lead is Mr Aaron Loxley Beck

Contact details: aaron@eternitydownham.co.uk /07885478269

This policy has been approved by Eternity Downham Market's Board of Trustees.

For and on behalf of Eternity Downham Market

VERSION NUMBER	VERSION DATE	REASON FOR REVISION	AMMENDED BY	APPROVED BY
V1	01.05.2023			TRUSTEE BOARD
V2	01.07.2024	REVIEW	ADMINISTATION	TRUSTEE BOARD