

NEBULA GIRLS GROUP

CHILD PROTECTION and SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The purpose and scope of this policy

This Policy relates to the aims and activities (detailed in the Constitution) carried out by or on behalf of Nebula Girls Group

Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children and young people who receive Nebula Girls Group's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services
- to provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection. This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Nebula Girls Group, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England.

Supporting documents

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents.

- Role description for the designated safeguarding officer (DSO)
- Dealing with disclosures and concerns about a child or young person
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- Recording concerns and information sharing
- Child protection records retention and storage
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Behaviour codes for children and young people
- Photography and sharing images guidance

- Safer recruitment
- Online safety
- Anti-bullying
- Managing complaints
- Whistleblowing
- Health and safety
- Induction, training, supervision and support
- Adult to child supervision ratios

We believe that:

- **Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind**
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

The four main areas of abuse are Physical, Emotional, Sexual and Neglect.

Physical abuse: A form of abuse which 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: 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 a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a 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 (including cyber 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 abuse, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via

the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect: 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, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

There are other types of abuse that fit into these categories and are key areas for children and young people in the UK. These include but are not restricted to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Extremism, contextual safeguarding, mental health, domestic abuse and homelessness (Working Together guidance 2020).

Signs which may indicate abuse include: -

- Unexplained bruising and injuries.
- Sexually explicit language and actions.
- Sudden changes in behaviour, such as absences, withdrawal or having unexplained material goods.
- Something a child has said.
- A change, observed over a long period of time e.g. losing weight or becoming increasingly dirty/unkept.

Such signs do not necessarily mean a child or young person is being abused. Equally, there may not be any signs; you may just feel something is wrong. It is not a member of staff's responsibility to decide if it is abuse, but it is their responsibility to act on such concerns and report it accordingly. The signs of abuse are not always obvious, and a young person may not tell anyone what is happening to them. Individuals are often scared that the abuser will find out, and worried that the abuse will get worse. Quite often they think that there is no-one they can tell or that they will not be believed. Occasionally, individuals do not even realise what is happening to them is abuse. It is key for associates and volunteers to be able to recognise signs of abuse. This will be covered in-depth within annual training.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take. All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues

- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a nominated child protection lead (Designated Child Protection Lead DCPL), a deputy child protection lead and a Named trustee/board member for safeguarding
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
- recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions
- making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns
- Reviewing our safeguarding policies and procedures on a regular basis and at least once per annum

Role description for the designated safeguarding officer (DSO)

- To provide advice and support to staff and volunteers who have concerns a child is at risk of or is suffering from abuse and act as the organisation's first point of contact.
- To promote a safe environment for children, young people and staff within the organisation.
- To ensure all staff are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they are concerned a child/young person is subject to abuse or neglect.
- To be aware of the contact details of relevant statutory agencies (see below)

- Ensure any concerns about a child/young person are acted on immediately and clearly recorded.
- To make a decision as to whether to make a referral to the relevant Children's Social Care Initial Contact point
- To support staff to assist in information regarding concerns and support decision making about whether staff concerns are sufficient enough to notify Children's Social Work Services or whether other courses of action are more appropriate, for example Early Help or discussion with the Early Help Gateway
- The DSO or Deputy Lead in the absence of the DSO will record any reported incidents in relation to a child/young person or breach of Child Protection policies and procedures. This will be stored in a safeguarding file and its contents will be kept confidential and secure.
- Refer any cases to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) about any child protection concerns relating to a staff member or other organisations.
- Ensure safeguarding policies are known, understood and used appropriately by staff and volunteers and parents/carers.
- Ensure policies are available publicly.

Dealing with disclosures and concerns about a child or young person

Nebula Girls Group has a primary responsibility to ensure that concerns and any relevant information is passed onto Children's social care services, the independent Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and in emergencies, the police. These organisations have the statutory responsibility to make enquiries to establish whether a child or young person is at risk of harm. If a child or young person raises a concern, we will -

RECEIVE: Listen to the child/young person and accept what they are telling us.

REASSURE: Stay calm and reassure that they have done the right thing. We cannot promise confidentiality but will explain we may need to share what they are telling us to help them. Reassure them they are not to blame or in trouble for what they have told us.

RESPOND: Explain what will happen next and offer **SUPPORT** to the child/young person. Ensure they are safe.

RECORD: Record what was said as soon as possible after any disclosure using the same language/words used by the child/young person).

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) will take immediate action if there is a suspicion a child has been abused or likely to be abused

Contact points -

- If the child is at immediate risk of harm contact the Police – 999
- If there is no immediate risk of harm contact Children's social care team

Managing allegations against staff and volunteers

Any concerns involving the inappropriate behaviour of a staff member towards a young person will be taken seriously and investigated. The LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) will be informed where the incident occurred. The situation will be explained to the staff member (if deemed appropriate) who is at the centre of the allegation. They may be asked to cease working on a temporary basis until the matter is formally resolved, and after investigation this could lead to dismissal and further action being taken against the member of staff. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Support will be provided for the person who the allegation has been made against.

Any concerns involving the DSO directly should be reported to the Safeguarding Named Trustee in the first instance.

Recording of a Safeguarding concern

If anyone has a concern about a child or young person's welfare or safety, it is vital all relevant details are recorded. This must be done regardless of whether the concerns are shared with the police or other agencies. This will be done by -

- Keeping an accurate record of the date and time of the incident/disclosure.
- The date and time of the report.
- The name and role of the person to whom the concern was originally reported and their contact details.
- The name and role of the person making the report (if this is different to the above) and their contact details.
- The names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses to an event.
- What was said or done and by whom.
- Any action taken to investigate the matter.
- Any further action taken (such as a referral being made).
- The reasons why it was decided not to refer those concerns to a statutory agency (if relevant). The report must be factual. Any interpretation or inference drawn from what was observed, said or alleged should be clearly recorded as such.
- The record should always be signed and dated by the person making the report.

