

The Advocacy Academy Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (February 2024)

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- *Children Act 1989*
- *United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991*
- *Data Protection Act 1998*
- *Sexual Offences Act 2003*
- *Children Act 2004*
- *Protection of Freedoms Act 2012*
- *Children and Social Work Act 2017*
- *Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023*
- *Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children*

SUMMARY

- All those in regular contact with children and young people are in a position to get to know those individuals well, to develop trusting relationships, observe changes in behaviour and may be chosen by the young person to share confidence and concerns. Regrettably, there are occasions where child abuse is alleged or suspected. All such situations must be taken seriously.
- It is the policy of The Advocacy Academy (TAA) to safeguard the welfare of children and all others involved in The Advocacy Academy's activities by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm, and neglect.
- It is the responsibility of each adult to ensure that their behaviour is appropriate at all times. A Code of Conduct is included in this document to give positive guidance for all adults. It is essential that all adults follow the Code of Conduct whether they work with children, young people or adults. Details of the steps to take if abuse is alleged or suspected are also included in this document. It is important to remember that The Advocacy Academy staff are not investigating officers.
- If there is an allegation or suspicion of abuse then this must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Imane Maghrani), whose responsibility it is to refer to Children's Social Care/police (who are the investigative agencies). At all times the welfare of the young person is paramount. Swift reporting will enable the investigative agency to give advice and take appropriate action. You have a legal duty of care to report any allegations or suspicions.
- These procedures exist not to discourage adults from being involved in the life of this service but to ensure, as far as possible, that people who may abuse children do not get the opportunity to do so.
- The Advocacy Academy also has a responsibility to safeguard and protect the personal data of young people. Any personal information relating to under 18s needs to be treated sensitively and (wherever possible) confidentially.

COMPLYING WITH THE ADVOCACY ACADEMY'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY

All adults coming into contact with children and young people through The Advocacy Academy must comply with the Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct.

As one such person, you are required to sign a copy of this document. By signing you agree to comply with the policy and follow the Code of Conduct. You need to read and understand the form prior to signing. If you have any queries, please speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If you suspect that a child/young person is being abused:

1. Immediately tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Imane Maghrani);
2. Record the known facts in writing and give them to the above person.

If a child or young person tells you they are being abused (a direct disclosure), or discloses abuse someone else has experienced (indirect disclosure):

RECEIVE, REASSURE, RESPOND:

1. Allow them to speak without interruption, accepting what is said;
2. Advise them that you will offer support, and reassure them that telling you was the right thing to do, but that you **MUST** pass information onto the Designated Safeguarding Lead, explaining the limits of confidentiality.
3. Inform them of your actions.
4. Immediately tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
5. Record the facts as you know them, including the account given to you by the young person and give a copy to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If you receive an allegation about any adult or about yourself:

1. Immediately tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
2. Record the facts as you know them in writing and give a copy to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
3. If the allegation is about the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Chief Executive Officer, tell the Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding (Mark Straw).

If you deal with the personal data of young people:

1. Handle all information with sensitivity and confidentiality, ensuring you are GDPR compliant.
2. Dispose of data relating to under 18s in a confidential manner.
3. Do not use the information inappropriately, especially if it will cause harm to the young person concerned.
4. Do not share details of young people on personal social media accounts.

CODE OF CONDUCT

You must:

- Treat all young people with respect.
- Treat all information and data (including photographs and video footage) pertaining to a young person with sensitivity.
- Avoid being alone with a young person or causing someone else to be alone with a young person because of your actions e.g. being late.

- Be sensitive to the needs of young people.
- Respect young people's chosen pronouns.
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy.
- Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviours that are inappropriate.
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned.
- Be aware that any physical contact with a young person can be misinterpreted and should always be avoided.
- Recognise that special caution is required when discussing sensitive issues with young people. Always use trigger warnings.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Operate within The Advocacy Academy's Safeguarding Procedures in the event of any disclosure/concern.

You must not:

- Act in a manner that excludes the young people you are working with.
- Make suggestive or derogatory remarks in front of young people.
- Have inappropriate contact with young people, whether physical, verbal or virtual.
- Undermine other staff members in front of young people.
- Show favouritism to any individual.
- Be under the influence of alcohol or other substances when working with young people.
- Take photographs of young people without express permission from relevant TAA staff.
- Transfer the personal data of young people to third parties without express permission from relevant TAA staff, the young person or their parent/guardian.
- Allow your own priorities to compromise the care, happiness or wellbeing of young people.
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking the facts.
- Either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.
- Rely on your good name or that of the organisation to protect you.
- Believe "it could never happen to me."

Intellectual Property

You must not share The Advocacy Academy's intellectual property with any other persons or organisations, and must not use them if undertaking volunteering for any other organisations besides The Advocacy Academy, or as an individual working independently of any other organisations.

