Supporting distressed children

Registered Charity Number 1169026

Safeguarding Policy

1. Safeguarding Statement

Mentor Link is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people by taking all reasonable steps to protect them from any abuse or neglect. This applies to all the children, young people and adults, with whom we work, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, nationality or country of origin. This definition is in line with "Working Together to Safeguard children 2023" to include all children up to the age of 18 years whether living with their families, in state care, or living independently.

Workers, including staff, volunteers, and the trustees, will at all times show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of the children and young people involved with Mentor Link and the organisations with whom it works. The charity is committed to multiagency working in relation to all safeguarding matters.

This will be done by:

- Ensuring that all our paid staff, volunteers and Trustees are carefully selected, DBS checked, trained and supervised – see *Safer Recruitment Policy*.
- Carefully assessing the risks that children and young people may encounter and taking all necessary steps to minimise and manage them. Carrying out Risk Assessments for any mentoring or activities that are undertaken with the children. *See Health and Safety Policy.*
- Letting member organisations, parents, children and young people know how to voice concerns or complaints about anything that they may not be happy with – see *Complaints Policy*.
- Giving member organisations, parents, children, young people and workers information about what we do and what can be expected from us – see *Complaints Policy*.

To this end Mentor Link has in place:

- A Child Protection Policy
- A Health and Safety Policy (including Risk Assessments)
- A Disciplinary Policy
- A Complaints Policy
- A Safer Recruitment Policy
- A Whistle Blowing Policy
- A Confidentiality Policy

- A Management of Allegations against staff or volunteers' procedure
- PREVENT Policy.
- Bullying and harassment policy
- E-policy

Our Safeguarding Policy will be updated annually in line with changes to new guidance and included in our Induction and staff and volunteer manuals.

We will ensure that staff, volunteers and Trustees know how to recognise and respond to concerns that a child or young person/adult may be abused or neglected. Safeguarding training will be mandatory for all staff, volunteers and Trustees of Mentor Link as part of our Induction process.

The designated person for responsibility for Safeguarding is Andrea Maddocks CEO and Karen Arnold (Service Manager). The Trustees have appointed, from within its membership, a Champion for Safeguarding who will report annually to the Board on any safeguarding and/or child protection issues which may have arisen over the previous twelve months. They will ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and reviewed annually; they will also ensure safe recruitment policies and procedures for handling allegations against paid staff and volunteers are in place.

2. **Child Protection Statement**

We believe that it is always unacceptable for a child, young person or adult to experience abuse of any kind. We recognize our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all people and will be alert to indications of any abuse by service users with whom we work and will respond to their needs. The policy covers all children that we work with, young people and adults.

For adults this will be inline with the Care Act 2014 aged 18 years or over who have needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect and as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of or the experience of abuse or neglect.

We value and respect every child and young person and will endeavour always to listen to them.

We will provide staff and volunteers with compulsory safeguarding training and guidance to follow when they suspect someone may be experiencing or at risk of harm.

We will adhere rigorously to our Procedures and Code of Conduct which outlines to staff and volunteers' professional boundaries and correct procedures.

The Designated Child Protection Person is Andrea Maddocks – CEO Mentor Link and Karen Arnold (Service Manager) . (Service Manager)

When there is a concern about someone, every adult in our organisation/group is expected to share those concerns with the designated Safeguarding Person.

The legislation that shapes Mentor Link's Safeguarding Policy is:
Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2013)

The Children Act 1989 s 47.
The Protection of Children Act 1999
Data Protection of Data Act 1998
The Children Act 2004 (Every Child Matters)
Keeping children safe in education 2024

The next review of our policies and procedures will be held in August 2025.

3. Child Protection Policy and Practice

Statutory Framework

Section 47 Children Act 1989 states that a local authority has a duty to make enquiries when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm." It must make such enquiries as it considers necessary in order to decide whether any action is needed to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.

Significant harm is defined in section 31(9) of 1989 Act and is identified in Working Together to Safeguard Children (DoH, HO, DfEE, 2000) as resulting from physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. For the purpose of this policy the term 'significant harm' is used to refer to all child protection concerns.

The Children Act imposes a duty on statutory agencies to assist the local authority with its enquiries were called upon to do so although they are not obliged to do so 'where it would be unreasonable in all the circumstances of the case'.

