

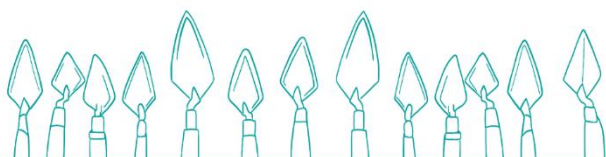
Council for  
British Archaeology

# Digital Safeguarding Policy

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Council for British Archaeology

De Grey House  
St Leonard's Place  
York, YO1 7HD

 [archaeologyuk.org](http://archaeologyuk.org)

 [info@archaeologyuk.org](mailto:info@archaeologyuk.org)

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(287815) and Scotland (SC041971)

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## Contents

Definitions.....	2
1. Policy Statement.....	4
2. Purpose and Scope .....	5
3. Roles and Responsibilities .....	7
4. Whistleblowing and Escalation.....	8
5. Procedures.....	8
6. References .....	15
7. Appendices .....	17
7.1. Appendix A: A summary of digital safeguarding for Young Archaeology Clubs (YAC).....	17
7.2. Appendix B: Code of behaviour for the digital environment .....	19
7.3. Appendix C: Signs and indicators of abuse .....	21
7.4. Appendix D: Flow chart for recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns or allegations for volunteers and staff.....	27
7.5. Appendix E: CBA Safeguarding incident report form .....	28

## Definitions

**Adult Safeguarding:** safeguarding adults at risk means protecting their right to live in safety and free from abuse and neglect.

**An adult at risk** is defined as a person aged 18 or over who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and
- is experiencing, or is 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. (Care Act, 2014)

An adult at risk of abuse may:

- have an illness affecting their mental or physical health,
- have a learning disability,
- suffer from drug or alcohol problems,
- be frail due to age.

**Child:** Anyone up to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Child Protection:** a situation where a child is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so, and action is required to protect that child.

**Cyberbullying/Online Bullying:** is any type of bullying that happens online. Unlike bullying that takes place offline, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, and it can sometimes feel that there is no escape or safe space (NSPCC, 2020). Often for young people there is little distinction between online and offline, and the bullying will be in both areas.

**Digital safeguarding:** 'The protection from harm in the online environment through the implementation of effective technical solutions, advice and support and procedures for managing incidents' (Girlguiding, 2024).

**Grooming:** is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited or trafficked. Anybody can be a groomer, no matter their age, gender or race. Grooming can take place over a short or long period of time – from weeks to years. Groomers may also build a relationship with the young person's family or friends to make them seem trustworthy or authoritative (NSPCC, 2020).

**Radicalisation:** usually happens when two conditions are present. Firstly, there has to be a person or group that holds a specific point of view and wants to recruit people to support them or take action on their behalf. Secondly, the individuals being targeted will more often than not share common characteristics or circumstances. The individual may have some existing form of vulnerability, such as a mental illness or unmet psychological need for belonging or status, which can be exploited and used by those trying to radicalise them (British Council, 2020).

**Safeguarding children:** 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 (Working Together, 2023).

**Sexting:** The sharing of illegal or inappropriate material online sometimes known as sexting is when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others, or sends sexual messages (NSPCC, 2020).

# Digital Safeguarding Policy for the Council of British Archaeology

## 1. Policy Statement

The CBA acknowledges their duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults and is committed to ensuring that their policies and procedures reflect their statutory responsibilities, government guidance and are compliant with best practice and Charity Commission requirements. An up-to-date overview of the legislation which relates to online safeguarding can be found [here](#).

The policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances.

It aims to ensure that everyone, regardless of age, ability or disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, and socio-economic background:

- can have a positive and enjoyable experience at the CBA in a safe and inclusive online environment.
- is protected from any kind of abuse while participating in any online activities provided by the CBA online.

A summary of digital safeguarding for Young Archaeology clubs (YAC) version of the procedures for children and their parents and guardians can be found in appendix A.

A summary of the procedures can be found in **Appendix A**.



**Signed:**

**Employer:** Council for British Archaeology (CBA)

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> November 2025

**Review date:** November 2025

## 2. Purpose and Scope

This policy and procedures set out how the CBA will seek to protect and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk when they are engaged with the CBA in any online activity. This could be through digital platforms, email or third-party social media. Only digital platforms which have been approved and are referred to in the policy, procedures and digital toolkit should be used to communicate or run groups with children or adults at risk. It is recognised that new platforms, apps and websites will be developed after the documents being released. Any new online platform should be discussed with the DSL, and a risk assessment should be completed. The policy covers the use of an individual's own devices or activities run through devices owned by the CBA. For children and young people, it is recognised that the primary form that this online activity will take, will be through the Young Archaeology Clubs (YAC).

