Wycombe Arts Centre
Desborough Road
High Wycombe
HP11 2PU

Registered Charity No. 1136161
Phone: 01494 445517
info@wycombeartscentre.com
wycombeartscentre.com

Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults Policy

Introduction

Wycombe Arts Centre (WAC) is dedicated to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults on our premises. We believe every individual has the right to be safe, treated with respect, and have their well-being protected. This policy outlines our safeguarding principles and practices to ensure the safety and welfare of those with whom we engage. We adhere to the guidance provided by the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) and relevant legislation. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all staff, volunteers, and visitors play a vital role in keeping children and vulnerable adults safe.

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Suzanne Buckley (info@godsofwarmma.co.uk)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): Darrel Carter (dac@wycombeartscentre.com) The DSLs are responsible for safeguarding concerns, maintaining records, liaising with external agencies, and ensuring compliance with safeguarding legislation.

Definitions of Abuse

Abuse can take many forms, and safeguarding applies to both children and vulnerable adults. The categories of abuse include:

1. Physical Abuse: Any act causing harm, including hitting, shaking, or burning.
2. Emotional Abuse: Persistent emotional maltreatment, including threats or verbal abuse.
3. Sexual Abuse: Any sexual activity without consent.
4. Neglect: Failing to provide basic needs, such as food, shelter, or medical care.
5. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): The harmful practice of partial or total removal of female genitalia for non-medical reasons.
6. Exploitation: Abuse for the benefit of others, including financial or sexual exploitation.
7. Domestic Abuse: Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse within family relationships.

8. Modern Slavery and Trafficking: Exploiting vulnerable individuals for forced labor or sexual exploitation.

9. Vulnerable Adults: An individual at risk due to physical or mental illness, disability, or other factors that impair self-protection.

Safeguarding Commitment
Wycombe Arts Centre commits to treating children, young people, and vulnerable adults with respect and dignity, ensuring that they are not exposed to any form of physical, emotional, or verbal abuse. We will not tolerate discrimination or destructive criticism and encourage a safe, inclusive environment where individuals are respected, encouraged, and supported.

Vetting Adults Working with Children
All adults, whether employees, volunteers, or hirers, must declare any criminal convictions related to the abuse of children or vulnerable adults. Staff and volunteers will be subject to enhanced DBS checks, and records of these checks must be maintained.

Whistleblowing
Staff and volunteers are encouraged to report any concerns about the safety or well-being of a child or vulnerable adult. Reports will be handled confidentially, and whistleblowers will be protected from retaliation. Concerns should be reported to the Arts Centre Manager or local safeguarding authorities as necessary.

Safer Recruitment
WAC ensures that all staff, volunteers, and contractors working with children are recruited safely, with at least two references obtained and enhanced DBS checks conducted before employment.

Guidelines to Minimise Risk to Children and Vulnerable Adults

- No adult should work alone with children or vulnerable adults unless endorsed by an enhanced DBS check.
- A minimum of two responsible adults will supervise a group.
- Parents/carers are always permitted to stay and accompany children during activities.
- Physical contact should be respectful and not open to misunderstanding.
- Personal information about children and vulnerable adults, including photographs, must not be shared without consent from parents or carers.

Responding to Concerns About Abuse
If a child or vulnerable adult discloses abuse, the following steps will be taken:

1. **Immediate Action**: The parents or carers of the child or vulnerable adult will be informed as soon as possible.

2. **Alleged Perpetrator**: The alleged perpetrator will be asked to step down from the group immediately and will be instructed not to make any contact with any member of the group until investigations are completed.

3. **External Consultation**: Advice will be sought from local Social Services or appropriate external safeguarding agencies to ensure proper handling of the situation.

4. **WAC Management Board**: A special meeting of the WAC Management Board will be called to decide on actions internal to the organisation. If the abuse is believed to be happening outside of the Arts Centre (e.g., in the child's school or wider community), the parents will be informed, and Social Services will be consulted.

5. **External Agency Involvement**: An appropriate external agency will always be contacted to manage the situation, ensuring the issue is handled by professionals rather than being dealt with internally by WAC.

6. **Diplomatic and Careful Handling**: It is unlikely that many groups will experience the trauma of abuse disclosures. However, should this occur, it is essential to handle the situation diplomatically and carefully. Emotions can run high, and adults should be supported to address their feelings in formal meetings. Informal discussions will be discouraged. Additional advice and support can be sought from Social Services, and the WAC Management Board will ensure ongoing support and proper handling.

Code of Behaviour for Staff and Visiting Contractors

At WAC, we adopt a child-centred approach. All children, young people, and vulnerable adults should be:

• Treated equally and with respect.
• Listened to and involved in decision-making processes as appropriate.
• Encouraged, supported, and welcomed by all staff members.
• Provided with a safe, supervised working environment.

Staff and Facilitators Responsibilities

All staff and visiting contractors working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults are expected to:

- Use appropriate language and lead by example.
- Create an atmosphere of trust and respect personal boundaries.
- Respect the differences of ability, culture, religion, and race.
- Discuss and establish a mutual code of behaviour between young people and staff/visiting contractors.
- Be aware of children's limitations and any special needs/requirements and accommodate these accordingly.
- Ensure all activities are safe and children are supervised at all times.
- Ensure children are collected safely at the end of workshops, never leaving them unsupervised.

Good Practice

- Details of each child participating in activities must be registered (name, contact details, medical conditions, etc.).
- Ensure adequate adult supervision in all activities, with a recommended ratio of one adult to every ten participants.
- Parents/carers must be fully aware of the importance of collecting children promptly after activities.
- Media coverage, such as photographs or video, must be approved by parents or carers before being taken.