There is no legal requirement for voluntary agencies to assist the local authority in meeting its child protection responsibilities. "Working Together", however, stresses that voluntary organisations need to have clear guidance and procedures in place to ensure appropriate referrals and co-operation with statutory agencies procedures.

Unresolved concerns about harm to a child may lead to their becoming subject to child protection procedures (see "Working Together"). This may lead to an initial child protection conference and a child protection plan will be drawn up involving relevant agencies, the family and the child or young person. Substantiated concerns may lead to the court making a care order as a result of an application made under section 31 of the Children Act.

The response of Mentor Link to child protection concerns will be determined in accordance with the policy set out below. Developed with reference to the Practitioner's guide to Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children produced by Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board 2007

For young people aged over 16 years the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) provides a statutory framework for people who lack capacity to make decisions for themselves, or who have capacity and want to prepare for a time when they may lack capacity in the future.

The presumption is that adults have the mental capacity to make informed decisions about their own safety and how they live their lives. Issues of mental capacity and the ability to give informed consent are central to decisions and actions in Safeguarding Adults. All interventions need to take into account the ability of adults to make informed choices about the way they want to live and the risks they want to take. This includes their ability:

- to understand the implications of their situation.
- to take action themselves to prevent abuse.
- to participate to the fullest extent possible in decision-making about interventions.

The MCA 2005 provides a statutory framework to empower and protect people who may lack capacity to make decisions for themselves and establishes a framework for making decisions on their behalf. This applies whether the decisions are life-changing events or everyday matters. All decisions taken in the Safeguarding Adults process must comply with the Act.

If there are concerns about a mentee over 16 years old, (either from a volunteer or a member of staff from the charity) regarding lacking the mental capacity to make decisions about engaging with the mentoring service, or what is disclosed during the mentoring service then a disclosure or concern report will be made to the Safeguarding Officer (DSL) within the school that made the referral.

Identification of abuse

There are different types of abuse, which may include:

Physical abuse
Actual or risk of physical injury to a child or young person/adult or failure to prevent physical injury to a child including deliberate poisoning or suffocation.

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocation, 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. Giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison is also considered physical abuse.

Neglect
The persistent or severe neglect of a young person/adult, or the failure to protect a child or young person from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold, resulting in the significant impairment of the young person's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive (i.e., not due to illness).

Neglect can be difficult to recognise, and physical signs may include constant hunger, dirty, being consistently underweight or inappropriate dress for the conditions. The young person may also indicate that they have few friends and are left alone unsupervised.

Sexual abuse
Actual or risk of sexual exploitation of a child or young person/adult. Involves forcing or enticing someone to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. The activities may involve

physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Emotional abuse
Actual or risk of severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child, young person/adult caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment.

Is the persistent emotional maltreatment such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects of their emotional development? Includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supporting networks.

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 (including cyber 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.

Psychological abuse
Psychological abuse includes 'emotional abuse' and takes the form of threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, rejection, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, indifference, harassment, verbal abuse (including shouting or swearing), cyber bullying, isolation or withdrawal from services or support networks. Psychological abuse is the denial of a person's human and civil rights including choice and opinion, privacy and dignity and being able to follow one's own spiritual and cultural beliefs or sexual orientation. It includes preventing the person from using services that would otherwise support them and enhance their lives. It also includes the intentional and/or unintentional withholding of information (e.g., information not being available in different formats/languages etc.).

Possible indicators

- Untypical ambivalence, deference, passivity, resignation.
- Appears anxious or withdrawn, especially in the presence of the alleged abuser.
- Exhibits low self-esteem.
- Untypical changes in behaviour (e.g., continence problems, sleep disturbance).
- Not allowed visitors/phone calls.
- Locked in a room/in their home.
- Denied access to aids or equipment, (e.g., glasses, dentures, hearing aid, crutches, etc.).
- Access to personal hygiene and toilet is restricted.
- Movement is restricted by use of furniture or other equipment.

- Bullying via social networking internet sites and persistent texting

A Private fostering arrangement is essentially one that is made privately (that is to say without being instigated by a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16, under 18 if they are disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, with the intention that it should last 28 days or more. If a member of staff or volunteer becomes aware of a private fostering arrangement, they must report this to the designated charity staff, Safeguarding officer in the school or contact Children's Services.

