



New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C.

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

1. Policy Statement and Key Principles

New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C. (NFOS) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and the welfare of the child is paramount in all decisions, activities and services provided by the organisation.

This policy applies to all activities delivered by NFOS, including Alternative Provision, outreach and home support, holiday clubs, youth provision, transport assistance, animal-assisted activities, educational support, hub based services and any services delivered in partnership with external organisations.

NFOS recognises its statutory responsibilities under:

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Company Number: 15204337

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Version: [02] | Approved by: Amy Bradsworth, Director & DSL | Next Review: [01/01/2027]

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- The Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- The Equality Act 2010
- The SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Human Rights Act 1998

NFOS is committed to creating a culture where:

- The welfare of children and young people is paramount.
- Every child has the right to be protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm.
- Safeguarding concerns are taken seriously and acted upon promptly.
- Children are listened to and their wishes and feelings are considered when decisions affecting them are made.
- Staff, volunteers and visitors understand their safeguarding responsibilities and receive appropriate training and support.
- Safeguarding practice is child centred, trauma informed and inclusive.

NFOS recognises that some children may be at increased risk of abuse or may face additional barriers to recognising or reporting concerns. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Children with communication difficulties
- Children with mental health needs
- Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children
- Young carers
- Children experiencing domestic abuse
- Children who are missing education
- Children from marginalised or underrepresented groups
- Children experiencing exploitation or online harm

NFOS is committed to removing barriers to participation and ensuring all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, socio economic background or family circumstances, receive equal protection and support.

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We recognise that effective safeguarding requires partnership working. NFOS will work openly and collaboratively with children, parents and carers, schools, local authorities, health professionals, the police and other agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all staff, volunteers, directors, contractors and visitors are expected to share our commitment to protecting children and young people from harm.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C. recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every person working with or on behalf of NFOS has a duty to promote the welfare of children and young people and to act immediately if they have concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing.

This section applies to all:

- Directors and senior leaders
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Apprentices and students
- Agency staff
- Self-employed workers and contractors
- Visiting professionals
- Trustees or board members (where applicable)

2.1 Organisational Responsibilities

New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C. will:

- Promote the welfare and protect children and young people from harm.
- Ensure safeguarding arrangements are effective and proportionate to the services provided.
- Maintain and regularly review safeguarding policies, procedures and risk assessments.
- Ensure safeguarding policies are available to staff, volunteers, families and partner organisations. Printed hard copies and/or digital copies on the Staff Dashboard

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- Foster a culture where safeguarding concerns can be raised openly and without fear of reprisal.
- Take all safeguarding concerns seriously and respond promptly.
- Refer concerns to statutory agencies, including Children's Services, the Police, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), or other relevant agencies where appropriate.
- Cooperate fully with safeguarding investigations and reviews.
- Ensure accurate, secure and confidential safeguarding records are maintained in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Review safeguarding practice at least annually and following any serious incident, legislative change or significant learning.

2.2 Responsibilities of Directors and Senior Leadership

The Directors and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Ensuring safeguarding remains a strategic priority throughout the organisation.
- Providing sufficient resources, staffing and training to enable effective safeguarding arrangements.
- Ensuring safer recruitment procedures are followed.
- Ensuring appropriate safeguarding supervision and support is available to staff.
- Ensuring safeguarding risks are identified, assessed and managed through a Safeguarding Risk Register and organisational risk assessments.
- Reviewing safeguarding incidents, trends and lessons learned to continuously improve practice.
- Ensuring the organisation complies with relevant legislation, statutory guidance and best practice.
- Ensure staff are DBS checked

2.3 Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within NFOS.

The DSL will:

- Act as the main point of contact for safeguarding concerns.
- Receive, record and assess safeguarding concerns promptly.

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- Make referrals to Children's Services, the Police, MASH, LADO or other agencies where appropriate.
- Provide advice and support to staff regarding safeguarding concerns.
- Maintain confidential safeguarding records.
- Ensure safeguarding information is shared appropriately and lawfully.
- Liaise with schools, parents, carers and external professionals where necessary.
- Ensure safeguarding policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated.
- Undertake regular safeguarding training and continuing professional development to maintain knowledge and skills.

2.4 Responsibilities of Staff, Volunteers and Others Working on Behalf of NFOS

All staff, volunteers and others working on behalf of NFOS must:

- Read, understand and follow this safeguarding policy and associated procedures.
- Promote the welfare of children and young people at all times.
- Attend safeguarding training appropriate to their role.
- Be alert to signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm.
- Listen to children and take their concerns seriously.
- Report safeguarding concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- Follow NFOS policies relating to safer working practice, online safety, social media, transport, outreach and home visits.
- Record concerns accurately, factually and promptly.
- Cooperate with safeguarding enquiries and investigations.

No member of staff, volunteer or contractor should assume that another person has reported a concern. If you are worried about a child, you must act.

2.5 Failure to Follow Safeguarding Procedures

Failure to comply with this policy or associated safeguarding procedures will be taken seriously and may result in:

- Additional training or supervision;
- Disciplinary action;

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- Suspension from duties;
- Termination of employment, volunteering or contractual arrangements;
- Referral to professional or statutory bodies where appropriate.

NFOS has a zero tolerance approach to behaviour that places children or young people at risk of harm.

3. Scope and Objectives

3.1 Scope

This policy applies to all activities, services and individuals operating under or on behalf of New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C. (NFOS).

The policy applies to:

- Directors and senior leaders
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Apprentices and students
- Agency staff
- Self-employed workers and contractors
- Visiting professionals
- Trustees or board members (where applicable)
- Anyone acting on behalf of NFOS

This policy covers all services delivered by NFOS, including but not limited to:

- Alternative Provision (AP)
- Outreach and home support
- 1:1 and small group support
- Holiday clubs and youth provision
- Educational and therapeutic activities
- Transport assistance
- Animal-assisted activities and therapy animal sessions
- Hub-based services and room hire
- Community events and activities

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- Services delivered in partnership with external organisations or subcontractors

Safeguarding arrangements extend to all children and young people accessing NFOS services, whether these are delivered at the NFOS Hub, within schools, in family homes, in community settings, during transport, or in external venues.

