

FRIENDS OF HADDENHAM LIBRARY

7 Station Rd, Haddenham, Cambridgeshire CB6 3XD

Safeguarding Children: Policy and Procedures

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation is available from [nspcc.org.uk/learning](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/learning).

Haddenham Library recognises that, under the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, it has a duty and responsibility for making arrangements to ensure all its functions are discharged having regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children/young people in their care — this includes all services directly provided and commissioned by the local authority. A child is anyone up until their 18th birthday.

Safeguarding children: Safeguarding children is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 as:

- 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 enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm. As adults and/or professionals or volunteers, everyone has a responsibility to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children — and, in particular, protecting them from significant harm — depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise.

Individual children, especially some of the most vulnerable children and those at greatest risk of social exclusion, will need co-ordinated help from health, education, children's social care, and quite possibly the voluntary sector and other agencies, including youth justice services.

For those children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, joint working is essential, to safeguard and promote welfare of the child(ren) and — where necessary — to help bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against children. All agencies and professionals should:

- ✓ be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect;
- ✓ be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children;
- ✓ share and help to analyse information so that an assessment can be made of the child's needs and circumstances;
- ✓ contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the child's welfare;
- ✓ take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific plans; and
- ✓ work co-operatively with parents unless this is inconsistent with ensuring the child's safety.

Definitions of a Child

In England a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Child protection guidance points out that even if a child has reached 16 years of age and is:

- living independently
- in further education
- a member of the armed forces
- in hospital; or
- in custody in the secure state

they are still legally children and should be given the same protection and entitlements as any other child.

Definitions of abuse and neglect:

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse 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 carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is 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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (eg: rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts.

They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is 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 carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Volunteers' awareness

All volunteers will be made aware of this policy as part of their initial induction process and there will be regular briefings and updates for all volunteers.

Where necessary or possible, volunteers will be encouraged to attend appropriate training courses, such as those run by Hunts Forum.

Reviewing the Policy and Procedure

This policy and procedure will be reviewed every year. This will include checking telephone numbers, accuracy of personnel details, and any updates required by a change in local or national policy.

Procedures

Who do I go to if I am concerned?

The named responsible person for safeguarding duties for Haddenham Library (Child Protection Officer) is Robin Gildersleeve (07773328337).

All group members and volunteers should contact the safeguarding lead for any concerns/queries they have in regards to safeguarding children. A log of the concern must be kept.

The safeguarding lead will be responsible for making decisions about notifying children's social services if required and consider alternative actions, where necessary.

The safeguarding lead will also ensure that the safeguarding children policies and procedures are in place and up to date. They will ensure a safe environment is promoted for volunteers, and adults and children accessing the service. The safeguarding lead will ensure they are up to date with their safeguarding children training.

General volunteers' guidelines for ensuring child safety

- Always listen to children and value and respect them as individuals.
- Always ensure another volunteer listens and/or observes, when in a difficult or sensitive situation involving a child.
- Avoid being alone with a child — a meeting with a child or young person should take place as openly as possible — always remain in public view.
- Be aware of one another whilst on duty.
- Comfort a child who is obviously distressed, but always remain in public view.
- Never initiate physical contact with a child.
- Never lead a child by the hand out of the library in search of a parent or carer — the child should be kept safe in the library until the parent/carer returns.
- Do not make contact with children for non-library business.
- Never do things of a personal nature for a child that the child could do for him or herself.
- Never accompany a child into a toilet, or assist a child in using the toilet or in adjusting his/her clothes.

Unsupervised children

The way in which library volunteers deal with unaccompanied children discovered in the library must be based on an awareness of the legal responsibility of the parent or carer, and the library's duty of care to all children on library premises. Children under the age of 8 years should be accompanied and supervised by a parent, carer or other suitable, responsible adult.

However, there may be occasions when very young children visit the library unaccompanied. Whilst not wishing to discourage children from visiting the library, volunteers need to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of the child if the child

is (apparently) under 8 years of age, bearing in mind that children are 'less careful' of their own safety than adults. A letter may be sent by Haddenham Library to the parent or carer of the child, reminding them of library policy regarding unaccompanied young children. However, the library is a safer place for children than the streets, and while following the suggested courses of action, library volunteers should allow children to remain in the library.

A good practice response to discovering a very young child (below 8) unaccompanied in the library: If the child is under 8 and you are concerned about their safety:

- Ask the child if an adult is aware that they are here and if s/he is expecting to be collected.
- Try to contact the parent or carer; see if the child can give an address or telephone number; check registration details to see if the child or a parent/carer is a library member.
- Avoid being left alone with a child — try to ensure colleagues are present when dealing with unsupervised children and remain in public view.
- Record any response from the parent or carer — a letter may be sent to the parent or carer as outlined above. If volunteers are not happy to allow the child to leave alone, and if all attempts to contact the parent or carer fail, volunteers should encourage the child to stay in the library. If the child is still there when the library is closing, then contact the local police station. No volunteer should take a child home.

