



# Safeguarding Policy

Reviewed January 2020 & November 2021 & March 2022 & March 2024

## Safeguarding Policy Statement

Hastings & Rother YMCA 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 which protects them.

### We recognise that:

The welfare of the child/young person is paramount (Children's Acts 1989 & 2004)

All children and young people, 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 their 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 Hastings & Rother YMCA services, including the children of adult members or users.

To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on 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, paid staff, volunteers and session workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Hastings and Rother YMCA.

### We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures for staff and volunteers
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers

- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children and young people appropriately
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

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

This procedure is consistent with the government guidelines set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, DCSF, March 2010, and with the Children's Workforce Development Council's publication,

Recruiting Safely: Safer recruitment guidance helping to keep children and young people safe, CWDC, 2009.

## 1. Introduction

This document defines that unlawful or unsafe behaviour will not be tolerated and that where appropriate legal or disciplinary action may follow. It is also recognised that not all adults who work with young people at the Hastings & Rother YMCA are paid or contracted employees. However, the principles of this document will still apply and should be followed by any adult whose work brings them into contact with young people.

Throughout this document wherever it states YMCA it relates to the Hastings & Rother YMCA.

All adults who come into contact with children and young people in their work have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. The Children Act of 2004 places a duty on organisations and individuals to safeguard and promote the well-being of children and young people. This includes the need to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of children and young people in the YMCA are competent, confident and safe to do so.

## 2. Purpose

This document has been written to help staff manage their concerns about the welfare of children and young people that they may come.

It is important that all adults working with young people that the nature of their work and the responsibilities related to it, place them in a position of trust. This document provides clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviours for all adults working for the YMCA with young people in paid or unpaid capacities.

## 3. Definition of child abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or young person. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or young person either directly by inflicting harm, or indirectly, by failing to act to prevent harm. Children or young people 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, or young people.

There are four types of child abuse. They are defined in the UK Government guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 (1.33 – 1.36) as follows:

1. Physical abuse
2. Emotional abuse
3. Sexual abuse

## 4. Neglect

Bullying is not defined as a form of abuse in Working Together but there is clear evidence that it is abusive and will include at least one, if not two, three or all four, of the defined categories of abuse. For this reason, it has been included in this document.

### 4.1 Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or young person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child or young person.

### 4.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or young person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child or young person's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to children or young person that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child or young person 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 or young people. These may include interactions that are beyond the child or young person's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child or young person 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 or young people frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children or young people. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child or young person, though it may occur alone.

### 4.3 Sexual Abuse

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 or young person 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 or young people 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 or young person in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children or young people.

#### 4.4 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child or young person's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child or young person from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child or young person's basic emotional needs.

#### 4.5 Bullying

Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group).

The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to and young people to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, cause them significant harm (including self-harm).

All settings in which children and young people are provided with services or are living away from home should have in place rigorously enforced anti-bullying strategies.

## 5. Recognising the signs of abuse

Recognising child abuse is not easy. It is not your responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place or if a child or young person is at significant risk of harm from someone. You do however, have both a responsibility and duty, as set out in your organisation's child protection procedures, to act in order that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any necessary action to protect a child or young person.

The following information should help you to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse.

#### 5.1 Physical Abuse

Most children and young people will collect cuts and bruises as part of the rough-and-tumble of daily life. Injuries should always be interpreted in light of the child or young person's medical and social history, developmental stage and the explanation given. Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the body, e.g. elbows, knees, shins, and are often on the front of the body. Some children or young people, however, will have bruising that is more than likely inflicted rather than accidental.

Important indicators of physical abuse are bruises or injuries that are either unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given, or visible on the 'soft' parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g. cheeks, abdomen, back and buttocks. A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern, although this can be more complicated with burns, as these are often delayed in presentation due to blistering taking place sometime later.

The physical signs of abuse may include:

- unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- multiple bruises- in clusters, often on the upper arm, outside of the thigh
- cigarette burns
- human bite marks
- broken bones
- scalds, with upward splash marks,
- multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge.

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse

- fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- flinching when approached or touched
- reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather
- depression
- withdrawn behaviour
- running away from home.

## 5.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, as there are often no outward physical signs. There may be a developmental delay due to a failure to thrive and grow, although this will usually only be evident if the child or young person puts on weight in other circumstances, for example when hospitalised or away from their parents' care. Even so, children and young people who appear well- cared for may nevertheless be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of a child not being allowed to mix or play with other children or young people denied contact with peers.

Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse include:

- neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking
- being unable to play
- fear of making mistakes
- sudden speech disorders
- self-harm
- fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour
- developmental delay in terms of emotional progress

## 5.3 Sexual Abuse

Adults who use children or young people to meet their own sexual needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers. Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child or young person's behaviour that may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children or young people who tell about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

It is also important to remember that it not just adult men who sexually abuse children or young people - there are increasing numbers of allegations of sexual abuse of children against women and sexual abuse can also be perpetrated by other children or young people.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- pain or itching in the genital area
- bruising or bleeding near genital area
- sexually transmitted disease
- vaginal discharge or infection
- stomach pains
- discomfort when walking or sitting down
- pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or
- withdrawn
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- having nightmares
- running away from home
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level
- sexual drawings or language
- bedwetting
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

## 5.4 Neglect

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise, yet have some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children or young people.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- constantly dirty or 'smelly'

- loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- inappropriate clothing for the conditions.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:

- complaining of being tired all the time
- not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments.
- having few friends
- mentioning being left alone or unsupervised.

## 5.5 Bullying

Bullying is not always easy to recognise as it can take a number of forms. A child or young person may encounter bullying attacks that are:

- physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching and other forms of violence or threats
- verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing
- emotional: excluding (sending to Coventry), tormenting, ridiculing,
- humiliating.

