

Safeguarding Policy

This policy establishes a framework to support staff in their practices and clarifies the organisation's expectations.

The staff and management of Mendip Activity Centre fully recognise that we all have a full and active part to play in protecting those who use our company from harm. All our staff believe that Mendip Activity Centre should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical and moral development to all customers.

DSL, Phil Turner, phil.turner@mendip.co.uk

Mendip Activity Centre:

- Seek to ensure that we undertake our responsibility with regard to protection of children and / or vulnerable adults and will respond to concerns appropriately
- Will support all customers' development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence
- Has a structured procedure within the company which will be followed by all members of staff in cases of suspected abuse
- Is aware of other agencies and contacts, especially within the Schools, Police and Social Services
- Ensures that all adults within our company who have access to children or vulnerable adults have been checked as to their suitability

Procedures

Our company procedures for safeguarding all customers, including children and vulnerable adults will be in line with recommendations detailed in our employee handbook.

The types of contact with children and/or vulnerable adults will include both regulated and controlled activity.

- regulated activity can be defined as 'frequent contact' with a vulnerable person (once a month or more) or as 'intensive contact' (3 days or more within a 30 day period),
- controlled contact includes ancillary roles, such as caretakers, where there may be contact with vulnerable groups, administrators or managers who can access data on vulnerable people.

We will ensure that staff who regularly come into contact with our customers for prolonged periods of time will have appropriate knowledge and training in safeguarding.

DBS checks will be conducted for specific roles where staff are working with children and vulnerable adults.

On commencement of employment, certain employees will need a DBS completed if they aren't already on the Update Service; if they don't have a DBS then they may need to join the update service once the DBS has been completed.

If a new employee is on the update service then we will need to see:

- the original DBS certificate or the DBS number so the update service can be checked
- the employees ID documents

Supporting Children and vulnerable adults

We recognise that a child or vulnerable adult who is abused or witnesses violence may find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self worth. We recognise that a child or vulnerable adult in these circumstances may feel helpless and humiliated. We recognise that a child or vulnerable adult may feel self blame. We recognise that the schools and other voluntary organisations may provide the only stability in the lives of children and vulnerable adults who have been abused or who are at risk of harm. We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child or vulnerable adult in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.

Our company will support all people by:

- encouraging self esteem and self confidence whilst not condoning aggression or bullying
- promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within their time at Mendip Activity Centre and when under our care
- providing continuing support to a young person about whom there have been concerns whilst at Mendip Activity Centre, by ensuring that appropriate information is forwarded confidentially to the appropriate person

If a safeguarding issue is brought to our attention we will:

- keep written records about the issue even if there is no need to make an immediate referral for action
- ensure that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from general information
- ensure that any person who may be at risk is accommodated appropriately

Confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to Safeguarding are confidential. All staff are aware that they cannot promise a child or vulnerable adult to keep secrets.

If a disclosure is made or a safeguarding issue arises we will follow the process below;

- **Listening:** Listen to what is being said carefully and patiently without displaying shock or disbelief and accept what is being said without judgment. Do not investigate, interrogate or decide if the child

is telling the truth. Do ask open questions like "Is there anything else that you want to tell me?" Do not ask the child to repeat what they have told you to another member of staff.

- **Reassure:** Reassure the child, but don't make promises that you can't be sure to keep, e.g. "everything will be all right now". Don't promise confidentiality – never agree to keep secrets. Acknowledge how difficult it must have been to talk.
- **Report:** Tell the child that you need to tell some people, explain what you have to do next and whom you have to talk to. Ensure they are safe before leaving them.
- **Record:** Make some very brief notes at the time and write them up in detail as soon as possible. Record the date, time, place and the actual words used by the child; be specific.
- **Refer:** As soon as possible refer the matter directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead – DSL which is the Head of Centre only. Do not discuss the case with anyone else. If the Head of Centre is not available then refer to the Managing Director.

Following the report, if necessary, the details will be forwarded to northsomersetsafeguarding.co.uk by the DSL – Head of Centre.

Supporting Staff

We recognise that staff working at Mendip Activity Centre who have become involved with a child or vulnerable adult who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with an appropriate person and seek further support if required.

Allegations against staff

We understand that a young person may make an allegation against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the DSL – Head of Centre or Managing Director. The person, on all such occasions, will discuss the content of the allegation with the North Somerset Local Safeguarding Children's Board, or the Safeguarding Advisory Service.

Whistle blowing

We recognise that children or vulnerable adults cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of colleagues or other Centre users.

Physical Intervention

Staff must understand that use of physical intervention is a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to them or another person. We recognise that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child or vulnerable adult may be considered under safeguarding or disciplinary procedures.

Bullying

Our policy on bullying is set out in a separate document and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under safeguarding procedures. This would be documented as an incident in its own right.

Professional boundaries

Professional boundaries are what define the limits of a relationship between a worker and a client. They are a set of standards we agree to uphold that allows this necessary and often close relationship to exist while ensuring the correct detachment is kept in place.

Mendip Activity Centre expects staff to protect the professional integrity of themselves and the organisation.

A personal relationship between a member of staff and a client who is under 18 is prohibited. This includes relationships through social networking sites such as Facebook.

If professional boundaries and/or policies are breached this could result in disciplinary procedures.

DSL - Phil Turner - phil.turner@mendip.co.uk

Document Reviewed - February 2024 - April 2025