NFOS also expects partner organisations, contractors and subcontractors delivering services on our behalf to have safeguarding arrangements that meet statutory requirements and align with the principles of this policy.

3.2 Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people who access NFOS services.
- Provide clear guidance to staff, volunteers and others regarding their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are recognised, recorded, reported and responded to promptly and appropriately.
- Promote a culture where children feel safe, respected, listened to and supported.
- Protect children from abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination and harm, including online harm.
- Ensure children with additional vulnerabilities, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), receive appropriate support and protection.
- Maintain safe recruitment, training and supervision arrangements for all staff and volunteers.
- Promote effective partnership working with parents, carers, schools, local authorities and other agencies.
- Ensure safeguarding practice is child-centred, trauma-informed and compliant with current legislation and statutory guidance.
- Continuously review and improve safeguarding practice through training, supervision, audits and lessons learned.

NFOS recognises that safeguarding is not simply about protecting children from harm, but also about creating safe, inclusive and nurturing environments in which children and young people can learn, develop, build resilience and achieve positive outcomes.

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4. Key Safeguarding Contacts

New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C. recognises that effective safeguarding relies on clear leadership, accessible support and prompt action when concerns arise.

All staff, volunteers, contractors and others working on behalf of NFOS must report safeguarding concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or, in their absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL). If a child is believed to be at immediate risk of harm, staff must contact Children's Services, the Police or emergency services directly and inform the DSL or DDSL as soon as possible afterwards.

4.1 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Amy Bradsworth

Founder & Director

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Email: ceo@newforestoutreach.co.uk

Telephone: 07876 191833

The DSL has overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Acting as the lead professional for safeguarding and child protection.
- Receiving, recording and assessing safeguarding concerns.
- Making referrals to Children's Services, the Police, Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or other agencies where appropriate.
- Liaising with schools, parents, carers and external professionals.
- Maintaining confidential safeguarding records in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Ensuring safeguarding policies, procedures and risk assessments are implemented and reviewed regularly.
- Providing safeguarding advice and support to staff, volunteers and families.
- Ensuring safeguarding training and induction is provided to staff and volunteers.

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- Monitoring safeguarding practice and promoting a culture of safeguarding throughout the organisation.

4.2 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

Kelsey king

Senior Operations & Finance Coordinator
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

Email: kelseyk@newforestoutreach.co.uk

Telephone: 07845830645

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead supports the DSL and will assume safeguarding responsibilities in their absence.

The DDSL is responsible for:

- Receiving and responding to safeguarding concerns.
- Providing advice and support to staff and volunteers.
- Maintaining safeguarding records in accordance with organisational procedures.
- Liaising with schools, parents, carers and external agencies where appropriate.
- Making referrals to Children's Services, the Police, MASH or other safeguarding agencies when necessary.
- Supporting safeguarding audits, reviews and policy updates.
- Ensuring safeguarding concerns are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Whilst the DSL has overall responsibility for safeguarding, safeguarding remains everyone's responsibility and all staff are expected to act immediately if they have concerns about a child or young person's welfare.

4.3 Hampshire County Council Children's Services

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Telephone: **0300 555 1384**

Office hours:

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- Monday to Thursday: 8:30am – 5:00pm
- Friday: 8:30am – 4:30pm

Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team

Telephone: **0300 555 1373**

Email: mash@southampton.gov.uk/childrens.services@hants.gov.uk

4.4 Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is responsible for managing allegations against adults who work with children.

The DSL or DDSL will seek advice from or make referrals to the LADO where concerns arise regarding:

- Employees;
- Volunteers;
- Apprentices;
- Agency staff;
- Self-employed workers;
- Contractors;
- Visiting professionals; or
- Anyone working on behalf of NFOS.

Concerns may include allegations that an adult has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm; or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The DSL will maintain up-to-date contact details for the Hampshire LADO service and ensure referrals are made promptly where required.

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4.5 Police

Emergency

If a child or young person is in immediate danger, or a crime is being committed, call:

999

Non-Emergency

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary

Telephone: **101**

4.6 Escalation of Concerns

All staff, volunteers and others working on behalf of NFOS have a duty to act if they are worried about a child or young person's welfare.

If a member of staff believes:

- A child is at immediate risk of harm;
- A safeguarding concern has not been acted upon appropriately;
- Further action is required to protect a child; or
- The response to a safeguarding concern is inadequate,

they must escalate the concern immediately.

Any member of staff can make a referral directly to Children's Services or the Police if they believe a child is at risk of harm. Staff should never assume that someone else has taken action.

Safeguarding concerns should always be treated as urgent and dealt with without delay.

4.7 Availability of Safeguarding Information

This policy and safeguarding contact information will be:

- Provided to all staff, volunteers and contractors during induction;

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- Published on the NFOS website;
- Published on the Staff Dashboard
- Hard copy in every department and Hub
- Provided at interview stages during induction
- Made available to children, parents and carers on request;
- Reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation, statutory guidance or organisational changes require.

NFOS is committed to maintaining a culture of openness, vigilance and accountability where safeguarding is embedded throughout all aspects of the organisation and where every child and young person is supported to feel safe, valued and heard.

5. Definitions

5.1 Definition of a Child

For the purposes of this policy, a child is defined by the Children Act 1989 and 2004 as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently, is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or is in custody does not change their status as a child for safeguarding purposes.

5.2 Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in protecting children from harm and promoting their welfare.

5.3 Child Protection

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Child protection is part of safeguarding and refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

This may include concerns relating to abuse, neglect, exploitation or other forms of harm requiring intervention from Children's Services, the Police or other statutory agencies.

5.4 Categories of Abuse

There are four main categories of abuse recognised in UK legislation and statutory guidance:

Physical Abuse

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Emotional Abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. This may include:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved;
- Bullying or cyberbullying;
- Serious intimidation or humiliation;
- Exposure to domestic abuse;
- Persistent criticism or rejection.

Sexual Abuse

Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

Sexual abuse may involve:

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration or non-penetrative acts;
- Non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at sexual images;
- Grooming online or offline;
- Encouraging children to share nude or semi-nude images;
- Sexual exploitation.

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Neglect

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

This may include failure to provide:

- Adequate food, clothing or shelter;
- Appropriate supervision;
- Necessary medical care;
- Emotional warmth and support;
- Protection from physical or emotional harm.

