



Wace Chester Community Interest Company

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures

Date of Policy: April 2025

Due for Review: April 2026

Director responsible for safeguarding: Martin Ankers

Wace Chester Community Interest Company – hereafter called ‘the company’ – is committed to implementing any action needed to ensure a safe environment for children and young people.

The company is registered with the Community Interest Companies Regulator (company number 10697721).

The directors recognise that they have a duty of care and are committed to reviewing the policy and all its associated procedures annually.

This document contains both the policy and the set of procedures to be used to achieve the aims set out in the policy.

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Policy Statements

This policy applies to all directors, staff, volunteers and anyone representing the company.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect children and young people who receive the company's services. This includes the children of adults who use our services;
- To provide directors, staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

The company believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

Legal Framework

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

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998 / GDPR
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child / young person is paramount
- All children / young people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children /young people 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 the welfare of children and young people
- All allegations or suspicions of abuse must be reported and that the authorities have lead responsibility for any investigations

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

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for directors and volunteers, and by keeping up-to-date with safeguarding developments
- Developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
- Providing effective management for volunteers through supervision, support, resourcing and training
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, parents and volunteers
- Sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

Procedures

For the following procedures, the terms 'child', 'children', 'young person' and 'young people' refer to anyone under 18 years of age.

Part A - Preventing Abuse.

The company has a duty of care to all those with whom it comes into contact. We will maintain confidentiality at all times, except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at a risk of harm.

Currently, the company runs no activities at which it is expected there will be children present without a responsible adult. For all activities where there is a possibility that children will be present:

- The activity will be organised in such a way so as to minimise the opportunities for harm
- Appropriate risk assessments will be carried out
- Appropriate consent forms will be used
- Appropriate records will be kept (including an accident book)
- Adequate insurance will be in place (only activities that are approved by the insurers will be undertaken)
- Adults with appropriate skills (such as first aid) will be present

The company will make sure that all volunteers for such activities will be recruited in accordance with the principles laid out in the procedures Part B. All directors, paid staff and volunteers will work within a code of conduct (given in Appendix A). We will have a clear supervision structure, and a director will be appointed each year as the lead for safeguarding.

The directors will maintain a list of approved staff or volunteers, and only people on this list will be allowed to have contact with children or young people.

The directors will ensure that anyone representing the company (such as staff, directors, volunteers) will not meet with a child without a responsible adult (such as a parent) being present at all times.

All staff, directors and volunteers will keep contact with children to a minimum. Where possible, services that are provided from which children will benefit will involve a responsible adult and communication will be with responsible adults. Only official company (and not personal) methods of communication (e.g. email addresses) will be used.

We will ensure that all staff, directors and volunteers are provided with the appropriate resources, support and training.

The definitions of abuse relating to children will be taken as being those listed in Appendix B.

We will implement the e-safety policy and procedures laid out in Appendix C.

All of the directors will be made aware of all the procedures in this document, and both this document and all the relevant contact details will be given to the appropriate staff or volunteers. The directors will make sure that proper documentation is kept.

Part B – Recruitment Procedures

If the company does run a group or activity where children or young people will be present without responsible adult supervision, then the adults running, helping with or volunteering with this group will:

- Be given a written job description by their supervisor.
- Complete and sign an application form / declaration that states that there is no reason why they should not be working with children or young people.
- Have a face-to-face interview. The person(s) conducting the interview must not be closely related to the candidate, and the directors must approve of the interviewer. This interview will ensure that the candidate is aware of their role and what is expected of them (including safeguarding measures). The interview will also ensure that the candidate is aware of the support that they will receive in their role.
- Give references if requested to do so, and these will be taken up before the appointment.
- Allow the company to submit a check using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

After these steps have been taken, and if there are no reasons not to appoint the candidate, then the directors will approve the candidate and inform them that they have been appointed. The candidate's name will be added to the list of approved workers for the company. Appointments will be made subject to a designated probationary period.

- Paid workers (staff) may need additional checks.
- A DBS check will be deemed valid for a period of 5 years, after which the company will process another check.
- Each worker must attend a training session about the company's safeguarding procedures at least once every 3 years.
- Each worker will be made aware of the provisions of this policy (and will be given a copy of this policy), including the worker being made aware of how to report any concerns.

The company takes the position that it is unacceptable for there to be a sexual relationship between a worker and a child / young person. Any behaviour that might allow a sexual relationship to develop (even if this may be legal in other settings) between a worker and child / young person is unacceptable and must be avoided. The company also takes the position that it is not acceptable for a worker to form a romantic relationship with a child / young person.

If the company withdraws permission for an individual to engage in children's / youth work (or would have done so had the individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred), then the relevant authorities will be informed (such as the DBS).

Part C - Reporting Abuse and Concerns

If a child or young person or adult makes a disclosure that they are being abused, or they make an allegation against someone, the person being told:

- Should stay calm and listen carefully.
- Should assure the person making the disclosure or allegation that they have done the right thing in telling someone.
- Must not investigate, act alone or ask any leading questions.
- Should explain to the person making the disclosure or allegation that someone else needs to be told if anyone is at risk of harm, in order to help them.
- Must not promise to keep secret what they have been told.
- Should make a written record of the conversation (with as much detail as possible) and then sign and date this written record. This written record must be kept securely stored and not stored in a place where anyone else can read it.
- Must not discuss the situation with anyone else except those who need to know, such as the lead director for safeguarding.

Any disclosures, allegations or concerns must be reported.

If there is no immediate threat of harm, then:

- The lead director for safeguarding must be informed, and the written record as detailed above must be given to them. The written record will be kept securely and passed on to authorities if needed.
- If the lead director is not available, another director should be informed.
- If the allegation is against a director, then that director will not be informed – the allegation should be passed on to one of the other directors.
- The director will then decide if the case warrants a referral to the statutory authorities. If this is the case, the company will do everything necessary to comply with the statutory authorities.
- The director may also need to inform the company's insurers.

If the disclosure involves an immediate threat of harm or if the disclosure suggests that a criminal offence has been committed, the police will be contacted as a matter of urgency.

Information will be made readily available (including on the company's website) about how to contact the police or social services, so that allegations (for example, against the director responsible for safeguarding) can be made directly to them.

Flintshire County Council

The Duty Social Worker, Duty and Assessment Team, Social Services for Children, County Offices, Chapel Street, Flint, CH6 5BD.

Tel: 01352 701000

Out of hours duty social worker: 0345 0533116

Email for enquiries: ChildProtectionReferral@flintshire.gov.uk

Web: <https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Social-Services/Child-Protection.aspx>

Cheshire West and Chester Council

Integrated Access and Referral Team (iART) (Office hours): 0300 123 7047

Emergency Duty Team (Out of hours): 01244 977277

Emails:

i-ART@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

edt@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Web: <https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/health-and-social-care/children-and-young-people/report-a-concern-about-a-child/report-a-concern-about-a-child.aspx>

Appendix A – Code of Conduct

All workers should agree to the following code of conduct when working with children or young people:

- Do treat all people with dignity and respect
- Do not abuse the power and responsibility of your role. Do not belittle, scapegoat, put down or ridicule a child or young person (even ‘in fun’) and do not use inappropriate language (such as anything with sexual connotations, innuendo, flirting).
- Do not use any behaviour that has a sexual connotation
- Do act inclusively, seeking to make everyone feel welcome and valued
- Don’t exclude other children or workers from conversations and activities unless there is a good reason
- Do treat people with equal care and concern
- Don’t show favouritism (e.g. in selection for activities, in giving rewards, etc.) or encourage excessive attention from a particular child (e.g. gifts)
- Do encourage everyone to follow any behaviour agreement or ground rules and apply sanctions consistently
- Don’t threaten or use sanctions which have not been agreed, or make empty threats
- Don’t feel you have to deal with every problem on your own
- Do seek to diffuse aggressive or threatening behaviour without the use of physical contact
- Don’t use physical restraint except as a last resort to prevent injury. This should use minimum force
- Don’t spend time alone with children out of sight of other people
- Do make sure that any electronic communication is done with parental consent and is transparent, accountable, recorded and adheres to the e-safety guidelines in Appendix C
- Don’t keep communication with children secret, while still respecting appropriate confidences
- Don’t take photos or videos without consent, and only use them in the ways agreed. Any photos or videos must be used in accordance with the guidance given in the e-safety guidelines in Appendix C
- Do use physical contact wisely; it should be:
 - In public
 - Appropriate to the situation and to the age, gender and culture of the child
 - In response to the needs of the child, not the adult
 - Respectful of the child’s privacy, feelings and dignity
- Do not use physical contact which could be misconstrued as aggressive (e.g. rough games) or sexual
- Do respect children’s privacy

- Don't assume that children should tell you anything you ask just because you are a worker
- Do respect the right of children to wash, change and use the toilets in private
- Don't walk in unnecessarily or unannounced
- Do respect the right of children to make their own decisions and choices
- Don't work in ways that put your needs and interests before those of the children you work with
- Do encourage respect for difference, diversity, beliefs and cultures
- Don't discriminate or leave discrimination or bullying unchallenged

I agree to abide by the above code of conduct:

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Appendix B – Definitions of Abuse

The following definitions are taken from *Working together to safeguard children (March 2015)*:

Abuse: A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

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 maltreatment of a child, 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.

Appendix C – Online Safety Policy

The company recognises that children and young people should be able to use the internet and other online technologies and communication technologies in a safe and secure way.

Children will not be given ways to access the internet using the company's equipment, except for the fact that they are able to use the free wi-fi provided to the public.

Training of Volunteers

It is essential that all volunteers receive online safety awareness training and understand their responsibilities (including the procedures set out in this policy).

Training will be offered as follows:

- Every new volunteer will receive a copy of this policy and the directors will ensure that they understand this policy and the acceptable use policy for volunteers.
- Each volunteer will be able to access appropriate training, paid for (where necessary) by the company.

Professional Identity of Volunteers

Communication between adults and children / young people, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit boundaries. This includes the use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, social networks, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, webcams, websites and blogs.

When using digital communications, anyone representing the company should:

- Only make contact with children and young people for professional reasons and in accordance with the policies and guidance of the group.
- Not share any personal information (like e-mail address, mobile phone number, home telephone number) with a child or young person.
- Ensure that all communications are transparent and open to security.
- Be careful in their communications with children and young people so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation.
- Make every effort to ensure that professional (anything related to the charity / company) and personal online lives are kept separate.
- Not post information online that could bring the company into disrepute.
- Only communicate using the company's systems (like email addresses, social networks, website). To maintain accountability, all the directors will have full access to the company's public-facing means of communication (such as the main e-mail address, Facebook, Twitter).

Website

The company's website will operate using the following principles:

- The website will have pages (that are clearly linked to) that show the company's website privacy policy and data protection policy.
- Users of the site will have full control of what information can be seen by others.
- Members of the site (i.e. those with a username & password that can login to a members' area) will be able to see all the information that the charity / company holds about them and they will be able to delete their account any time they choose.
- There will be no age restriction applied to becoming or being a member of the website (the website currently has no facility for the public to become a member).
- The site will use a security certificate to help protect information sent to and from the site.

The company also has a Data Protection and Website policy.