Persistent bullying can result in:

- depression
- low self-esteem
- shyness
- poor academic achievement
- isolation
- threatened or attempted suicide

Signs that a child or young person may be being bullied can be:

- coming home with cuts and bruises
- torn clothes
- asking for stolen possessions to be replaced
- losing dinner money
- falling out with previously good friends
- being moody and bad tempered
- wanting to avoid leaving their home
- aggression with younger brothers and sisters
- doing less well at school
- sleep problems
- anxiety
- becoming quiet and withdrawn

These definitions and indicators are not meant to be definitive, but only serve as a guide to assist you. It is important too, to remember that many children or young people may exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and that the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as a death or the birth of a new baby in the family or relationship problems between parents/carers. In assessing whether indicators are related to abuse or not, the authorities will always want to understand them in relation to the child or young person's development and context.

## How to respond to signs or suspicions of abuse

We aim to ensure those children and young people who attend the YMCA, and any other children who may come to the attention of staff and volunteers, receive the protection and support they need if they are at risk of abuse.

This procedure provides clear direction to staff and volunteers if they have concerns that a child or young person is in need of protection.

## Ways that abuse might be brought to your attention

- a child or young person might make a direct disclosure about him or herself
- a child or young person might make a direct disclosure about another child or young person
- a child or young person might offer information that is worrying but not a direct disclosure
- a member of staff might be concerned about a child or young person's appearance or behaviour or about the behaviour of a parent or carer towards a child or young person
- a parent or carer might make a disclosure about abuse that a child or young person is suffering or at risk of suffering
- a parent might offer information about a child or young person that is worrying but not a direct disclosure.

### **Talking to a child or young person who has told you that he/she or another child or young person is being abused**

- Reassure the child or young person that telling someone about it was the right thing to do.
- Tell him/her that you now have to do what you can to keep him/her (or the child or young person who is the subject of the allegation) safe.
- Let the child or young person know what you are going to do next and who else needs to know about it.
- Let the child or young person tell his or her whole story. Don't try to investigate or quiz the child or young person, but make sure that you are clear as to what he/she is saying.
- Ask the child or young person what he/she would like to happen as a result of what he/she has said, but don't make or infer promises you can't keep.
- Give the child or young person the ChildLine phone number: 0800 1111.

### **Reporting child protection concerns**

You should then take the steps set out in the flowchart in Annex 1 to ensure the concern is dealt with.

If a child or young person is in need of emergency medical attention or in immediate danger, follow the procedure set below in the section on helping a child or young person in immediate danger or in need of emergency medical attention.

### **Helping a child or young person in immediate danger or in need of emergency medical attention**

- If the child or young person is in immediate danger and is with you, remain with him/her and call the police.
- If the child or young person is elsewhere, contact the police and explain the situation to them.
- If he/she needs emergency medical attention, call an ambulance and, while you are waiting for it to arrive, get help from your first aider.
- If the first aider is not available, use any first aid knowledge that you may have yourself to help the child or young person.

You also need to contact your supervisor/manager or named person for child protection to let them know what is happening.

A decision will need to be made about who should inform the child or young person's family and the local authority children's services department, and when they should be informed. If you have involved the police and/or the health services, they should be part of this decision. Consider the welfare of the child or young person in your decision making as the highest priority.

### **Issues that will need to be taken into account are:**

- the child or young person's wishes and feelings
- the parent's right to know (unless this would place the child or young person or someone else in danger, or would interfere with a criminal investigation)
- the impact of telling or not telling the parent
- the current assessment of the risk to the child or young person and the source of that risk
- any risk management plans that currently exist.

Once any immediate danger or emergency medical need has been dealt with, follow the steps set out in the flowchart in Annex 1.

### **Keeping a record of your concerns**

Use the reporting form in Annex 2 to record the concern and how it is dealt with.

The relevant sections of the form should be completed and signed at each stage of the procedure. It can be used to forward information to the statutory child protection authorities if a referral to them is needed.

The form should be signed and dated by all those involved in its completion and kept confidentially on the child or young person's file. The name of the person making the notes should be written alongside each entry.

## 6. Allegations made against another child or young person

### Aims and purpose of this procedure are:

- to ensure that children who attend the YMCA and any other children who may come to the attention of The YMCA are protected and supported following an allegation that they may have been abused by another child or young person involved with the YMCA or elsewhere.
- to ensure that there is a fair, consistent and robust response to any allegations of this nature so that the risk posed to other children by the child/young person in question is managed effectively
- to facilitate an appropriate level of investigation into allegations, whether they relate to recent alleged activity, said to have taken place during the time that the child/young person
- in question has been involved with the YMCA or whether they relate to abuse which allegedly took place prior to the child's/young person's involvement with the YMCA.
- to ensure that the YMCA continues to fulfil its responsibilities towards children and young people who may be subject to such investigations and are in need of support
- to ensure that there is an appropriate response in situations where allegations are unfounded or deemed to be malicious in origin.

The purpose of the procedure is to provide a clear direction to staff that are called upon to deal with such allegations and to manage investigations and care plans which may result from them.

### This procedure applies to:

- any member of staff, volunteer or trustee to whom an allegation of abuse has been made which suggests that another child or young person is responsible
- anyone in a managerial position, including the named person for child protection, line managers and supervisors, who may be required to deal with such allegations and manage investigations and care plans that result from them.

### Ways that allegations might be made against another child/young person involved with The YMCA

- A child or parent/carer might make a direct allegation against another child or young person.
- A child or parent/carer might express discomfort with the behaviour of another child or young person that falls short of a specific allegation.
- Another child, member of staff or volunteer may directly observe behaviour from one child/young person towards another that gives cause for concern.
- The YMCA may be informed by a parent or by the police or another statutory authority that a child or young person is the subject of an investigation.
- A child or young person may volunteer information to the organisation that he/she has harmed another child or is at risk of doing so, or has committed an offence against or related to a child.

### Child protection or bullying?

When faced with a situation of one child or young person behaving inappropriately towards another, a decision needs to be made about whether the problem behaviour constitutes bullying or a child protection concern. This is a decision that needs to be reached by the named person for child protection, in consultation with the staff member responsible for the child, the staff member's manager/supervisor and, if necessary, the local authority children's social care department.

If the conclusion is that the behaviour is an example of bullying, and if both children attend the group/organisation, it needs to be dealt with under the anti-bullying policy and procedure.

If it is behaviour that could be described as child abuse and has led to the victim possibly suffering significant harm, then it must be dealt with under child protection procedures. This should include all incidents of sexual assault and all but the most minor incidents of physical assault.