5.5 Additional Safeguarding Concerns

NFOS recognises that safeguarding concerns can extend beyond the four categories of abuse.

Additional safeguarding concerns include, but are not limited to:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- County Lines
- Child-on-child abuse
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Online abuse and online safety concerns
- Sharing of nude and semi-nude images
- Domestic abuse
- Coercive and controlling behaviour
- Honour-based abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- Radicalisation and extremism
- Missing children
- Serious violence and gang affiliation
- Substance misuse
- Mental health concerns
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Fabricated or induced illness

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- Modern slavery and trafficking

5.6 Children with Additional Vulnerabilities

NFOS recognises that some children may face additional barriers to recognising abuse or reporting concerns and may therefore be more vulnerable to harm.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND);
- Children with speech, language or communication needs;
- Children with mental health needs;
- Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children;
- Young carers;
- Children living in poverty or unstable housing;
- Children experiencing domestic abuse;
- Children who are missing education;
- Children from marginalised or underrepresented groups;
- Children with caring responsibilities;
- Children who have experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences.

Staff should be aware that behaviours associated with disability, communication difficulties or neurodivergence do not automatically indicate abuse, nor does abuse rule out disability or additional needs.

5.7 Safeguarding in the Context of NFOS Services

As NFOS provides Alternative Provision, outreach, home support, transport assistance, youth provision, holiday clubs and animal-assisted activities, safeguarding responsibilities extend to all settings where services are delivered, including:

- The NFOS Hub;
- Schools and educational settings;
- Family homes;
- Community venues;
- Outdoor activities and trips;
- Vehicles used for transporting children;

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- Online and digital environments;
- Activities involving therapy animals or animal-assisted interventions.

Safeguarding arrangements must be considered in all activities and environments to ensure children remain safe, supported and protected from harm.

6. Our Responsibilities

Everyone working with or on behalf of New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C. (NFOS) has a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors must be aware of their role in identifying concerns, responding appropriately and protecting children from harm.

6.1 Organisational Responsibilities

NFOS will:

- Promote the welfare of children and young people in all aspects of its work.
- Provide a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment where children feel respected, valued and listened to.
- Maintain robust safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.
- Ensure safeguarding arrangements comply with current legislation, statutory guidance and best practice.
- Implement safer recruitment procedures, including DBS, identity, right to work, reference and qualification checks where appropriate.
- Ensure staff and volunteers receive safeguarding induction and regular training relevant to their role.
- Maintain appropriate insurance, risk assessments and health and safety procedures.
- Work collaboratively with schools, parents, carers, local authorities and partner agencies to safeguard children.
- Maintain secure and confidential safeguarding records in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
- Review safeguarding arrangements regularly and learn from incidents, complaints and safeguarding reviews.

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6.2 Responsibilities of All Staff and Volunteers

All staff, volunteers, contractors and anyone working on behalf of NFOS must:

- Read, understand and comply with this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Promote the welfare and best interests of children and young people at all times.
- Attend safeguarding training appropriate to their role and keep their knowledge up to date.
- Be alert to signs and indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm.
- Listen carefully to children and take their views, wishes and feelings seriously.
- Report safeguarding concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).
- Record safeguarding concerns factually, accurately and promptly.
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- Respect confidentiality and share information only where necessary to protect a child or as required by law.
- Cooperate with safeguarding investigations and statutory agencies.

No member of staff should assume that someone else has taken action. If you are concerned about a child, you must act.

6.3 Safeguarding Children with SEND and Additional Needs

NFOS recognises that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may face additional safeguarding challenges and barriers to recognising, communicating or reporting abuse.

Staff must be aware that children with SEND may:

- Have communication difficulties which make disclosure more challenging;
- Be more vulnerable to bullying, exploitation or abuse;
- Depend on adults for personal care or support;
- Exhibit behaviours that may mask or mimic signs of abuse;
- Have limited understanding of healthy relationships or personal boundaries.

Staff should remain vigilant, adopt a child-centred approach and consider each child's individual communication and support needs when responding to safeguarding concerns.

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6.4 Alternative Provision, Outreach and Home Support

As NFOS provides Alternative Provision, outreach and home support services, safeguarding responsibilities extend to all locations where services are delivered.

Staff providing outreach or home support must:

- Follow lone working procedures and risk assessments.
- Inform the organisation of their location and expected visit times.
- Maintain professional boundaries within family homes and community settings.
- Report any safeguarding or welfare concerns immediately.
- Terminate a visit and seek support if they feel unsafe or believe a child is at risk of immediate harm.

6.5 Transporting Children

NFOS recognises that transporting children carries additional safeguarding responsibilities.

Staff transporting children must:

- Hold the appropriate driving licence and insurance.
- Ensure vehicles are roadworthy, insured and maintained.
- Obtain parental consent where required.
- Follow agreed collection and drop-off procedures.
- Ensure children use appropriate seatbelts or car seats where required by law.
- Record and report any incidents, accidents or safeguarding concerns arising during transport.

Children must never be transported in circumstances that compromise their safety or wellbeing.

6.6 Animal-Assisted Activities and Therapy Animals

NFOS uses therapy animals and animal-assisted activities to support children's wellbeing and engagement.

All activities involving animals will be:

- Risk assessed appropriately;

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- Supervised by trained staff;
- Delivered with consideration for allergies, phobias and individual needs;
- Conducted in a manner that prioritises both child safety and animal welfare;
- Supported by appropriate hygiene and infection control measures.

Children will never be required to interact with animals if they do not wish to do so.

6.7 Professional Curiosity and Early Intervention

NFOS encourages staff to exercise professional curiosity when working with children and families.

Staff should:

- Ask questions where they are worried about a child's welfare;
- Record concerns, even if they appear minor in isolation;
- Share concerns with the DSL or DDSL promptly;
- Seek advice if unsure whether something constitutes a safeguarding concern.

Early identification and intervention can prevent concerns from escalating and improve outcomes for children and families.

6.8 Duty to Act

Every member of staff, volunteer and contractor has a duty to act in the best interests of the child.

Where there is a concern that a child may be suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, NFOS will take immediate action, including making referrals to Children's Services, the Police or other statutory agencies where appropriate.

The welfare of the child will always be the paramount consideration in all safeguarding decisions.