This policy links to several CBA policies and guidance. The three safeguarding policies can all be accessed through the [CBA website](#). These are:

- Safeguarding Policy Children and Adults at Risk
- Digital Safeguarding Policy.
- Third Party Safeguarding Policy

For YAC Clubs the following can be accessed through the YAC website. These are:

- Safeguarding Policy Children and Adults at Risk
- Digital Safeguarding Policy.
- Third Party Safeguarding Policy
- YAC Code of Behaviour
- Privacy Policy and Planning Safe Activities Guidance for the YAC

Further CBA policies are available on request. These are:

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- CBA Code of Conduct,
- Complaints Procedure
- Safer Recruitment Policy

These policy and procedures are designed to reduce the risk of harm both to those engaging with the CBA and those working or volunteering for it. Everyone who comes into contact with children/young people/adults at risk has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

This policy and the procedures and updated code of behaviour (appendix B) apply to all staff employed by the CBA, the board of trustees, volunteers, students or anyone else operating on behalf of the Council for British Archaeology. This includes YAC volunteers aged 16 and 17.

While 16 and 17 year-old volunteers are in a position of responsibility to younger YAC members; the CBA still has a responsibility of safeguarding towards them. YAC groups affiliated to the CBA are required to have in place a safeguarding policy which covers digital safeguarding. If they do not have their own policy, they are able to adopt these policy and procedures.

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved with the CBA in any way. For employees, they form part of the terms and conditions of employment and for volunteers they are part of a volunteer agreement. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed immediately and may ultimately result in dismissal or exclusion from the CBA.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

The **trustees** of the CBA have the legal responsibility for safeguarding at the CBA. The trustees have nominated a trustee as **Safeguarding Champion**. Trustees will ensure that safeguarding policies, procedures, and a Code of Conduct and Behaviour are in place and up to date.

Trustees will also appoint two people who will undertake the roles of designated safeguarding and deputy safeguarding lead for the organisation.

**Designated safeguarding leaders** are responsible for ensuring that:

- They respond to all concerns about child or adult protection and allegations or concerns about staff or volunteers. They have responsibility to manage these issues, to seek advice and to liaise with statutory authorities. They are also required to report back to Trustee Chair and the Safeguarding Champion.
- Safer recruitment practices are in place through the CBA and that training is provided and attended.
- They are compliant with reporting serious incidents to the Charity Regulator.
- The safeguarding policies and documentation are reviewed in line with the monitoring process detailed above. They are responsible for disseminating the policy, procedures, and code of behaviour to all staff and volunteers.
- When working with other organisations or sub-contracting work that due diligence is undertaken and that they have the relevant safeguarding policies and procedures in place.
- Promoting a culture and environment whereby staff, volunteers and freelancers are empowered to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role.

The **CBA** will provide all staff and volunteers with up-to-date relevant safeguarding policies and procedures including a Code of Behaviour specific to safeguarding. CBA will have a designated safeguarding lead(s) who responds to any safeguarding concern. CBA will support staff and volunteers to communicate with their members and deliver events which are accessible and safe. All volunteers will be safely recruited and will receive an induction to the role which includes information about safeguarding, policies, procedures and the Code of Behaviour. Two leaders from each Young Archaeology Club (YAC) must complete the NSPCC online safeguarding training. All YAC leaders will undergo the YAC safeguarding induction.



## 4. Whistleblowing and Escalation

Escalation is the process whereby if an individual raising a concern either has a concern about the person they should be reporting it to, or if they feel that the right action has not been taken that they then speak to that person's line manager. An example of this may be a volunteer speaking straight to the DSL if they have concerns about the group leader.

Whistleblowing describes the process which is used when a person has a concern about safeguarding at the CBA but does not feel able to raise this through following this policy and procedures and speaking to the relevant person. Whistleblowing should only be if the individual who wishes to raise concerns feels that the CBA will not take the concerns seriously and action will not be taken or has a fear about the way they will be treated if they raise a concern. For staff the policy on whistleblowing can be found here. If a volunteer has a concern which follows this criteria and they do not feel able to speak with a leader, DSL, or staff member at the CBA they should contact the [NSPCC](#) on their dedicated helpline 0800 028 0285.