**This checklist can be used to help inform the decision:**

**Bullying**

- The difference of power between the bully and the person being bullied is relatively small.
- The bullying behaviour may be from a number of children/young people acting in a group rather than from one child acting alone.
- It may also, but not necessarily, be directed towards a group of other children rather than an individual child.
- The behaviour involves teasing or making fun of someone, excluding a child from games and conversations, pressurising other children not to be friends with someone, spreading hurtful rumours or circulating inappropriate photographs/ images/drawings, cyber-bullying, shouting at or verbally abusing someone, stealing someone's possessions, making threats, or harassment on the basis of race, gender, sexuality or disability.
- The behaviour has not previously been a concern and the bully or bullies may have been responding to group pressure.
- The behaviour is perceived as bullying by the victim.

Please note: physical or sexual assault, or forcing someone to do something embarrassing, harmful or dangerous is also included in the list of bullying behaviours toolbox, but are the most likely to constitute a child protection concern if the victim suffers significant harm as a result of the behaviour.

**Child protection concerns**

The difference of power between the child who is abusing and the person being abused is significant

e.g. there is an age difference of more than two years, there is a significant difference in terms of size or level of ability, the abuser holds a position of power (such as being a helper, volunteer or informal leader) or the victim is significantly more vulnerable than the other child or young person.

The behaviour involves sexual assault or physical assault (other than the most minor physical assault).

The child who is the victim of the behaviour may have suffered significant harm.

The behaviour may not necessarily be perceived by the victim as abusive, particularly if it is sexual in nature.

The behaviour is not a one-off incident and is part of a pattern of concerning behaviour on the part of the child or young person who is abusing.

The behaviour, if sexual, is not part of normal experimentation that takes place between children and young people.

**Sexual abuse or normal experimentation?**

All children and young people develop an interest in their own sexuality from a young age, and seek to learn about sex from their peers. It is important not to label normal, healthy behaviour as deviant or abusive. It is equally important not to allow sexually abusive behaviour perpetrated by one child or young person towards another to go unchecked, as this is harmful both for the victim and the perpetrator.

There are ways of assessing whether sexual behaviour between children and young people is abusive or not. Indicators of abusive behaviour include:

- there is a significant difference in age, dominance or understanding between the children/young people
- the behaviour was accompanied by the use of threats or bribes
- the behaviour was carried out in secret.

**What to do if you have child protection concerns**

- Is the child who has been allegedly abused, or the child who has allegedly perpetrated the abuse, in immediate danger or does either of them need emergency medical attention?
- If either child is in immediate danger and is with you, remain with him/her and call the police if you are unable to remove the danger yourself.
- If the child is elsewhere, contact the police and explain the situation to them.
- If a child needs emergency medical attention, call an ambulance and, while you are waiting for it to arrive, get help from your first aider.
- If the first aider is not available, use any first aid knowledge that you may have yourself to help the child.
- You also need to contact your supervisor/manager or named person for child protection to let them know what is happening.

A decision will need to be made about when and who should inform the families of both the child who has been abused and the child who has allegedly perpetrated the abuse, as well as the local authority children's social care department.

If the child who is the alleged victim is not known to the YMCA, it is not our role to inform the child's family. Even if the child who is the alleged victim is known, the police and/or the health services, should be part of the decision making process if they have been contacted.

The paramount consideration should always be the welfare of the children and young people involved. Issues that will need to be taken into account are:

- the children's wishes and feelings
- the parents' right to know (unless this would place the child who has allegedly perpetrated the abuse in danger, or would interfere with a criminal investigation)
- the impact of telling or not telling the parents.
- the current assessment of the risk to the child who has been abused and the
- source of that risk.
- the current assessment of any risk to the child who has allegedly perpetrated
- the abuse and the source of that risk.
- any risk management plans that currently exist for either child

Once any immediate danger or emergency medical need has been dealt with, the procedure set out below should be followed:

1. The member of staff who has been informed of the allegation or who has the concern, should make notes of what he/she has been told or of his/her direct concerns using the reporting form at Annex 1, and should discuss these with his/her supervisor/manager as soon as possible and within 24 hours.

The named person for child protection should also be involved in the discussion.

2. If both children/young people are known to The YMCA and if their families do not already know about the allegation or concern, the member of staff, manager or named person should discuss it with them unless:
  - the view is that someone (for example the child who has allegedly perpetrated the abuse) may be put in danger by the family being informed
  - informing the family might interfere with a criminal investigation.

If any of these circumstances apply, discussions with the families should only take place after this has been agreed with the local authority children's social care department.

3. If only the child who is alleged to have harmed another child is known to (name of group/organisation), then, subject to the considerations set out in above, discussions with only this child's family should take place.

4. The child who is the subject of the allegation should also be informed of what has been said about him/her. However, if the view is that children's social care or the police should be involved, the child should only be informed after discussion and agreement with these agencies. These agencies may have views about what information should be disclosed to the child/young person at this stage.
5. If there is still uncertainty about whether the allegation or concern constitutes a child protection issue, the named person (or supervisor/manager if named person not available) should discuss with children's social care department or with the NSPCC Helpline without disclosing the identity of either child/family.
6. If, having discussed the situation fully and taken advice if necessary, the manager/supervisor and the named person concludes that the alleged behaviour does not constitute a child protection issue, then consideration should be given to whether the anti-bullying policy and procedure should be used (if both children are known to the organisation) and whether either or both children should be referred for other services.
7. If the view is that the behaviour does indeed amount to a child protection issue, the named person should refer both children to the local authority children's social care department and confirm the referral in writing within 24 hours.
8. Pending the outcome of the referral to the children's social care department and the possible investigation or assessment that may follow from this, any risk that may be posed to other children by the child who has allegedly harmed another child will need to be carefully managed. This should be done on an inter-agency basis in accordance with procedures developed by the local safeguarding children board for children who display harmful behaviour towards others.
9. The named person should enquire of the children's social care department whether these procedures are being used and, if so, should ask to be involved in or at least kept informed of inter-agency decisions made in accordance with these procedures.
10. If the procedures are not being used but the YMCA remains concerned that the child/young person could pose a risk to other children, then the named person and the manager should consider whether the child/young person can continue to be involved with the YMCA and, if so, on what basis.

