



Safeguarding Children Policy

For Online Delivery and Safeguarding, please see pages 5-6 of this document

CARIS Families is committed to building a culture of safety in which the children in our care are protected from abuse, harm and radicalisation.

Our Clubs will respond promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns regarding the safety of a child that may occur. CARIS Families' child protection procedures comply with all relevant legislation and with guidance issued by the City of London & Local Authority's Safeguarding Children Partnership.

CARIS Families' Services Manager is the designated Child Protection Officer (CPO). The CPO coordinates child protection issues and liaises with external agencies, including Local Authority Council's family support teams and the City of London & Local Authority's Safeguarding Children Partnership. All volunteers and parents participating in our services will be made aware of the name and contact details of the CPO, and they will be contactable when sessions are running, or an alternative lead person will be available.

This policy applies to CARIS Families staff members, volunteers, and parents who attend any of our services. A copy of this policy will be available for reference by staff, volunteers and parents/carers at any time.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of government legislation, local authority, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England/Northern Ireland/Scotland/Wales.

DfE: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

DFE: What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners 2015.

The Children Act 1989, The Children Act 2004.

LSCP: London Safeguarding Children Procedures and Practice Guidance. *updated 31/03/2023.*

Child abuse and neglect

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or by failing to protect them from harm. Some forms of child abuse and neglect are listed below.

- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making the child feel that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Physical abuse** can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may be also caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child.
- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This can involve physical contact, or non-contact activities such as showing children sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs. It can involve a failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm, to ensure adequate supervision or to allow access to medical treatment.



Signs of child abuse and neglect

Signs of possible abuse and neglect may include:

- significant changes in a child's behaviour or mood
- deterioration in a child's general well-being
- unexplained bruising or marks
- comments made by a child which give cause for concern
- inappropriate behaviour displayed by a member of staff, volunteer, or parent/carer. For example, inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their role, or the inappropriate sharing of images.

Ways that abuse might be brought to a volunteer, parent-volunteer or staff member's attention

- A child might make a direct disclosure about him or herself
- A child might make a direct disclosure about another child
- A child might offer information that is worrying but not a direct disclosure
- A volunteer, parent/carer or member of staff might be concerned about a child's appearance or behavior, or about the behavior of a parent or carer towards a child
- A parent or carer might make a disclosure about abuse that a child is suffering or at risk of suffering
- A parent/carer might offer information about a child that is worrying but not a direct disclosure.
- Talking to a child who has told you that he/she or another child is being abused

What staff, volunteers and parents must do

If abuse is disclosed by a child

When a child makes a disclosure to a volunteer, parent or staff member, that volunteer, parent or staff member must:

- reassure the child that they were not to blame and were right to speak out
- listen to the child but not interrogate, quiz them or put words in their mouth. They should ask a minimum of questions, and only when necessary for clarification
- tell the child that they now have to do what you can to keep him or her (or the child who is the subject of the allegation) safe
- ask the child what he or she would like to happen next as a result of the disclosure, but should not make or infer promises they can't keep
- let the child know what they are going to do next
- report the incident to the CPO as soon as possible and immediately if the child is at risk of harm

If abuse is witnessed or suspected

If a volunteer, parent or staff member witnesses or suspects abuse, they must report this to the CPO straight away. If a third party expresses concern that a child is being abused, the CPO will encourage them to contact their Local Authority Safeguarding Referral Pathway. If the third party will not do so, we will explain that our service is obliged to and the incident will be logged accordingly. The reporting will also be followed through by the CPO to ensure the concerns have been raised to the appropriate Local Authority Safeguarding Referral Pathway.



If an allegation is made against an adult present online or in person at our services

If anyone makes an allegation of child abuse against a volunteer or parent/carer:

- The allegation will be recorded by the services manager or deputy on a **Logging a Concern** form. Any witnesses to the incident should sign and date the entry to confirm it.
- The allegation must be reported to the appropriate Local Authority using their referral pathway, and to the Temporary Accommodation staff in line with the local authority's safeguarding procedure within their hostels. The Local Authority will advise if other agencies (e.g. police) should be informed, and our services will act upon their advice. Any telephone Safeguarding referrals will be followed up in writing within 48 hours.
- Following advice from the Local Authority, it may be necessary to suspend the volunteer or parent/carer's access to our services, pending full investigation of the allegation.
- If appropriate CF will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

If anyone makes an allegation of child abuse against a staff member:

- If an allegation is made against a staff member, it must be directed to the CPO
- Should an allegation be made against the CPO, the allegation must be made to CARIS Families Director Safeguarding Lead, whose contact details are available at the end of this document.
- Should an allegation be made against CARIS Families Safeguarding Lead, the allegation must be made to CARIS Families' Chair and the named Trustee for Safeguarding, whose contact details are available at the end of this document

Extremism and radicalisation

All childcare settings have a legal duty to protect children from the risk of radicalisation and being drawn into extremism. There are many reasons why a child might be vulnerable to radicalisation, including:

- feeling alienated or alone
- seeking a sense of identity or individuality
- suffering from mental health issues such as depression
- a desire for adventure or wanting to be part of a larger cause
- associating with others who hold extremist beliefs

Signs of radicalisation

Signs that a child might be at risk of radicalisation include:

- changes in behaviour, for example becoming withdrawn or aggressive
- claiming that terrorist attacks and violence are justified
- viewing violent extremist material online
- possessing or sharing violent extremist material

If a volunteer or parent/carer suspects that a child is at risk of becoming radicalised, they must report this to the CPO, who will record any relevant information or observations on a **Logging a Concern** form for further consideration.



Logging a Concern

All information about the suspected abuse or disclosure, or concern about radicalisation, will be recorded by the staff member/ volunteer who raised the concern on the **Logging a Concern** form as soon as possible after the event, the CPO will assist and support the recording of the concern. The record should include:

- date of the disclosure, or the incident, or the observation causing concern
- date and time at which the record was made
- name and date of birth of the child involved
- a factual report of what happened. If recording a disclosure, you must use the child's own words
- name, signature and job title of the person making the record.

The CPO will then decide on the appropriate course of action, in consultation with CARIS Families' Director Safeguarding Lead, if necessary.

For concerns about **child abuse**, the CPO will contact the appropriate Local Authority Safeguarding Referral Pathway. The CPO will follow up all referrals in writing within 48 hours.

For concerns regarding **radicalisation**, the CPO will contact the appropriate Local Authority Safeguarding Referral Pathway. For more serious concerns the CPO will contact the Police on the non-emergency number (101), or the anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321. For urgent concerns the CPO will contact the Police using 999.

Informing the child's family about a concern

If the child's family does not already know about the concern, the CPO will discuss it with them **unless**:

- a family member might be responsible for abusing the child
- The child or another person may be put in danger by the family being informed
- informing the family might interfere with a criminal investigation

If any of these circumstances apply, discussions with the family should only take place after this has been agreed with the appropriate Local Authority Safeguarding Referral Pathway Team

If there is still uncertainty about the concerns, the CPO can discuss it with the appropriate Local Authority Safeguarding Referral Pathway team/ with the NSPCC Helpline without disclosing the identity of the child / family.

Promoting awareness among staff and volunteers

Our services promote awareness of child abuse and the risk of radicalisation through our volunteer and staff training. CF ensures that:

- the designated CPO and other staff have relevant experience and receive appropriate training in safeguarding and the Prevent Duty
- all volunteers and staff are subject to an enhanced DBS check prior to their first shift at the club. Further safe recruitment practices will be followed for all new staff and volunteers
- all staff and volunteers have a copy of this Safeguarding Children policy, understand its contents and are vigilant to signs of abuse, neglect or radicalisation
- all staff and volunteers are aware of their statutory duties with regard to the disclosure or discovery of child abuse, and concerns about radicalisation
- all staff receive safeguarding training and regular refresher courses
- all volunteers receive basic safeguarding training
- all staff receive basic training in the Prevent Duty



Use of mobile phones and cameras

Photographs will only be taken of children with their parents' written permission. Only staff work mobiles will be used to take photographs of children during face-to-face services, except with the express permission of the Services Manager. No staff member, volunteer, parent/carer or child may use their personal mobile phones to take photographs at the Club. Photos taken will be uploaded to a secure site as soon as possible and then deleted from staff work mobiles

Online Delivery and Safeguarding

In response to any statutory policies, procedures, advice and guidance issued by Government/Local Authorities, Health Boards, in relation to COVID-19 or other pandemics, CF's services may at any given point transfer to online delivery, temporarily or permanently.

Online delivery will follow the same safeguarding principles as face-to-face delivery. Concerns about a child or young person should be reported in the same way as they would be if a staff member or volunteer observed or was disclosed a concern in a face-to-face setting.

Staff and volunteers should continue to be alert to signs a child or young person may be at risk and report any risks to the CPO (Services Manager).

Support for Parents/Carers and Children

- Prior to any online activity taking place, CF will ensure it has received consent from a parent/carer for their child to engage with the online service, even if they've previously consented to take part in its face-to-face counterpart service
- All children and parents will be provided with a Parents Handbook which covers online delivery procedures, so they know what to expect and also how to get online or telephone help if they need it.

Safe delivery of online services

CF will take the following steps to ensure safe online delivery:

- Staff and volunteers will only use CF registered accounts to log onto the online learning platform and will not be able to use personal accounts
- Only group sessions will be held online, there will be no one-to-one sessions with children. Any volunteer Learning Mentor leading a tutor group in a breakout room will be supervised by CF staff who will enter the room to supervise the session on a regular basis, and children will be informed that there will be additional adults 'sitting in' on the session.

Online Delivery Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers

- Staff and volunteers should make sure they're in a suitable setting, not a bedroom. If sitting in a bedroom is unavoidable, they should make their background neutral (e.g. use an electronic wallpaper)
- Staff and volunteers should ensure they are dressed appropriately, as they would if attending a group session in person
- Staff and volunteers should make sure there is always a member of staff available during sessions to supervise breakout rooms. If it becomes necessary for a staff member to have a private online call with a child (see 'if a child makes a disclosure'), that staff member should ensure that the CPO or Safeguarding Lead is on the call. The same applies for a telephone call.

Online Delivery Code of Conduct for children

- Children should dress appropriately (as they would if they were attending a face-to-face session)



- Children should be supported to find a quiet place in their family accommodation to partake in the session. Families will be supported to achieve this and will be provided with headphones for children if necessary.
- Any child aged 7 or under needs to have a parent/carer present in the room while they are participating in our online services
- Children should try not to speak over others and let everyone have their say
- If children need help or want to talk to a staff member they should let the volunteer or staff member know and they'll arrange a time to speak to them
- Children should try to be on time when they join a session.

If a child makes a disclosure

If a child says they want to speak to a member of staff online privately, we will arrange it, so the CPO or Safeguarding Lead is also online and joins the private call with the child's knowledge. Staff members taking the private call should follow the following procedure:

- o Tell the child that they have a duty to pass information on if they think the child may be at risk or come to harm
- o Make notes of any conversation immediately after the online meeting, including the time and date of the conversation, and log it with the CPO / Safeguarding Lead who will take the appropriate safeguarding procedures forward.

Contact numbers

Hackney FAST: 020 8356 5500 (Mon-Fri 9-5, out of hours Emergency Duty Team: 020 8356 2710)

Camden Children & Families Contact Service 020 7974 3317, out of hours 020 7974 4444

Police: 101 (non-emergency) or 999 (emergency)

Anti-terrorist hotline: 0800 789 321

NSPCC: 0808 800 500

Rebecca Walker, CARIS Families Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) 07597100975

This policy was adopted by CARIS Families for services in the London Boroughs of Hackney & Camden	Date: 05.04.2024
To be reviewed: 05.04.2025	Signed: 