Safeguarding Children and Young People

CLASS Policy Framework

Adopted on: 21st July 2020

Most recent revisions approved on: 23 September 2025

CLASS Safeguarding Team

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Sophie King, CLASS CEO (07816 752 525 / sophie.king@class-uk.com)

Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Kate Parsons, Operations Manager (07474 489 590 / kate.parsons@class-uk.com)

Board Safeguarding Lead: Melanie Lombard, Chair of Trustees (07811 371 661 / m.b.lombard@sheffield.ac.uk)

1. Introduction

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

CLASS has a duty to ensure that it has appropriate policy and procedures in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and to protect Adults At Risk from abuse, harm or neglect (see Adults at Risk of Harm policy).

This policy is discussed regularly by the above CLASS Safeguarding Team, and reviewed, endorsed, and approved by the Board of Trustees every two years or when legislation changes.

2. Purpose and scope of this policy

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of CLASS, including senior managers and the board, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students. The purpose of this statement of policy and procedures is:

- to protect from harm any children or young people who we may come into contact with during the course of our work;
- to provide staff, board members and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding children and young people;
- to provide staff, board members and volunteers with guidance on processes for reporting, recording and taking action in response to safeguarding concerns.

Safeguarding within the Ageing Well in Place in Hulme project (AWiPiH)

Ageing Well in Place in Hulme is a partnership project convened by CLASS and Aquarius Community Savers which also involves a range of participating agencies.

One key partner is One Manchester Ltd, the registered social landlord for Hopton Court and Meredith Court tower blocks in Hulme which are the two main sites where AWiPiH activities take place at present.

CLASS staff working on this project will follow the steps in Section 7 of One Manchester Ltd's Safeguarding Children and Young People policy which is available to read in full at: https://www.onemanchester.co.uk/policies/safeguarding-children-and-young-people-policy.

In summary, (and following discussion and agreement with One Manchester) any safeguarding concerns that do not involve an immediate risk of harm will be reported to the One Manchester Neighbourhoods Team either:

1. To a Neighbourhood Officer (CLASS project staff have these names and contact details; there is a high turnover of staff at this level)
2. To the Neighbourhood Manager, Richard Monyei 07423 031 728 / richard.monyei@onemanchester.co.uk;
3. Or, if neither the relevant Neighbourhood Officer or the Neighbourhood Manager can be reached, One Manchester Ltd have requested that CLASS staff report these concerns via the *"customer resolution centre on 0330 355 1000, if this is out of hours, you will be transferred to this team, who will contact the out of hours duty manager if required".*

In all cases when CLASS staff or volunteers assess that there is an immediate risk of harm, they must follow the procedure set out in Section 9 (pp7-10) of this CLASS Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Harm policy.

3. Legal Framework and safeguarding guidance

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and young people from harm in England and Wales including The Children and Social Work Act (2017), Working together to safeguard children (2015), and The Children Act 1989 and 2004; as well as guidance from NCVO and the NSPCC.

4. Supporting documents

This policy statement should be read alongside other CLASS organisational policies and guidelines including:

- Safeguarding adults at risk of harm
- Health and safety
- Serious incident reporting
- Data protection
- Recruitment and selection
- Grievance and disciplinary
- Complaints
- Code of conduct

5. Definitions

Child/Young Person
A child or young person means someone who is under 18 years of age, that is, has not reached their 18th birthday.

Child abuse or neglect
Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse means a child's rights and needs are not being met as defined in The Children's Act 2004 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. Abuse may occur through the actions of an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Where a child is disabled, injuries or behavioural symptoms may mistakenly be attributed to his/her disability rather than the abuse. Similarly, where a child is black or from a minority ethnic group, aggressive behaviour, emotional and behavioural problems and educational difficulties may be wrongly attributed to racial stereotypes, rather than abuse. Cultural and religious beliefs should not be used to justify hurting a child. Safeguards for all children and young people are the same regardless of disability or ethnicity.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse 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 or causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is called Induced Fabrication Illness by a Carer (formerly known as Munchausen's by proxy).

Emotional abuse

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 conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Witnessing the harm of another person, such as in the case of domestic violence, is a form of emotional abuse. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including sexual exploitation, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, and whether it is for money or reward or not. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative contact (e.g. rape and buggery) or

non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in seeing or receiving or sending sexually suggestive emails or text-messages, or inappropriate behaviour in Internet chat rooms, involving children looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material of watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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. Neglect may occur as a result of maternal substance abuse during pregnancy. Once a child is born, neglect 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.

Abuse of Disabled Children

Disabled children are at increased risk of abuse and those with multiple disabilities are at even more significant risk both of abuse and neglect. Parents of disabled children may experience multiple stresses. This group of children may be particularly vulnerable to abuse for a number of reasons including:

- Having fewer social contacts than other children
- Receiving intimate personal care from a larger number of carers
- Having an impaired capacity to understand what they are experiencing is abuse or to challenge the abuser
- Having communication difficulties resulting in difficulties in telling people what is happening
- Being reluctant to complain for fear of losing services
- Being particularly vulnerable to bullying or intimidation
- Being more vulnerable to abuse by peers than other children

Disability is defined as:

- A major physical impairment, severe illness and/or a moderate to severe learning difficulty
- An ongoing high level of dependency on others for personal care and the meeting of other basic needs

Bullying

Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group). There is increasing use of new technologies as a tool for bullying and such incidents should be taken seriously.

