

A Place to Be (Youth Group) Haslemere

Safeguarding Policy

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Owner: Edward WALKER

Our Approach

The Management Committee of A Place to Be (APTB) Youth Group is firmly committed to the welfare of all the young people who use our services and facilities, we recognise our responsibility to have procedures in place to protect young people from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

We aim to ensure all our young people meet in a safe environment with people they can trust. We will ensure safeguarding risks are recognised and appropriately managed (with steps taken to reduce or remove risk). Core to our role safeguarding young people, we will encourage a culture of reporting, recording and taking action where necessary.

APTB is a small entity working with a small number of Haslemere's young people on around 40 days each year, nonetheless we take safeguarding seriously all of the time.

Roles and Responsibilities

Everyone volunteering or working with us has a duty to the welfare of young people in our care; safeguarding is a priority for us all and is central to the services, facilities and activities our young people enjoy. All adults working with us will be provided with a copy of this policy when they join. Everyone will be given a new copy whenever the policy is updated. In addition, we will spend time annually discussing roles & responsibilities in person with every member of staff, volunteer and committee member. Every adult routinely engaged with us will be required to indicate their commitment & understanding by completing a signed copy of this policy (to be retained on file).

This policy is owned by the APTB **Management Committee**, the committee are responsible for keeping the policy up-to-date, providing an annual review and ensuring the appropriate procedures are in place for its tactical implementation and ongoing efficacy.

Edward WALKER: In addition to their role as Chair of the APTB Committee, Edward is the **Safeguarding Coordinator** and **Safeguarding Portfolio Holder**.

Chloe ADAMS: In addition to their staff role as APTB Youth Leader, Chloe is the **Lead Recruiter** and **Designated Safeguarding Lead** for all service provision.

Edward and Chloe have a shared responsibility for ensuring the checking process is adhered to for all current and new adults working with APTB (volunteers, staff and committee members).

Recruitment

All prospective volunteers and staff should complete an application, supplying these particulars:

- Personal details (Name, Date of Birth and Home Address)
- Names of two independent referees
- Previous experience
- Any criminal convictions
- Competencies, areas of interest and motivation
- Signature and date

All prospective volunteers & staff will be supervised by a designated permanent member of staff until references have been received and DBS checks completed.

Checking

All permanent roles with APTB are conditional pending the result of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

All roles require an enhanced DBS check.

The expected period of validity acceptable to APTB - for any DBS check - is three years, checks must be renewed so that any current check does not exceed a three year anniversary.

APTB is registered with a proxy called 'Thirtyone:eight' which is a charity supporting registered organisations to conduct DBS checks. In addition to the practical submission of checks, this proxy also provides on-demand advice & guidance to APTB on our approach to safeguarding.

Some volunteers and staff may have equivalent DBS checks from other roles (e.g. schools and hospitals) however, they must still present these credentials for review by the **Safeguarding Coordinator** and **Designated Safeguarding Lead**:

- Where satisfied, DBS checks made by another body will negate the need for new checks by APTB (however, the same rule will apply about validity and check period).
- Where unsatisfied, the person must undergo DBS checks by APTB.

The result of all checks will come back to the Lead Recruiter who will log the (a) disclosure number, (b) certificate date, (c) whether the check was satisfactory. The certificate will be retained for a period of six months and then destroyed. Results will be recorded in the **Safeguarding Register**.

Where the result of a check is unsatisfactory (or otherwise has a problem), the Lead Recruiter will notify the Safeguarding Coordinator: whatever plan of action required will have the welfare of young people at its centre i.e. suspending an adult's involvement until something can be resolved or immediately terminating an adult's involvement where sufficient concerns are highlighted.

We recognise checks as a crucial part of safeguarding our young people however, there is an ongoing duty of aftercare and rules to constantly ensure the suitability of our adults working with young people (and to protect everyone involved in our service provision). A satisfactory DBS check does not simply mean a person is 'safe', 'cleared' or beyond reproach: checks are one part of our multi-layered approach to safeguarding.

Code of Conduct

The Management Committee has devised a code of conduct as a guideline for the interaction between our adults and our young people.

Abusive behaviour and language, violence, aggression, bullying or discrimination will never be tolerated from anyone. Any witness to such behaviour must report it immediately to whoever is in charge such that a timely investigation and response can occur. Penalties for offenders will include suspension or permanent exclusion from the club (for young people) and termination of employment / volunteer services rendered (for adults involved).

