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## Safeguarding Children Policy

### Summary:

This safeguarding policy demonstrates the commitment by YES Guardians to deliver a duty of care to students, host families, parents and Yes Guardians staff. Here we summarise current working practices, this Child Safeguarding policy includes Missing Children's Policy. All of our documents compile with guidelines given by AEGIS accreditation.

This policy should be used read in conjunction with the following documents which can all be found on the Gov.Uk website under the Safeguarding heading.

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- What to do if you are worried if a child is being abused 2015 .

The YES Guardians Missing Student, E-Safety, Prevent and Whistleblowing Policies can all be found at [www.yesguardians.co.uk](http://www.yesguardians.co.uk) under the policy tab and it is important that these policies are read carefully and in conjunction with this Safeguarding Policy.

**Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Our designated safeguarding lead (DSL) Hayley Harris has attended multi-agency safeguarding training to level 3. The main responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead in her absence) are to-

- Advise and act upon all suspicion, belief and evidence of abuse reported to them and to refer cases of suspected abuse to the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Child Protection Team.
- Support staff or host family members who make referrals for Safeguarding.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff and host families.
- Liaise with relevant people on safeguarding matters when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.
- To co-ordinate Safeguarding procedures within YES Guardians.
- To maintain an ongoing training programme for all YES Guardians staff and approved host families.
- To ensure confidentiality and storage of records in relation to child protection.
- To liaise as necessary with the Designated Safeguarding Leads for child protection appointed by the Schools or colleges attended by students and relevant local agencies.
- To keep parents / guardians informed of action to be taken under these procedures in relation to their child in consultation with the school or college and relevant local agencies.
- Where appropriate, to take part in child protection case conferences or reviews.
- Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required.
- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.

- Liaise with the head teacher or principal to inform them of issues especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.

**Deputy Safeguarding lead:** Marc Harris is also trained to safeguarding children level 2.

All Host families will receive basic level safeguarding children training as a minimum which will be renewed every 3 years. All host families will be provided with a hard copy of this policy which will be signed to show it has been read and understood, this will be an annual requirement.

## Introduction:

At Yes Guardians we are committed to safety. We work together to promote safeguarding and welfare of children and young people in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. From this we have developed a robust safeguarding framework to ensure all children and young people under our guardianship are safe and protected.

It is important that all practitioners working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people understand fully their responsibilities. This policy complies with the recommendations and requirements of the Department for Children, Schools and Families 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' March 2018 and aims to improve the lives of children, young people and their families. The guidance explains the roles, responsibilities and duties of the different people and organisations that work with, and whose work affects children and young people based on their statutory responsibilities.

This policy applies to all employees of Yes guardians and host families who provide homestay accommodation.

## Purpose of this document

1. To ensure a safe secure environment for a student's development and learning.
2. Ensure that all YES Guardians staff will be able to recognise any child where there may be a safeguarding concern, confirmed or suspected and respond appropriately.
3. To bring an awareness to a young person's physical, emotional and social wellbeing.
4. Define the local arrangements, roles and responsibilities and how YES Guardians works with other agencies to safeguard children, ensuring effective procedures are in place.
5. Ensure compliance with the recommendations and requirements of the Department for Children, Schools and Families 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' March 2013 and aims to improve the lives of children, young people and their families.

## Mission Statement

### Care & Safety

Every child, regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, has a right to equal protection from harm. The legal definition of a child is anyone under the age of 18. We expect these principles to be applied to young people who are ages 18 and over for who we are the responsible Guardian.

## What is Safeguarding & Child Protection?

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding means:

- Protecting children from abuse and maltreatment.
- Preventing harm to children's health or development.
- Ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care.

- Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child. (NSPCC 2020)

## Safeguarding Philosophy

All children deserve the opportunity to achieve their full potential according to the five outcomes in **Every Child Matters**:

- Stay safe
- Be healthy
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic wellbeing

These outcomes define the satisfactory level of health, education and development expected for any child. Protecting children from maltreatment is important in preventing impairment of health and development but, in itself, may be insufficient to ensure that children grow up in circumstances with the provision of safe and effective care and education.

It is essential that all YES Guardians staff who have contact with children, parents and other adults in contact with children can recognise, and know how to act upon, evidence that a child's health or development is or may be impaired, especially when they are suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm.

## Types of Abuse

### Emotional Abuse

Is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It's sometimes called psychological abuse. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child.

Emotional abuse is often a part of other kinds of abuse, which means it can be difficult to spot the signs or tell the difference, though it can also happen on its own.

### *Types of Emotional Abuse*

- Humiliating or constantly criticising a child.
- Threatening, shouting at a child or calling them names.
- Making the child the subject of jokes, or using sarcasm to hurt a child
- Blaming and scapegoating.
- Making a child perform degrading acts.
- Not recognising a child's own individuality or trying to control their lives.
- Pushing a child too hard or not recognising their limitations.
- Exposing a child to upsetting events or situations, like domestic abuse or drug taking.
- Failing to promote a child's social development.
- Not allowing them to have friends.
- Persistently ignoring them.
- Being absent.
- Manipulating a child.

- Never saying anything kind, expressing positive feelings or congratulating a child on successes.

## Physical Abuse

### *Types of Physical Abuse*

- Hitting with hands or objects
- Slapping and punching
- Kicking
- Shaking
- Throwing
- Poisoning
- Burning and scalding
- Biting and scratching
- Breaking bones
- Drowning.
- It's important to remember that physical abuse is any way of intentionally causing physical harm to a child or young person.

### *Signs of Physical abuse*

Bumps and bruises don't always mean a child is being physically abused. All children have accidents, trips and falls and there isn't just one sign or symptom to look out for.

If a child regularly has injuries, there seems to be a pattern to the injuries or the explanation doesn't match the injuries, then this should be reported.

### *Physical abuse symptoms*

- Bruises
- Broken or fractured bones
- Burns or scalds
- Bite marks.
- It can also include other injuries and health problems, such as: scarring
- The effects of poisoning, such as vomiting, drowsiness or seizures
- Breathing problems from drowning, suffocation or poisoning.

## Sexual Abuse

When a child or young person is sexually abused, they're forced or tricked into sexual activities. They might not understand that what's happening is abuse or that it's wrong. They might be afraid or too ashamed to tell someone. Sexual abuse can happen anywhere – and it can happen in person or online.

It's never a child's fault they were sexually abused – it's important to make sure children know this.

### *Types of sexual abuse*

**Contact abuse** is where an abuser makes physical contact with a child.

This includes:

- Sexual touching of any part of a child's body, whether they're clothed or not.
- Using a body part or object to rape or penetrate a child.
- Forcing a child to take part in sexual activities.
- Making a child undress or touch someone else.
- Contact abuse can include touching, kissing and oral sex – sexual abuse isn't just penetrative.

**Non-contact abuse** is where a child is abused without being touched by the abuser.

This can be in person or online and includes:

- Exposing or flashing.
- Showing pornography.
- Exposing a child to sexual acts.
- Making them masturbate.
- Forcing a child to make, view or share child abuse images or videos.
- Making, viewing or distributing child abuse images or videos.
- Forcing a child to take part in sexual activities or conversations online or through a smartphone.

## *Signs of sexual abuse*

### Emotional Signs

- Avoiding being alone with or frightened of people or a person they know.
- Language or sexual behaviour you wouldn't expect them to know.
- Having nightmares or bed-wetting.
- Alcohol or drug misuse
- Self-harm.
- Changes in eating habits or developing an eating problem.
- Changes in their mood, feeling irritable and angry, or anything out of the ordinary.

### Physical Signs

- Bruises
- Bleeding, discharge, pains or soreness in their genital or anal area
- Sexually transmitted infections.
- Pregnancy.

### Online

- Spend a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media.
- Seem distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting.
- Be secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone.
- Have lots of new phone numbers, texts or email addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.
- Children and young people might also drop hints and clues about the abuse.

### Neglect

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and the most common form of child abuse. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care. This can put children and young people in danger. It can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing. Neglect can be really difficult to spot. Having one of the signs doesn't necessarily mean a child is being neglected. But if you notice multiple signs that last for a while, they might show there's a serious problem.

Children and young people who are neglected might have: poor appearance and hygiene, health and development problems housing and family issues, changes in behaviour.

### Other areas needing protection

## Radicalisation and Extremism

(please refer to the anti-radicalisation policy and read in conjunction with this safeguarding policy).

## Child Sexual Exploitation

Is form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power, sexual gratification or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

Indicators of Child sexual exploitation may include-

- 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 well-being
- 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 don't take part in education.

## Domestic Abuse

Is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: Psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.

Where there is domestic abuse in a family, the children/young people will always be affected; the longer the violence continues, the greater the risk of significant and enduring harm, which they may carry with them into their adult life and relationships. This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

Schools and Host Families are ideally placed to offer appropriate support, alongside other agencies, whether families are in crisis, or whether there are early signs of potential abuse.

Helplines: <http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk> Advice:  
<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/abuse/Pages/domestic-violence-help.aspx>  
<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/domestic-abuse>

## Honour based violence

Encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation, forced marriage and practices such as breast ironing. YES Guardians recognises that all cases of honour based violence fall under the safeguarding and child protection umbrella and will be treated accordingly.

## Child on Child Abuse

Can manifest in many different ways, including but not limited to on-line bullying, sexting, banter, initiation rituals and inappropriate or harmful sexualised behaviours. In most instances, the conduct of children and young people towards each other will be covered by the school behaviour policy. However, some allegations may be of such a serious nature that they may raise safeguarding concerns. YES Guardians recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. It will not be passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. The forms of peer on peer abuse are outlined below.

- Domestic abuse – an incident or pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, financial and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent against a current or former dating partner regardless of gender or sexuality.
- Child Sexual Exploitation – children under the age of 18 may be sexually abused in the context of exploitative relationships, contexts and situations by peers who are also under 18.
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour – Children and young people presenting with sexual behaviours that are outside of developmentally 'normative' parameters and harmful to themselves and others.
- Serious Youth Violence – Any offence of most serious violence or weapon enabled crime, where the victim is aged 1-19 i.e. murder, manslaughter, rape, wounding with intent and causing grievous bodily harm. 'Youth violence' is defined in the same way, but also includes assault with injury offences. The term peer-on-peer abuse can refer to all of these definitions and a child may experience one or multiple facets of abuse at any one time. Therefore, our response will cut across these definitions and capture the complex web of their experiences.

## County Lines

The UK government defines county lines as:

“County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.”

County lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing and exploitation has a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and local communities.



## Child Criminal Exploitation

Child criminal exploitation is increasingly used to describe this type of exploitation where children are involved, and is defined as:

“Child criminal exploitation is common in county lines and occurs 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. 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.”

Criminal exploitation of children is broader than just county lines, and includes for instance children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft.

## Mental Health

All YES Guardians staff are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. At YES Guardians we recognise the importance that only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. YES Guardians Staff however, are well placed to observe children and young people day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Where children and young people have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children’s experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

If YES Guardians staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following this child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

## Managing Allegations

Any allegation a child makes must be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively and promptly, regardless of where the alleged incident took place.

### Response

Depending on the situation, an appropriate response may involve:

- The police investigating a possible criminal offence
- Your local child protection services making enquiries and/or assessing whether a child is in need of support
- Any children involved will be given appropriate support.

## Responding to concerns

How to respond if a child discloses safeguarding information to you-

- Reassure the child that they've done the right thing by telling you about it.
- Listen carefully to the child or young person and let them tell their whole story. Don't try to investigate or quiz the child, but make sure you understand what they're saying. Try to ask open ended questions and summarise what is said to you.
- Use non-judgmental language.

- Tell them that you now have to do what you can to keep them safe.
- Explain what you are going to do next and that you will need to speak to other people who can help.
- Reassure.
- Never promise to keep what a child or young person tells you a secret. Explain that you need to talk to other people who can help keep them and any other children involved safe.
- Do not confront the person against whom an allegation was made

## Making notes

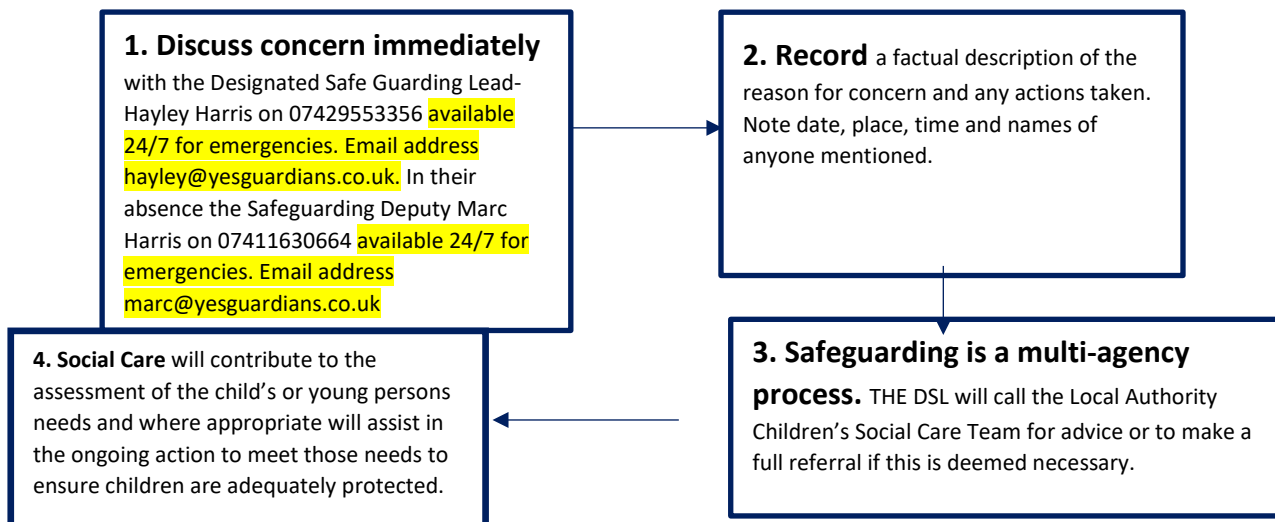
It's important to keep accurate and detailed notes on any concerns you have about a child. These notes will need to be kept secure and private, making sure they are only shared with professionals involved with the child or young person. You will need to share this record with the nominated child protection lead Hayley Harris.