This is a situation that needs to be kept under regular review as the investigation and assessment conducted by the statutory agencies is carried out and reaches a conclusion. It may also need to be reviewed regularly following the conclusion of the assessment process, as the child or young person may be receiving support that should, with time, reduce the level of risk he/she presents.

11. If the allegation is found to be without substance or fabricated, the YMCA will consider referring the child who was said to have been harmed to the children's social care department for them to assess whether he/she is in need of services (for example, the child may have been abused by someone else).
12. If it is felt that there has been malicious intent behind the allegation, the YMCA will discuss with the police whether there are grounds to pursue any action against the person responsible.

**What should I say to a child who says that he/she or another child is being abused by another child/young person?**

- Reassure the child that he/she has done the right thing by telling someone about it.
- Tell him/her that you now have to do what you can to keep him/her (or the child who is the subject of the allegation) safe.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and who else needs to know about it.
- Let the child tell his/her whole story. Don't try to investigate or quiz the child but make sure that you are clear as to what he/she is saying.
- If possible, explain to the child's parent/carer what has happened. Do this first without the child there, and then summarise it again in front of the child so that it is an open subject between parent/carer and child. This may enable them to talk about it together more easily.
- Check out what the child would like to happen as a result of what he/she has said, but don't make or infer promises you can't keep.
- Give the child the ChildLine phone number (0800 1111).
- Make sure that the parent/carer has support too.

**What should I say to a child/young person who says that he/she has abused another child?**

- Reassure the child that he/she has done the right thing by telling someone about it.
- Tell him/her that you now have to do what you can to keep him/her and the child who has been abused safe.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and who else needs to know about it.
- Let the child tell his/her whole story. Don't try to investigate or quiz the child, but make sure that you are clear as to what he/she is saying.
- If there is no risk to the child from the child's parent/carer, then explain to the parent/carer what has happened. Do this firstly without the child there, and then summarise it again in front of the child so that it is an open subject between parent/carer and child. This may enable them to talk about it together more easily.
- Check out what the child expects to happen as a result of what he/she has said. Offer reassurance where appropriate but don't make or infer promises you can't keep.
- Reassure the child that, with help, the problem can be sorted out and that what has happened does not make him/her an abuser for life.
- Give the child the ChildLine phone number.

**Remember that the child who has behaved in this way is a child in need of support.**

Make sure that the parent/carer has support too.

**Recording the concerns**

Use the reporting form at Annex 2 to record the concern and how it is dealt with. The relevant sections of the form should be completed and signed at each stage of the procedure. It can be used to forward information to the statutory child protection authorities if a referral to them is needed.

## 7. Allegations made Against an Employee or Volunteer

This procedure outlines what you should do if a child protection allegation is made against an adult working for or involved in your group or organisation.

The procedure should provide a clear direction to staff and trustees who are called upon to deal with such allegations and to manage investigations that may result from them.

### The aims of this procedure are:

- to ensure that children who attend (name of group/organisation), and any other children who may come to our attention, are protected and supported following an allegation that they may have been abused by an adult from within (name of group/organisation)
- to ensure that there is a fair, consistent and robust response to any allegations made, so that the risk posed to other children by an abusive individual is managed effectively
- to facilitate an appropriate level of investigation into allegations, whether they are said to have taken place recently, at any time the person in question has been employed by/volunteered with (name of group/organisation), or prior to the person's involvement with (name of group/organisation)
- to ensure that (name of group/organisation) continues to fulfil its responsibilities towards members of staff, volunteers or trustees who may be subject to such investigations
- to ensure that individuals are able to continue in their role if they have been at the centre of allegations that are unfounded or deemed to be malicious in origin.

### This procedure applies to:

- any member of staff, volunteer or trustee to whom an allegation of abuse has been made, that involves another member of staff, volunteer or trustee
- anyone in a managerial position (including the named person for child protection, line managers, supervisors and trustees) who may be required to deal with such allegations and manage investigations that result from them.

### How you might find out about a possible case of abuse

Ways that allegations might be made against an adult working for or involved with the YMCA include:

- a child or parent/carer making a direct allegation against a member of staff or trustee
- a child or parent/carer expressing discomfort with the behaviour of a member of staff or trustee that falls short of a specific allegation
- another member of staff or volunteer directly observing behaviour that is a cause for concern
- the YMCA being informed by the police or another statutory authority that a member of staff, volunteer or trustee is the subject of an investigation
- information emerging from the renewal of a DBA check that suggests that a member of staff, volunteer or trustee may have committed an offence or been involved in an activity that could compromise the safety of the children they work with at the YMCA
- a staff member or trustee telling the organisation that they have been the subject of allegations, have actually harmed a child, or committed an offence against (or related to) a child.

### 7.1 What to do if an allegation is made or information is received

There are potentially two issues that need to be dealt with as a matter of urgency:

1. Is a child in immediate danger or does she/he need emergency medical attention?
2. If a child is in immediate danger and is with you, remain with him/her and call the police.
3. If the child is elsewhere, contact the police and explain the situation to them.
4. If the child needs emergency medical attention, call an ambulance and, while you are waiting for it to arrive, get help from your first aider
5. If the first aider is not available, use any first aid knowledge that you may have yourself to help the child. You also need to contact your supervisor/manager or named person for child protection to let them know what is happening.
6. The member of staff or manager should also inform the child's family if the child is in need of emergency medical attention, and arrange to meet them at the hospital or medical centre. The parents/carers should be informed that an incident has occurred, that the child has been injured and that immediate steps have been taken to get help

## **7.2 Is the person at the centre of the allegation working with children now?**

If this is the case, the concern needs to be discussed immediately with the manager of the group/organisation and the named person for child protection. One of these (either the manager or named person) should then, in a sensitive manner, remove the staff member involved in the allegation from direct contact with children.

It should then be explained to the person, in private, that there has been a complaint made against him/her, although the details of the complaint should not be given at this stage. The person should be informed that further information will be provided as soon as possible but that, until consultation has taken place with the relevant agencies and within the organisation, they should not be working with children. It may be best, under the circumstances, for the person to return home on the understanding that the manager or named person will telephone him/her later in the day.

The information provided to him/her at this stage will need to be very limited. This is because discussions need to take place first with other agencies who may need to be involved, such as the local authority children's social care department, the police or the local authority designated officer (LADO). **01273 481544** or

If the person is a member of a trades union or a professional organisation, he/she should be advised to make contact with that body. Arrangements should also be made for the member of staff or volunteer to receive ongoing support in line with the responsibilities the organisation has towards his or her welfare.

### **Conducting an investigation**

Once any urgent necessary steps have been taken, attention can be given to dealing with the full implications of the allegations. There are up to three possible lines of enquiry when an allegation is made:

- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- enquiries and an assessment by the local authority children's social care department about whether a child is in need of protection
- Investigation by an employer and possible disciplinary action being taken against the person in question. This includes implementing a plan to manage any risk posed by the individual to children and young people in the workplace until the outcome of the other investigations and enquiries is known.

## **Reporting an allegation or concern**

If the allegation is made by a child or family member to a member of staff, or if a member of staff observes behaviour of concern by a colleague at first hand, this should be reported immediately to the staff member's supervisor/manager and the named person for child protection; the YMCA's lead on handling the allegation.

If a staff member has received an allegation or observed something of concern about their own manager, the staff member should report the allegation or concern to the person more senior to their manager.

If the person who is the subject of the concern is a named person for child protection, the matter should be reported to the named person's manager.

### **When to involve the local authority designated officer**

The named person should report the allegation to the local authority designated officer (LADO) within one working day if the alleged behaviour suggests that the person in question:

- may have behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child
- has possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- has behaved towards a child in a way that suggests that he/she may be unsuitable to work with children.

This should also happen if the individual has volunteered the information him/herself.

The LADO may be told of the allegation from another source. If this is the case, then the first information received by the YMCA may be when the LADO makes contact in order to explain the situation.

Whoever initiates the contact, there will be discussion between the LADO and the YMCA's named person to share information about the nature and circumstances of the allegation, and to consider whether there is any evidence to suggest that it may be false or unfounded.

If there is any reason to suspect that a child has suffered, or be likely to suffer, significant harm and there are no obvious indications that the allegation is false, the LADO, in cooperation The YMCA, will make an immediate referral to the local authority children's social care department to ask for a strategy discussion.

The LADO and named person will take part in the strategy discussion. The named person and any other representative from The YMCA should cooperate fully with this and any subsequent discussion with the children's social care department.

It should be asked from the outset that the children's social care department shares any information obtained during the course of their enquiries if it has any relevance to the person's employment.

### **Dealing with a criminal offence**

If there is reason to suspect that a criminal offence may have been committed (whether or not the threshold of 'significant harm' is reached), the LADO will contact the police and involve them in a similar strategy discussion, which will include the named person for child protection.

The named person and any other representative from the YMCA should cooperate fully with any discussion involving the police and should ask for similar cooperation from the police in terms of the sharing of information relevant to the person's employment.

Discussions with the police should also explore whether there are matters that can be acted on in a disciplinary process while the criminal investigation takes place, or whether disciplinary action must wait until the criminal process is completed.

### **Talking to parents about the allegation or concern**

If the child's parents/carers do not already know about the allegation, the named person and the LADO need to discuss how they should be informed and by whom.

### **Talking to the person who is the subject of the allegation**

The person at the centre of the allegation should be informed as soon as possible after the initial consultation with the LADO. However, if a strategy discussion with children's social care or the police is needed, this might have to take place before the person concerned can be spoken to in full. The police and children's social care department may have views on what information can be disclosed to the person.

Only limited information should be given to the person in question, unless the investigating authorities have indicated that they are happy for all information to be disclosed or unless there is no need for involvement from these statutory agencies.

The named person will need to keep in close communication with the LADO and the other agencies involved in order to manage the disclosure of information appropriately.

### **Taking disciplinary action**

If the initial allegation does not involve a possible

criminal offence, the named person and manager of the person at the centre of the allegation should still consider whether formal disciplinary action is needed.

If the local authority children's social care department has undertaken any enquiries to determine whether a child or children are in need of protection, the named person should take account of any relevant information from these enquiries when considering whether disciplinary action should be brought against the person at the centre of the allegations.

The following timings should be kept to wherever possible, depending on the nature of the investigation:

- If formal disciplinary action is not needed, other appropriate action should be taken within three working days.
- If disciplinary action is required, and can be progressed without further investigation, this should take place within 15 days.
- If the YMCA decides that further investigation is needed in order to make a decision about formal disciplinary action, the named person for child protection should discuss with the LADO the possibility of this investigation being done by an independent person to ensure that the process is objective. Whether or not the investigation is handled internally or independently, the report should be presented to the named person within 10 working days.
- Having received the report of the disciplinary investigation, the named person should decide within two working days whether a disciplinary hearing is needed.
- If a hearing is needed, it should be held within 15 working days.

The named person should continue to liaise with the LADO during the course of any investigation or disciplinary proceedings, and should continue to use the LADO as a source of advice and support.

If a criminal investigation is required, it may not have been possible to make decisions about initiating disciplinary proceedings or about the person's future work arrangements until this is concluded. The police are required to complete their work as soon as reasonably possible and to set review dates, so the named person should either liaise with the police directly or via the LADO to check on the progress of the investigation and criminal process.

The police are also required to inform the employer straight away if the person is either convicted of an offence or acquitted or, alternatively, if a decision is made not to charge him/her with an offence or to administer a caution. In any eventuality, once the outcome is known, the named person should contact the LADO to discuss the issue of disciplinary proceedings.

If the allegation is substantiated and if, once the case is concluded, the YMCA dismisses the person or ceases to use their services, or the person ceases to provide his/her services, the named person should consult with the LADO about referral of the incident to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). This should take place within a month.

### **Managing risk and supporting the person at the centre of the allegation**

The first priority of the YMCA must always be the safety and welfare of children and young people. However, as an employee or volunteer, the person who is the subject of the allegation has a right to be treated in a fair, sensitive and non-judgemental manner and to have his or her privacy respected as far as this ensures the safety of the child and other children.

