

SKY Autism Support Malvern

Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

Policy reference: Version 2

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Safeguarding Statement:

SKY Autism Support recognizes the moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of all children and vulnerable adults involved in our services and schemes. The trustees and staff endeavor to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children and vulnerable adults are respected, valued and listened to. SKY Autism Support ensures that procedures are followed in order for children and vulnerable adults to receive effective support, protection and justice. SKY Autism Support will work with other agencies sharing information where appropriate and within reason.

Part one: Our Policy

- 1.1 Sky Autism Support Malvern policy is to ensure that all individuals can live / attend a safe non-threatening and abuse free environment
- 1.2 Rebecca Salvatierra will be the executive lead on safeguarding.
- 1.3 Safeguarding adults and children includes:
 - Protecting their rights to live in a safety, free from abuse and neglect
 - People and organisations working together to prevent the risk of abuse or neglect and to stop them from happening
 - Making sure people's wellbeing is promoted, taking their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs into account.
- 1.4 People who are aware of abuse have a personal and professional responsibility to report the abuse.
- 1.5 If it is a paid worker/ volunteer responsible for the abuse this would be reported immediately to the police.

2 Responsibilities

- 2.1 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All people working and volunteering for SKY Autism Support Malvern hold a responsibility to adhere to the six principles of safeguarding as laid out in the Care Act 2014.
- 2.2 All staff and trustees need to be aware of Worcester safeguarding procedure (<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/areyouworriedaboutachild>)
- 2.3 [Ruth Wharton -ruth@skyautismsupport.com](mailto:ruth@skyautismsupport.com) is responsible for being the Safeguarding lead in the charity

- 2.4 A trustee will be nominated as a non-executive lead
- 2.5 The responsible person and the trustee have the responsibility to ensure that each person, their relatives / carers and people supporting them are aware of this policy and procedure and irrespective of their role in the charity, receive the appropriate training. The responsible person would be responsible for investigating any reported incidents, preparing accurate reports and reporting the incident to the necessary individuals or authorities.
- 2.6 In the absence of the responsible person then the most senior person at the time of the incident is responsible for reporting this to the necessary authorities.
- 2.7 All staff/ volunteers are responsible for reporting any suspected incidents of abuse to the appropriate person.

All staff / volunteers also have the responsibility to:

- Maintain lines of communication with each person accessing the service
- Develop and maintain relationships based on trust
- Empower individuals making them aware that they can share their concerns or complaints and they will be listened to
- Empower people to know their rights and to understand how they can expect to be treated using their preferred method of communication.

2.8 Capacity and Consent

The mental capacity act 2005 states that “a person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision unless all practical steps to help him do so have been taken without success” A person at risk should be supported to make their own decisions based on awareness of the decision to be made and available choices. Where there is evidence that an individual lacks capacity to make a specific decision then the decision will be made in line with the best interest principles as defined by Mental Capacity Act 2005.

- 2.1 A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years. When making decisions for a child then all relevant parties are to be included which can but not necessarily include biological parents if it is felt that they are not acting in the best interest of the child.
- 2.2 Any decisions made on behalf of a child or vulnerable adult must be made in consultation with relevant people involved and documented and signed by all present.

3 Creating a safe environment

SKY Autism will endeavor to::

- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are competent to carry out their responsibility for safeguarding in promoting the welfare of children by creating an environment and an ethos where all staff including volunteers are able to raise concerns.
- To ensure that buildings and their surroundings make a child feel safe
- Prevent people who pose a risk to children and vulnerable adults by ensuring that all people in contact with children and vulnerable adults have an clear enhanced DBS
- Have procedures in place that ensure the identity of a person being considered to work with vulnerable adults and children is robustly and thoroughly checked out.

Part two – Our Procedure

4 Definitions

4.1 The Care Act 2014 guidance defines abuse as a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person (s). It may consist of a single act or repeated acts. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of the person subjected to it.