Financial or material abuse
This includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to a young person's/adults financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property or possessions.

Financial abuse can range from inadvertent mismanagement and opportunistic exploitation to deliberate and targeted abuse, often accompanied by threats and intimidation. Financial abuse can occur in isolation, or as research has shown, where there are other forms of abuse, there is likely to be financial abuse occurring also. This is not always the case, but staff and volunteers should be aware of this potential.

Indicators of financial abuse include:
- change in living conditions.
- possessions sold.
- cut off from family/friends/social network.
- Unauthorised withdrawal of funds using the vulnerable person's ATM card,

Discriminatory abuse
This includes discrimination on the grounds of race, faith or religion, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation and political views, along with racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist comments or jokes, or comments and jokes based on a person's disability or any other form of harassment, slur or similar treatment. Hate crime can be viewed as a form of discriminatory abuse, although will often involve other types of abuse as well. It also includes not responding to dietary needs and not providing appropriate spiritual support. Excluding a person from activities on the basis they are 'not liked' is also discriminatory abuse.

Possible Indicators
Indicators for discriminatory abuse may not always be obvious and may also be linked to acts of physical abuse and assault, sexual abuse and assault, financial abuse, neglect, psychological abuse and harassment, so all the indicators listed above may apply to discriminatory abuse.

- May reject their own cultural background and/or racial origin or other personal beliefs, sexual practices or lifestyle choices.
- Making complaints about the service not meeting their needs.

Institutional Abuse

The mistreatment or abuse or neglect of a child or adult at risk by a regime or individuals within settings and services that children or adults at risk live in or use, that violate the person's dignity, resulting in lack of respect for their human rights. Institutional abuse occurs when the routines, systems and regimes of an institution result in poor or inadequate standards of care and poor practice which affects the whole setting and denies restricts or curtails the dignity, privacy, choice, independence or fulfilment of children or adults at risk.

The list above is a guide, and it is important to remember that young people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time and the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. When a disclosure is made, it is important for volunteers and staff to know the correct procedure.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse, controlling behaviour, threats to kill or harm family members, reading texts/emails/letters, rape; so, called 'honour' based violence. In 2013, the Home Office announced changes to the definition of domestic abuse:

- Incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse... by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexuality.
- Includes: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so, called 'honour' based violence; Female Genital Mutilation; forced marriage.

If in the course of his or her work in the profession, the person discovers that an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18, the following action is required: An FGM notification is to be made to is to the chief officer of police for the area in which the girl resides, orally or in writing. Best practise is for reports to be made by the close of the next working day.

- Age range extended down to 16.

Many people think that domestic abuse is about intimate partners, but it is clear that other family members are included and that much safeguarding work that occurs at home is, in fact is concerned with domestic abuse. Family members are defined as: mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and Grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or stepfamily.

'Forced marriage' is a term used to describe a marriage in which one or both of the parties are married without their consent or against their will. A forced marriage differs from an arranged marriage, in which both parties' consent to the assistance of their parents or a third party in identifying a spouse.

Modern Slavery

Modern slavery encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced and compulsory labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment. A large number of active organised crime groups are involved in modern slavery. But it is also committed by individual opportunistic perpetrators.

There are many different characteristics that distinguish slavery from other human rights violations, however only one needs to be present for slavery to exist.
Someone is in slavery if they are:

- forced to work - through mental or physical threat.
- owned or controlled by an 'employer', usually through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse.
- dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property'.
- physically constrained or has restrictions placed on his/her freedom of movement.

Contemporary slavery takes various forms and affects people of all ages, gender and races.

Acts of Omission and self-neglect

The duty to report any safeguarding concerns for children, young people and adults includes abuse where there is omission. Omission is defined as the act of knowing about ongoing abuse of any kind but failing to report it, is another form of neglect. Signs of self-neglect could also encompass poor personal hygiene, like soiled clothing, dirty nails and skin, unkempt or lice-ridden hair, foul smells, and presence of faeces or urine.

Criminal Exploitation

Children who are exploited through crime are also victims of abuse and are a safeguarding issue. If there are disclosures or concerns about this type of abuse it has to be reported via the Safeguarding officers or DSL in school and the Safeguarding lead for Mentor Link the CEO Andrea Maddocks on the day of disclosure and in line with other disclosure procedures. The care and support needs of these children must be put in place as with any other child.