The following rules apply to APTB sessions, facilities & service provision:

- No alcohol or drugs will be consumed on the premises by any person.
- Leaders/workers will refrain from consuming alcohol prior to assuming responsibility for young people.
- No photos or videos of a young person may be used in publicity without their parent or guardian signing consent forms in advance.
- Young people are free to leave the club activity whenever they wish.
- Young people must be collected by parents/guardians at the end of meetings.

Further expectations are described in the APTB 'Behaviour code for adults working with children'.

APTB is intended to be a safe place for young people to enjoy themselves, to develop social skills and to take part in fun activities, we will always take positive action to ensure their safety & wellbeing.

Dealing with Abuse and Disclosures: Young People

In the course of providing services to young people, they may exhibit signs of abuse or they may make a disclosure of abuse. The social nature of the services we provide may mean some signs of abuse are more noticeable than at school; the familiarity / trust with our staff may mean we receive a disclosure the young person may not want to make to other adults. We are in a privileged position with these young people, we have a duty to be alert to abuse; this section details our procedure and expectations.

There are four types of abuse to which young people can be subjected:

- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse

If any of these occur, young people often display problems in the following areas:

- Behaviour
- Drugs and alcohol
- Education
- Physical evidence, e.g. bruising, Mental health & Relationships

A young person may disclose they are being abused; they may show signs of abuse; they may speak about third party abuse.

Where abuse is **suspected**:

- Observations, conversations or concerns will be reported to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead**.
- Details will be recorded in full and included in the **Safeguarding Register**.
- The matter must not be investigated or discussed with anyone other than the **Designated Safeguarding Lead**.
- The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** will triage and evaluate the new report with the **Safeguarding Coordinator** as soon as practicable. Where deemed necessary, the information will be shared with the appropriate local statutory services. The sharing will happen without undue delay however, given most APTB activities occur on a Friday evening, some action may not be doable until the following working day.
- The **Safeguarding Register** will be updated with whatever evaluation is made and the action taken or reasons & rationale for no action.

Where abuse is **reported/alleged**:

- The young person will be listened to and encouraged to speak without interruption, comment or judgment.
- The young person must have it explained that some information may need to be shared in certain circumstances if they could be at risk of harm or abuse.
- Observations, conversations or concerns will be reported to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead**.
- The matter must not be investigated or discussed with anyone other than the **Designated Safeguarding Lead**.
- Details will be recorded in full and included in the **Safeguarding Register**.
- The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** will triage and evaluate the new report with the **Safeguarding Coordinator** as soon as practicable. Where deemed necessary, the information will be shared with the appropriate local statutory services. The sharing will happen without undue delay however, given most APTB activities occur on a Friday evening, some action may not be doable until the following working day.
- The **Safeguarding Register** will be updated with whatever evaluation is made and the action taken or reasons & rationale for no action.

Ordinarily, it may not be appropriate to notify parents / guardians of suspected, reported or alleged abuse save for any concerns about self-harm. The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** may decide a conversation with the adult collecting the young person is necessary to immediately address concerns around forms of self-harm.

Where abuse is suspected, reported or alleged, the **Designated Safeguarding Lead** may take a view the matter is so critical or urgent that immediate safeguarding of a young person is required (and it would not be ideal for that young person to return home / leave the session with whatever adult is collecting them). In this circumstance the appropriate course of action would be to involve the police and to await their attendance / take their advice. This course of action is at the sole discretion and prerogative of the **Designated Safeguarding Lead** (or the person there and then in charge), it does not require triage and evaluation with the **Safeguarding Coordinator**. If there is time available, a discussion may take place between the two parties however the prerogative to take this immediate action cannot be overruled by any person.

Dealing with Abuse and Disclosures: Leaders

The Management Committee recognises that abuse could (a) occur by a leader onto a young person and/or (b) be alleged to have occurred by a leader onto a young person.

