

The Wheels Project Ltd
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Registered Charity No: 1081236

SAFEGUARDING POLICY & PROCEDURE

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Our Activities

The Wheels Project Ltd works with children and young people as part of its commitment to addressing social exclusion.

There are times when our staff work alongside children and young people both within our own premises and on other organisations' premises. This work may include practical work in our workshops with vehicles, classroom-based group work and other group activities in a range of settings.

In addition to the project's own staff and trustees, volunteers, police officers and visiting speakers from other organisations may have access to the young people involved with the project.

1.2 Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020
- South West Child Protection Procedures

1.3 Our approach to Safeguarding

The Wheels Project recognises its responsibilities both morally and in law to safeguard those children and young people with whom it works. The project recognises the necessity to follow best practice with regards to working with children and young people in general and safeguarding in particular.

The project also acknowledges the need to protect staff and trustees from the risks of false accusation and to protect the reputation of the project.

The Wheels Project embraces the definition of safeguarding children defined in "KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION [KCSIE 2021](#)" as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- Ensuring that 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

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1.4 The purpose of our policy

We aim to:

- Protect children and young people who use The Wheels Project services. This includes the children of adults who use our services;
- Provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding

The Wheels Project believes that a child or young person should never experience harm or abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practices that keep all children safe regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity.

1.5 Our Responsibilities

The Wheels Project will highlight its' commitment to Safeguarding by integrating the following statement on all job descriptions:

The Wheels Project is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable people. Safeguarding is a central part of our organization, details of this can be found in our child protection policy.

The Wheels project has a designated safeguarding lead; however, it is considered an integral part of everyone at the project's responsibility to protect the health and wellbeing of children and vulnerable people.

Our Recruitment and Safeguarding policies will be issued to all candidates who are invited to attend interview in order to

1. Promote our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
2. Reduce the risk of appointing an inappropriate adult so as to minimise situations in which abuse might occur.
3. Notify candidates that all paid staff and volunteers will be trained in the prevention of child abuse and receive regular updates on new legislation.

1.6 Staff/Volunteer Recruitment

The Wheels Project will ensure that it is aware of existing and new requirements in relation to the recruitment of paid staff and volunteers to work with children. This information will be obtained from www.dbs.gov.uk.

The Wheels Project will be extremely vigilant when recruiting staff and volunteers. All application forms will ask specific questions about:

- any criminal record
- whether they are known to the police or any social services department as being an actual or potential risk to children
- whether they have ever had action taken against them in relation to child abuse, sexual offences, or violence
- names and addresses of at least two people, not relatives, who will provide references that comment on the candidate's previous work with children.

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All candidates will be required to complete a DBS application form at Enhanced level and assessed and approved by a DBS approved agency before starting the job.

1.7 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

All employees must be checked and passed by the Disclosure and Barring Service before they can be employed by The Wheels Project. Any member of staff must be checked and passed beforehand at an **enhanced level** if his/her duties involve working directly alongside our students.

The Wheels Project pays for this check to be carried out through a DBS approved agency.

Any employee who is convicted of an offence committed within or outside of The Wheels Project and which directly relates to the type of offences detailed in this document must declare it immediately to either The General Manager or a Trustee of the Charity. This will initiate immediate suspension without pay where the staff member will have up to one month to present the details of any transgression before at least 2 Trustees and The General Manager.

Each member of staff is re-checked every two years and must pass each time. Failure to do so will initiate immediate suspension without pay where the staff member will have up to one month to present the details of any transgression before at least 2 Trustees and The General Manager.

The employee must prepare a written report for this hearing outlining the circumstances of the breach and reasons why s/he should not be dismissed.

Failure to either attend the hearing without good reason or satisfy the members of the panel hearing this case that this employee represents an acceptable risk to the safety of our students then the employee will be dismissed immediately. The result will be confirmed in writing from the Chair of Trustees stating the reasons behind the decision and the date of termination of employment.

A written appeal by this employee submitted within 1 week of this hearing will be considered by the full board of Trustees at its discretion.