## 5. Procedures

### 5.1. Introduction

These procedures reflect and are linked to the Safeguarding Policy: Children and Adults at risk. The procedures are divided into three sections for ease of reference:

**Section 1** Introduction to safeguarding in the online environment, the risks posed, types of abuse which occur online and signs and indicators of those who are perpetrators or victims of online abuse. **Section 2** Practical guidance about safeguards which should be in place in relation to digital safeguarding. This section includes information on online communication, consent, risk assessments and information on digital safeguarding for children, adults at risk and parents/ guardians.

**Section 3** Guidance on recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns or allegations for volunteers and staff.

### 5.2. Section 1

#### 5.2.1. Risks relating to the digital environment and safeguarding

Online safeguarding is described as: 'The protection from harm in the online environment through the implementation of effective technical solutions, advice and support and procedures for managing incidents.' (Girl guiding, 2024).

The CBA recognises that by using digital platforms, email and social media they can provide children and vulnerable adults with different ways to positively interact and engage with the organisation. The principles for digital safeguarding and safeguarding people in the physical environment are often very similar. For example, you should always have two adults to run a

group with children, whether this is online or in the physical environment. However, there are some key differences, in relation to the type of risks which may be encountered. These have been categorised into four areas Keeping Children Safe in Education, (2024)

- Content risks: The child or young person accesses information which could cause them harm e.g. viewing violent or indecent images of adults or children.
- Contact risks: The child or young person is harmed by the behaviour of other people online e.g. bullying, grooming behaviours, radicalisation.
- Conduct risks: The child or young person harms others due to their behaviour e.g. harassment, sexting.
- Commercial risks: The child or young person is exposed to inappropriate commercial advertising, marketing schemes or hidden costs e.g. online gambling sites.

### **5.2.2. Types of online abuse**

Children and young people may experience several types of abuse online:

- Bullying/cyberbullying (examples include trolling, threatening behaviour, blackmail, tagging accounts, creation of fake profiles)
- Emotional abuse (this includes emotional blackmail, for example pressuring children and young people to comply with sexual requests via technology)
- Sexting (pressure or coercion to create sexual images)
- Sexual abuse
- Sexual exploitation.

(NSPCC, October 2020)

The above categories also apply to adults at risk. One area of additional concern for adults is online financial abuse and scams.

### **5.2.3. Signs and indicators of online abuse.**

The principles of safeguarding are the same in the physical environment as in the online environment. There are also many similarities with the signs and indicators of abuse in the physical environment and the online environment. Abuse may take place online or technology may be used to make contact with a victim and to facilitate abuse in the physical environment. It is important that anyone working or volunteering with children, young people or adults knows what to look out for in those who are experiencing online abuse and also in those who may be presenting a risk or being abusive online.

Listed below are some general signs and indicators which you may see in those who are either experiencing or perpetrating online abuse.

- Spending a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media.
- Seeming distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting.
- Being secretive about who they are talking to and what they are doing online or on their mobile phone.
- Having lots of new phone numbers, texts or email addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet. (NSPCC, October 2020)
- Having a phone or device which is new and unexplained.
- Change(s) in behaviour.

As well as these specific signs and indicators of online abuse it is also important to recognise that someone may spot concerning or abusive behaviour whilst running a group online or communicating with a child, adult at risk or parent/ guardian through the online environment. Appendix C contains more detailed information about the signs and indicators of abuse. The same principles apply to that of seeing a concern in the physical environment and these procedures are detailed in section 3.

### 5.3. Section 2

#### 5.3.1. Practical guide to digital safeguarding at the CBA

In the following section there is practical general information on digital safeguarding. This includes risk assessments, online communication, running online groups, consent and the use of images and film. Detailed information tailored to groups using the online platforms recommended (Zoom and Big Blue button) and social media pages currently used (Facebook and Twitter) are included in the template risk assessments.

#### 5.3.2. Risk benefit assessments

Before you undertake any sessions for children or adults who are at risk, a written risk assessment should be completed. This is the same for on and offline groups. Template risk assessments are available [here](#) for running groups online and setting up a social media page for your group. They will help you ensure that you are prepared for the session. If you would like to use a platform which does not have a risk assessment, please contact the DSL to discuss this.