MEMBERS OF THE ADVOCACY ACADEMY SAFEGUARDING TEAM

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Imane Maghrani

Associate Director Spark Programmes

07748 441 327

imane@theadvocacyacademy.com

Trustee with Safeguarding Responsibility

Mark Straw

Trustee

07881 967 729

mark@communitypraxis.com

Lambeth Safeguarding Children Board

First Response Team: 0207 926 5555

Out of Hours Emergency Team: 0207 926 1000

helpandprotection@lambeth.gov.uk

<https://www.lambethsaferchildren.org.uk/>

I have read and understand this document and agree to adhere to The Advocacy Academy's Safeguarding Policy.

Print Name:

Position held:

Signed:

Date:

GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE

1. Detection of abuse

If a TAA stakeholder tells you about an allegation of child/young person/vulnerable adult abuse then you must immediately refer them to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Imane Maghrani).

Do not attempt to assess yourself whether or not the allegations are true and do not attempt to deal with any suspicion or report of abuse yourself.

2. Dealing with a suspicion or awareness of abuse

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will, where practicable, obtain the following information:

- Contact details for the child/young person/vulnerable adult
- Details of the allegation or suspicion including, where known, the name of the alleged abuser and the circumstances which brought the alleged abuse to the attention of the stakeholder. This information should be recorded on the relevant forms.

3. Reporting suspicions or allegations of abuse

The Designated Safeguarding Lead may:

- Provide appropriate support for the child/young person/vulnerable adult
- Report the suspicion or allegation to the relevant agencies which may include the school, the Police and/or Social Services and/or the Disclosures and Barring Services and the Child Protection Board of the relevant Local Authority.
- Make a written record of the contact at any of these agencies to which the case is reported
- Provide appropriate support for the person against whom the allegation has been made
- Confirm to the person who originally reported the allegation that action has been taken.

4. Person against whom the allegations have been made

The Designated Safeguarding Lead may consider whether it is appropriate to take action against the individual where the suspicions or allegations are made against a TAA member of staff, stakeholder or young person. The individual will be notified in writing if any such action is to be taken.

The Advocacy Academy has a duty to take all allegations or suspicions of abuse seriously and to take the appropriate action, including referral to the Disclosures and Barring Service. In light of this anyone against whom an allegation has been made may be suspended from their involvement with The Advocacy Academy whilst appropriate investigations are undertaken. If the Disclosures and Barring Service subsequently bars a person against whom an allegation has been made (or at all), The Advocacy Academy will not be permitted to engage the individual in the programme.

5. Follow up procedures

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will confirm to you the action that has been taken. If you feel that insufficient action has been taken and you still have concerns for the safety and welfare of the child/young person/vulnerable adult you should report your suspicions or allegations again explaining why you feel the action taken to date is insufficient. If you feel the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not handling your concerns in line with this Safeguarding Policy, you may also report to the Trustee with responsibility for safeguarding.

6. Data Protection

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, individuals have a right of access to personal data that relates to them. This right of access may include a right to request access to records (in whole or in part) relating to

suspicious or allegations of abuse involving the person making the request.

If any staff member receives a request from a person for access to personal data (held either about that person or another individual) in relation to suspicions or allegations of abuse, the request should be forwarded to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Further advice on data protection can be obtained from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

There are four recognised types of abuse that are most likely to be encountered within the scope of The Advocacy Academy's work. It is important to know what they are and how to recognise them. Most types of abuse can take one or several of these forms, for example bullying and domestic violence often include both physical and emotional abuse. Please note that while in the below, reference is often made to children, this may also apply to young people who are not minors and vulnerable adults.

1. Physical Abuse

This is when a child is physically hurt or injured by a child or an adult. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It also includes giving a child harmful drugs or alcohol. Female genital mutilation is a form of physical abuse which is illegal in the UK. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child they are looking after.

2. Emotional Abuse

This is when adults deny children love or affection, or constantly threaten or humiliate them. Sarcasm, degrading punishments and ignoring a child are also forms of emotional abuse and undermine a child's confidence and sense of self-worth. 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 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.

3. Sexual Abuse

This is when a child is used sexually by an adult or young person. Sexual abuse can include kissing, touching the child's genitals or breasts, vaginal or anal intercourse and oral sex. Encouraging a child to look at pornographic material is also sexual abuse. Sexual abuse includes sexual exploitation, such as forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution. Sexual abuse is not limited to a particular gender or age dynamic (e.g. male adults harming young girls/women); young people of all genders can be subjected to sexual abuse at the hands of people of all genders.

