

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

1. Purpose and Scope

The Unity Centre is committed to providing a safe environment for all children, young people, and vulnerable adults who participate in our activities. Our activities include, but are not limited to:

- Children's Yoga
- Creative Workshops
- Music Workshops
- Storytelling
- Yoga and Wellness Classes for Adults
- Wellness Therapies

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults who receive The Unity Centre's services, including the children of adults who use our services.
- To provide parents, staff, volunteers, and service users with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and protecting vulnerable individuals.
- To ensure that all participants, regardless of age or vulnerability, are safeguarded from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of The Unity Centre, including senior managers, the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, and students.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up based on legislation, policy, and guidance that seeks to protect children and vulnerable adults in England. A summary of key legislation and guidance is available from the NSPCC (nspcc.org.uk/childprotection).

3. We Believe That:

- Children, young people, and vulnerable adults should never experience abuse of any kind and have the right to protection against neglect and exploitation.

- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all individuals under our care, ensuring they are safe and practicing in a way that protects them.
- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some individuals are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs, or other issues.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, vulnerable adults, their parents, carers, and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.

4. We Will Seek to Keep Children, Young People, and Vulnerable Adults Safe By:

- Valuing, listening to, and respecting them.
- Appointing a nominated Child Protection/Safeguarding Lead (DSL), a deputy safeguarding lead, and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding.
- Developing child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures that reflect best practices.
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies that need to know, and involving children, young people, vulnerable adults, parents, families, and carers appropriately.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.
- Developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures.
- Sharing information about child protection and safeguarding best practices with children, vulnerable adults, their families, staff, and volunteers via leaflets, posters, group work, and one-to-one discussions.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training, and quality assurance measures.
- Implementing a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, vulnerable adults, staff, and volunteers by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely.

5. Procedures

5.1. Personal/Personnel Safety

- A group of children or young people under sixteen should not be left unattended at any time.
- Avoid being alone with an individual child, young person, or vulnerable adult for a long time. If there is a need to be alone with an individual (e.g., for first aid or if they are distressed), make sure another worker knows where you are and why.
- No staff member, volunteer, or external worker should arrange to meet a child, young person, or vulnerable adult away from the activity without someone else being there. Such meetings should be planned and approved by a senior member of staff.
- Teenage assistants should always be supervised.

5.2. Child and Vulnerable Adult Safety

1. Ensure that the area you are using for activities is fit for purpose, e.g., remove furniture that could cause injury during energetic activities.
2. Ensure that all workers and assistants know:
 - Where the emergency phone is and how to operate it.
 - Where the first aid kit is.
 - Who is responsible for First Aid and how to record accidents or injuries in the incident book.
 - What to do in the event of a fire or other emergency.
3. Conduct a fire practice annually.
4. Ensure that children do not go home without an adult unless the parent has given specific permission. Never allow a child to leave with another adult unless the parent has informed you that this will happen.
5. If private cars are used for an outing, drivers must be approved by the management, properly insured, rested before driving, and have clean licenses. There should always be at least one other responsible person (aged 16 or over) in each vehicle. Full seatbelts should be fitted and used at all times.
6. Workers should only give a lift home to a young person or vulnerable adult if the parents or carers have specifically requested it. This should be communicated clearly, especially in the case of trips or outings.

5.3. Responding to Allegations and Concerns

- Any staff member who receives a disclosure or has concerns about the welfare of a child, young person, or vulnerable adult must report it immediately to the DSL.

- Staff should listen carefully to what the individual is saying, taking it seriously, and making a record of the conversation as soon as possible.
- Do not promise to keep secrets but let the individual know that their disclosure will only be shared with those who need to know to protect them.
- Do not investigate the matter yourself; report it to the correct authorities for further action.

5.4. What Not to Do

- Do not begin investigating the matter yourself; leave it to the appropriate authorities.
- Do not discuss the matter with anyone except the relevant people in authority.
- Do not form your own opinions or decide to do nothing.
- Avoid leading questions or showing shock/disbelief.

5.5. Things to Say or Do

- "What you are telling me is very important."
- "This is not your fault."
- "I am sorry that this has happened/is happening."
- "You were right to tell someone."
- "What you are telling me should not be happening to you, and I will find out the best way to help you."
- Make notes as soon after the event as possible, recording exactly what was said without assumptions or conjecture.

6. Recruitment and Training of New Workers

- Completion of an application form.
- An interview by three people from the management team, who will make the final decision.
- Identifying reasons for gaps in employment and other inconsistencies in the application.
- Checking the applicants' identity (passport, driving license, etc.).
- Taking up references prior to the person starting work.
- Ensuring criminal record checks are carried out through relevant agencies approved by the Criminal Records Bureau.
- Taking appropriate advice before employing someone with a criminal record.
- No unaccompanied access to children or vulnerable adults until all checks are completed.
- A probationary period of 3 months for new paid workers and volunteers.
- Ongoing supervision and support for paid workers and volunteers.
- Ensuring good practice by providing appropriate training and guidance.

- A nominated Child Protection/Safeguarding representative on the Management Committee.

7. Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes in legislation, guidance, or within the organization.
- The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through feedback, audits, and ongoing training.

Professional Support:

- In an emergency call 999
- Otherwise contact the Single Point of Advice (SPOA) team:

Phone: 01323 464222

Opening hours: Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm, Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm

Out of hours contacts

Children's services

Call the Emergency Duty Service out of hours from 5pm to 8.30am (after 4.30pm on Fridays) and during the weekends and bank holidays if you have a serious concern about a child's welfare that cannot wait until the following working day. This out of hours service covers East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

- 01273 335906 or
01273 335905

[More information about what these policies and procedures should include is available from nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding]

Contact details

Nominated child protection lead

Name: Phone/email: **Deputy**

child protection lead

Name(s): Phone/email:

Senior lead for safeguarding and child protection

Name: Phone/email:

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000

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

This policy was last reviewed on:(date)

Signed:

[this should be signed by the most senior person with responsibility for safeguarding in your organisation, for example the safeguarding lead on your board of trustees].

Date: