

# The Thomas Gifford Trust

## Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

### 1. Introduction

The Charlbury Community Centre is owned and operated by the Thomas Gifford Trust and this policy sets out the position on safeguarding for Charlbury Community Centre. Any reference to Thomas Gifford Trust and its employees/volunteers includes everyone working at Charlbury Community Centre.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers employed by the Thomas Gifford Trust who work directly with children and vulnerable adults.

Everyone who participates in activities organised by the Thomas Gifford Trust is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. Thomas Gifford Trust has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people and vulnerable adults, staff and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

Thomas Gifford Trust is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and vulnerable adults and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of Thomas Gifford Trust and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection safeguarding issues.

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989).

#### 1.1 Policy Statement

The Trust is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults using the Charlbury Community Centre.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.

The Trust will:

- Ensure that the Community Centre is a safe place that everyone in the community can use.
- Have a named Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will be contacted in the event of potential harm to a child or vulnerable adult.
- Implement the safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken at the Community Centre.
- Ensure that organisations/clubs using the centre will have appropriate safeguarding policies in place.
- Display at Charlbury Community Centre and on the front page of the Community Centre website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns.

- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse or raise concerns relating to safeguarding.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises.
- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.
- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices annually.

## **2. Promoting Good Practice**

### **2.1 Introduction**

To provide children and vulnerable adults with the best possible experience and opportunities everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework e.g. Every Child Matters.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees or participants within Thomas Gifford Trust activities to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult, as outlined in Section 4. This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

### **2.2 Good Practice**

All staff and volunteers should adhere to the following principles and action:

- always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- make the experience of foundation fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity
- always put the welfare of the young person first
- maintain a safe and appropriate distance (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child)
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given.
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible, e.g. where young people need to be supervised, encourage parents to take responsibility for their own child. If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms always ensure parents, coaches etc work in pairs
- request written parental consent if staff are required to transport young people in their cars
- gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements e.g.
- overnight stays
- ensure that if mixed gender participants are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff where possible
- be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- recognising the developmental needs and capacity of the young person
- secure written parental consent for the project/club to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given.

## 2.3 Poor Practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all staff and volunteers:

- unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others
- taking young people alone in a car on journeys, however short
- taking young people to your home where they will be alone with you
- sharing a room with a young person
- engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun
- reducing a young person to tears as a form of control
- allow allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- do things of a personal nature that the young person can do for themselves.

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g. transporting a young person in your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/carer and the young person involved.

If, during your care, you accidentally hurt a young person, the young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to the Senior Designated Person and make a written note of it. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

## 3. Defining Abuse

### 3.1 Introduction

Abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust.

There are four main types of abuse: **physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect**. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person or vulnerable adult encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person or vulnerable adult directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person or vulnerable adult.

Abuse in all of its forms can affect children and vulnerable adults at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood.

Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

### 3.2 Types of Abuse

**Physical Abuse:** where adults physically hurt or injure a young person or vulnerable adult e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute abuse.

This category of abuse can also include when a parent/carer reports non-existent symptoms or illness deliberately causing ill health in a young person they are looking after.

In a sports situation, physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training disregard the capacity of the child's immature and growing body

**Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person or vulnerable adult, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the individual's emotional development. It may involve telling the individual they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause an individual to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person or vulnerable adult frightened or withdrawn.

Ill treatment of children and vulnerable adults, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse in sport may occur when the young person is constantly criticised, given negative feedback, expected to perform at levels that are above their capability. Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying.

**Bullying:** this may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying.

It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text, email or chat room messages), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

In sport bullying may arise when a parent or coach pushes the young person too hard to succeed, or a rival athlete or official uses bullying behaviour.

**Neglect:** this occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of their health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.

Neglect in sport could occur when a coach does not keep the young person safe or exposing them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

**Sexual Abuse:** this occurs when adults (male and female) use children or vulnerable adults to meet their own sexual needs. Siblings and family members can be the abuser. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing individuals pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

### 3.3 Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- the young person or vulnerable adult describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person
- unexplained changes in a young person's behaviour e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- inappropriate sexual awareness
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- distrust of adults, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- difficulty in making friends
- being prevented from socialising with others
- displaying variations in eating patterns including over eating or loss of appetite
- losing weight for no apparent reason
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.