The following guidelines are in place to help our leaders avoid scenarios which could put themselves or young people at undue risk. Our leaders should not:

- Be working alone with young people
- Lock and unlock premises without another adult present
- Transport young people in a car or minibus without another adult being present
- Take young people to their homes
- Make inappropriate contact with young people, i.e. develop relationships outside the club setting
- Leave young people unattended
- Leave young people in the presence of adults who are not suitably trained
- Leave young people in the presence of adults not known to leaders
- Leave young people in the presence of adults who have not had relevant DBS checks
- Show favouritism to young people within the club

Where abuse by any leader (staff or volunteer) is **suspected**:

- Observations, conversations or concerns will be reported to the **Safeguarding Coordinator**, the person reporting may wish to phone through their concern but should follow up in writing (text or email) as soon as possible.
- The **Safeguarding Coordinator** will triage and evaluate the report and may choose to involve the **Designated Safeguarding Lead** or another member of the **Management Committee** depending on the nature of the report and the persons involved.
- The **Safeguarding Coordinator** will set out a plan of action (this may include interviewing the adult involved or suspending their involvement pending an investigation). Notwithstanding any action by APTB, information deemed credible may be passed to law enforcement.
- All information and actions will be recorded in a dedicated log by the **Safeguarding Coordinator**.
- The **Safeguarding Coordinator** will make contact with a young person's parent / guardian to advise on the situation and to inform them of the APTB process.

Where abuse by any leader (staff or volunteer) is **alleged**:

- Observations, conversations or concerns will be reported to the **Safeguarding Coordinator**, the person reporting may wish to phone through their concern but should follow up in writing (text or email) as soon as possible.
- The **Safeguarding Coordinator** will triage and evaluate the report and may choose to involve the **Designated Safeguarding Lead** or another member of the **Management Committee** depending on the nature of the report and the persons involved.
- The **Safeguarding Coordinator** will set out a plan of action (this may include interviewing the adult involved or suspending their involvement pending an investigation). Notwithstanding any action by APTB, information deemed credible or any serious allegation may be passed to law enforcement.
- The **Safeguarding Coordinator** will make contact with a young person's parent / guardian to advise on the situation and to inform them of the APTB process.
- All information and actions will be recorded in a dedicated log by the **Safeguarding Coordinator**.

Where abuse by any leader (staff or volunteer) is **witnessed**:

- Observations, conversations or concerns will be reported to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead** or the person there and then in charge.

- Where the matter is so obviously serious or criminal, the perpetrator should be removed from the premises and the police should be called. The young person must receive immediate care and their parent / guardian should be called to the location.
- Where the matter does not warrant the action outlined in the bullet above, the **Designated Safeguarding Lead** or the person there and then in charge will triage and evaluate the incident with the **Safeguarding Coordinator** to determine what immediate actions are required.
- The **Safeguarding Coordinator** will set out a plan of action (this may include interviewing the adult involved or suspending their involvement pending an investigation). Notwithstanding any action by APTB, any serious matter may be passed to law enforcement.
- All information and actions will be recorded in a dedicated log by the **Safeguarding Coordinator**.

Safeguarding Register

The Management Committee will maintain a safeguarding register, the **Safeguarding Coordinator** and **Designated Safeguarding Lead** have day-to-day responsibility for updating this.

The register will contain:

- Particulars of DBS checks (name of adult, date of check, certificate number, whether the check was acceptable and the three year anniversary date).
- Adult attendance (at all APTB sessions with young people).
- Young Person attendance (at all APTB sessions).
- Adult safeguarding training record (date session attended, date of next expected attendance)

A separate section of the register will contain a young person concern log for any abuse that is suspected, reported or alleged (per the recording process detailed in the sections above). It will be necessary to balance the privacy, confidentiality and need-to-know of persons involved against the necessity to keep a record (e.g. to maintain the ability to spot concerns through patterns of behaviour, to retain evidence and to fulfil statutory obligations), a key may be used to secure this balance (i.e. using letters or numbers in the log to refer to people with a corresponding key kept separately). The rules around retention of information are covered separately in our Privacy Policy.

The concern logs for matters relating to abuse suspected, alleged or witnessed which involve our staff & volunteers will be retained separately by the **Safeguarding Coordinator**.

Training Provision

It's vital our staff, volunteers and committee members maintain an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding, continuous training for adults is part of our commitment safeguarding commitment to young people:

- All adults - no matter their role with APTB - will be required to take part in annual safeguarding training. Safeguarding is part of the induction for all new staff and volunteers, overseen by the **Lead Recruiter**.
- To further embed safeguarding in our service provision, we will review this policy annually and involve our staff and volunteers in that conversation & process.

[The original version of this safeguarding policy was first adopted at the Management Committee meeting on 23 August 2014. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Management Committee].