Signs and symptoms

There is no clear dividing line between one type of abuse and another.
The following section is divided into areas to help categorise what may be seen or heard. Children and young people may show symptoms from one or all of the categories.

This should not be used as a checklist: Mentor Link staff and volunteers should be aware of anything unusual displayed by the young person.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Bruises in places that are not usually harmed in normal play.
- Bruise or marks consistent with either straps or slaps
- Undue fear of adults
- Aggression towards others
- Unexplained injuries or burns – particularly if they are recurrent.

PHYSICAL NEGLECT

- Exposure to danger/lack of supervision
- Inadequate/inappropriate clothing
- Constant hunger
- Poor standard of hygiene

- Untreated illnesses

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Overly withdrawn child or young person
- Overly aggressive child or young person
- Constant wetting or soiling
- Frequent vomiting
- Persistent rocking movement
- Very poor language development
- Inability to relate to peers or adults.

SEXUAL ABUSE

- Language and drawing inappropriate for their age.
- Sexual knowledge inappropriate for their age
- Wariness on being approached.
- Soreness in the genital area
- Unexplained rashes or marks in the genital areas
- Pain on urination
- Difficulty in walking or sitting.
- Stained or bloody underclothes
- Recurrent tummy pains or headaches
- Bruises on inner thigh or buttocks

DOMESTIC ABUSE

- Aggression or bullying
- Anti- social behavior
- Anxiety, depression or suicidal thoughts
- Attention seeking
- Bedwetting nightmares or insomnia
- Constant sickness
- Drug or alcohol use
- Eating disorder
- Trouble learning and problems at school.
- Tantrums
- Withdrawn

Remember

Signs and symptoms often appear in a cluster, but also many of the indicators above may be caused by other factors.

4. Mentor Link Safeguarding Procedure

Mentor Link staff will explain on first contact with the child or young person that they cannot give guarantees about maintaining confidentiality if there are issues relating to safeguarding their welfare or the welfare of other children. Mentor Link staff and volunteers will need to refer to Mentor Link's Confidentiality Policy.

Mentor Link's confidentiality policy can be found in its Staff/Induction handbook, but essentially Mentor Link believe that the legal principle that the welfare of the child is paramount. This means that the considerations of confidentiality which might apply to other situations in the organisation should not be allowed to override the right of children to be protected from harm. However, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned particularly when a disclosure or an allegation has been made and is being investigated.

It is the responsibility of all Mentor Link volunteers and staff to be alert to the possibility of child protection and children in need issues and to know the signs to look for. If significant harm is suspected the concern should be recorded, discussed and reported to the CEO or Karen Arnold (Service Manager) immediately. If the volunteer is working in school, then the "concern or disclosure form" must be completed and handed to the designated person in school on the day of disclosure. All concerns and Disclosures are recorded on a charity database and if there are previous reports on the child. Each disclosure or concern will be followed up with the school until there is a satisfactory outcome for the child. Mentor Link will remain engaged with the school to follow up on safeguarding even if they are no longer providing a service. If the mentoring is not conducted in school, the CEO or Karen Arnold (Service Manager) will make a referral to Children's Social Care team at the local council. Such decisions must be clearly recorded.

Children and young people with a disability may be supported or trained by Mentor Link and staff/volunteers have to be aware that some children and young people, because of their learning or physical disability, are vulnerable and may find it more difficult to recognise and report abuse. Their disability may mean that:

- Their life experiences are limited, creating difficulty recognising inappropriate behaviour.
- They are afraid of challenging people, concerned that they will anger an authority figure or get into trouble.
- Communication difficulties make it hard to report abuse.
- They may not be able physically to leave an abusive situation.
- They receive intimate physical care and, therefore, the abuse may seem 'normal'.
- Their self-esteem and self-image are poor.
- They might not be aware to whom they can report abuse.
- Authority figures are unwilling to believe that anyone would abuse a disabled child or young person.

Mentor Link's staff and volunteers must take particular care, therefore, when working with children and young people with disabilities.

If a child protection allegation is made against someone who works with children or is a Mentor Link employee, trustee or volunteer it should be reported immediately to the Worcestershire LADO and Mentor Link CEO or to the designated Trustee for Mentor Link if the allegation is against the CEO. He or she will act promptly in accordance with Mentor Link's Management of Allegations against Staff/Volunteers/Trustees procedure, and Whistleblowing Policy which includes three key aspects to be considered, namely, the charity's child protection procedures, the charity's own disciplinary procedures and whether a police criminal investigation will be required.