Child protection records retention and storage

Nebula Girls Group is committed to the safe and secure management of confidential information. All personnel information, including volunteer information, is stored securely and can only be accessed by those that require it to carry out their role. Only relevant information is stored and this is regularly reviewed and outdated information destroyed appropriately.

Nebula Girls Group is also committed to the rights of children and young people to confidentiality. However, where a member of staff feels that the information disclosed by a child or young person

should be referred to the DSO for investigation, the young person should be told that confidentially cannot be kept.

Photography and sharing images guidance

Occasionally photos or videos may be taken by us of the children and young people at our sessions for the purposes of showing parents/carers the activities we do, for promoting our organisation and for raising awareness of autism on online social media platforms.

Where this is the case, we will adopt the following -

- Any photos or videos of children will only be taken using Nebula's own equipment and following formal written parental/carer consent.
- Any images kept by Nebula will be held in secure folders
- Staff and volunteer must not use any personal equipment for the purposes of taking photos, videos or any other images of the children and young people at any of our sessions.
- Parents/Carers and visitors to any of our sessions will not be permitted to take photographs of any of the children or young people. In some circumstances, they may be able to take photos of their own child(ren) but this should be discussed with the Group Leader before doing so.

Safer Recruitment

Youth services would not exist without the thousands of staff and volunteers who deliver provision. There are many different roles to play in delivering quality services for young people and ensuring we encourage individuals that are suitable to work with young people is essential. Getting the right people in place is key to well organised and quality services delivered in a safe and supportive environment. Safe recruitment means taking steps to ensure only individuals who are suitable for working with young people, whilst keeping them safe from harm and risks, are appointed.

Under the Protection of Children Act 1999, all individuals working on behalf of, or otherwise representing, an organisation are treated as employees whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity.

When recruiting the following steps will be taken to support safer recruitment:

- We will draw up a role profile which highlights the key responsibilities and a specification to define the skills and experience required for the role.
- Prospective applicants will be made aware of the aims and philosophy of Nebula Girls Group and our stance on safeguarding children and young people and equal opportunities.
- All employees are to have at least one verified reference and a recent Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check relevant to their role.
- We will always ask for original identification documents to confirm the identity of the applicant, e.g. passport or driving licence and/or utility bill.

Online safety

The Internet is significant in the distribution of indecent photographs/pseudo photographs of children and young people. Adults often use the Internet to establish contact with young people to “groom” them for inappropriate or abusive relationships. In addition there is a risk of children and young people being able to view offensive and inappropriate content.

Where the internet is used for any of our activities or projects, these will be done on Nebula’s own appliances (ie laptop). A risk assessment will be drawn up to determine the appropriateness of any online content. All activities will be supervised and monitored by staff and volunteers.

In addition, users must not upload any material to the internet that could be considered inappropriate, offensive or disrespectful of others. Where this is done unintentionally, the user must exit the website and/or delete all material immediately. Breach of this will be treated as gross misconduct.

Anti-bullying

Everyone will be treated with dignity and respect at Nebula Girls Group. Bullying and harassment of any kind are in no-one's interest and will not be tolerated; this includes bullying or harassment of staff by visitors to Nebula Girls Group.

Sour sessions or over social media.

Bullying and harassment will be treated as disciplinary offences. (See our full Policy for more information)

Whistleblowing

Nebula Girls Group is committed to being open, honest and accountable. It encourages a free and open culture in its dealings between the Trustees and those working for Nebula Girls Group, both employees and volunteers.

This policy aims to help the Trustees and employees/volunteers to raise any serious concerns they may have about colleagues or their employer with confidence and without having to worry about being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way as a result.

It is written in the context of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which protects employees who ‘blow the whistle’ on malpractices within their organisation. (See our full Policy for more information)

Health and Safety

Nebula Girls Group is committed to keeping all staff, volunteers, visitors, children and young people safe within the working environment (see our full Policy for more information)

Induction, training, supervision and support

Nebula Girls Group is committed to ensuring that it meets its responsibilities in respect of child protection through the provision of support and training to staff.

We will ensure that staff and volunteers:

- are given a copy of our Safeguarding policies and procedures (including staff and volunteers Code of Conduct) and have its implications explained to them.
- receive regular training and supervision in child protection issues and are provided with any relevant information and guidance.
- are provided with supervision and management support commensurate with their responsibilities in relation to child protection, and their requirement to maintain caring and safe relationships with children.
- are made aware of the main indicators of child abuse.

Adult to child supervision ratios

Youth work organisations must ensure that an assessment is made, specific to the programme to ascertain staffing requirements, which will enable effective supervision of young people and effectively manage the associated risks. We will follow the national guidance which states that the level of supervision to be taken into account should be based on:

- The age and ability of the young people.
- The activity being undertaken.
- Children's growing independence.
- Children's need for privacy.
- The geography of the facility being used.
- The Risk Assessment

Links to other Child Protection services

NSPCC –

[For safeguarding training, resources and consultancy](#)

Call us on 0116 234 7246

[Help for adults concerned about a child](#)

Call us on 0808 800 5000

[Help for children and young people](#)

Call Childline on 0800 1111

SAFER BRADFORD

<https://saferbradford.co.uk/>

Contact details for Nebula Girls Group

Nominated child protection lead – Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

Name: **Lesley Brook**

Phone/email: **07814 486693** nebulagirlsgroup@gmail.com

Deputy Safeguarding Officer

Name: **Elena Preston**

Phone/email : 07507 770320 elpreston47@gmail.com

Nominated child protection named trustee

Kevin Campbell Wright

Email kevin@campbellwright.co.uk

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