Information about the allegation must only be shared on a need to know basis with those directly responsible for supervising and managing the staff member or volunteer. Any other information (for example, explanations to other staff members as to why the person is not at work or working to different arrangements) should be agreed and negotiated with the individual concerned.

If the person is a member of a trades union or a professional organisation, he/she should be advised to make contact with that body as soon as possible after being informed that he/she is the subject of an allegation. Arrangements should also be made for him/her to receive ongoing support and information about the progress of the investigation.

The possible risk of harm to children and young people presented by the person who is the subject of an allegation needs to be carefully managed both during and after any conclusion to the investigation processes following the allegation. This means that the YMCA may need to consider suspending the person if there is cause to suspect that a child may be at risk of significant harm, or if the allegation is serious enough to warrant investigation by the police, or if it is so serious that it could lead to dismissal. However, a decision to suspend should not be taken automatically, as there may be other ways of managing any risk presented by the person.

The situation should be discussed fully between the named person, the individual's manager or supervisor and the LADO, who will seek the views of the police and the children's social care department on the question of possible suspension. The conclusions of the discussion should also be carefully documented. Grounds for suspension should be clearly set out if this is the conclusion. If suspension is not the conclusion, then a clear plan should be made as to how any possible risk posed by the individual is to be managed.

This could involve, for example, changes to the person's duties so that they do not have direct contact with children, and/or increased levels of supervision whilst at work.

If it is decided, once the case has been concluded, that a person who has been suspended or who has taken sick leave due to the stress induced by the allegation, is able to return to work, the named person and the manager/supervisor of the person who has been the subject of the allegations should consider how best to support the individual in this process. A plan to facilitate a return should be drawn up in consultation with the individual him/herself, and should take into account the need to manage any remaining child protection risks and also to support the person concerned after what will have been and will remain a very difficult experience.

If the decision is that the person cannot return to work and has to be dismissed or chooses to resign, the named person and the LADO should discuss the need for the matter to be referred to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) and/or to any professional body to which the person may belong.

The YMCA does not enter into settlement agreements with individuals who resign following the conclusion of investigations into allegations made against them, and will always comply with its statutory obligations to share information about the individual in the interests of protecting children and young people.

If the allegation is found to be without substance or fabricated, the YMCA will consider referring the child in question to the children's social care department for them to assess whether he/she is in need of services or whether he/she may have been abused by someone else. If it is felt that there has been malicious intent behind the allegation, the YMCA will discuss with the police whether there are grounds to pursue any action against the person responsible.

### **Keeping a record of the investigation**

All those involved in dealing with the allegation should keep clear notes of the allegations made, how they were followed up, and any actions and decisions taken, together with the reasons for these.

These notes should be compiled gradually as the situation unfolds, with each entry being made as soon as possible after the event it describes. The notes should be signed and dated by the person making them, and the person's name should be printed alongside.

The notes should be kept confidentially on the file of the person who is the subject of the allegation. Discussion should take place with the LADO to determine whether any aspects of the notes may not be shared with the person concerned. If there are no

reasons not to do so, a copy of the records should be given to the individual.

The notes should be held on file for a 10-year period, whether or not the person remains with the YMCA for this period.

## 8. Information sharing

Staff and volunteers may find themselves wishing to or being asked to share information of a confidential nature about children and families using the service. This may be because:

- the staff member/volunteer is of the view that someone in the family may benefit from additional support
- someone from another agency has been in touch and wishes to know something about the family's involvement with our service
- someone in the family has asked to be referred for further help
- the staff member/volunteer is concerned that a child may be at risk of significant harm, or an adult in the family may be at risk of serious harm, or there is a serious crime that may have been committed or about to be committed involving someone in the family.

Before sharing the information, the staff member/volunteer should record what it is that they wish to share, who they wish to share it with, and the purpose of doing so. If the reason involves risk of harm to a child, young person or adult, then child protection procedures or adult safeguarding procedures should be referred to immediately.

The legal principle is that the "welfare of the child is paramount". Privacy and confidentiality should be respected where possible but if doing this leaves a child at risk of harm then the child's safety has to come first. Remember:

- Legally, it is fine to share information if someone is worried about the safety of a child.
- Not everyone needs to know when a concern or worry is raised. This respects the child's, family's and/or staff's rights to privacy. So only people who need to know should be told about it. Otherwise there might be gossip and rumours or other people may be genuinely concerned.
- It is fine to say that a concern has been raised and it is being dealt with following the group's procedures.

**In any other situation, these guidelines should continue to be followed.**

1. The staff member/volunteer should then consider the issue of consent to the information being shared. If the information relates to an adult who is capable of giving consent, and such consent has not already been obtained, then the staff member/volunteer should seek the consent of the person concerned unless doing so would place someone at risk of harm or would impede the prevention or investigation of a serious crime. If the information relates to a child or young person, then the matter should be discussed with the child or young person if they are capable of understanding it. If, in the view of the staff member or volunteer, the child or young person is competent to give their consent (Gillick competence) then this should be sought unless the urgency or seriousness of the situation prevents this, as suggested above.
2. When seeking consent, the staff member/volunteer should ask for this in writing if possible, unless this is inappropriate. If written consent is not possible, then the staff member/volunteer should record that it has been obtained verbally. Before being asked to give consent, families and children/young people should be made aware of what information is to be shared, the purpose of doing so, with whom it will be shared and the consequences of its not being shared.
3. The staff member/volunteer should then pass the information on to the agreed agency without delay (i.e. within one week of consent being obtained or sooner if circumstances require). This should be done within the following parameters of good practice, and recorded:
  - Make a conscious decision on how much information to share based on the public interest - which, in this case, will normally be the interests of the child.
  - Ensure that it is shared securely - this means checking who exactly is receiving the information, and that they are doing so in a confidential environment.
  - Make sure that the information you share is as accurate and up to date as possible; if you are unsure of any of it but still decide to share it, then make sure that the recipient is aware of any areas of uncertainty.
  - Distinguish clearly between fact and opinion.
  - Ask what the recipient is going to do with the information and whether they will need to pass it on to anyone else.
  - Inform the person who is the subject of the information that it has been passed on, unless it would be unsafe or inappropriate to do so.

4. If consent is withheld, or if it cannot be sought because of a risk of harm to someone, or because of the risk of a serious crime being committed, or because of the investigation of a serious crime being compromised, then the staff member/volunteer should consult with their manager on whether the information should be shared without consent.
5. In such a situation, the manager and the staff member/volunteer need to weigh up whether sharing the information is in the public interest. 'Public interest' is a term used in the Data Protection Act but not clearly defined. It can refer to the interests of the whole community, or to a group within the community, or to individuals. Normally it would be considered to be in the public interest for the confidentiality of service users to be protected, but this may be outweighed by the public interest involved in protecting people from harm, preventing crime or disorder, or promoting children's welfare by making sure that they have access to safe and effective care. The manager, in consultation with the member of staff/volunteer, needs to decide whether, on balance and in this particular case, the public interest is served by information being shared without consent.
6. If the decision is not to share the information, this must be recorded and the reasons for not sharing must be stated. If the decision is to go ahead and share the information, then this must be done by either the manager or the staff member/volunteer (it must be clearly understood between them who will do it) within one week of the decision being made (or sooner if circumstances require). The parameters of good practice outlined under point 3 should be used to inform the process of sharing the information.
7. The manager and staff member/volunteer should record the decision to share the information without consent, the reasons for doing so, and the details of how this was done. This record must be signed by both.

## 9. E-safety policy

This policy and the procedures that it underpins apply to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students and anyone working on behalf of The YMCA.

- to protect children and young people who receive the YMCA's services and who make use of information technology (such as mobile phones, games consoles and the Internet) as part of their involvement with us;
- to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to e-safety;
- to ensure that, as an organisation, we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use information technology.

### We recognise that:

- the welfare of the children/young people who come into contact with our services is paramount and should govern our approach to the use and management of electronic communications technologies;
- 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 and in helping young people to be responsible in their approach to e-safety;
- the use of information technology is an essential part of all our lives; it is involved in how we as an organisation gather and store information, as well as how we communicate with each other. It is also an intrinsic part of the experience of our children and young people, and is greatly beneficial to all. However, it can present challenges in terms of how we use it responsibly and, if misused either by an adult or a young person, can be actually or potentially harmful to them.

### We will seek to promote e-safety by:

- appointing an e-safety coordinator (note: this may or may not be the same person as your named person for child protection);
- developing a range of procedures that provide clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on the appropriate use of ICT

- supporting and encouraging the young people using our service to use the opportunities offered by mobile phone technology and the internet in a way that keeps themselves safe and shows respect for others;
- supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online and when using their mobile phones and game consoles;
- incorporating statements about safe and appropriate ICT use into the codes of conduct both for staff and volunteers and for children and young people;
- developing an e-safety agreement for use with young people and their carers (see toolbox resource);
- use our procedures to deal firmly, fairly and decisively with any examples of inappropriate ICT use, complaints or allegations, whether by an adult or a child/young person (these may include breaches of filtering, illegal use, cyber bullying, or use of ICT to groom a child or to perpetrate abuse);
- informing parents and carers of incidents of concern as appropriate;
- reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly;
- providing adequate physical security for ICT equipment;
- ensuring that user names, logins and passwords are used effectively;
- using only official email accounts provided via the organisation, and monitoring these as necessary;
- ensuring that the personal information of staff, volunteers and service users (including service users' names) are not published on our website;
- ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given;
- any social media tools used in the course of our work with children, young people and families must be risk assessed in advance by the member of staff wishing to use them;
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers on ICT issues, through supervision, support and training;
- examining and risk assessing any emerging new technologies before they are used within the organisation.

**Kim Francis**

**E-Safety Co-ordinator & Child Protection  
01424 429677**

## **10. It is not child protection but I am still concerned**

Sometimes concerns about a child may not be about abuse. You may be concerned that a child or family need some help in making sure all the child's needs are met to address a particular problem.

Examples of this might be where a child is suffering because of poverty, getting into trouble in the community, or has a disability and needs extra help. In these instances, you can get them help by using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

More information on when to use and the process behind the Common Assessment Framework and the form can be found here:

## **Flow Chart for Reporting Concerns Annex 1**

- Member of staff has concerns about a Child's Safety or Welfare
- Member of staff makes notes of their concerns using the reporting form, and discusses them with their Supervisor / manager.
- The named person for child protection should also be involved in discussion.
- If the child's family does not already know about the concern, the member of staff or manager discusses it with them unless:
  - a family member might be responsible for abusing the child
  - someone may be put in danger by the family being informed
  - informing the family might interfere with a criminal investigation.

If any of these circumstances apply, discussions with the family should only take place after this has been agreed with the local authority children's social care department.

If there is still uncertainty about the concerns, the named person (or supervisor/manager if named person not available) can discuss with children's social care department without disclosing the identity of the child/family.

### No longer concerned

No further child protection action needed. Staff member and supervisor/manager decide whether to discuss the initial concern with other services (e.g. school) to ensure that the child's needs are being met elsewhere.

### Concerned

Named person refers to local authority children's social care department and confirms in writing within 48 hours.

## Form for Reporting Concerns Annex 2

### Details of Child and Parents /Carers

Name of Child:

Gender:

Age:

Date of Birth:

Ethnicity:

Language:

Additional Needs:

Name(s) of Parent(s) / Carer(s):

Child's home address and address (es) of parents (if different from child's):

### Your Details

Your Name

Your Position

Date and Time of Incident (if applicable)

### Report

Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else? (delete as appropriate)

Reporting own concerns

Responding to concerns raised by someone else

If you are responding to concerns raised by someone else, please provide their name and position with the organisation:

- Please provide details of the incident or concerns you have, including times, dates, description of any injuries, whether information is first hand or the accounts of others, including any other relevant details:

### The child's account / perspective:

Please provide details of anyone alleged to have caused the incident or to be the source of concerns:

Provide details of anyone who has witnessed the incident or who shares the concerns:

Please note: concerns should be discussed with the family UNLESS:

- The view is that a family member might be responsible for abusing the child
- Someone may be put in danger by the parents being informed
- Informing the family might interfere with a criminal investigation

If any of these circumstances apply, consult with the local authority children's social care department to decide whether or not discussions with the family should take place.