#### 5.3.3. Online communication

##### *Email and telephone calls and messaging*

A key principle of good safeguarding is not to be on your own with a child. This includes communication before a group as well as the group itself. Communication with children (for

example about the date and time of an online meeting) should always be via the parent or guardian who can then share the information with the child. In the case of YAC young volunteers (16–18), consent should be sought from the parent or guardian for the YAC leader to communicate with them directly, always copying in the parent/ guardian. If a child or young person communicates with a volunteer or member of staff directly without copying in another adult, then make sure you have permission to contact them and reply copying in their parent or guardian and explaining why you are doing so.

If any safeguarding or wellbeing concerns are realised through these communications, please follow the procedures in section 3.

#### **5.3.4. Running online groups**

The safeguarding principles for running a group are the same as for a group in the physical environment.

- Make sure you are familiar with the online platform- make use of the CBA's digital toolkit that provides guidance on online meetings platform: [Online Meetings Toolkit](#)
- Set the group up using the settings to ensure that it is safe – see risk assessment.
- Communicate with the participants and their parents/ carers about the group and how the groups will be run. Share with them the participants and their parents and carers. This should include how to access the meeting, what level of supervision the participant will need and how to contact you if they are any questions or queries. Do share the “summary of digital safeguarding for Young Archaeology clubs (YAC)” which should help ensure that everyone understands how the group will run and what is required of them and their parents/ guardians.
- Don't start the group until there are two adults present and always ensure that you are not on your own with a child.
- Ensure that you are following the Code of behaviour and that you have shared this with the participants.

#### **5.3.4. Social media e.g. Facebook and Twitter**

No CBA employee or volunteer should use their personal social media accounts to communicate with children they are involved with at the CBA, this includes YAC groups. You should not upload, post, like or share inappropriate offensive, discriminatory or illegal content on any online space. If you want to set up social media pages for your group as with the setting up of any new activity on or offline, please complete a risk benefit assessment. We have provided risk assessment templates for hosting YAC Facebook and Twitter accounts. This can be found [here](#).

If any safeguarding or wellbeing concerns are realised through these communications, please follow the procedures in section 3.

#### **5.3.5. Consent**

Personal or identifying details of children and adults (e.g. full name, address) who attend the CBA groups should not be shared online. Written consent should be sought from parents or guardians and directly from those aged over 16 years as to what data you collect and how you will process this. A template consent form can be found [here](#).

#### **5.3.6. Images and filming**

Filming, recording of the session or the chat and the taking of “screengrabs” should be discussed at the beginning of any session. The platform should be set up in such a way that limits the ability of people to be able to record the session.

Online meetings should not be recorded unless express written permission is given by those attending the group. If they are under 16, this consent should be sought from their parents/guardians. Information should be given to those attending and their parents and guardians about what will be done with the recording including how and with whom it should be shared. Verbal consent should be taken from those attending the group. People attending may wish to have their camera and or microphone switched off if the session is being recorded.

### **5.4. Section 3**

#### **5.4.1. Recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns or allegations for volunteers and staff.**

Key principles for recognising and responding.

- Recognise that abuse does happen and be aware of the signs to look out for. Abuse can occur online, in the physical environment or in a combination of both settings.
- If you have a wellbeing or safeguarding concern about a child or adult who is part of any CBA activity you must never keep this to yourself. It may seem minor, and you may not be sure that it needs reporting, but it is better to react early on to any concerns.
- Designated safeguarding leaders are the people to whom all concerns about child or adult protection, allegations or concerns about staff or volunteers should be reported to. They have responsibility to manage these issues, to seek advice and to liaise with statutory authorities.

There are two designated safeguarding officers for the CBA. These are:

- Joanne Kirton: [joannekirton@archaeologyuk.org](mailto:joannekirton@archaeologyuk.org) 07738591744, 01904 521233 and Neil Redfern: [neilredfern@archaeologyuk.org](mailto:neilredfern@archaeologyuk.org) 07437180732, 01904 521233
- Group leaders are also people to whom you can talk with about any safeguarding or wellbeing concern. Please do not share your concerns with friends or family.
- You can talk to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without this being a legal breach of someone's confidentiality.
- Any concerns about safeguarding or wellbeing should be discussed with a DSL within 24 hours.

A visual simple representation of the process below can be found in **Appendix D**.

If you are concerned that someone is in immediate danger of harm.

- Please call the police.
- If a child or adult needs emergency medical attention, call an ambulance. You, or the coleader or helper should contact the child's parents or adult's next of kin.