Each parent/carer will be issued with a letter asking for consent at the beginning of volunteer support outlining what to do and contact details in cases of allegations being made against an employee, volunteers as per Managing Allegations Policy.

Mentor Link complaints procedure can be invoked if a child, young person, parent/carer or some other involved person wishes to make a complaint about the behaviour, language or actions of a member of Mentor Link staff, volunteer or board of trustees. Mentor Link's complaints procedure can be found in its staff handbook, website and volunteer induction pack.

If a child or young person makes any child protection disclosure to a Mentor Link volunteer, he/she must always be informed that Mentor Link is passing information to the appropriate authority.

Whistleblowing

This policy has been developed for use by any member of staff or volunteer or service user who believes they are aware of serious malpractice within the organisation.

If a Trustee, employee or volunteer or service user of Mentor Link becomes aware that an activity, practice or policy carried out by Mentor Link is illegal, contrary to Mentor Link policies or best practice, or otherwise gives cause for concern, they may 'whistle-blow' by informing the Trustees; the police or social services; or the Charity Commission.

The Trustees of Mentor Link are responsible for all activities, policies, procedures and practices of the organisation and its paid employees and volunteers acting on its behalf. In the event that acts which might give cause for concern are being carried out, the Trustees will always act in compliance with the law, with guidance from the Charity Commission and other statutory bodies, with best practice and with Mentor Link's own policies and procedures.

It is hoped that any Trustee, employee or volunteer or service user of Mentor Link who discovers matters of concern will bring those matters to the attention the Trustees in the first place. No detriment will be suffered for bringing any such matter to the Trustees' attention. No Trustee, employee, volunteer or member of Mentor Link will undertake any act which might obstruct any investigation, either internal or by an external statutory agency, into any of Mentor Link's activities.

Trustees are fully aware of their responsibility under the law, and they will respect the legal protection afforded to a whistle-blower.

5. Practice for Mentor Link Staff

Child protection issues must be addressed. If a volunteer suspects that a child (or young person/adult) is suffering, or is at risk of suffering significant harm, or a child in need these concerns must be discussed with their Service Administrator/ CEO or Andrea Maddocks immediately. The Volunteer **must** complete a concern or disclosure form and forward to the Mentor Link member of staff and if you work within a school, the designated person for Safeguarding (DSL) in school on the day of disclosure. If a child protection allegation is made against someone who works with children or is a Mentor Link employee, trustee or volunteer it should be reported immediately to the Worcestershire LADO

If a child raises issues which cause concern the worker should listen carefully, giving the child time and undivided attention. A concern also needs to be reported onto the school using the Disclosure Form. The responsibility for undertaking the investigation lies with Children's Services. **It is most important that Mentor Link volunteers or staff do not ask questions of the child or express opinions since this raises the risk of being called to give evidence of their involvement in any court proceedings.**

Mentor Link staff will make clear Mentor Link's confidentiality policy at the first meeting with a child. Nevertheless, some children will be fearful about the consequences of what they have said. They may need considerable help and reassurance to feel safe. If there is no immediate danger the volunteer may need to give time to enable the child or young person to disclose to the appropriate representative of the local authority. Such decisions should be made only by Mentor Link CEO.

Information concerning child protection concerns should be recorded immediately.
The record should include:

- The date and time of disclosure, date of birth, gender and ethnicity.
- The child or young person's account - in some circumstances the child/young person will be encouraged to write or dictate their own account and be given a copy.
- Any injuries noted.
- An assessment made by the worker concerned as to why the information given by the child/young person constitutes a child protection/child in need concern.
- Action taken by worker.

The record should be signed and dated. A copy should be sent to the CEO or Andrea Maddocks immediately, but not later than 24 hours.

Any action to be taken will be determined by the urgency of the circumstances and the setting in which the child or young person is living.

If Children's Services does not consider the situation to merit further investigation, consideration may need to be given to referring the child/young person for legal advice. Such a referral to a solicitor for legal advice should be taken only by agreement with the CEO of Mentor Link.

