

Safeguarding Children Guidance Document

For

The Escape Youth Group

1. Introduction

The Escape Youth Group is a non-profit organisation – Charity No

The Escape Youth Group is based at:

Park Centre
Park Road
Burgess Hill
West Sussex

The Escape Youth Group is managed by a board of trustees (the Board). One of the trustees has particular responsibility for safeguarding children – Louisa Rogers

The Board has adopted this safeguarding child policy and expects every adult working or helping at The Escape to support and comply with it. Consequently, this policy shall apply to all staff, managers, trustees, directors, volunteers, students or anyone working on behalf of The Escape Youth Group.

2. Purpose of this guidance document

This guidance document is intended to protect children and young people who receive any service from us.

As an organisation we believe that no child or young person should experience abuse or harm, and are committed to the protection of children and young people.

This guidance document is intended to provide guidance and overarching principles to those who represent us as volunteers or staff, to guide our approach to child protection and safeguarding.

3. The risks to children

Nearly every child grows up in a safe and happy environment and it is important not to exaggerate or overestimate the dangers. Nevertheless, there are situations where children need protection including:

- Sexual abuse
- Grooming
- Physical and emotional abuse and neglect
- Domestic violence
- Inappropriate supervision by staff or volunteers
- Bullying, cyber bullying, acts of violence and aggression
- Victimisation
- Self-harm
- Unsafe environments and activities
- Crime
- Exploitation

4. Safeguarding children at events / activities

There are 3 kinds of events / activities:

- Those open to adults and children of all ages
- Those for children accompanied by a 'parent'
- Those for unaccompanied children, which are sometimes run alongside other events / activities.

- At events and activities open to all ages, children under 16 must be accompanied to the venue by an adult over the age of 18 and collected by a designated over 18 year. Young people aged 16 & 17 may attend unaccompanied if they bring the written consent and mobile telephone number of a designated adult.
- At events and activities for children accompanied by a 'parent', children under 16 must be supervised throughout the event by an adult over the age of 18. Young people aged 16 & 17 may attend unaccompanied if they bring the written consent and mobile telephone number of a designated adult.
- At events and activities for unaccompanied children, children under the age of 16 must be enrolled by a responsible adult before being left with the event leader. The enrolment must record the child's name, age, address, and the names of the child's parents / guardians, addresses and contact numbers. Young people aged 16 & 17 may attend unaccompanied if they bring the written consent and mobile telephone number of a designated adult.
- Both events and activities are to be defined broadly to include any occasions where The Escape will be providing a service.

5. Disclosure and barring

The Escape Youth Group offers a variety of activities for children.

Some of our activities will involve close interaction between committee members and / or regular volunteers, all volunteers who have the opportunity to build relationships with young people will have an enhanced DBS under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

Tina Tucker who is overseeing the DBS and having oversight if there is any disclosures to make the decision as to whether they can carry out the role.

The Board will take very seriously any allegation of impropriety on the part of any member of the Escape. A member of The Escape Youth Group who discovers anything amiss should get in touch immediately with the following:

Louisa Rogers

The Board will review the allegation and the likely risk to children and, if appropriate, will consider banning the member from future events or revoking his or her membership, or both.

Even if a child doesn't tell someone verbally about what's happened to them, there may be other indicators that something is wrong. People who work with children need to be able to recognise the signs and know how to respond appropriately.

Children may disclose directly or indirectly and sometimes they may start sharing details of abuse before they are ready to put their thoughts and feelings in order.

Children and young people may disclose abuse in a variety of ways, including:

- directly – making specific verbal statements about what's happened to them
- indirectly – making ambiguous verbal statements which suggest something is wrong
- behaviourally – displaying behaviour that signals something is wrong (this may or may not be deliberate)
- non-verbally – writing letters, drawing pictures or trying to communicate in other ways.

Children and young people may not always be aware that they are disclosing abuse through their actions and behaviour.

Sometimes children and young people make partial disclosures of abuse. This means they give some details about what they've experienced, but not the whole picture. They may withhold some information because they:

- are afraid they will get in trouble with or upset their family
- want to deflect blame in case of family difficulties as a result of the disclosure
- feel ashamed and/or guilty
- need to protect themselves from having to relive traumatic events.

There are three key interpersonal skills that help a child feel they are being listened to and taken seriously:

- show you care, help them open up: Give your full attention to the child or young person and keep your body language open and encouraging. Be compassionate, be understanding and reassure them their feelings are important. Phrases such as 'you've shown such courage today' help.
- take your time, slow down: Respect pauses and don't interrupt the child – let them go at their own pace. Recognise and respond to their body language. And remember that it may take several conversations for them to share what's happened to them.
- show you understand, reflect back: Make it clear you're interested in what the child is telling you. Reflect back what they've said to check your understanding – and use their language to show it's their experience.

It's important to keep accurate and detailed notes on any concerns you have about a child. You will need to share these with your nominated child protection lead.