Signs of bullying include:

- behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go training or competitions
- an unexplained drop off in performance
- physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes
- a shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions.

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is NOT the responsibility of those working for Thomas Gifford Trust to decide that abuse is occurring. It IS their responsibility to act on any concerns.

### **3.4 Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment at Sporting Events**

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people and vulnerable adults. Staff should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Trustees.

Staff and volunteers will not take photographs/images of children without the prior permission of the parents/carers of the child on their profile form.

## **4. Responding to Suspicions and Allegations**

### **4.1 Introduction**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for Thomas Gifford Trust in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person. This applies BOTH to allegations/suspicions of abuse occurring within Thomas Gifford Trust activities and to allegations/suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

### **4.2 Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse**

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in section 3 of this document, it

may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person or vulnerable adult affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person or vulnerable adult says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- stay calm so as not to frighten the young person or vulnerable adult
- reassure them that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- listen to them, showing that you are taking them seriously
- keep questions to a minimum so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify.
- inform the child or vulnerable adult that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- safety of the child is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue
- record all information
- report the incident to the Senior Designated Person.

When working on site in another organisation such as a school, nursery, Children's centre and you become aware of possible abuse you must immediately ask to speak to the Senior Designated Person on site.

### **4.3 Recording Information**

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions. Information should include the following:

- the child's or vulnerable adult's name, age and date of birth
- the child's or vulnerable adult's home address and telephone number
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- details of witnesses to the incidents
- the child or vulnerable adult's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred
- have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail

### **4.4 Reporting the Concern**

All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

Thomas Gifford Trust expects its members and staff to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult immediately with one of the Senior Designated People and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.



Your Senior Designated People are:

- **Stuart Duff, contact: 07748 116531**
- **Louise Whitehead, contact: 07972 860646**

If the Senior Designated Person is not available, you should take responsibility and seek advice from the following services.

The **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** is the front door to Children's Social Care for all child protection and immediate safeguarding concerns. If there is an immediate safeguarding concern, for example:

- Allegations/concerns that the child has been sexually/physically abused
- Concerns that the child is suffering from severe neglect or other severe health risks
- Concern that a child is living in or will be returned to a situation that may place him/her at immediate risk
- The child is frightened to return home
- The child has been abandoned or parent is absent

You should call the MASH immediately Tel: 0345 050 7666. This number will take you through to Customer Services who will ask a series of questions and triage into MASH where safeguarding concerns are raised.

**A No Names Consultation should not be used for the above scenarios.**

The Oxfordshire MASH Referral Form (MASH Enquiry online referral form) may be used by professionals only to refer children to social services. Or you can email a report to MASH on the secure email on: **[mash-childrens@oxfordshire.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:mash-childrens@oxfordshire.gcsx.gov.uk)**

To talk about an on-going concern, if you want to speak to someone about an already open case contact the relevant Children's Social Care Team:

- Oxford City - 01865 328563
- North Oxfordshire (including Banbury, Witney and Bicester): 01865 323039
- South Oxfordshire (including Abingdon, Faringdon, Wantage, Thame, Didcot and Henley): 01865 323041
- Emergency Duty Team: 0800 833 408
- John Radcliffe Hospital Assessment Team: 01865 221236 (for antenatal safeguarding concerns and issues concerning children in the hospital).

If you are unsure whether to make a referral, you can contact the Locality and Community Support Service (LCSS) and request a 'no names' consultation (meaning you don't give the child's name). You can discuss the situation with them and they will advise you on what to do next. If a referral needs to be made, they will advise you of this:

- LCSS Central: 0345 241 2705
- LCSS North (including Banbury, Witney, Bicester, Carterton and Woodstock): 0345 241 2703
- LCSS South (including Abingdon, Faringdon, Wantage, Thame, Didcot and Henley): 0345 241 2608

To report concerns about child sexual exploitation, if a child or young person has made a disclosure regarding sexual exploitation, or if you think a child may be at risk of being sexually exploited, please contact the Kingfisher Team on 01865 309196.

Out of hours calls to this number will be diverted to the Thames Valley Police Referral Centre.

To report concerns about child radicalisation, if you are concerned about a child or young person being radicalised, please follow the guidance in this document below:

### Oxfordshire Prevent Referral and Contacts Oct 2015

This could be in regard to a far right movement, such as the English Defense League (EDL), animal rights activists such as the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) or in regards to religious extremism such as the Islamic State (IS).