4.2 The No Secrets guidance defines abuse as a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or person's.

4.3 Abuse is about the misuse of power and control that one person has over another. In deciding if abuse has taken place it is important to remember that intent is not the issue. So abuse is not defined on whether or not the perpetrator intended to do harm, but rather on whether or not harm was caused and the impact of the harm (or risk of harm) on the individual.

4.4 Abuse may be in different forms and these are:

- Bullying / cyber bullying
- Drugs, alcohol and substance abuse
- Peer to Peer abuse can include cyber bullying, verbal and physical abuse, sexual abuse
- Sexual harassment / violence/ grooming
- Domestic abuse
- Honour based violence
- Psychological
- Financial
- Institutionalized
- Modern Slavery

5. CHILD ABUSE

5.1 In relation to children safeguarding and promoting their welfare, addressing child abuse relates to:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to ensure children have the best outcomes.

5.3 There are 4 types of child abuse as defined in "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2015) which are:

- **PHYSICAL ABUSE** – may include hitting, shaking, throwing, scalding, poisoning, drowning, suffocating or causing physical harm. This can also include a parent / carer fabricating or deliberately induces illness in a child.
- **EMOTIONAL ABUSE** – persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It can involve telling a child they are inadequate, worthless, unloved, making fun of them and their actions. Overprotecting, limiting their exploration and learning. Preventing the child participating in

normal social interaction. It can involve cyberbullying, or causing a child to feel permanently in danger or scared. Exploitation and corruption of a child.

- **SEXUAL ABUSE** – involves enticing or forcing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities not necessarily violence and the child may not be aware. These activities can include physical contact, children looking at sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to act in a sexually inappropriate way or grooming a child (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by males as women can also commit acts of sexual abuse as can other children.
- **NEGLECT** – is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical/ psychological needs, which can result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It can include failure to:

Provide adequate food, clothing or shelter

Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger

Ensure adequate supervision

Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

Respond to a child's basic emotional needs

5.4 Bullying and forms of bullying including prejudice based or Cyber Bullying is abusive and will include at least one and if not all of the above abuses.

6.0 SIGNS OF ABUSE

6.1 Physical Abuse

Most children will get accidental bruises, scratches and cuts and these are usually on the bony parts of the body. Some children will have bruising that appears inflicted. Important indicators of physical abuse are bruises or injuries that are unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given and can appear on parts of the body less likely to get accidental damage such as buttocks, cheeks, abdomen and back.

6.1.1 The physical signs of abuse may include:

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Multiple bruises in clusters often on upper arm or outside of thigh
- Cigarette burns
- Human bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds with upward splash marks
- Multiple burns

6.1.2 Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse

- Fear of parents being asked for an explanation
- Aggressive behaviours and outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to change/ remove items of clothing ie: in hot weather
- Depression
- Withdrawn behaviours
- Running away from home

6.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can be difficult to identify as children may appear well cared for outwardly but receive no love, affection or attention from carers.

6.2.1 Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse can include:

- Neurotic behaviour – sulking, hair twisting, rocking
- Being unable to play
- Fear of making mistakes
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self harm
- Fear of parent being approached about their behaviours
- Developmental delay

6.3 Sexual Abuse

It is recognized that there is an under reporting of sexual abuse within families. If a child reports abuse they are asking for it to stop and should be listened to and taken seriously.

6.3.1 The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in genital area
- Bruising or bleeding in/ around genital area
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy
- Difficulty passing urine

6.3.2 Changes in behaviour can also include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour ie: becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares
- Running away from home
- Sexual knowledge beyond their age
- Sexual drawings or language
- Bed wetting
- Over eating or anorexia
- Self harm or mutilation, leading at times to suicide attempts
- Saying they have secrets that they cannot tell
- Sudden increase in money
- Not allowed to have friends
- Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

6.4 Neglect

It can be difficult to recognise neglect however its effects can be long term and damaging to children.