It is important to recognise the importance of giving feedback to the child or young person at the end of the process. This should include ensuring that they receive information from Children's Services concerning the outcome of the enquiries and informing them of their right to make a complaint if not satisfied with how the investigation was handled.

6. Consent

Prior to providing one to one support consent will be obtained from parents/carers and the principle should always be one of openness with both. Informed consent is obtained at the start of intervention in children's lives and gained again where circumstances alter, for example where an agency wishes to make a referral of a child with additional needs or a child in need to another agency. Young people over the age of 16 are presumed to have capacity to give or withhold their consent to sharing of confidential information, unless there is evidence to the contrary under the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

7. Safeguarding Code of Conduct

- Mentor Link staff, volunteers and trustees always treat everyone with respect including adults and children
- Act as a good role model
- Provide opportunities and show understanding so that children and young people can talk about issues that are important to them.
- Recognise a child/young person's right to privacy.
- Respect all individual's faith and cultural traditions.
- Risk assesses situations to ensure potential dangers have been identified and the risk minimised.
- Create an environment in which children and young people feel safe and deal with situations which might make the setting unsafe.
- Ensure, whenever possible, that it takes place at least within the sight or hearing of others.
- Avoid physical contact where possible, if it is needed, e.g. In demonstrating a skill or to assist a young person with a disability or, wanted by a child who is upset, use common sense, keep it impersonal and short.

Mentor Link staff, volunteers and trustees should never:

- Permit or accept abuse or discriminatory behaviour e.g., bullying, taunting.
- Engage in inappropriate behaviour, conduct or use inappropriate language.
- Show favouritism for anyone.
- Meet a child or young person away from the usual meeting place unless the charity staff and parent/carer are aware of the arrangement.
- Use alcohol or drugs when working or immediately prior to working.
- Smoke or vape during mentoring or in sight of mentee after the session.
- Give personal money to anyone.

Escalation Procedures

- Volunteers have a responsibility to share relevant information.
- Your designated Service Administrator should be contacted if you are concerned in any way about a young person or adult. If you work in schools the designated member of staff for school is detailed on the contact sheet in your Induction pack and your Service Administrator or Head Office staff will be able to assist you. In the event of any disclosure, you should firstly report this to the CEO or Karen Arnold (Service Manager) who will assist you. A concern or disclosure form will need to be completed and forwarded to charity staff and passed to the designated person in school on the day of the disclosure.
- The charity staff or school will decide which cases need to be referred to children's services or other agencies and will advise you of the outcome.
- Safeguarding agencies and partners are expected to work together professionally. If there are issues over any safeguarding concerns then charity staff will adhere to the local authority guidance set out in escalation of professional procedures for safeguarding children.

- If you do not work in schools the designated person is Andrea Maddocks CEO or Karen Arnold (Service Manager) who will refer on to Children's services.
- All volunteers must be aware of the signs of abuse and the correct procedures to follow.

Contacts
Mentor Link Head Office 01299 822336
Andrea Maddocks 07855 940141
Karen Arnold (Service Manager) 07875438659
Contact the Police on 999 if there is an immediate risk of danger and then contact the Local Safeguarding Team.

Local Safeguarding team Worcestershire (Children)- 01905 822666 or out of hours 01905 768020
Local Safeguarding team Worcestershire (adults) 01905 843189
Local Safeguarding team Herefordshire – 01432 260800
Local Safeguarding Team Warwickshire – 01926 414144
Local Safeguarding team Birmingham – 0121 303 1888
Local Safeguarding team Dudley- 0300 555 0050
Local Safeguarding team- Shropshire – 0345 678 9021
Local Safeguarding Team – Gloucestershire - 01452 426565 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm).
Local Safeguarding Team- Wolverhampton – 01902 555392 or 01902 555392
Local Safeguarding Team –Staffordshire - 01785 895836 and 0300 111 8007 (All non-urgent reports from **professionals** are submitted via our online Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF).

- Report a Concern or Request Support for a Child
- This form allows you to share detailed information around your worries and upload any supporting documentation.

Please be aware that referrals will not be taken from professionals via this advice line. Unless there is an immediate risk of harm, professionals will be asked to submit a full report via the online MARF:
Report a Concern or Request Support for a Child

Gloucestershire LADO Amadmin@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Worcestershire LADO contact

If you need to make a formal referral please visit the Worcestershire Children First website and follow the link to the online portal to make your referral: Are you worried about an adult who works with children?