Have you spoken to the child's parents / carers? If so, please provide details of who you spoke to and what was said. If not, please state the reason for this.

Are you aware of any previous incidents or concerns relating to this child and of any current risk management plan / support plan? If so, please provide details:

### Summary of discussion with supervisor / manager:

Has the situation been discussed with the named person for child protection? Yes / No (delete as appropriate)

If so, please summarise the discussion

After discussion with the supervisor / line manager and named person, do you still have child protection concerns?

Yes / No (delete as appropriate)

Have you informed the statutory child protection authorities?

Police: Yes / No Date and Time:

Name and phone number of person spoken to:

Local authority children's social care:

Yes / No Date and Time:

Name and phone number of person spoken to:

Action agreed with child protection authorities:

What has happened since referring to statutory agency(ies)?

Include the date and nature of feedback from referral, outcome and relevant dates:

If the concerns are not about child protection, details of

any further steps taken to provide support to child and family, and any other agencies involved:

Signed

Date and Time Named Position

### Staff Behaviour Code Annex 3

This behaviour code outlines the conduct expected of staff and volunteers from the YMCA and staff from other organisations who engage with children and young people through the YMCA and its activities.

It has been informed by the views of children and young people.

#### Purpose

Following this code will help to protect children from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from adults. It will also help staff and volunteers to maintain the standard of behaviour expected of them and will reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse being made against them.

#### Upholding this code of behaviour

All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code to their line manager under the whistle-blowing procedure or, if necessary, under child protection procedures.

Staff and volunteers who breach this code of behaviour may be subject to The YMCA's disciplinary procedures. Any breach of the code involving a volunteer or member of staff from another agency may result in them being asked to leave The YMCA.

Serious breaches may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the police, the local authority children's social care department and/or the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

#### The role of staff and volunteers

When working with children and young people for (name of group/organisation) all staff and volunteers are acting in a position of trust. It is important that staff and volunteers are aware that they may be seen as role models by children and young people, and must act in an appropriate manner at all times.

- operate within The YMCA's principles and guidance and any specific procedures;
- follow the YMCA's child protection policy and e-safety policy and procedures at all times;
- listen to and respect children at all times;

- avoid favouritism;
- treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination;
- value and take children's contributions seriously, actively involving children and young people in planning activities wherever possible;
- ensure any contact with children and young people is appropriate and in relation to the work of the project;
- always ensure language is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory;
- follow the e-safety policy and report any breaches;
- always ensure equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose;
- provide examples of good conduct you wish children and young people to follow;
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse;
- ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people or if this isn't possible, that you are within sight or hearing of other adults;
- be close to where others are working. If a child specifically asks for or needs some private time with you, ensure other staff should know where you and the child are;
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy;
- encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like;
- recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people.

#### You must not:

- patronise or treat children and young people as if they are silly;
- allow allegations to go unreported;
- develop inappropriate relationships such as contact with children and young people that is not a part of the work of The YMCA or agreed with the manager or leader;
- conduct a sexual relationship with a child or young person or indulge in any form of sexual contact with a child or young person. Any such behaviour between an adult member of staff or volunteer and a child or young person using the services of The YMCA represents a serious breach of trust on the part of the staff member or volunteer and is not

acceptable under any circumstances;

- let children and young people have your personal contact details (mobile number or address);
- make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people;
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive;
- make inappropriate promises to children and young people, particularly in relation to confidentiality;
- jump to conclusions about others without checking facts;
- either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues;
- rely on your reputation or that of the organisation to protect you.

### **The role of parents and carers**

The YMCA welcomes and encourages parental involvement. Parents and carers are regarded as valuable partners in promoting positive behaviour and will be involved as appropriate.

In the event of their child becoming the subject of behaviour sanctions, parents/carers will be informed and involved.

The YMCA understands the importance of emerging technologies for children's education and personal development and seeks to support children and young people in making use of these in our work. However, we also recognise that safeguards need to be in place to ensure children are kept safe at all times.

### **To be used when using YMCA based technology with young people.**

#### **Young person's agreement**

I will be responsible for my behaviour when using the Internet. This includes resources I access and the language I use.

I will not deliberately browse, download or upload material that could be considered offensive or illegal. If I accidentally come across any such material I will report it immediately to a member of staff.

I will not send anyone material that could be considered threatening, bullying, offensive or illegal. I will not give out any personal information such as name, phone number or address.

I will not reveal my passwords to anyone.

I will not arrange to meet someone unless accompanied by a member of staff or a parent.

I understand that all my use of the Internet and other related technologies will be monitored and logged and can be made available to the group leader.

I understand that these rules are designed to keep me safe and that if they are not followed my parent/ carer may be contacted.

### **Young person's and parent's signatures:**

We have discussed this policy and .....  
(child's name) agrees to support the safe use of ICT at  
(name of organisation)

Parent/ Carer Signature.....

Child's Signature.....

Date .....

## **Useful Contact Details Annex 4**

- LA Designated Officer LADO 01273 481544 or ESSCPA.Contact@eastsussex.gov.uk
- East Sussex County Council Single Point of Advice 01323 464222
- Supervisor/manager:  
Judith Monk 07970 717026 or 01424 422105
- Named person for child protection and deputy:  
Yolanda Rumball 07796 381469 or 01424 429677
- Local police: call 101
- Local authority children's social care department:  
East Sussex - 01424 724120
- NSPCC Helpline: 0800 800 5000 or help@nspcc.org.uk
- ChildLine: 0800 1111 (textphone 0800 400 222) or www.childline.org.uk

### **Hastings & Rother YMCA's**

- Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) Judith Monk 07970 717026 or 01424 422105
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Kim Francis 07734215037 or 01424 429677
- "Named person" Kim Francis 07734215037 or 01424 429677
- Child protection officer Yolanda Rumball 07796 381469 or 01424 429677
- Child protection lead Yolanda Rumball 07796 381469 or 01424 429677
- All these roles at Hastings & Rother YMCA are overseen by Safeguarding Coordinator - Chair Judith Monk

**Policy reviewed and updated on January 8th 2021/  
December 1st 2021 & March 2022 & March 2024**