To report concerns about a professional or person in a position of trust, contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to report an allegation or concern on: 01865 810603 or email: [LADO.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:LADO.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

For Vulnerable Adults contact: Oxfordshire Social & Community Services by ringing 0845 050 666, or you can email [socialandhealthcare@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:socialandhealthcare@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

If you need urgent help or a crime has been committed, you should contact the police if it is an emergency, you should call 999 or 112.

Otherwise, you should call the Thames Valley Police Public Enquiry Centre on 101.

Where there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation:

- Criminal in which case the police are immediately involved
- Child protection in which case the social care team (and possibly) the police will be involved
- Disciplinary or misconduct in which case Thomas Gifford Trust will be involved

As mentioned previously in this document, Thomas Gifford Trust staff and volunteers are not child protection experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with the appropriate professional agencies.

**If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern**

Any suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult has been abused by an employee or a volunteer should be reported to the Thomas Gifford Trust Senior Designated Person who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child or vulnerable adult in question and any other individuals who may be at risk. Any suspicions regarding the senior designated person should be reported immediately to the appropriate agency. Please see the above section for up to date contact details.

Allegations of abuse can be made sometime after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to the appropriate services. This is because other children or vulnerable adults may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children or vulnerable adults is automatically excluded from working with children (Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (SVGA) 2006 and ISA Registration & VBS).

#### **4.5 Concerns outside the immediate Environment (e.g. a parent or carer)**

You should always report your concerns to the Senior Designated Person. If the Senior Designated Person is not available, the person being told or discovering the abuse should



contact their local social care team or the police immediately. The senior designated person will decide how to inform the parents/carers. You should maintain confidentiality on a need-to-know basis.

#### **4.6 Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The Senior Designated Officer
- The parents of the child
- The person making the allegation
- Social Care Team/police
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

Seek advice from the social care team on who should approach the alleged abuser.

#### **4.7 Internal Inquiries and Suspension**

The Thomas Gifford Trust Senior Nominated Person will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social care team inquiries in line with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (SVGA) 2006 and ISA Registration & VBS.

Irrespective of the findings of the social care team or police inquiries the Thomas Gifford Trust Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases the Thomas Gifford Trust Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of children and vulnerable adults will remain of paramount importance throughout.

## **5. Recruiting and Selecting Personnel for working with Children and Vulnerable Adults**

### **5.1 Introduction**

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children or vulnerable adults. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, both full and part time. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and vulnerable adults the following steps will be taken by the Thomas Gifford Trust when recruiting.

### **5.2 Controlling Access to Children and Vulnerable Adults**

All staff and volunteers over the age of 18 who work directly with children or vulnerable adults will complete pre-employment checks, for example:

- DBS check
- verification of identity
- references
- right to work

Consent will be obtained from the applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

For every employee, we will obtain two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children or vulnerable adults. These references **MUST** be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact and to check identity.

Evidence of identity must be checked - this evidence must be photo ID (passport or driving licence with photo).

All staff and volunteers over the age of 18 will have regular performance reviews in place to check the suitability and training requirements of staff and volunteers after their appointment.

### **5.3 Interview and Induction**

All employees and volunteers over the age of 18 who work directly with children or vulnerable adults will be required to undertake an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers will receive formal or informal induction during which:

- A check will be made that the application form has been completed in full, including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures
- Their qualifications will be substantiated
- The job requirements and responsibilities will be clarified
- They will sign up to the Thomas Gifford Trust's Code of safeguarding and equality.
- Safeguarding Procedures will be explained and training needs identified.

### **5.4 Training**

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or vulnerable adult
- Work safely and effectively with children and vulnerable adults

### **5.5 Thomas Gifford Trust requirements**

All staff and volunteers over the age of 18 who have access to children will undergo a DBS check.

All staff and volunteers are to undertake relevant safeguarding training or undertake a form of home study, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of positive culture towards good practice and child protection.

All staff and volunteers to receive advisory information outlining good/bad practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person or vulnerable adult.

## 6. Declaration

On behalf of the Thomas Gifford Trust we, the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and Training and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

**Name:** Louise Whitehead

**Position within Organisation:** Senior Designated Person

**Name:** Stuart Duff

**Position within Organisation:** Safeguarding Trustee

**Reviewed:** February 2024

**Date of next review:** February 2025