7. Safer Recruitment

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New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C. (NFOS) is committed to safer recruitment practices and recognises that safeguarding begins with recruiting suitable individuals to work with children and young people.

NFOS will take all reasonable steps to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children and will ensure that recruitment, selection and ongoing employment practices prioritise safeguarding and child protection.

7.1 Recruitment Principles

NFOS will ensure that:

- Safeguarding is embedded throughout the recruitment process.
- Job descriptions and role profiles clearly state safeguarding responsibilities.
- Applicants are informed of the organisation's commitment to safeguarding.
- Gaps in employment history are explored.
- References are obtained and verified before appointment wherever possible.
- Candidates are assessed for their suitability to work with children.
- Appropriate pre-employment checks are completed before an individual begins work.

7.2 Pre-Employment Checks

Depending on the role, NFOS will complete some or all of the following checks before an individual commences employment, volunteering or contracted work:

- Identity verification;
- Right to work checks;
- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks;
- Children's Barred List checks where the role involves regulated activity;
- Verification of qualifications and professional memberships;
- Employment history checks;
- References;
- Online searches where appropriate and proportionate;
- Confirmation of suitability for the role.

No individual will commence unsupervised work with children until all required safeguarding checks have been completed and deemed satisfactory.

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7.3 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

NFOS complies with the requirements of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and relevant legislation, including the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

The level of DBS check required will depend on the nature of the role and the level of contact with children.

This may include:

- Standard DBS checks;
- Enhanced DBS checks;
- Enhanced DBS checks with Children's Barred List information;
- Enhanced DBS checks with Children's and Adults' Barred List information where appropriate.

NFOS recognises that the majority of roles involving direct work with children, including Alternative Provision, outreach, holiday clubs, transport assistance and one-to-one support, constitute regulated activity and therefore require an Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information.

7.4 Existing Staff and Ongoing Suitability

Safeguarding is an ongoing responsibility.

NFOS will:

- Monitor the ongoing suitability of staff and volunteers;
- Encourage staff to disclose any changes in circumstances relevant to their role;
- Require staff to inform the organisation of any arrests, cautions, investigations or convictions that may affect their suitability to work with children;
- Undertake repeat DBS checks where appropriate, with a review normally taking place every three years or sooner if concerns arise;
- Take appropriate action where concerns are identified.

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Failure to disclose information relevant to a person's suitability to work with children may be treated as a disciplinary matter and could result in dismissal or termination of contractual arrangements.

7.5 Volunteers, Students and Contractors

Volunteers, apprentices, students, agency staff, self-employed workers, contractors and visiting professionals who have contact with children are subject to safeguarding requirements appropriate to their role.

NFOS will ensure that:

- Appropriate DBS and suitability checks are completed;
- Safeguarding responsibilities are clearly explained;
- Individuals receive safeguarding induction and understand reporting procedures;
- Appropriate supervision arrangements are in place where required.

7.6 Online Searches

NFOS may carry out online searches of shortlisted candidates where this is lawful, proportionate and relevant to safeguarding.

Any information identified through online searches will be considered fairly and in accordance with employment law and data protection legislation.

7.7 Confidentiality and Data Protection

Information obtained through recruitment and DBS processes will be handled securely, confidentially and in accordance with:

- The Data Protection Act 2018;
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR);
- DBS Code of Practice;
- NFOS Data Protection and Privacy Policies.

Access to DBS information and recruitment records will be restricted to those who require it for legitimate safeguarding or employment purposes.

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7.8 Unsuitable Behaviour and Referrals

NFOS has a duty to safeguard children and will take appropriate action if concerns arise regarding an individual's suitability to work with children.

Where required, NFOS may make referrals to:

- The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS);
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- The Police;
- Professional regulatory bodies;
- Children's Services or other statutory agencies.

The safety and welfare of children will always be the primary consideration in decisions relating to recruitment, employment and safeguarding.

8. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

All staff, volunteers, contractors and others working on behalf of New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C. (NFOS) have a responsibility to act if they have concerns about a child's safety or welfare.

Safeguarding concerns may arise from:

- A disclosure made by a child or young person;
- A disclosure made by a parent, carer or another person;
- Observations of a child's behaviour, appearance or presentation;
- Concerns raised by another organisation or professional;
- Concerns relating to online activity or social media;
- Concerns regarding the conduct of an employee, volunteer or another adult working with children.

All safeguarding concerns must be treated seriously and acted upon without delay.

8.1 Immediate Danger

If a child or young person is believed to be at immediate risk of harm:

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- Call **999** immediately and request the Police or Ambulance Service as appropriate.
- Take any reasonable action necessary to protect the child from immediate danger.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) as soon as possible.
- Record the incident factually and accurately.

Staff should never delay emergency action while seeking advice.

8.2 If a Child Makes a Disclosure

If a child tells you something that raises a safeguarding concern:

You should:

- Stay calm and listen carefully.
- Allow the child to speak freely.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Explain that you cannot promise to keep secrets and may need to share information to keep them safe.
- Ask only open questions if clarification is needed, for example:
 - “Can you tell me what happened?”
 - “Is there anything else you would like to tell me?”
- Record the conversation as soon as possible using the child’s own words where possible.
- Report the concern immediately to the DSL or DDSL.

You must not:

- Promise confidentiality;
- Ask leading questions;
- Investigate the concern yourself;
- Press the child for additional information;
- Express shock, disbelief or anger;
- Discuss the matter with anyone who does not need to know.

8.3 Concerns Identified Through Observation

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Staff should remain alert to signs and indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm.

Where concerns arise through observation, staff should:

- Record factual observations;
- Include dates, times and relevant context;
- Avoid making assumptions or personal judgements;
- Report concerns immediately to the DSL or DDSL.

No concern is too small to report. A series of seemingly minor concerns may indicate a wider safeguarding issue.

8.4 Concerns Raised by Parents, Carers or Third Parties

If a parent, carer or another person raises a safeguarding concern:

- Listen carefully and respectfully;
- Record the information accurately;
- Avoid making promises about outcomes;
- Obtain contact details where appropriate;
- Report the concern immediately to the DSL or DDSL.

The DSL or DDSL will consider the information and determine the appropriate course of action.