Unaccompanied young children expecting to be met at closing time Library volunteers should:

- Check on the child's situation with the support of another volunteer — are they waiting for a parent or carer to collect them?
- The child may be allowed to use the library phone to phone home to ask a parent or carer to collect them. However, children should be reminded to organise this in advance if it is happening on a regular basis.
- Telephone the child's home from the library to clarify the situation if necessary.
- Wait for the parent/carer to collect the child and then explain the library's policy to them. Two volunteers should wait with the child.
- Where a parent or carer cannot be contacted, contact the police. No volunteer should ever take a child home.
- If a child wishes to leave, every effort should be made to persuade him or her to stay until help has arrived. However, volunteers must not attempt physically to restrain a child except to prevent accident or injury when there are reasonable grounds to believe there is a real risk to the child or in self-defence.

Use of toilets

This should be under the supervision of a parent or guardian only. If an unaccompanied child wishes to use the toilet, it will have to be without supervision.

What to do if you have concerns about a child

You may have concerns about a child because of something you have seen or heard, or a child may choose to disclose something to you. If a child discloses information to you, you should:

- ✓ Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and refer to Cambridgeshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board.
- ✓ Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- ✓ Accept what is said.
- ✓ Reassure the child, but only as far as is honest, don't make promises you may not be able to keep *eg: 'Everything will be alright now', 'You'll never have to see that person again'.*
- ✓ Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child refers to it. For example, you could say, *'You're not to blame'.*
- ✓ Let the child know that they've done the right thing to report to you. Reassurance can make a big impact to the child who may have been keeping the abuse secret.
- ✓ Say you will take them seriously. A child could keep abuse secret in fear they won't be believed. They've told you because they want help and trust you'll be the person who will listen and support them.
- ✓ Do not interrogate the child; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
- ✓ Do not ask leading questions (*eg: Did he touch your private parts?*), ask open questions such as *'Anything else to tell me?'*
- ✓ Do not ask the child to repeat the information for another member of staff.
- ✓ Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.
- ✓ Do not talk to the alleged abuser. Confronting the alleged abuser about what the child has told you could make the situation a lot worse for the child.
- ✓ Take notes if possible or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards.
- ✓ Record the date, time, place any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child (do not paraphrase).
- ✓ Record statements and observable things rather than interpretations or assumptions.
- ✓ Do not delay reporting the abuse. The sooner the abuse is reported after the child discloses the better. Report as soon as possible so that details are fresh in your mind and action can be taken quickly.

Whatever the nature of your concerns, discuss them with the Library Co-ordinator or designated Safeguarding Lead. See the diagram on the next page for the process to follow.

If you still have concerns, you or the Safeguarding Lead should refer to:

Cambridgeshire Local Safeguarding Children Board

Phone Number: 0345 045 5203

- Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team (EDT): 01733 234724

Online Referral Form <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/children-s-social-care/safeguarding-children-and-child-protection>. Send form to referralcentre.children@cambridgeshire.gov.uk:

You should follow up the verbal referral in writing, within 48hrs

Allegations Involving a Volunteer

There may be occasions when there is an allegation against a volunteer. Allegations against those who work with children, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, cover a wide range of circumstances.

All allegations of abuse of children by those who work with children or care for them must be taken seriously. All reports of allegations must be submitted within one working day to The Child Protection Officer.

The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- ✓ Behaved in a way which has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- ✓ Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- ✓ Behaved towards a child or children in a way which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children.

The allegations may relate to the person's behaviour at work, at home or in another setting.

The Child Protection Officer will discuss the matter to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded, whether a referral is required and/or whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

Some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate referral to the Cambridge County Council referralcentre.children@cambridgeshire.gov.uk Telephone: 0345 045 5203 (8-6pm Monday to Friday) 01733 234 724 (out of hours) and the Police, but common sense and judgement must be applied in reaching a decision about what action to take.

If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the Child Protection Officer will immediately refer the matter and ask for a Strategy Discussion/Meeting to be convened.

Some allegations may be less serious and at first sight might not seem to warrant consideration of a police investigation or enquiries by the local authority. However, it is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation. Consequently the Child Protection Officer should be informed of all allegations that come to the trustees' attention and appear to come within the scope of this procedure so that he or she can consult Police and social care colleagues as appropriate.

Where such allegations are made, consideration must be given to the following three strands:

- 1) The police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
- 2) Enquiries and assessment by Children's Social Care Services as to whether the child is need of protection or in need of services;
- 3) Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

Process Chart Where There Are Concerns About A Child's Welfare