6.4.1 The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Being constantly dirty or smelly
- Constant hunger, stealing food or looking in bins
- Losing weight or underweight
- Inappropriate or dirty clothing

6.4.2 Neglect may be indicated by changes in behaviour which may include:

- Talking about being left alone
- Not having many or any friends
- Complaining of being tired all the time
- Not requesting medical assistance or failure to attend appointments

7.5 Specific Safeguarding Issues

There are specific issues in safeguarding that have become critical issues. These are listed below:

- Cyber bullying
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults
- Domestic violence
- Children/ vulnerable adults with family members in prison
- Children / vulnerable adults as witnesses in the court system
- Drugs
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced Marriage
- Gangs and Youth Violence
- Gender based violence/ violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Hate
- Mental Health
- Private Fostering
- Homelessness
- Preventing Radicalisation
- Online abuse/ extexting
- Trafficking
- Missing children and vulnerable adults
- Poor parenting especially in relation to babies and young children

8.0 Responding to incidents of abuse or suspected abuse

8.1 Safeguarding is everyone's business. Therefore it is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer to be vigilant for the indicators of abuse. Staff have a duty to report without delay, even if it is only a suspicion.

8.2 A staff member / volunteer who becomes aware of or directly observes abuse must deal with the situation immediately and report to the most senior staff member, social services, designated safeguarding lead, police.

8.3 The designated safeguarding lead has responsibility to inform WSCB/local authority. Liase with the Trustee Board and local authority. Work with the families / carers if appropriate. They will act as a source of support, advice and guidance.

8.4 The priority must always be to ensure the wellbeing of the child / vulnerable adult at risk is maintained. The first action is to stop the abuse and then to reassure/ comfort the individual as necessary.

8.5 The staff member must assess the situation and make sure relevant care, support and attention is provided as soon as possible.

8.6 In an emergency staff should seek immediate help eg: First Aid, medical treatment, police involvement.

8.7 Where the alleged perpetrator is still present and posing a threat staff members should try to diffuse the situation but not put themselves at risk

8.8 Staff must ensure they do not destroy evidence.

9.0 REPORTING

All safeguarding incidents must be reported to the safeguarding lead and the designated safeguarding Trustee.

9.1 SKY Autism adheres to child protection and safeguarding procedures that have been agreed locally by Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Board (WSCB). Where we identify children and families in need of support, we will carry out our responsibilities in accordance with the West Mercia Consortium inter agency procedures and the WSCB Levels of Need Guidance.

9.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be used as first point of contact for concerns and queries regarding any safeguarding concern within our service. Any member of staff who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm must immediately report to the DSL. In the absence of the DSL, then the trustees must be notified.

9.3 All concerns about a child or vulnerable adult should be reported without delay and recorded in the SKY AUSTISM specific recording and reporting paperwork.

9.4 The DSL in consultation with parents/ carers and other agencies will decide on next action to take.

9.5 All referrals will be made inline with local procedures as detailed on the Worcestershire website

9.6 Staff should always follow the reporting procedures as outlined in this policy in the first instance.

9.7 Any member of staff who does not feel that their concerns about a child or vulnerable adult have been responded to appropriately and in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy should raise their concerns with the Board of Trustees. If they still feel that the situation has been addressed appropriately then they should report their concerns to Social Services.

10. Other Relevant Policies

The company's statutory responsibility for safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults goes beyond compliance with child protection and safeguarding procedures. The safeguarding duty is relevant for the discharge of all functions and activities. This policy needs to be considered in conjunction with the following policies:

- Behaviour Management
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Anti – bullying (including Cyber bullying)
- Trips and Visits
- First Aid and the administration of medication
- Health and Safety
- Healthy Relationships

Useful Numbers and Websites

- **If there is immediate danger call 999**
- **Family Front Door 01905 822666**
- **Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team 01905 768020**
- **The Local Authority safeguarding partnership is: Worcestershire Safeguarding Partnership (<http://worcestershire.gov.uk/areyouworriedaboutachild>)**