8.5 Recording Safeguarding Concerns

All safeguarding concerns must be recorded promptly, factually and securely.

Records should include:

- The date and time of the concern;
- The child's details;
- The nature of the concern;
- The child's own words where applicable;
- Any observations made;
- Actions taken;
- Details of who the concern was reported to.

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Safeguarding records will be stored securely and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

8.6 Referral to External Agencies

The DSL or DDSL will assess safeguarding concerns and determine whether a referral to external agencies is required.

This may include:

- Hampshire Children's Services;
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH);
- The Police;
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- Health professionals;
- Other safeguarding or statutory agencies.

Referrals will be made promptly where there is reason to believe a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

8.7 Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

Any concern or allegation relating to the behaviour of an employee, volunteer, contractor or other adult working with children must be reported immediately to the DSL.

If the allegation concerns the DSL, it must be reported directly to the Deputy DSL and/or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Staff must not investigate allegations themselves.

NFOS will follow statutory guidance and seek advice from the LADO where appropriate.

8.8 Escalating Concerns

If any member of staff feels that:

- Their concern has not been taken seriously;
- Appropriate action has not been taken;

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- A child remains at risk of harm;

they must escalate the concern.

This may include:

- Speaking to the DSL or DDSL again;
- Contacting Children's Services directly;
- Contacting the Police;
- Using the NFOS Whistleblowing Procedure.

The welfare of the child is always the paramount consideration.

Anyone can make a referral to Children's Services if they believe a child is at risk of harm.

9. Safeguarding Training and Education

New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C. (NFOS) is committed to ensuring that all staff, volunteers and others working on behalf of the organisation are appropriately trained and supported to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

Safeguarding training is an ongoing process and forms an essential part of creating a safe, inclusive and child-centred culture.

9.1 Induction

All new staff, volunteers, apprentices, agency staff, self-employed workers and contractors who work with children will receive safeguarding induction appropriate to their role.

Induction will include:

- This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- The Code of Conduct and Professional Boundaries Policy;
- Reporting safeguarding concerns and escalation procedures;
- Whistleblowing procedures;
- Online safety and acceptable use of technology;
- Equality, diversity and inclusion;
- Health and safety procedures;

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- Relevant risk assessments;
- Procedures relating to outreach, home visits, transport and lone working where applicable.

Staff must confirm that they have read and understood safeguarding policies and procedures before undertaking unsupervised work with children.

9.2 Safeguarding Training

All staff and volunteers will receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role and responsibilities.

Training will be refreshed regularly and will include, where appropriate:

- Recognising signs of abuse and neglect;
- Child protection procedures;
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE);
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and County Lines;
- Child-on-child abuse;
- Domestic abuse;
- Online safety and cyber safety;
- Sharing of nude and semi-nude images;
- Radicalisation and the Prevent Duty;
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing;
- Professional boundaries;
- Information sharing and confidentiality;
- Recording and reporting safeguarding concerns.

NFOS will maintain records of safeguarding training completed by staff and volunteers.

9.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL Training

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will undertake safeguarding training appropriate to their role.

This training will be updated regularly and will ensure they have the knowledge and skills required to:

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- Identify safeguarding concerns;
- Manage referrals and work with statutory agencies;
- Understand local safeguarding arrangements;
- Support and advise staff;
- Maintain safeguarding records;
- Respond to allegations against adults working with children;
- Promote a culture of safeguarding throughout the organisation.

The DSL and DDSL will also undertake continuing professional development (CPD) to ensure their safeguarding knowledge remains current.

9.4 Safeguarding Children with SEND

NFOS recognises that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may face additional safeguarding challenges and barriers to reporting abuse.

Staff will receive training and guidance to help them:

- Recognise signs of abuse in children with SEND;
- Understand communication barriers;
- Respond appropriately to disclosures;
- Support children who may struggle to recognise or report concerns;
- Promote inclusion and reduce barriers to participation.
- Be aware of uncommon bruises and/or injuries

9.5 Outreach, Home Support and Lone Working

Staff delivering outreach, home support or community-based services will receive additional training appropriate to their role.

This may include:

- Lone working procedures;
- Home visit safety;
- Dynamic risk assessments;
- Environment risk assessments;
- Managing challenging situations;
- Professional boundaries;

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- Emergency procedures;
- Safeguarding in community settings.
- Handover forms & notes

9.6 Transporting Children

Staff involved in transporting children will receive training and guidance relating to:

- Safeguarding during transport;
- Collection and drop-off procedures;
- Vehicle safety;
- Managing incidents and emergencies;
- Professional boundaries;
- Recording and reporting concerns.

9.7 Animal-Assisted Activities

Staff involved in animal-assisted activities will receive training and guidance relating to:

- Safe interaction between children and animals;
- Risk assessments;
- Animal welfare;
- Infection prevention and hygiene;
- Managing allergies and phobias;
- Emergency procedures.

The welfare of both children and animals will be considered at all times.

9.8 Safeguarding Culture and Continuous Improvement

NFOS is committed to maintaining a culture where safeguarding is openly discussed, continuously reviewed and embedded throughout the organisation.

Staff are encouraged to:

- Seek advice if they are unsure about a safeguarding concern;
- Reflect on safeguarding practice;
- Share learning from incidents and near misses;

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- Raise concerns through supervision or whistleblowing procedures;
- Contribute to the ongoing development of safeguarding practice.

Safeguarding training, policies and procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain effective, up to date and reflective of current legislation, statutory guidance and best practice.

10. Safer Working Practice and Keeping Yourself Safe

New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C. (NFOS) is committed to protecting both children and the adults who work with them. Staff, volunteers and contractors are expected to maintain professional boundaries at all times and work in a way that safeguards children, themselves and the reputation of the organisation.

10.1 Professional Boundaries

All staff and volunteers must:

- Maintain clear and appropriate professional boundaries with children and families.
- Treat all children and young people with dignity, respect and fairness.
- Avoid favouritism or developing relationships that could be perceived as inappropriate.
- Use language and behaviour that is professional and age appropriate.
- Follow all NFOS safeguarding, behaviour management and code of conduct policies.
- Report any concerns about professional boundaries to the DSL or DDSL.

Staff must remember that they are in a position of trust and are expected to act professionally at all times, both during and outside of working hours.

10.2 Social Media and Personal Communication

Staff, volunteers and contractors must not:

- Accept or send friend requests to children or young people on personal social media accounts.
- Communicate with children using personal social media platforms or personal messaging services.
- Share personal telephone numbers, personal email addresses or private social media accounts with children.

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- Post images or information about children without appropriate consent and organisational approval.
- Engage in online behaviour that could undermine their professional role or bring NFOS into disrepute.

Any communication with children or families must take place through approved organisational systems or agreed communication methods.

10.3 Lone Working, Outreach and Home Visits

As NFOS provides outreach and home support services, staff may work alone or visit children and families in community settings or family homes.

Staff undertaking outreach or home visits must:

- Follow NFOS lone working procedures.
- Inform an appropriate colleague or manager of their location and expected return time.
- Complete and follow relevant risk assessments.
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- Avoid entering situations that feel unsafe or place themselves at unnecessary risk.
- End a visit and seek support if they feel unsafe or if safeguarding concerns arise.

Staff should not place themselves in situations where their conduct could be misinterpreted or where they may be vulnerable to allegations.

10.4 Transporting Children

Where staff transport children as part of their role, they must:

- Follow NFOS transport procedures.
- Ensure parental consent and appropriate permissions are in place.
- Maintain professional boundaries during journeys.
- Ensure children travel safely and in accordance with legal requirements.
- Report any accidents, incidents or safeguarding concerns immediately.

Staff should avoid situations that could place themselves or a child at risk and should seek advice if they are unsure about any aspect of transporting children.

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10.5 Physical Contact

NFOS recognises that there are occasions when physical contact with a child may be appropriate, for example:

- To provide reassurance;
- To administer first aid;
- To support mobility or personal care needs;
- To prevent injury to the child or others;
- As part of an agreed care or support plan.

Any physical contact must:

- Be necessary and proportionate;
- Be appropriate to the child's age and needs;
- Respect the child's dignity and wishes;
- Be recorded where appropriate;
- Never be used as a punishment.

Staff should be aware that even well intentioned contact can be misinterpreted and should always act transparently and professionally.

10.6 Personal Safety

Staff are encouraged to prioritise their own safety and wellbeing.

If a staff member:

- Feels unsafe during a session, visit or activity;
- Experiences threatening or abusive behaviour;
- Encounters unsafe environments or practices;
- Is concerned about their own wellbeing;

they should remove themselves from danger where possible and inform the DSL, DDSL or a senior manager immediately.

NFOS will support staff in managing risks and will not expect anyone to continue working in circumstances that place them or others at risk.

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10.7 Raising Concerns

If staff have concerns about:

- Unsafe practices;
- The conduct of another adult;
- Their own ability to work safely;
- Organisational safeguarding arrangements;

they must raise these concerns promptly through safeguarding procedures, supervision or the Whistleblowing Policy.

NFOS is committed to creating an open culture where concerns can be raised without fear of blame or reprisal.

The safety and welfare of children, young people and staff will always remain the highest priority.

11. Monitoring, Review and Continuous Improvement

New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C. (NFOS) is committed to continuously improving safeguarding practice and ensuring that safeguarding arrangements remain effective, up to date and reflective of current legislation, statutory guidance and best practice.

Safeguarding is an ongoing process and requires regular monitoring, review and reflection to ensure children and young people remain safe and well supported.

11.1 Monitoring Safeguarding Practice

NFOS will monitor safeguarding practice through:

- Regular review of safeguarding records and concerns;
- Analysis of safeguarding incidents, trends and outcomes;
- Review of risk assessments and control measures;
- Staff supervision and safeguarding discussions;
- Feedback from children, young people, parents and carers;
- Monitoring compliance with safeguarding policies and procedures;

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- Review of training records and safeguarding competencies.

Where learning is identified, improvements will be implemented promptly and shared with relevant staff.

11.2 Policy Review

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be reviewed:

- At least annually;
- Following changes to legislation or statutory guidance;
- Following significant safeguarding incidents;
- Following learning from safeguarding reviews or audits;
- Following changes to NFOS services or organisational structure.

Interim amendments may be made at any time where necessary to ensure safeguarding arrangements remain effective.

11.3 Learning and Continuous Improvement

NFOS is committed to learning from experience and promoting a culture of openness and continuous improvement.

The organisation will:

- Reflect on safeguarding incidents and near misses;
- Encourage staff to share concerns and learning;
- Review safeguarding procedures following incidents;
- Implement improvements where weaknesses are identified;
- Promote a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Staff are encouraged to seek advice, ask questions and contribute to the development of safeguarding practice across the organisation.

11.4 Safeguarding Culture

NFOS aims to create a safeguarding culture where:

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- Children and young people feel safe, respected and listened to;
- Staff feel confident to raise concerns;
- Safeguarding is embedded into everyday practice;
- Concerns are taken seriously and acted upon promptly;
- Partnership working is encouraged;
- Continuous learning and reflection are valued.

The welfare of the child will always be the paramount consideration in all safeguarding decisions and actions.

NFOS is committed to maintaining high standards of safeguarding practice and ensuring that all children and young people who access our services are protected from harm and supported to achieve positive outcomes.

12. Online Safety, Social Media and Digital Technology

New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C. (NFOS) recognises that technology and online services are an integral part of children's lives and can provide many benefits. However, the online environment also presents safeguarding risks that must be understood and managed appropriately.

NFOS is committed to promoting online safety and ensuring that children, young people, staff and volunteers use digital technology safely, responsibly and appropriately.

12.1 Online Safety

Online safety is a safeguarding issue and forms part of NFOS's wider safeguarding responsibilities.

Online risks may include:

- Cyberbullying;
- Online grooming and exploitation;
- Exposure to harmful, inappropriate or extremist content;
- Sharing of nude or semi-nude images;
- Online harassment or coercion;
- Fraud or scams;

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- Misinformation and harmful online influences;
- Excessive or unhealthy use of digital technology;
- Artificial intelligence (AI) generated harmful or inappropriate content.

Staff must remain alert to signs that a child may be experiencing online harm and report concerns in accordance with this safeguarding policy.

12.2 Use of Social Media

Staff, volunteers and contractors must maintain professional boundaries when using social media.