Worcestershire County Council. The LADO Team can be contacted on 01905 846221 or LADO@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk however all referrals must come via the portal.

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We value and respect every child and young person and will endeavour always to listen to them and respond appropriately to safeguard them. We will provide staff and volunteers with guidance to follow when they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing or at risk of harm.

We will adhere rigorously to our Procedures and Code of Conduct.

We will work cooperatively with other agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

The Designated Child Protection Person in school is:
Detailed in your Induction pack.

The Designated Child Protection person in Mentor Link is:
Andrea Maddocks CEO and Karen Arnold (Service Manager)

When there is a concern about a child or young person every adult in our charity is expected to share those concerns with the Designated Child Protection Persons. Volunteers must inform the Service Administrators, CEO or Karen Arnold (Service Manager) in addition to the designated person in school so that support can be obtained.

We will review our policy and procedures on an annual basis.

We will:
• Treat all children and young people with respect
• Be watchful for children or young people who are experiencing harm or neglect
• Respond to concerns and allegations appropriately
• Adopt good practice with regard to safeguarding children and young people and ensure adherence to our policies and procedures. (See Safeguarding Policy)
• Ensure that Safe Recruitment and selection practices are followed (See Safer Recruiting Policy)
• Ensure volunteers are trained in accordance with their roles
• Ensure every adult share concerns about the welfare of any child or young person with the Designated Person for Child Protection and follow up all allegations until a satisfactory outcome is obtained.

• Work in partnership with children, young people, parents/carers and other agencies and stay involved with these organisations until a satisfactory outcome is obtained.

DISCLOSURES, CONCERNS, ALLEGATIONS AND COMPLAINTS

In order to keep children and young people safe, groups/organisations need to be clear about the differences between disclosures, concerns, allegations and complaints because there are different processes to be followed.

Child Protection Procedures should be followed when:

Disclosure

• A child or young person makes a disclosure (see Safeguarding policy).

A disclosure is when a child or young person tells someone else about the behaviour of another person or persons towards him or her which makes the hearer thinks that the child or young person is experiencing some form of abuse or may be at risk of abuse.

Concern

• There is a concern about a child or young person (See Safeguarding policy).

A concern is when another child or young person, another parent or carer or a worker raises a question about whether a particular child or young person is experiencing some form of abuse or may be at risk of abuse.

Allegations

The Management of Allegations Procedures (See Managing Allegations policy) should be followed when:

• An allegation is made about a worker, paid or unpaid, or a board member. An allegation is when somebody informs someone in the organisation/group or there is reasonable cause to believe that a person who works with children or young people may have:

• Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child or young person

• Committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or young person

• Behaved towards a child or young person in a way that indicates he or she is unsuitable to work with children or young people.

Complaints

The Complaints Procedure should be followed when:

A complaint is made about the charity procedures or practices.

A safeguarding complaint is a complaint about practices in the Charity (Managing Allegations Policy).

In some cases, two sets of procedures may need to be used.

Remember: In all cases the wellbeing of the children and young people are paramount.

Contacts

- Mentor Link Head Office 01299 822336
- Andrea Maddocks 07855 940141
- Karen Arnold (Service Manager) 07875438659

- **Contact the Police on 999 if there is an immediate risk of danger.**

- Local Safeguarding team Worcestershire- 01905 822666 or out of hours 01905 768020
- Local Safeguarding team Worcestershire (adults) 01905 843189
    - Local Safeguarding team Herefordshire – 01432 260800
    - Local Safeguarding Team Warwickshire – 01926 414144
    - Local Safeguarding team Birmingham – 0121 303 1888
    - Local Safeguarding team Dudley- 0300 555 0050
    - Local Safeguarding team- Shropshire – 0345 678 9021
    - Local Safeguarding Team – Gloucestershire - 01452 426565 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm). Out of hours Emergency Duty Team on 01452 614758
    - Local Safeguarding Team –Staffordshire - 01785 895836 and 0300 111 8007

Gloucestershire LADO Amadmin@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Worcestershire LADO contact

If you need to make a formal referral please visit the Worcestershire Children First website and follow the link to the online portal to make your referral: Are you worried about an adult who works with children?

Worcestershire County Council. The LADO Team can be contacted on 01905 846221 or LADO@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk however all referrals must come via the portal.

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