Include:

- the child's details (name, age, address)
- what the child said or did that gave you cause for concern (if the child made a verbal disclosure, write down their exact words)
- any information the child has given you about the alleged abuser.

Timely information sharing is key to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

People who work with children, whether in a paid or voluntary role, may need to share information about the children and families they are involved with for a number of reasons. These include:

- you are making a referral to arrange additional support for someone in the family
- someone from another agency has asked for information about a child or family
- someone in the family has asked to be referred for further help
- a statutory duty or court order requires information to be shared
- you are concerned that a child or a member of their family may be at risk of significant harm
- you think a serious crime may have been committed or is about to be committed which involves someone in the family.

You must always have a clear and legitimate purpose for sharing a child's personal information. Keep a record of the reasons why you are sharing or requesting information about a child or their family.

You should also make sure you are not putting a child's safety and wellbeing at risk by sharing information about them.

As part of our commitment to child protection and keeping children safe, we will share information with Early Help teams when needed in order support our clients in the best possible way and gain professional advice.

Not all disclosures will lead to a formal report of abuse or a case being made or a case being taken to court, but all disclosures should be taken seriously.

Should a member of The Escape Youth Group disclose to a member of staff or volunteer at The Escape Youth Group – Louisa Rogers will be informed initially, who will assess the need to escalate to MASH (multi agency safeguarding hub).

Staff members and volunteers will be briefed on the procedure to be taken in the event of a disclosure.

Professionals do not necessarily need the consent of the information subject to share their personal information.

Wherever possible, you should seek consent and be open and honest with the individual from the outset as to why, what, how and with whom, their information will be shared. You should seek consent where an individual may not expect their information to be passed on. When you gain consent to share information, it must be explicit, and freely given.

As part of our commitment to child protection and keeping children safe, we will share information with Early Help teams when needed in order support our clients in the best possible way and gain professional advice.

6. Health and Safety aspects of safeguarding children

Before starting any event for unaccompanied children, the Board will carry out a risk assessment and then take steps to minimise all risks to health and safety. Parents and children will be made aware of any particular risks and of the steps to be taken to minimise those risks. Records of these risks assessments will be kept.

Sufficient adults (ratio 1:10) must be present at any event for unaccompanied children to enable one adult to deal with any emergency while another adult supervises the children not directly affected by the emergency.

7. Guidance on the prevention of bullying and cyberbullying

We will not tolerate the bullying of children either by adults or by other children. If any incident of child-on-child bullying should arise at a The Escape event, those involved will be separated immediately and the parents / guardians of the children involved will be contacted and asked to deal with the matter.

Cyberbullying

May be defined as 'the use of electronic communication, particularly mobile phones and the internet, to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature'. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target.

It can take a number of different forms:

- Threats and intimidation
- Harassment or cyber-stalking
- Sexting (sending and receiving of sexually explicit messages – predominately via mobile phones)
- Exclusion / peer rejection
- Impersonation
- Trolling (using the internet to provoke or offend others online)

There is no specific law which makes cyberbullying illegal, but it can be considered a criminal offence under several different acts including

- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Communications Act 2003

- Obscene Publications Act 1959
- Computer Misuse act 1990

The Safeguarding Officer (Louisa Rogers) will take overall responsibility for the co-ordination and implementation of bullying and cyberbullying prevention and response.

This will include:

- Ensuring that all staff know that they need to report any issues concerning bullying and cyberbullying to them.
- Providing a safe place for conversations regarding any issues concerning bullying and cyberbullying
- Follow a clear process regarding the disclosure of any issues concerning bullying and cyberbullying; note clearly everything relating to the incident; dates, times and names, and content, saving of messages / photos
- Escalation will be via Louisa Rogers in the first instance, who will assess whether this requires reporting to MASH (multi agency safeguarding hub)

8. Photographing children

No photos will be taken or published of any child attending an event or activity unless prior written permission is sought from a person with parental responsibility. If any person has any concerns regarding any person taking photos at an event or activity, that person should contact The Escape Youth Group immediately.

9. Managing behaviour, discipline and acceptable restraint

Adults supervising children at The Escape Youth Group events or activities must never use any form of corporal punishment.

Unacceptable behaviour at The Escape Youth Group events for unaccompanied children will generally be stopped by separating the children from each other. The miscreants will be suitably supervised and will be returned as soon as possible to the care of their parents / guardians.

The Escape Youth Group may apply further disciplinary sanctions, namely the banning of the child / children from future events or revoking their membership. This would be determined and applied by the Board.

A parent / guardian who is aggrieved by this ban may appeal to The Escape Youth Group who will hear the views of all relevant parties. The decision of The Escape Youth Group is then final.

10. Other guidance documents

This safeguarding guidance document should be read together with the following policies:

- Health and Safety Guidance
- Health and Wellbeing Guidance
- Drugs and alcohol Guidance
- Major accident prevention Guidance

Note: this guidance document was approved on And is due for review on a yearly basis.