### **Concerns about the safeguarding and wellbeing of children or adults.**

Ways this may present;

- A child or adult taking part in a CBA activity may tell you about something directly.
- A parent or a guardian of someone taking part in a CBA activity may tell you about something directly.
- You may witness behaviour relating to wellbeing or safeguarding which concerns you.
- A member of staff or volunteer may tell you about something directly relating to safeguarding or wellbeing which concerns them.

How to respond:

- Listen.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing by talking with you.
- Do not try to investigate by asking questions. Your role is to be the alerter not the investigator.
- Explain that you will need to share, with whom and why.
- Make a record using the incident reporting form [here](#).
- Talk with a DSL who will consider if a referral needs to be made to the local social care team and or the police.

## **Concerns about the behaviour of a member of staff or a volunteer.**

Ways this may present;

- You may witness someone behaving in an unsuitable way with children or adults, harming a child or committing a criminal offence.
- A child, parent or adult attending a CBA activity may tell you about the behaviour of an adult which concerns you.
- A member of staff or volunteer may tell you that they are being investigated by their employer, social care or the police for behaving in a way which may have harmed a child or adult.
- There may be information on their criminal records check.

How to respond:

- Listen.
- If someone shares information with you, reassure them that they have done the right thing.
- Do not try to investigate by asking questions. Your role is to be the alerter not the investigator.
- Explain that you will need to share, with whom and why.
- Make a record using the incident reporting [form](#).
- Talk with the DSL who will consider any immediate safeguarding actions and will liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer.

If you have any concerns which relate to the person that you should be reporting safeguarding concerns to, please speak with the person above them. For example, if you are a volunteer with the

YAC and have concerns about a branch leader speak to the DSL. If your concern relates to one of the DSL please speak to the other DSL. Please see p3 for detailed information on whistleblowing and escalation.

## **Concerns about the behaviour of a group member.**

Ways this may present;

- You may witness a member of the group behaving in an unsuitable way towards another member e.g. bullying or discriminatory behaviour.
- A member of the group may tell you about the behaviour of a member of the group.
- A parent/ guardian of a member of the group may talk to you about their concerns.

How to respond:

- Listen
- If someone shares information with you, reassure them that they have done the right thing.
- Do not try to investigate by asking questions. Your role is to be the alerter not the investigator.
- Explain that you will need to share, with whom and why.
- Make a record using the incident reporting form [here](#).
- Talk with the person and if they are a child their parent or guardian to try to find out what they want to happen but do not make promises you cannot keep.
- If you have safeguarding or wellbeing concerns talk with the DSL who will consider any immediate safeguarding actions and will liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer.

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## 7. Appendices

### 7.1. Appendix A: A summary of digital safeguarding for Young Archaeology Clubs (YAC)

This is available in a child friendly version [here](#).

#### **Aim**

We want to use the internet and digital tools to help you enjoy archaeology whilst keeping everyone in the groups safe.

#### **When you are taking part in a group...**

- Treat people with respect.
- Talk with your parent, a leader or an adult you trust if you have any worries or concerns about the YAC group or the CBA.
- Do not record the meeting, save the chat or take photos or screengrabs of the group.
- Talk with your parent(s)/ guardians about where you are going to be while the group is on.
- Make sure that you are wearing clothes which would be suitable to wear to a face-to-face group e.g. they cover your top and bottom half.
- Think about how you wish to communicate. If you would prefer not to have your camera or microphone on that's ok. Do let the leader know and talk with them to find a way you can communicate and participate in the group.

#### **The leaders and helpers...**

- Should treat you with respect.
- Should enable everyone to participate in the group.
- Should set a good example in the way that they behave and should not be rude.
- Should not have favourite people in the group.
- Should never speak to you or touch you in a way that is upsetting, or involves you keeping a secret.
- If they want to take a photograph of you, record the session or take a "screengrab" of an online group they should have permission from you and written permission from your parents.
- Should help you if there is anything you do not understand.
- Should not be on their own with you in online, or face to face groups. This includes break out rooms.
- Should not be friends with you on social media through their personal account.
- Should communicate with you through your parents if you are under 16.
- Should copy in your parents when they communicate with you if you are 16- 18.

- If they have concerns about you or your behaviour they should talk with you, they may need to talk with your parents. They should tell you if they are going to do this.
- If they have concerns about your safety of wellbeing they may need to talk with your parents and or a professional. They should tell you if they are going to do this.

If you have any questions about how you or others should or are behaving please talk with your parent or guardian, the leader of the group or you can contact the leader for safeguarding at the Council for British Archaeology or the NSPCC helpline 0808 800 5000.

**The people responsible for safeguarding are:**

Joanne Kirton: [joannekirton@archaeologyuk.org](mailto:joannekirton@archaeologyuk.org) 07738591744, 01904 521233 Neil Redfern: [neilredfern@archaeologyuk.org](mailto:neilredfern@archaeologyuk.org) 07437180732, 01904 521233

**Parent/ Guardian**

The CBA have a digital safeguarding policy which can be found [here](#). Any activities run online will have been risk assessed by the leader. If you want more information or have any questions, do talk to the leader or the designated safeguarding lead whose details are on the previous page.

- Please talk with your child about the online group, how it will work and how they can interact with the group during it e.g. If they are more comfortable having their video off.
- Please log into and out of the online platform using your own account.
- Where possible, allow them to access the online group in a communal space or in a room with the doors left open.
- Remember you are responsible for your child during the session.

## 7.2. Appendix B: Code of behaviour for the digital environment

Everyone working or volunteering with the CBA has a responsibility to ensure that children, young people and adults at risk are protected from abuse. This code of behaviour applies to behaviour in online environment, there is a separate code of behaviour for the physical environment which can be found [here](#). Any alleged breaches of the Code of Behaviour should be reported in the first instance to your line manager, to a YAC branch leader or to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

### **Rights**

- Treat everyone equally, with dignity and respect.
- Model good behaviour.
- Value everyone's contributions and involve participants in planning and reviewing activities.
- Respect people's right to personal privacy. This includes having their camera turned off and their microphone muted if they wish.
- Allow people to talk about any concerns they have.
- Do not make suggestive remarks or threats to anyone, even in fun.
- Do not permit abusive behaviour, such as bullying.
- Do not make inappropriate promises, particularly in relation to confidentiality e.g. you can tell me and I will keep it to myself.

### **Responsibilities**

- Make sure everyone you are working with is aware of this Code, digital safeguarding policy and child protection policy and procedures.
- Plan activities that involve more than one other person being present, do not start groups until two adults are present and only use breakout rooms if you have enough adults to ensure that each group has two adults.
- Encourage others to challenge attitudes and behaviour they do not like.
- Do not use images or recordings of young people when consent has not been given, or for purposes outside the limits of that consent.
- Report any allegations, suspicions or concerns about safeguarding.

## **Relationships**

- If you do come into contact with children you work with online in groups or through your personal social media accounts, maintain a professional distance, refuse friend requests or follows.
- Do not engage in any behaviour which is in anyway abusive.
- If a situation arises where a child communicates with you individually or you are in a group with no other adults, explain to the child about the rules and take action, e.g. reply back copying in the parent, stop the meeting until the other adult arrives.
- If a child specifically asks for or needs some individual time with you for example to discuss a safeguarding or wellbeing concern, ensure other staff or volunteers know where you and the child are and let the leader and DSL know about the incident.
- Do not give children or young people your personal contact details (telephone numbers, email addresses, social media details or postal address) for reasons other than directly linked to CBA activities, or those of other staff members or volunteers and do not use children's contact details for anything other than the purpose for which they were given. If a child tries to follow or befriend you through your personal account explain why you cannot allow this.

## 7.3. Appendix C: Signs and indicators of abuse

### *Signs and Indicators of Abuse in Children*

This section describes the types of behaviour or physical signs which you may see if a child is experiencing abuse.

We do not expect you to remember all the different signs and indicators of abuse or to remember which category they fit into. The most important thing, is that if you have any concerns about someone's wellbeing or safety, is that you speak to the leader or DSL.

These are some general signs to be aware of which may indicate that a child is experiencing abuse:

- Unexplained changes in behaviour or personality, including becoming withdrawn, anxious or aggressive.
- Lacking social skills and has few friends, if any.
- Poor bond or relationship with a parent or carer.
- Knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age.
- Running away or going missing.
- Always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body, e.g. consistently wearing long sleeved tops despite hot weather or being visibly too warm.

Listed below are the definitions of abuse and the signs and indicators which you may see. Be aware that someone may experience more than one type of abuse. Emotional abuse is involved in all types of child abuse, as well as being a category on its own.

#### **Physical**

A form of abuse which 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 guardian fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

#### **Signs and indicators**

- Frequent injuries
- Unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones

- Unexplained bruises or cuts, burns or scalds or bite marks

### **Emotional**

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 a child 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 may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from 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.