The Wheels Project understands that it is crucial that all staff and volunteers who come into contact with children have good practice guidelines to protect the welfare of those children. The guidelines will also serve to minimise the likelihood of allegations being made against them.

1.8 Minimising Situations in which Abuse might occur may involve the following:

- The Wheels Project has in place guidelines about action to be taken if abuse is disclosed or suspected.
- The Wheels Project's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures will be applied to all paid staff and volunteers.
- The Wheels Project has implemented a system of supervision and appraisal that checks on roles and relationships and observes practice.
- The Wheels Project carries out random checks on practice.
- The Wheels Project ensures that all staff have clear roles and responsibilities.
- The Wheels Project adopts an open-door policy where children or other adults can share concerns with appropriate people.
- The Wheels Project reduces occasions when adults are alone with children.
- The Wheels Project involves parents as much as possible.

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2 RECOGNISING CHILD ABUSE

Categories of abuse

In accordance with The Children Act 1989 and the various working documents (see bibliography) and current practice, The Wheels Project Ltd recognises the following forms of mistreatment as being indicative of child abuse;

2.1 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, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.'

2.2 Physical Abuse

'Physical abuse 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, ill health in a child.'

2.3 Sexual Abuse

'Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is 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 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. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.'

2.4 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 include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the children from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), 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 ill-treatment to a child, though it may occur alone.'

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2.5 Peer on peer abuse

'All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer-on-peer abuse). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying);
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- Up-skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm;
- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

(The definitions on this page are taken from KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION [KCSIE 2021](#))

3 RECOGNISING CHILD ABUSE

3.1 Staff roles in child protection

3.1.1 General Project Staff

The role of Wheels Project staff in safeguarding are defined in this section.

Project staff are **not** expected to attempt any investigation into abuse situations. But it is recognised that, given the nature of their work with children and young people, staff may become aware of, or suspicious of, possible abuse situations. These must be handled according to the policy below.

3.1.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

A Designated Safeguarding Lead (currently the workshop Supervisor, Steve Beese) will be appointed from among the existing staff and that appointment will be reviewed at least once a year.

The role of the nominated DSL is to ensure that the project's policy and training on safeguarding is kept up to date. In order to achieve this, it will be their role to attend such training as is necessary and to arrange to cascade this training to other staff as appropriate.

The role of the DSL is also to support staff who may handle disclosures of abuse or become aware of or have suspicions regarding certain young people. They will be responsible for guiding and advising that member of staff with regard to further actions to be taken.

In addition, the DSL will be responsible for recording and monitoring such situations and for making decisions as to whether, how and when to refer the matter to the appropriate Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in Safeguarding.

It will be the decision of the DSL as to whether the referring agency of the young person/people involved should be informed of the situation.

Where appropriate the DSL will seek advice and support from an independent professional agency such as the First Response Team (0117 903 6444)

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3.2 Levels of Abuse Awareness

For the purpose of this policy, the Wheels Project, in accordance with Bristol City Council's Safeguarding Policy, recognises the following levels of awareness of abuse.

3.2.1 Inking

When a member of staff has a "gut feeling" that something is "not right" with a young person then this may be said to be an Inking. An example of this may be the young person who flinches excessively after making a mistake or if staff shout/move too fast.

3.2.2 Suspicion

A suspicion is when a member of staff has certain grounds for suspecting that there may be a child protection issue. It is stronger than an inkling. Examples might be inappropriate sexualised behaviour, unexplained or unreasonably explained injury (bruising, cuts, burns etc), or overheard comments.

3.2.3 Disclosure

Disclosure is when a young person or child directly states to a member of staff that they are being abused. This may not be in such direct words, but it will be some statement such as "I hate it when my Dad starts hitting me".

3.3 Responding to Child Abuse

The worker's response to abuse depends upon the level of abuse being uncovered. As follows;

3.3.1 Inking

If a member of staff has an "inkling" about a young person this should be discussed with the group leader and reported to the DSL within 24 hours of the session which lead to the concern. The member of staff should report the name and group that the young person is in and their reason for feeling concerned.

The DSL will assess the situation and advise the member of staff accordingly. They will also ensure that the details are appropriately recorded and that the matter is monitored for the remainder of that person's involvement at the project.

If appropriate the DSL may consider consulting with the First Response Team, the LADO, referring agency and/or Youth Service Safeguarding Officer for advice and/or further action.

3.3.2 Suspicion

As with an inkling, all suspicions should be discussed with the group leader and reported to the DSL within 24 hours. The report should include detailed explanation of the evidence which has led to the suspicion as well as any details known about the child (name, address, date of birth, school etc).

The DSL may discuss the matter with appropriate other agency (ies) and will probably arrange for the Safeguarding register to be checked.

All actions etc will be appropriately recorded and kept by the DSL

3.3.3 Disclosure

Any disclosure of abuse is extremely serious. The group leader and the DSL *must* be informed immediately. The member of staff to whom the disclosure was made must discuss the exact nature of what has been said and pass on any further information (name, age, date of birth, school, address etc) which will be needed.

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The DSL will advise the member of staff on any further discussion which may be needed with the child/young person and must notify LADO within 1 day.

According to the assessed urgency of the case, LADO, or First Response Team) must be informed and any additional action taken. Out of hours, if the First Response team are unavailable the social services duty manager will be contacted.

Throughout the above, all staff will be mindful of the guidelines of good practice covered in their introductory and subsequent safeguard training (notes of which are reproduced in the appendix)

The importance of appropriate and detailed recording, by staff raising the safeguarding issue and the DSL, cannot be over stressed. All recording should be contemporaneous, signed, timed, and dated before the end of the working day.

3.4 Staff Training

All Trustees, staff and volunteers complete on-line training support in Safeguarding from a recognised safeguarding specialist currently Educare.

The Administrator with Educare (currently the General Manager) will sign up each new member of staff, Trustee, and volunteer at commencement of their services at Wheels to undertake and complete the full set of training modules within 1 year of enrolment.

All staff will undertake additional practical safeguard training in

- De escalation
- Restraint and use of reasonable force
- Any other training which may be identified and appropriate to maintain our high standards of service delivery

Key staff will undertake First Aid at Work training through an approved agency such as British Redcross, St John Ambulance, Tutorcare at the direction of the General Manager within 12 months of their starting date and at least every 2 years thereafter.

All Safeguarding Training and refresher training should occur annually together with any recommended face to face training offered by Bristol City Council Safeguarding team on a regular basis and at least once a year.

Staff refusing or failing to undertake training as directed will be subject to internal disciplinary action and suspension from the company without pay until the training is undertaken.

3.5 Responding to Complaints of Child Abuse against Staff

As stated above, staff should be mindful of not putting themselves in positions that might be mistaken as abusive or where they may be at risk of accusation.

Should a complaint be received against a member of staff it will be the responsibility of the DSL in association with the General Manager/Trustee to assess the complaint and take appropriate action.

3.6 Managing allegations against adults working with children (for professionals)

Every local authority has a statutory responsibility to have a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who is responsible for co-ordinating the response to concerns that an adult

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who works with children may have caused them or could cause them harm. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) works within Children's Services and gives advice and guidance to employers, organisations and other individuals who have concerns about the behaviour of an adult who works with children and young people. Included in this group are volunteers, agency staff and foster carers as well as people who are in a position of authority and have regular contact with children, such as religious leaders, political figures, or school governors.

3.6.1 What is the LADO's role?

To coordinate the safeguarding and investigative process in response to allegations made against people working with children.

To provide advice/guidance to employers or voluntary organisations.

To liaise with police and other agencies including Ofsted and professional bodies such as the General Medical Council and the General Teaching Council.

To monitor the progress of referrals to ensure they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process.

To resolve any inter-agency issues.

To collect strategic data and maintain a confidential database in relation to allegations.

To disseminate learning from LADO enquiries throughout the children's work force. To ensure that measures are in place to prevent further harm or abuse and that where required, referrals are made to the appropriate social care team.

3.6.2 What should be referred to the LADO?

The LADO should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

Allegations of historical abuse should be responded in the same way as contemporary concerns. In such cases, it is important to find out whether the person against whom the allegation is made is still working with children and if so, to inform the person's current employer or voluntary organisation or refer their family for assessment.

Any concern that meets the criteria above should be referred within one working day of the concern coming to our attention.

Initially, it may be unclear how serious the allegation is. If there is any doubt, the DSL should contact the LADO for advice.

3.6.3 What will the LADO do?

Following notification, and within one working day, the first step will be to offer an initial evaluation discussion of the concern. This will consist of advice and guidance regarding the

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most appropriate way of managing the allegation and whether the referral meets the criteria for LADO involvement.

If the referral meets the criteria for LADO involvement, the LADO will:

Arrange a Managing Allegations strategy meeting if one is required, liaising with the police and other agencies as necessary. If the case is complex, there may be a series of meetings.

Ensure that child protection procedures are initiated where the child is considered to be at risk of significant harm.

Provide advice about sharing information the individual against whom the allegation has been made, with children and their families and others.

Advice on whether the person should be suspended while investigations are undertaken.

Ensure employers are aware of their duty to notify the appropriate regulatory bodies and/or to refer the individual to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

3.6.4 How to contact the LADO

If you need to contact LADO, please consider all the guidance for organisations first. If you believe the concern meets the remit of the LADO service contact Bristol City Council. The LADO is best placed to give advice once they have access to the full range of information about your concern. Only in an emergency should you contact the LADO prior to completing a notification form as the advice they can give may be limited.

3.7 Record Keeping

It is the responsibility of the DSL to ensure that accurate records are kept of all matters referred to them. These records should be kept securely in a locked area with limited access.

3.8 Confidentiality

Child abuse is a highly sensitive area of working. All information, especially the nature of abuse and the identity of victims and alleged perpetrators must be treated as confidential. Such information should normally be restricted to the person(s) dealing with the child/young person and the DSL. Case histories might be used in training but all references to the individuals involved should be removed. Staff are encouraged not to informally discuss cases among themselves. Should support be needed this should be discussed with the DSL.

3.9 Supporting Young People

Given the nature of the relationship that The Wheels Project usually has with those children and young people attending its courses, it is unlikely that the company will be able to offer long term support to those children and young people who raise child protection concerns. However, it is important that young people feel supported while they are with the project; and staff dealing with such issues are expected to ensure they monitor and support young people as far as possible.

Young people may be referred to an appropriate agency with their permission or else they may be given information of organisations to whom they may turn for support (eg: ChildLine 0800 1111).

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[Do we have notices up around the Wheels offices and premises about who the safeguarding lead is and their contact number should anyone feel unsafe or want to speak to someone? If so, should we state this here?]

Any issues and/or concerns should be discussed with the DSL.

3.10 We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice at least annually.

This policy was last reviewed on 20th May 2021 and will be reviewed by Trustees at least annually

David Glossop
General Manager

APPENDIX A

Useful Contacts

LADO Bristol
0117 922 2000

First Response Team
0117 903 6444

ChildLine
0800 1111 The original child abuse helpline.
Open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year

Other ways to contact ChildLine are available through the following link such as 1-1 chat and Ask Sam: www.childline.org.uk/talk/pages/email.aspx

Other related policies available

- 1 Anti bullying**
- 2 Attendance**
- 3 Behaviour**
- 4 Confidentiality**
- 5 Data Protection**
- 6 Environmental**
- 7 Equality & Diversity**
- 8 Health & Safety**
- 9 Participation**
- 10 Risk Assessments**
- 11 Recruitment**
- 12 Smoke Free**
- 13 Substance Misuse**
- 14 Complaints**
- 15 Grievance**
- 16 [KCSIE 2021](#) guidance**