

# MYMS SAFEGUARDING POLICY



Registered Charity Number 297018

The management committee of MYMS is firmly committed to the welfare of all young people who use its facilities and protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

The organisation will aim to ensure that all young people meet in a safe environment with people they can trust. It will also ensure that all risks which young people encounter are carefully assessed and the necessary steps taken to minimise and manage them.

The MYMS Policy and Procedures will take note of the Kent County Council regulations for Body of Persons Approval [BOPA].

Our Policy and Procedures will be given to all new staff (paid and voluntary) and training will be made available to ensure that they have awareness of the content and implications. All staff (paid and voluntary) will be requested to indicate their commitment to this safeguarding policy by completing a signed copy which will be kept in the organisation's records.

Our policy will be available to any young person using our services, or to a member of the public on request.

## Code of conduct

The Management Committee adheres to the following guidelines as to how young people and adults interact with each other.

### All Staff (both paid and volunteer) will:

- Respect a young person's right to privacy
- Treat the young people with respect and dignity
- Recognise the unique contribution each young person can make. Talk to the young people about their right to be kept safe from harm
- Listen to the young people and take every opportunity to raise their self esteem
- Work as a team and agree what behaviour you expect from the young people and be consistent in enforcing it

- If it is necessary to speak to a young person about their behaviour, the language and approach will challenge 'what they did', not 'who they are'
- Be clear with anyone disclosing any matter that could concern the safety and wellbeing of a young person that this information cannot be kept a secret, but that it will be treated as private with only the appropriate people/professional bodies being informed
- Ask the designated member of staff to attend safeguarding training
- Ensure the ratio of staff to young people is appropriate for the activity
- Ensure roles/responsibilities of staff are understood by adults and young people
- Keep a register of members and/or session attendees
- Carry out risk assessments prior to any activity
- Record and report all incidents and accidents
- Ensure safety procedures are understood by all staff
- Maintain and have available a fully equipped first aid kit
- Ensure all adults and young people know what to do in an emergency
- Use parental/guardian consent forms for all participants
- Note and confidentially monitor relevant medical and dietary needs
- Ensure wherever possible that both male and female workers accompany mixed gender group
- Make clear the start and finish times of activities
- Ensure at least one adult present holds a current first aid qualification.

### All Staff (both paid and voluntary) will not:

- Use any kind of physical punishment or chastisement such as smacking or hitting

- Smoke or drink alcohol in front of any young person
- Use non-prescribed drugs or be under the influence of alcohol in front of any young person
- Do things of a personal nature for a young person that they can do for themselves
- Behave in a way that frightens or demeans any young person
- Use any racist, sexist, discriminatory or offensive language
- Invite a young person home or arrange to see them outside the set activity times
- Engage in any sexual activity (including using sexualised language) with a young person or in front of a young person
- Engage in rough or physical games, including horseplay
- Allow themselves to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behavior such as tantrums or crushes
- Give any of the young people presents or personal items. (Small gifts such as leaving presents or prizes may be given by the organization with agreement from the committee but never from an individual member of staff.)

### **Recruitment of staff (paid and voluntary)**

We strive to follow good employment practice in the recruitment of all staff. Our employment practice includes the use of application forms, taking references, positive identity checks and enhanced DBS Disclosures.

### **Training**

The contents of this policy (and other organization policies) will be included in the induction process for all members of the Management Committee and staff (paid and voluntary). The designated member of staff will be required to attend Safeguarding training courses, such as those delivered by Young Kent.