4. 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. Once a child is born it may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers) 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.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF ABUSE

Please note that this list includes many signs of abuse, but is never exhaustive. Some signs overlap across different forms of abuse, as multiple types of abuse can occur in conjunction with one another. Please also note that the presence of one of these signs does not immediately indicate child abuse and whilst remaining vigilant, we should also resist the urge to make judgements.

1. Signs of physical abuse:

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls or games (injuries that are unlikely to have occurred in the course of normal child behaviour)
- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching)
- Cigarette burns
- Bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Neglect: under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed or going to great lengths to hide parts of the body, for example, wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Depression
- Withdrawn behaviour
- Running away from home

2. Signs of emotional abuse:

- A failure to thrive or grow
- Sudden speech disorders
- Persistent tiredness
- Development delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Being unable to play
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Fear of making mistakes
- Self-harm
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour

3. Signs of sexual abuse:

- Pain or itching in the genital/anal area
- Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas, - Sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy
- Sexually transmitted infections or diseases

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming withdrawn or aggressive
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares
- Running away from home
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
- Sexual drawings or language
- Bedwetting
- Eating problems such as over-eating or anorexia
- Self-harm and suicidal ideation
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- Substance or drug abuse
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money or expensive gifts
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- Acting in an inappropriate sexually explicit way with adults

4. Neglect

- Constant hunger
- Stealing or hoarding food
- Constantly dirty or smelly, lack of personal grooming or hygiene
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- Having few friends
- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised

GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING A SAFEGUARDING FORM

In the interests of safeguarding our young people and protecting all of our staff members and volunteers, there are a series of procedures in place. This document is a guide to completing Safeguarding forms should you feel it necessary to do so, but it may not cover every situation that may arise. Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Imane Maghrani, the Designated Safeguarding Lead at The Advocacy Academy.

Completing a Safeguarding form may take longer than you expect, but it is essential that it is completed properly because, in the event of a serious case, your forms may provide social workers with vital information and evidence.

Depending on the nature of the incident, you may need to complete more than one form. Before writing the report, please ensure:

- You include the name of the individuals present, the time, date, and place.
- Personal opinion or conjecture does not appear in the content. There must always be a foundation for the facts asserted.
- Detail of the action you took is written down, including names of people you contacted, and the time at which you contacted them.

- Named individuals must appear as named in full once in the document and appear as initials throughout the rest of the document. "At 12:00 on Monday 1 May, I, Joe Bloggs met Anne Bloggs at The Impact Hub in Brixton. AB appeared to..."
- The language you use is clear and everything you write is explained in full.
- Do not discuss child protection issues with your peers. Any queries you may have must be directed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead only.

WHICH FORM?

1. Accident

An accident form should be completed if a young person sustains an injury while they are engaging with The Advocacy Academy (e.g. during a programme or on our premises). As well as the context and location, you must include details of the injury itself; where on the body it is and its severity. The treatment must also be detailed, including any first aid administered, medication given or medical staff seen.

2. Disclosure

A disclosure occurs when a young person informs you of something previously not known that is a serious welfare concern, i.e. abuse. This is potentially one of the most serious child protection scenarios that you may encounter and it is essential that the form is completed accurately. Of particular importance is the exact wording of the conversation and what action you took. Please use quotation marks where possible.

3. Observation

An observation form must be used if you have seen something of concern during a session, programme or in other interactions within the scope of your role at The Advocacy Academy. This may be bruising or odd behaviour, for example. When completing this form, please aim for a full balanced and accurate description, rather than any personal opinion.

4. Incident

Should you have a concern that you believe may be a safeguarding issue that does not fit neatly into any of the above categories, but is something you still feel ought to be recorded for the safety the young people or staff, please use the incident form. Follow the general guidelines and discuss any queries with the Designated Safeguarding Lead only.

Safeguarding Accident Form

Staff Name:	Young Person's Name:
Date of Accident:	Time of Accident:
Record of Accident	
Circumstances of Injury	
Location where accident/injury occurred:	
Nature of injury sustained	
Name of witnesses	
Action taken	
Name of the person to whom the concerns were reported:	Date:
Name of the person the form was completed by:	Signed:

Safeguarding Disclosure Form

Staff Name:	Young Person's Name:
Date of Disclosure:	Time of Disclosure:
Record of Disclosure:	
Name of the person to whom the concerns were reported:	Date:
Name of the person the form was completed by:	Signed:

Safeguarding Incident Form

Staff Name:	Young Person's Name:
Date of Incident:	Time of Incident:
Record of Incident:	
Name of the person to whom the concerns were reported:	Date:
Name of the person the form was completed by:	Signed:

Safeguarding Observation Form

Staff Name:	Young Person's Name:
Date of Observation:	Time of Observation:
Record of Observation:	
Name of the person to whom the concerns were reported:	Date:
Name of the person the form was completed by:	Signed: