

Safeguarding Children Policy

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility:

Introduction and Policy Statement

This policy demonstrates our commitment to protecting the welfare of children and young people. It sets out the measures and procedures to ensure their safety from harm, abuse, or neglect while they are in our care or engaged with our services.

Policy Statement:

Anthony Walker Foundation recognises its duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. We are committed to providing a safe environment and ensuring that all allegations of abuse or neglect are taken seriously and acted upon promptly.

Purpose and Scope

To outline clear procedures for recognising, responding to, and reporting safeguarding concerns in line with statutory guidance.

This policy applies to all staff, consultants, volunteers, board members, and contractors working with or on behalf of the Anthony Walker Foundation.

Definitions

- **Child:** Anyone under the age of 18 years.
- **Safeguarding:** Measures taken to protect children from abuse and ensure their welfare.
- **Disclosure:** Any statement or evidence provided by a child or an adult that indicates harm or potential harm to a child.

Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy (DDSL):

- Acts as the primary point of contact for all safeguarding concerns.
- Ensures that all staff and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding training.
- Liaises with local authority safeguarding partners, such as Children's Social Care and the local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

All Staff and Volunteers:

- Must familiarise themselves with this policy and complete mandatory safeguarding training.
- Are required to report any concerns or disclosures to the DSL immediately.

Board Members:

- Support the implementation of this policy.
- Ensure that adequate resources are available to safeguard children.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Confidentiality:

- All information relating to safeguarding should be treated as confidential and shared only on a need-to-know basis.

Information Sharing:

- All information regarding data shared by AWF will be recorded within the relevant person case file within the Charity Log system. Copies of all notes should be scanned on to the Charity log system and paper records should be kept in a locked cabinet until handed to the relevant statutory agency.
- When sharing information, ensure that it is done in accordance with local authority guidance and data protection laws.
- In cases of serious concern, it may be necessary to disclose information to external agencies to ensure the child's safety.

Monitoring and Review

Policy Review:

- This policy will be reviewed at least annually or whenever there is a significant change in legislation or guidance.

Monitoring:

- The DSL is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the policy and ensuring compliance.
- Regular audits and feedback sessions will be conducted to identify areas for improvement.

Obligations

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm.

As adults and/or professionals or volunteers, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children - and in particular protecting them from significant harm - depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise.

Individual children, especially some of the most vulnerable children and those at greatest risk of social exclusion, will need co-ordinated help from health, education, children's social care, and quite possibly the voluntary sector and other agencies, including youth justice services.

For those children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, joint working is essential, to safeguard and promote welfare of the child(ren) and - where necessary - to help bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against children.

All agencies and professionals should:

- be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect.
- be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children.
- share and help to analyse information so that an assessment can be made of the child's needs and circumstances.

Contribute to safeguard and promote the child welfare.

- take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific plans; and
- work co-operatively with parents unless this is inconsistent with ensuring the child's safety.

Definitions of abuse and neglect:

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (eg: rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts.

They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate caretakers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

This policy also take cognisance of the guidelines outlines with the *Working Together 2023 Guidance*.

This guideline is underpinned by the various legislations inclusive of:

Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004, Children and Social Work Act 2017, Equality Act 2010

Staff awareness

All staff will be made aware of this policy as part of their initial induction process and there will be bi-annual refresher input delivered by the safeguarding lead.

Where necessary or possible, staff will be encouraged to attend appropriate training courses, provided by statutory, private or third sector organisations.

The safeguarding lead is responsible for sharing relevant legislative and safeguarding updates with all staff.

Procedures

What to do if you have concerns about a child.

Remember that the welfare of the child is priority, and any concern must be reported to the relevant statutory body in a timely manner. In cases of emergency, staff must contact the relevant 999 service and ensure that a referral is submitted to the relevant children social care team using their recommended method.

Information sharing should always conform with Data Protection Act 1998, 2018 Update and Government Data Protection Regulation.

You may have concerns about a child because of something you have seen or heard, or a child may choose to disclose something to you.

If a member of staff receives a disclosure from a child that warrants safeguarding action, they should follow best practice in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and other relevant safeguarding guidance. Key steps include:

1. Listen and Reassure

- Stay calm and listen carefully without expressing shock or disbelief.
- Reassure the child they have done the right thing by speaking up.
- Avoid making promises you cannot keep (e.g., “I won’t tell anyone”). Instead, explain that you may need to share the information to help keep them safe.

2. Record the Disclosure Accurately

- Write down what the child said in their own words as soon as possible.
- Record the date, time, setting, and any observations (e.g., child’s behaviour or emotions).
- Avoid asking leading questions—only use open-ended questions if clarification is needed.
- Sign and date the record and keep it confidential within safeguarding procedures.

Nb. Only share with the appropriate person within your organisation (DSL or lead for the Commercial or School Services)

3. Report the Disclosure Without Delay

- Report it to the DSL (John Williams or Deputy Zoe Hume) immediately.
- In their absence contact Children’s Social Care or the Police (999 in emergencies).
- You can also contact your Local Authority’s Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for advice.
- If unsure, seek guidance from the NSPCC Helpline (0808 800 5000).

4. Follow Up and Support

- Ensure the child is safe while action is taken.
- Keep clear records of referrals and follow any further advice from safeguarding authorities.
- Consider seeking support for the child (e.g., through local safeguarding partnerships or counselling services).
- If you don’t receive a response from social care, follow up to ensure action is being taken.

Remember, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, so escalate until you get the right response.

It is important that you listen and capture (record) the voice of the child whenever a disclosure is made.

Best Practice

Whatever the nature of your concerns, discuss them with your manager or DSL. See the Appendix A for the process to follow.

If you still have concerns, you or your manager or DSL should refer to:

Liverpool: Liverpool's Children's Advice & Support Service (CASS) - 0151 459 2606

Sefton: Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership - 0151 934 4013. For emergent immediate concerns out of hours, contact the Emergency Duty Team - 0151 934 3555

Knowsley: Knowsley Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub - 0151 443 2600.

St. Helens: St. Helens Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub - 01744 676767 option 2. For emergent immediate concerns out of hours, contact the Emergency Duty Team - 0345 050 0148

Wirral: Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership - 0151 606 2008 (Mon-Fri 9-5)/ 0151 677 6557 (out of hours).

What information will you need when making a referral?

You will be asked to provide as much information as possible. Such as the child's full name, date of birth, address, school, GP, languages spoken, any disabilities the child may have, details of the parents. Do not be concerned if you do not have all these details, you should still make the call.

You should follow up the verbal referral in writing, prior to completing your shift on that day. If in doubt, contact the DSL.

Allegations Involving a Members of Staff / Volunteer

The Anthony Walker Foundation is committed to having effective recruitment and human resources procedures, including checking all staff, volunteer and trustee to make sure they are safe to work with children and young people. Where appropriate, key staff involved in recruitment processes will undertake Safer Recruitment Training.

However, there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against a member of staff, volunteer and trustee. Allegations against those who work with children, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, cover a wide range of circumstances.

All allegations of abuse of children by those who work with children or care for them must be taken seriously. All reports of allegations must be submitted within one working day to DSL.

The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way which 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 which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children.
- Display any behaviour which may raise safeguarding concern.
- Is convicted of an offence relating to violence, intoxicants, sexual offence or other behaviour which may suggest a risk to children.

The list is not exhaustive and is only a guide to ensure that relevant matters involving staff (inclusive of volunteers, and trustees) are flagged to the DSL in a timely manner.

The allegations may relate to the persons behaviour at work, at home or in another setting.

The DSL will discuss the matter with the CEO to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made.

In cases where our staff witness behaviour or is told about behaviour involving a member of staff from a statutory organisation, they will ensure that this is recorded in line with this policy and the facts are reported to the DSL so that appropriate action will be taken in a timely manner.

Change Record

Date of Change:	Changed By:	Comments:
1/4/2023		Policy approved by the Trustees
24/6/2024	John Williams	Annual policy review
27/3/2025	John Williams	Annual policy review

Appendix A

Information/Incident