Health and Safety

- Never leave children or vulnerable adults unsupervised.
- Provide appropriate guidance and ensure a safe environment during all activities.
- Ensure that all materials and techniques used in workshops are safe and appropriate.
- Ensure that a first aid kit is available on-site.

E-Safety and Use of Mobile Phones

Wycombe Arts Centre (WAC) is committed to promoting e-safety and the responsible use of technology for all children, young people, and vulnerable adults involved in our programs. All staff, volunteers, and contractors must be aware of the risks associated with online activities and take appropriate steps to ensure a safe environment.

To uphold this commitment, the following practices are in place:

- Children and young people are not permitted to use personal mobile phones or digital devices during sessions, unless specifically agreed in advance (for example, to contact a parent or carer). Where appropriate, devices may be stored securely during the session and returned at the end.
- Staff, volunteers, and contractors must not use personal phones during sessions except in emergencies—such as calling an ambulance or other urgent situations where verbal communication is not possible. Routine safeguarding concerns that arise during sessions should be reported verbally, as all adults and supervisors will be present and able to respond immediately.
- Messaging, social media use, or personal calls are not permitted during time spent supervising or working directly with children and young people.
- External contractors and facilitators must adhere to WAC's safeguarding policy, including procedures related to phone use and contact with young people. Contractors will not be left

in sole charge of children unless they have undergone appropriate safeguarding checks and can provide evidence of relevant safeguarding training.

- External providers remain responsible for conducting themselves professionally and in line with safeguarding principles while on site.
- All WAC staff will complete appropriate e-safety training and refresher courses as necessary to stay up to date with safeguarding best practices.
- Any breaches of digital safety procedures, including misuse of mobile phones or technology, will be recorded and addressed promptly following WAC's safeguarding policy.

Incident Reporting
All safeguarding incidents must be logged and documented according to WAC's incident reporting procedures.

Visitor Management
Visitors to Wycombe Arts Centre must adhere to safeguarding guidelines:

- All visitors must sign in upon arrival and wear a visitor's badge.
- Visitors with unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults must undergo DBS checks.
- Visitors must adhere to safeguarding policies, including maintaining appropriate boundaries and refraining from taking photographs or filming children and vulnerable adults.

Training Arrangements
All staff and volunteers working with children and vulnerable adults will receive safeguarding training as part of their induction, covering both children and vulnerable adults. Regular refresher training will be provided every three years, with specialized training for staff working with specific vulnerable groups.

Recording and Retention of Safeguarding Records

- Safeguarding records must be stored securely and accessed only by relevant individuals.
- These records will be retained for at least six years after the individual reaches adulthood, or according to legal requirements.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing
Safeguarding information will be shared only with those who need to know to protect the individual's safety. Information may be shared with external agencies, such as social services or the police, to safeguard the individual.

Conclusion
Wycombe Arts Centre is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all children, young people, and vulnerable adults involved in our programs. This policy is reviewed annually and updated as necessary to ensure compliance with the latest safeguarding legislation and best practices. All staff, volunteers, and visitors must adhere to this policy.

What to do if you have a concern about a child in Buckinghamshire

V2 June 2018

Buckinghamshire BSCB Safeguarding Children Board

CONSULT

Use the Thresholds document, discuss with your safeguarding lead and use your professional judgement to identify the level of need. Thresholds document can be found at: www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/professionals/thresholds-document/

If you are a school and need some advice, you can consult the Education Safeguarding Advisory Service (ESAS) on 01296 382912.
If you think the need has reached level 3 or 4 and you need advice or guidance, you can consult by calling First Response on **01296 383962**

LEVEL 2: ADDITIONAL SUPPORT	LEVEL 3: COMPLEX NEEDS / SPECIALIST/ THRESHOLD FOR CHILD IN NEED	LEVEL 4: ACUTE / CHILD PROTECTION
CONSENT		
Gain consent from the family to work with them to support their needs and prevent escalation of problems.	Speak with the family and gain written consent to ensure they agree to the referral, information sharing, assessment and intervention.	You do not require consent if the child is likely to suffer or is suffering significant harm. If you are unsure about whether consent is required you can call First Response who will advise you.
CONTACT		
Can you support the child and their family through your own service? Or can you signpost to another service? Check the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service on www.bucksfamilyinfo.org (click on the Early Help tab) or call 01296 383065.	Contact First Response: send a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF): www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/concerned-about-child/ On the MARF clearly indicate what level of need you have identified and what your expected outcomes are. or call First Response on **01296 383962** (**0800 999 7677** out of hours).	Collect all the information you have and contact First Response *immediately* on **01296 383962** (**0800 9997677** out of hours), followed up with a MARF: www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/concerned-about-child/ On the MARF clearly indicate what level of need you have identified and what your expected outcomes are. **Call Police 999 if immediate risk.**
WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?		
If you can support the family through your own agency - contact the family and talk through what support you can offer. If you cannot support the family, can you work with the family to guide them to another service that can support their needs?	Decisions on what action to take will be made within 24 hours. More complex cases will be considered by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) where information is shared to help decide which service is appropriate for the family. Referrers will be advised of the outcome in writing within 72 hours of the referral being received. The family may be referred to a multi-agency Early Help Panel who will assign a lead agency. A lead family worker will work directly with the family and coordinate across agencies to support their needs. The panel will notify referrers of the outcomes within one week of the panel meeting. Alternatively, the child's needs may be referred to Children's Social Care for a Children in Need assessment.	Where a child is assessed to have met the threshold for statutory intervention, statutory assessment will take place under the provisions of the Children Act 1989, led by Children's Social Care.

This document can be downloaded from: www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/professionals/thresholds-document/