### **Identifying and preventing abuse**

There are four main areas of abuse of which our staff working with young people are made aware:

**1. Emotional abuse:** Generally, this occurs when adults persistently fail to show young people due care, love or affection, where a young person may be consistently shouted at, threatened or taunted,

or be subjected to sarcasm and unrealistic pressures. It may also include over-protection, preventing young people from socialising, or bullying to perform to high expectations. The young person may lose self-confidence and may become withdrawn and nervous. We will avoid emotional abuse by not:

- Providing repeated negative feedback
- Repeatedly ignoring a young person's efforts to progress
- Repeatedly demanding performance levels above those of which the young person is capable
- Over-emphasizing the winning ethic

**2. Neglect:** Generally, this occurs when a young person's essential needs for food, warmth and care are not met. Failing, or refusing, to provide love and affection could also be deemed as neglect. We will avoid neglect by not:

- Leaving young people alone without proper supervision
- Exposing a young person to unnecessary heat or cold without fluids or protection
- Exposing a young person to an unacceptable risk of injury.

**3. Physical abuse:** Generally, this occurs when adults, or even children, deliberately inflict injuries on a young person, or knowingly do not prevent such injuries. This includes, for example, injuries caused by hitting, shaking, squeezing, biting or using excessive force. It also occurs when an adult gives underage young people alcohol, or inappropriate drugs, or fails to supervise their access to these substances. We will avoid physical abuse by not:

- Exposing young people to exercise/training, which disregards their age, abilities, maturity and body growth
- Exposing young people to overplaying, over-training or fatigue
- Exposing young people to alcohol, or giving them the opportunity to drink alcohol below the legal age
- Exposing young people to performance enhancing drugs or recommending that they take them

**4. Sexual abuse:** Generally, this occurs when boys and/or girls are abused by adults, both male and female, who use children to meet their own sexual needs. This includes, for example, forcing a child to take part in sexual activity such as sexual intercourse, oral intercourse, masturbation or oral sex, showing children pornographic material, or making suggestions that sexual favours can help (or refusal hinder) their progression. We will avoid this by ensuring that our staff avoid inappropriate contact with young people and ensuring that their contact and language with young people cannot be misconstrued by them or those around them.

**If abuse is suspected:**

Our staff may be aware of abuse in a number of ways:

- A young person may tell them
- A person may have reported an incident, or may have a strong suspicion
- They may have the suspicion themselves.

In many situations however, the signs will not be obvious and decisions about what actions to take can be difficult. The following signs and indicators are not exhaustive, and we understand that the presence of one or more indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place.

**Signs and indicators:**

- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her
- Someone else (young person or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of the young person
- Unexplained changes in behaviour; e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden uncharacteristic outbursts of temper
- Inappropriate sexual awareness, including explicit language
- Sexually explicit behavior
- The young person is distrustful of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship will normally be expected
- The young person has difficulty making friends

- The young person is prevented from socializing with other children
- Variations in eating patterns including overeating, loss of appetite
- Weight loss for no apparent reason.

**It is NOT the responsibility of our staff to decide that abuse is occurring, but it IS their responsibility to act on any concern.**

**If abuse is reported/alleged/suspected:**

- The safeguarding flowchart will be followed
- Observations, conversations or concerns will be recorded, signed and dated
- It will be made clear to any young person or adult making a disclosure, an allegation or expressing a concern that it may be necessary to pass the information to another party. This discussion will be recorded in writing and the following information will be recorded:
  - a) The date and time
  - b) Location of discussion
  - c) People present
  - d) The facts of the conversation
- The matter must not be investigated or discussed with anyone other than the MYMS Manager/Safeguarding Officer
- The MYMS Manager/Safeguarding Officer will assess the information and contact the appropriate local statutory services, e.g. schools/social services/police
- The young person will be listened to and encouraged to speak without interruption, comment or judgment
- It will be explained that in terms of the MYMS' Confidentiality Policy, information may need to be shared with appropriate professionals in certain circumstances
- A written account of the report or allegation will be made, signed and dated by the worker and the information passed to the MYMS Manager/Safeguarding Officer
- The MYMS Manager/Safeguarding Officer will inform the appropriate statutory service (school/Social Services/police)
- If the matter is regarded as critical it should be referred immediately and directly to the Safeguarding officer of Kent County Council/ Medway Council and details of the referral passed to the MYMS Manager/Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

### **Allegations of abuse against a member of staff (paid or voluntary)**

Abuse can and does occur outside the family setting. Research indicates that abuse which takes place within a public setting is rarely a one-off event. Our staff are aware of this possibility and that all allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action pursued.