They must not:

- Accept friend or follow requests from children or young people on personal social media accounts;
- Communicate with children through personal social media platforms or messaging services;
- Share personal contact details with children or young people;
- Post photographs, videos or information about children without appropriate consent and organisational approval;
- Share confidential or sensitive information online;
- Engage in online behaviour that may bring NFOS into disrepute.

All communication with children and families must take place through approved organisational systems or agreed communication methods.

12.3 Use of Mobile Phones and Digital Devices

Staff and volunteers must use mobile phones, tablets, laptops and other digital devices responsibly and in accordance with NFOS policies.

NFOS will ensure:

- Appropriate procedures are in place regarding the use of mobile phones and digital technology;
- Children are only photographed, filmed or recorded with appropriate parental consent and where there is a legitimate purpose;

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- Images and recordings are stored securely and only used for authorised purposes;
- Personal devices are not used to store children's personal information or images unless explicitly authorised and protected appropriately;
- Staff understand their responsibilities regarding confidentiality and data protection.

12.4 Photography and Recording

Photographs, videos or audio recordings of children and young people may only be taken:

- With informed parental consent where required;
- For legitimate educational, promotional or safeguarding purposes;
- Using approved devices and systems;
- In accordance with NFOS Data Protection and Privacy Policies.

Children and young people have the right to refuse to be photographed or recorded, and their wishes will be respected.

During Discovery Holiday Club older children who have their own mobile phones will be asked to keep them in the office and use them in the office with the adult present, this is to reduce the risk of photos and uncontrolled content during their time with New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C.

12.5 Digital Safety and Data Protection

NFOS recognises the importance of protecting personal information and digital records.

Staff must:

- Follow the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR;
- Protect passwords and access credentials;
- Store information securely;
- Report data breaches or cyber security concerns immediately;
- Use organisational systems responsibly and professionally.

12.6 Reporting Online Safety Concerns

Any concerns relating to:

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- Online abuse or exploitation;
- Cyberbullying;
- Inappropriate online contact;
- Harmful online content;
- Sharing of nude or semi-nude images;
- Unsafe use of technology; or
- Concerns regarding staff or volunteers' use of social media or digital technology,

must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

Online safeguarding concerns will be treated with the same seriousness as concerns arising offline and will be responded to promptly and appropriately.

NFOS is committed to creating a culture where children, young people and adults can use technology safely and confidently whilst being protected from online harm.

13. Whistleblowing

New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C. (NFOS) is committed to creating an open and transparent culture where staff, volunteers and others feel confident to raise concerns about unsafe practice, safeguarding failures or the conduct of others.

All staff, volunteers, contractors and others working on behalf of NFOS have a duty to raise concerns where they believe:

- A child or young person is at risk of harm;
- Safeguarding procedures are not being followed;
- Unsafe practice is occurring;
- The conduct of an employee, volunteer or another adult may place children at risk;
- A safeguarding concern has not been responded to appropriately.

Concerns should normally be raised with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) or a senior manager.

Where an individual feels unable to raise concerns internally, or believes concerns have not been addressed appropriately, they may use the procedures outlined in the NFOS Whistleblowing Policy.

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No person who raises a genuine concern in good faith will suffer discrimination, disadvantage or victimisation as a result of doing so.

NFOS is committed to ensuring that all concerns are taken seriously, investigated appropriately and used as an opportunity to improve safeguarding practice and protect children and young people.

14. Managing Allegations Against Staff, Volunteers and Adults Working with Children

New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C. (NFOS) recognises that allegations or concerns may occasionally arise regarding the behaviour of an adult working with children.

NFOS takes all allegations seriously and is committed to ensuring that concerns are managed fairly, consistently, promptly and in accordance with statutory guidance and local safeguarding procedures.

This section applies to:

- Employees;
- Directors;
- Volunteers;
- Apprentices and students;
- Agency staff;
- Self-employed workers and contractors;
- Visiting professionals;
- Anyone working on behalf of NFOS.

14.1 What Constitutes an Allegation?

An allegation or concern may arise where an adult has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm;

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- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Concerns may relate to behaviour that has occurred within or outside of work, including online behaviour and conduct on social media.

14.2 Reporting an Allegation

Any allegation or concern about an adult working with children must be reported immediately.

- Concerns regarding an employee, volunteer or contractor should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- If the concern relates to the DSL, it must be reported directly to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) and/or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- If the concern relates to both the DSL and DDSL, staff may contact the LADO or Children's Services directly.

Staff must not:

- Investigate allegations themselves;
- Discuss allegations with others who do not need to know;
- Attempt to interview children or witnesses regarding the allegation;
- Delay reporting concerns.

14.3 Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The DSL or DDSL will seek advice from, or make a referral to, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where required.

The LADO provides advice and oversight for allegations against adults working with children and will advise on:

- Whether the allegation meets the threshold for LADO involvement;
- The need for Police or Children's Services involvement;
- Next steps in managing the allegation;
- Information sharing and confidentiality;
- Any employment or disciplinary considerations.

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NFOS will cooperate fully with the LADO, Police, Children's Services and any other relevant agencies.

14.4 Suspension and Alternative Arrangements

The safety and welfare of children will always be the primary consideration.

Where necessary, NFOS may:

- Temporarily redeploy an individual;
- Increase supervision arrangements;
- Restrict duties;
- Suspend an individual from their role whilst investigations are carried out.

Suspension is a neutral act and does not imply guilt or wrongdoing.

Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the safety of children, the welfare of staff and advice from relevant agencies.

14.5 Confidentiality

All allegations and concerns will be managed confidentially.

Information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to:

- Safeguard children;
- Manage the allegation appropriately;
- Comply with legal or statutory obligations.

Staff involved in safeguarding matters are expected to maintain confidentiality at all times.

14.6 Learning and Reflection

Following the conclusion of an allegation or safeguarding investigation, NFOS will review:

- Safeguarding procedures;
- Risk assessments;
- Staff training needs;

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- Lessons learned and opportunities for improvement.

Where improvements are identified, these will be implemented promptly to strengthen safeguarding practice and reduce the likelihood of similar concerns arising in the future.

NFOS is committed to creating a culture where concerns are raised openly, acted upon appropriately and used to continuously improve safeguarding arrangements.