Details should include:

- The child's details (name, age, address)
- What the child said or did that give you cause for concern (if the child made a verbal disclosure, write down their exact words)
- The details of any other children involved or impacted.
- Dates, times and venues of any incidents.
- Details will be stored on the students' personal private file.

## Reporting Concerns

### IF YOU BELIEVE A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER CALL 999



If child is considered to be at imminent risk, contact the DSL, Police and Social Care without delay.

Telephone for Gloucestershire Social Services

01452 42 65 65

Email

[childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

The Children and Families Front Door is open between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday

Contacting the Children & Families services out of hours

Outside of office hours (as stated above) you can contact the Children & Families Services Emergency Duty Team on 01452 614194.

In Gloucestershire the Local Authority Designated Officer is Nigel Hatten, who is supported by Tracy Brooks and Jenny Kadodia, the Allegations Management Co-Ordinators. If you are looking for general Allegation Management advice, please contact either Tracy or Jenny on the following number 01452 426320.

## Whistleblowing

Where the Designated Safeguarding Lead decides not to refer the concerns to the relevant authorities, the person who raised the concern will be given a clear written statement of the reasons why the YES Guardians is not taking action. The person will be advised that, if they remain concerned, they are free to consult with, or to report to, the relevant authorities. YES Guardians is committed to the highest standards of openness and accountability. An important aspect of accountability and transparency is a procedure to enable staff and other members of YES Guardians to voice concerns in a responsible and effective manner. Please refer to the YES Guardians Whistleblowing Policy for further details. This can be found at [www.yesguardians.co.uk](http://www.yesguardians.co.uk) under the policy tab. There will be no retribution or disciplinary action taken against a member of staff for making such a report, provided it is done in good faith.

The NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 and the line is available from 8.00am to 8.00pm, Monday to Friday or staff can send an email to [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

## Ensuring Safety Always

- At YES Guardians we aim to provide a safe and secure environment for all students by liaising with parents, students, schools, host families and transport providers.
- All students have access to a 24/7 emergency telephone number 07429553356.
- All students have access to YES Guardians WhatsApp group for ongoing advice and support meaning there is always someone to reach out to.
- All staff and host families are trained in safeguarding and have read this policy. Everyone has an awareness of welfare and child protection matters and must report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Host Families will be provided with an online child safeguarding training platform every 3 years.
- YES Guardians follow the Safer Recruitment Policy.
- YES Guardians maintain a database of safeguarding contacts in each of the schools that it uses and will ensure liaison with them when required.

## Missing Child Procedure

It is a requirement of the terms and conditions that a student from YES Guardians staying with a host family should have a mobile phone with them at all times. The mobile phone should be charged and

have credit. The host families and students will exchange contact telephone numbers. Additionally, YES Guardians 24/7 contact number 07429553356 should be stored in the student's mobile contacts.

## Steps to take

It is important to consider if the student is firstly absent or missing

**Absent-** A child or young person is not at a place where they are expected or required to be and there is no apparent risk.

**Missing-** a child or young person whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests the person may be subject to crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another.

If you have concerns that a child has gone missing consider the following-

- The child is an immediate risk of coming to harm- call 999 and engage with the police.
- The child may be at risk of coming to harm call 101 and discuss with the local police.
- The child is not at immediate risk of harm but you are concerned call the Designated Safeguarding Lead Hayley Harris on 07429553356 and the YES Guardians 24/7 emergency telephone number.

In the event of a missing child, schools will take the lead during term time. At exeat weekends and half terms, whilst staying with host families, traveling to and from host family or airport not arranged by the school YES Guardians will lead on the incident. All Reasonable, safe and speedy measures will be used to locate the student by the DSL and may mean referral to the police and social care.

The student will be contacted on their mobile phone followed by the individual's school and friends. Social media will be checked. The police will only be involved after all these reasonable checks have failed to locate the student. The reporting individual should initially call 101 unless the student is believed to be in immediate danger then 999 should be called.

The students personal file will be shared with the police. A recent photograph (if available) will be shared to aid the investigation. A description of what the student is wearing will be given (if known), including hair styles, height, weight and eye colour. Any other information which is police require will be shared such as social media accounts, friends lists including names, telephone numbers and addresses, any other known associates, GP address, school and house parent details will also be shared.

Parents will be informed and kept up to date with regular updates throughout the process.

## When the student is found

A supportive approach will be used on the students return, actively listening and responding to their needs. We will take time to discuss what has happened and the importance of staying safe. The student will be made aware of the need to inform host families/ guardian of their where abouts.

The parents will be informed in writing. A full report of the incident will be logged in the students private personal file.