If any allegation is made or suspicions emerge regarding any staff member (paid and voluntary), it should be reported to the MYMS Manager/Safeguarding Officer. If an allegation concerns either of these officers, the report should be made to the MYMS Chair. If further action is required, the following procedure will apply during which all information relating to the allegation will remain confidential:

- A detailed factual record of the allegation and action taken will be made
- Information will be passed to the MYMS Chair who may consult with relevant professionals
- Consideration will be given to the suspension of the person involved, taking account of the risks to other young people and the member of staff concerned
- If the allegation involves a member of the organisation, contact will be made with the young person's parents to advise them of the process
- Relevant external bodies will be advised.

### **Protecting staff**

The management committee recognises the importance of protecting its staff (paid and voluntary) from possible allegations of abuse and recommends the following guidelines:

#### **Staff (paid and volunteer) should not:**

- Be alone with young people
- Lock and unlock premises without another adult present
- Transport young people in a car or mini bus without another adult being present
- Take young people to their homes
- Make inappropriate contact with young people, i.e. develop relationships outside the organisation's setting
- Leave young people unattended
- Leave young people in the presence of adults who are not suitably trained

- Leave young people in the presence of adults not known to leaders
- Leave young people in the presence of adults who have not had relevant DBS checks
- Show favouritism to young people within the organisation.

### **Safeguarding officer**

MYMS has nominated Phill Hyde, MYMS Manager as the nominated adult with responsibility for Safeguarding. This person is the first point of contact for all staff and/or young people with regard to safeguarding matters.

#### **The Safeguarding Officer will:**

- Understand that it is not his/her role to investigate allegations but it is his/her role to try to determine the facts of the concern or allegation
- Ensure the organisation's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are followed
- Ensure they know how to make contact with social care and police staff responsible for dealing with safeguarding children concerns both during and after office hours
- Report any concerns to social care or the police. (N.B. Urgent concerns should be reported immediately by those aware of them even if the designated person is not available, and it is the role of the Safeguarding Officer to ensure all staff and volunteers know how to do this)
- Act as a source of advice on all safeguarding matters and seek further advice and guidance from relevant organisations (e.g. Medway Youth Trust [MY Trust, formerly Young Kent], NSPCC, Social Services)
- Ensure that a record is kept of any concerns about a young person or adult and of any conversation or referrals to statutory agencies
- Ensure that any such record is kept safely and securely.

### **Photography**

Since young people may be photographed while participating in MYMS events and activities, parental consent must be obtained which will also allow photographic material to be used in the public domain.

**Media (including internet)**

The internet has emerging online spaces, new media and social networks which allow individuals to publish unmediated content. Users can be invited to view personal spaces and leave comments, over which there may be limited control.

All staff (paid and voluntary) should be made aware of the potential risks of using social networking sites or personal publishing either professionally, with the young people or personally. They should be made aware of the importance of considering the material they post, ensuring profiles are secured and how publishing unsuitable material may affect their professional status.

Examples include: blogs, wikis, social networking, forums, bulletin boards, multiplayer online gaming, chatrooms, instant messenger and many others.

- Staff (paid and voluntary) official blogs or wikis should be password protected. Staff (paid and volunteer) will not use social network spaces for interaction with the young people on a personal basis
- The sending of abusive or inappropriate text, picture or video messages will not be tolerated
- Cyberbullying (along with all forms of bullying) will not be tolerated.

This Safeguarding Policy was reviewed and updated 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023.

Damian Pevy, Chair, MYMS Committee  
On behalf of the Management Committee

.....(signed)

**This policy will be reviewed at least every two years by the management committee**

**Related policies** *[to be considered in due course]*:-

- Equal opportunities**
- Complaints**
- Recruitment**