15. Record Keeping, Confidentiality and Information Sharing

New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C. (NFOS) recognises that effective safeguarding relies upon accurate record keeping, appropriate information sharing and maintaining confidentiality.

Safeguarding records are an important part of protecting children and promoting their welfare. Records must be accurate, factual, timely and stored securely.

15.1 Recording Safeguarding Concerns

All safeguarding concerns, disclosures, incidents and actions taken must be recorded promptly.

Records should include:

- The child's full name and date of birth;
- The date, time and location of the concern;
- A factual account of what was seen, heard or reported;
- The child's own words wherever possible;
- Any actions taken;
- Details of who the concern was reported to;
- Any referrals made to external agencies;
- Outcomes or follow-up actions.

Staff must:

- Record information as soon as possible after the event;
- Use clear, objective and factual language;
- Distinguish between fact, observation and professional opinion;
- Sign and date records where appropriate.

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Staff must not:

- Alter or destroy safeguarding records;
- Include unnecessary personal opinions;
- Delay recording safeguarding concerns.

15.2 Storage of Safeguarding Records

Safeguarding records will be:

- Stored securely and separately from general records where appropriate;
- Accessible only to authorised personnel;
- Protected from unauthorised access, loss or damage;
- Retained and disposed of in accordance with legal requirements and organisational policies. Destroyed in line with GDPR

Electronic safeguarding records will be password protected and stored using secure systems.

Paper records, where used, will be kept in locked storage with restricted access.

15.3 Confidentiality

NFOS recognises the importance of confidentiality in safeguarding.

Information relating to safeguarding concerns will only be shared with those who need to know in order to:

- Protect a child or young person;
- Comply with statutory safeguarding duties;
- Support safeguarding investigations;
- Meet legal or regulatory requirements.

Staff should never promise a child complete confidentiality.

If a child discloses information that indicates they or another person may be at risk of harm, staff have a duty to share this information with the DSL or DDSL and, where appropriate, with external safeguarding agencies.

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15.4 Information Sharing

NFOS recognises that effective information sharing is essential for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Information may be shared with:

- Parents or carers where appropriate;
- Schools and educational settings;
- Children's Services;
- The Police;
- Health professionals;
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH);
- Other agencies involved in safeguarding or supporting the child.

Information sharing decisions will be:

- Necessary and proportionate;
- Relevant and accurate;
- Timely;
- Recorded appropriately;
- Made in accordance with statutory guidance and data protection legislation.

Where possible, consent will be sought before sharing information.

However, consent is not required if:

- A child is at risk of harm;
- Seeking consent would place a child at increased risk;
- There is a legal obligation to share information;
- The prevention or detection of crime requires information sharing.

The safety and welfare of the child will always take precedence.

15.5 Data Protection

NFOS processes personal information in accordance with:

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- The Data Protection Act 2018;
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR);
- Relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance;
- NFOS Data Protection and Privacy Policies.

Staff are responsible for:

- Protecting personal information;
- Using secure systems and passwords;
- Reporting actual or suspected data breaches immediately;
- Following organisational policies relating to confidentiality and information governance.

15.6 Retention and Disposal

Safeguarding records will be retained for an appropriate period in accordance with legal requirements and organisational retention schedules.

When records are no longer required, they will be disposed of securely to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

NFOS recognises that accurate record keeping and effective information sharing are essential to safeguarding children and young people and supporting positive outcomes.

16. Missing Children and Children Missing Education

New Forest Outreach Support C.I.C. (NFOS) recognises that children who go missing, are absent from education or disengage from services may be at increased risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, mental health difficulties, radicalisation or other forms of harm.

NFOS is committed to promoting attendance, maintaining effective communication with families and partner organisations, and responding promptly when concerns arise regarding a child's whereabouts or engagement.

16.1 Missing Children

A child may be considered missing if:

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- They fail to arrive for an agreed session without explanation;
- They leave an activity, venue or vehicle without permission;
- Their whereabouts become unknown during NFOS activities;
- They cannot be located after reasonable attempts have been made.

If a child goes missing, staff must:

- Remain calm and take immediate action.
- Check the immediate area and any locations the child may reasonably have gone.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) immediately.
- Contact the child's parent or carer where appropriate.
- Contact the Police by calling 999 if the child cannot be located promptly or there is concern for their safety.
- Record the incident and actions taken.

The child's age, individual needs, communication abilities, SEND status, health needs and any known risks will be considered when determining the urgency of the response.

16.2 Missing During Transport

If a child goes missing during transport or fails to arrive at an agreed collection or drop-off point, staff must:

- Contact the parent or carer immediately;
- Inform the DSL or DDSL;
- Check agreed locations and travel arrangements;
- Contact the Police if there are concerns for the child's safety or whereabouts;
- Record the incident and actions taken.

NFOS will ensure transport arrangements are appropriately risk assessed and communicated clearly with parents, carers and partner organisations.

16.3 Children Missing Education (CME)

NFOS recognises that children missing education are at increased risk of:

- Abuse and neglect;

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- Child sexual exploitation (CSE);
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE);
- Radicalisation;
- Mental health difficulties;
- Social isolation;
- Poor educational and life outcomes.

Where NFOS becomes aware that a child is:

- Persistently absent from education;
- Not receiving suitable education;
- Missing from school or educational provision;
- Disengaging significantly from services;

the DSL or DDSL will consider whether safeguarding concerns exist and liaise with:

- Parents or carers;
- Schools or educational settings;
- Children's Services;
- Local Authorities;
- Other relevant professionals.

16.4 Alternative Provision and Outreach

As NFOS provides Alternative Provision, outreach and community-based support, staff will:

- Monitor attendance and engagement;
- Record unexplained absences;
- Follow up concerns regarding non-attendance;
- Share safeguarding concerns with relevant professionals where appropriate;
- Work collaboratively with schools, families and external agencies to promote engagement and safety.

16.5 Recording and Reporting

All incidents involving missing children, unexplained absences or concerns regarding children missing education will be:

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- Recorded accurately and promptly;
- Reviewed by the DSL or DDSL;
- Shared with relevant agencies where appropriate;
- Used to inform future risk assessments and safeguarding practice.

NFOS recognises that a child's absence or disengagement may be an indicator of wider safeguarding concerns and will always prioritise the child's safety and wellbeing when responding to such situations.

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