

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE**

**AND ADULTS POLICY**

**1. Objective of the Safeguarding Policy**

1.1 The objective of YMCA Essex’s Safeguarding Policy is to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of all children, young people and adults who come on to our premises or who are involved in any way in YMCA activities.

1.2 The Board of YMCA Essex considers safeguarding to be our highest priority, as an integral part of our concern to ensure the health and safety of all service users, staff, volunteers, premises users, contractors, visitors and members of the public. Our Safeguarding Policy should be read in conjunction with all other relevant YMCA policies and procedures, including those for **Health & Safety**, **Confidentiality**, **Equalities and Inclusion**, **Whistleblowing** and **The Role of the Designated Board Member for Safeguarding**.

1.3 YMCA Essex takes very seriously the obligations and duty of care on organisations working with children and young people under The Children Act 1989 and the additions made in The Children Act 2004. The legislation defines children and young people as anyone up to age 18 and includes all children and young people regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion.

**2. YMCA Essex’s Approach to Safeguarding**

2.1 YMCA is committed to follow best practice in order to prevent any form of abuse or neglect of children, young people and adults while they are in the care of YMCA and in their broader lives. Our staff work closely with Essex County Council Social Care and other statutory safeguarding authorities on all aspects of safeguarding policy and practice.

2.2 We aim to develop a relationship of mutual trust and respect between staff and volunteers and service users, so that they feel confident and supported in sharing any information which may be relevant to safeguarding issues. We encourage staff and volunteers to share safeguarding concerns they may have about any persons, regardless of who they are, their level of seniority or their status within the community.

2.3 We recognise the need to develop and maintain a culture of listening to and engaging in dialogue with service users, including children as well as their parents or carers; seeking their views in ways appropriate to their age and understanding, and taking account of them both in individual decisions, including safeguarding decisions, and in the establishment, development or improvement of services.

2.4 YMCA Essex has put in place prompt, effective and clearly documented

response and reporting procedures which must be followed in all cases

where abuse is suspected, disclosed or discovered, regardless of the setting in which it occurs.

2.5 As part of its wider safeguarding responsibilities, YMCA has a duty under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to seek to keep children and young people free from radicalisation and to prevent them from being drawn into terrorism (the ‘Prevent’ duty). We follow the Government’s guidance and advice on how to identify potential risks, and how to build resilience to radicalisation and the ability to challenge extremist views by promoting the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.

**3. Responsibilities**

3.1 The Board ensures that a Senior Designated Person is appointed with overall responsibility for ensuring that any cases of abuse are reported and dealt with in accordance with the procedures, involving Essex County Council Social Care as appropriate and necessary. Currently the role of Senior Designated Person is carried out by Ben Gibbons, Head of Childcare and Youth Services.

3.2 The Chief Executive is responsible (through the Senior Designated Person if they are not the Chief Executive) for ensuring that the Safeguarding Policy and related procedures are implemented, and that all staff and volunteers know the policy and are given appropriate training to ensure the procedures operate effectively.

3.3 The Board also appoints a Designated Board Member (DBM) with responsibility for safeguarding, who on behalf of the Board may be advised in confidence of safeguarding cases and the action taken. The DBM also maintains an overview of safeguarding processes and their effectiveness so that the Board can be assured that YMCA’s safeguarding responsibilities are fully met. All staff are advised that they may raise any safeguarding concerns in complete confidence, directly with either the DBM or the Chair of the Board. Safeguarding is a standard agenda item for all meetings of the Board, enabling any relevant issues which need to be brought to the Board’s attention to be reported by the Chief Executive or the DBM. Currently the DBM is Caroline Bald.

3.4 The Board receives an annual report on whether there have been any safeguarding issues during the previous year internal to YMCA (i.e. involving YMCA staff and/or volunteers).

**4. Staff and Volunteers**

4.1 YMCA Essex is committed to ensuring safe recruitment, selection, supervision and operating practices for all staff and volunteers, and to provide them with the support, resources and training that they need. All Board Members, and all staff and volunteers working with children and

young people, are checked with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) at the appropriate disclosure level for their roles.

4.2 We ensure that there are appropriate supervision and call-out support arrangements in place to maintain safeguarding for all activities which take place outside normal working hours, including evening youth clubs, and evenings and nights at the YMCA Colchester residential accommodation.

4.3 Each of our staff and volunteers, paid and unpaid, has a duty to prevent abuse of children, young people and adults, and to report any abuse discovered or suspected in or outside the YMCA setting. This forms part of the induction process for all Board Members, staff and volunteers, which stresses the need for everyone to be alert to possible signs of abuse and to take the necessary action where this is discovered or suspected.

4.4 Any allegations or suspicions of ineffective safeguarding practice or of abusive behaviour by staff or volunteers will be immediately reported and rigorously investigated, and the necessary action taken. Failure to comply with safeguarding policies, procedures and responsibilities will be regarded as a potential disciplinary matter which may lead to action under the Disciplinary Procedure.

4.5 When a safeguarding allegation about a member of staff or a volunteer is received, depending on the nature of the allegation the Manager of that department or the Chief Executive will decide whether it is necessary to suspend the person about whom the allegation has been made while it is investigated, either because of the seriousness of the allegation or to prevent a safeguarding risk or to enable a full and fair investigation to take place. The Manager or the Chief Executive will appoint an Investigating Officer to carry out the investigation. If the investigation concludes that there appears to have been misconduct by a member of staff or a volunteer, the Disciplinary Procedure will be followed. Where the Manager and/or the Chief Executive are themselves involved/named in the alleged incident leading to the safeguarding allegation, the Chair of the Board will be consulted and may appoint a Board Member to be the Investigating Officer and/or a different Board Member to chair any subsequent disciplinary hearing, in order to ensure impartiality.

**5. Annual Review**

5.1 The Board’s Governance Committee will ensure that this Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually and updated as appropriate.