### **Signs and indicators**

- Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong.
- Parents or guardians who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder'.
- Parents or guardians blaming their problems on their child.
- Parents or guardians who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons.

### **Sexual**

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 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

### **Signs and indicators**

- Children who display knowledge, language or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age.
- Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games.
- Children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections or underage pregnancy.

### **Child sexual exploitation (a form of sexual abuse)**

It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

### **Signs and indicators**

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions.
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation.
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends.
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant.
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional wellbeing.
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol.
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late.
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

### **Neglect**

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 as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or guardian failing to:

- a. provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- b. protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- c. ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers).



d. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### **Signs and indicators**

- Children who are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe.
- Children who are left hungry or dirty.
- Children who are left without adequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat.
- Children who are living in dangerous conditions, i.e. around drugs, alcohol or violence.
- Children who are often angry, aggressive or self-harm.
- Children who fail to receive basic health care.
- Parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured.

### **Extremism**

Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

### **Signs and indicators**

- Isolating themselves from family and friends.
- Talking as if from a scripted speech and unwilling or unable to discuss their view.
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others.
- Increased levels of anger and increased secretiveness, especially around internet use.

### **Child Criminal Exploitation**

Where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

### **Signs and indicators**

- Frequently absent from and doing badly in school.
- Going missing from home, staying out late and travelling for unexplained reasons.
- In a relationship or hanging out with someone older than them.
- Being angry, aggressive or violent, isolated or withdrawn.
- Having unexplained money and buying new things.
- Wearing clothes or accessories in gang colours or getting tattoos.
- Using new slang words.
- Spending more time on social media and being secretive about time online.
- Making more calls or sending more texts, possibly on a new phone or phones.
- Self-harming and feeling emotionally unwell.
- Taking drugs and abusing alcohol.
- Committing petty crimes like shop lifting or vandalism.
- Unexplained injuries and refusing to seek medical help.
- Carrying weapons or having a dangerous breed of dog.

### **Grooming**

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them.

### **Signs and indicators**

- Being very secretive about how they are spending their time, including when online.
- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Having money or new things like clothes and mobile phones that they cannot or will not explain.
- Underage drinking or drug taking.
- Spending more or less time online or on their devices.
- Being upset, withdrawn or distressed.
- Sexualised behaviour, language or an understanding of sex that is not appropriate for their age.
- Spending more time away from home or going missing for periods of time.

Department for Education, (2018)

HM Government, (2015)

NSPCC, (2020)

### *Signs and Indicators of Abuse in Adults*

This section describes the types of behaviour or physical signs which you may see if an adult is experiencing abuse.

We do not expect you to remember all the different signs and indicators of abuse or to remember which category they fit into. The most important thing is that if you have any concerns about someone's wellbeing or safety is that you speak to the leader or DSL.

This list is not exhaustive and if someone has one of these signs or indicators that is not proof, they are being abused. It is an indicator that something is not right and that action needs to be taken. Some of these indicators may also indicate that a crime has been committed.

These are some general signs to be aware of which may indicate that an adult is experiencing abuse:

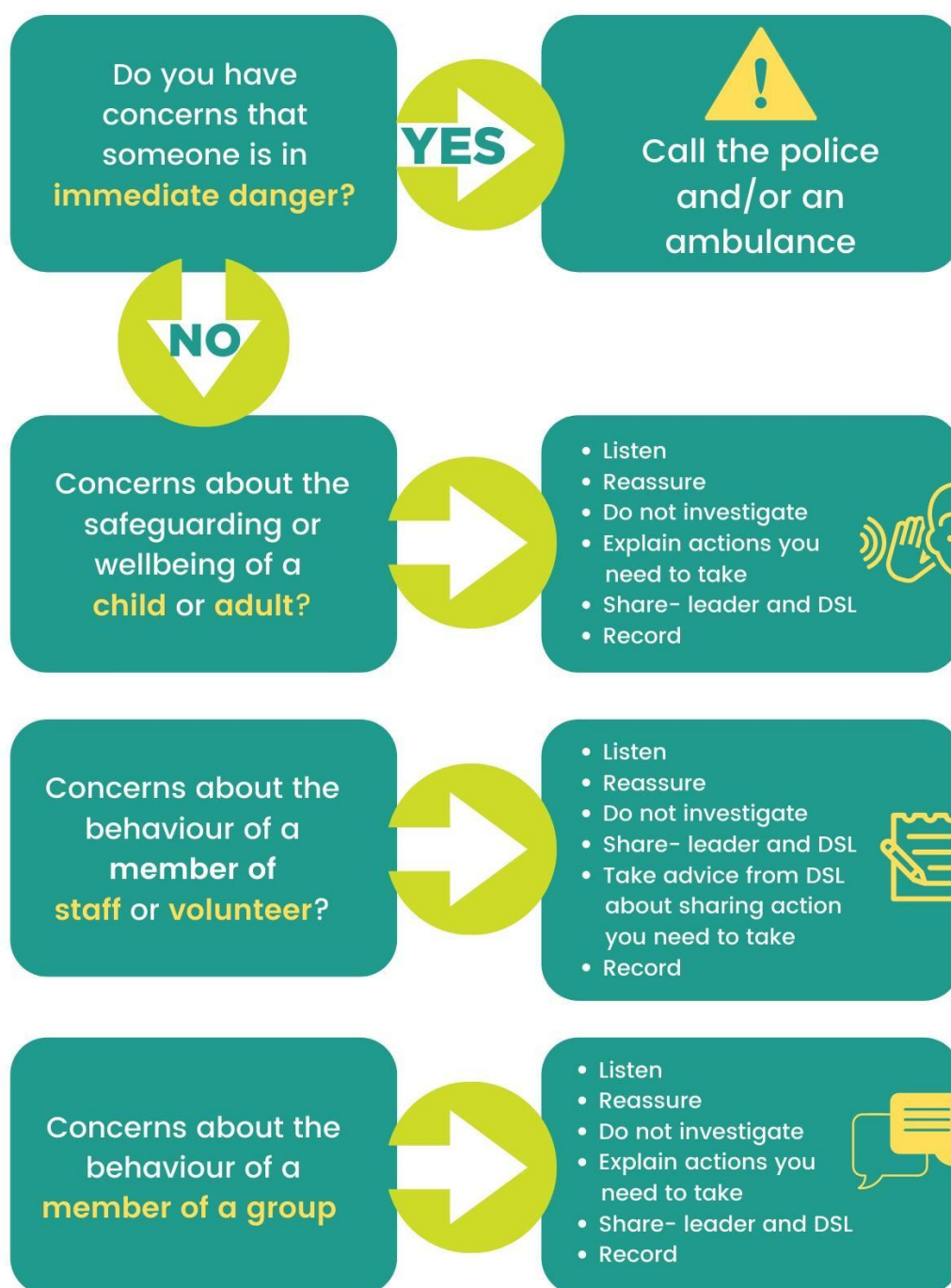
Behavioural signs of abuse in an adult may include:

- Becoming quiet and withdrawn
- Being aggressive or angry for no obvious reason
- Looking unkempt, dirty or thinner than usual
- Sudden changes in their character, such as appearing helpless, depressed or tearful
- Physical signs – such as bruises, wounds, fractures or other untreated injuries
- The same injuries happening more than once
- Not wanting to be left by themselves, or alone with particular people
- Being unusually lighthearted and insisting there's nothing wrong

Other signs include a sudden change in their finances, such as not having as much money as usual to pay for shopping or regular outings or getting into debt. Watch out for any official or financial documents that seem unusual and for documents relating to their finances that suddenly go missing (NHS, 2018)

For adults, the types of abuse are divided into ten categories (Care Act, 2014). To see a full list of the types of abuse and the signs and indicators you may see, please visit [this website](#) from the Social Care Institute for Excellence.

7.4. Appendix D: Flow chart for recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns or allegations for volunteers and staff.



## 7.5. Appendix E: CBA Safeguarding incident report form

This form should be used to record any incident other than first aid or behaviour. Be careful to record the events as they occurred and try not to include personal opinions.

<b>Where did the incident take place?</b>
<b>Date and time of incident. (Date and time)</b>
<b>Summarise the incident factually:</b>
<b>Who witnessed or is aware of the incident?</b>
<b>What steps were taken and by whom?</b>
<b>Was anyone spoken with (e.g. parent/carer, emergency services, venue operator)?</b> <b>Record who was spoken to, when, and by whom.</b>
<b>Are any further steps to be taken?</b>

<b>Details of the person completing this form</b>			
Name of the person completing this form:			
Contact details:			
Signature:		Date:	
<b>Please ask the CBA DSL to review this form and countersign here to confirm that they agree with your account of the incident.</b>			
Name:			
Contact details:			
Signature:		Date:	