Self-harming behaviour

Children and young people who harm or attempt to harm themselves should be taken seriously. The self-harming behaviour in itself may cause impairment of the

child's health or development and in some circumstances present significant harm or the risk of significant harm. Self-harming behaviour may also arise alongside eating disorders and/or drug misuse.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation is a collective term for procedures that include the removal of part or all of the external female genitalia for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious physical and mental health consequences both at the time and in later life. The procedure is typically performed on girls of 4 - 13 years but may be performed on new born babies or on young women. FGM can result in death. FGM is a criminal offence (Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 2003). Under the act it is an offence to arrange, procure, aid or abet female genital mutilation. Parents/carers may be liable under this act. It is also an offence to allow the procedure to be undertaken in another country. Where agencies become aware that a girl is at risk of FGM a referral should be made to Children's Social Care.

Domestic Violence as Abuse

Domestic Violence is defined by the Home Office as: 'Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. This includes issues of concern to black and minority ethnic (BME) communities such as so called 'honour killings'.'

The term domestic violence is used to include any form of physical, sexual or emotional abuse between people in a close relationship. It can take a number of forms such as physical assault, sexual abuse, rape, threats and intimidation. It may be accompanied by other kinds of intimidation such as degradation, mental and verbal abuse, humiliation, deprivation, systematic criticism and belittling. The term domestic violence includes the term domestic abuse.

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is one that is conducted without the full consent of both parties and where duress is a factor. Forced marriage can amount to sexual and emotional abuse and put children or adults at risk of physical abuse. In circumstances where there are concerns that someone is at imminent risk of a forced marriage urgent referrals should be made to the Police (999 or 101) and Children's Social Care. If you are trying to stop a forced marriage or help someone leave a forced marriage, contact the government's forced marriage unit https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage. In the case of a young person at risk of forced marriage it is likely that an initial discussion with the parent, carer or other community member may significantly increase the level of risk to the young person.

Internet Harm

Sexual exploitation (see above) also includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in seeing or receiving or sending sexually suggestive emails or text-messages, or inappropriate behaviour in Internet chat rooms, involving children

looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material of watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Trafficking

Children can be trafficked into, within and out of UK for many reasons and all different types of exploitation. Trafficking is a form of child abuse and needs an appropriate safeguarding response. Any child who is recruited, transported, transferred, harboured or received for exploitative reasons is considered to be a victim of trafficking, whether or not they have been forced or deceived. This is because it is not considered possible for children in this situation to give informed consent. Even when a child understands what has happened, they may still appear to submit willingly to what they believe to be the will of their parents or accompanying adult. It is important these children are protected too.

Children are trafficked for many reasons, including sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, labour, benefit fraud, forced marriage, begging and involvement in criminal activity such as pick pocketing, theft and working on cannabis farms. They are likely to be subjected to other forms of abuse, as a means of coercing and controlling them.

Trafficking is carried out by individual adults and organised crime groups.

Sexual activity with a child/young person under the age of 18, or living away from home.

Consensual sexual activity involving a young person under 18 years is not always abusive, but it may be. A child's or young person's ability to consent can be impaired due to lack of freedom, capacity or choice; for example, because of an age/power imbalance; because it is leading into sexual exploitation; because one person is in a position of trust with the other (e.g. a teacher); where one person is vulnerable because of disability or capacity; where the child/young person is in the care of another away from home. No child under the age of 13 or under is able to consent to any sexual activity according to the Sexual Offences Act (2003).

Child Criminal Exploitation

Child Criminal Exploitation is common in 'county lines' and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Criminal exploitation of children is broader than just county lines, and includes for instance children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft.

6. We believe that:

- the welfare of children and young people is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take;

- all children and young people, 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 are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues;
- working in partnership with the parents, carers and other agencies responsible for children and young people is essential in promoting their welfare.

7. We recognise that:

- It is the responsibility of each CLASS staff member, and each of our Board members and volunteers, to prevent the neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children and young people and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.
- CLASS has a responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures, which are designed to prevent and to be alert to such abuse.

8. We will seek to keep children and young people safe in the following ways:

To achieve a safe organisational ethos, we will:

- Treat all children, young people and adults fairly in being able to benefit from our work regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion
- Have in place quality assurance processes that help us to ensure we are all safeguarding in practice
- Promote the safety of children, young people and adults at risk in all our work, including by encouraging the groups we work with to have safeguarding training and policies and procedures in place

To achieve a safe working environment, we will:

- Ensure the welfare and safety of children, young people and adults at risk is paramount in all our activities.
- Listen to the people we work with and take account of what they tell us in making any decisions in relation to them.
- Take all reasonable steps to protect the people we work with from harm, discrimination, and degrading treatment.
- Regularly assess and review safety risks which arise from premises, activities, equipment and travel arrangements, as outlined in the CLASS Health and Safety policy.

To achieve safe processes, we will:

- Take all suspicions and allegations of abuse, from inside or outside the organisation, seriously, and respond to them promptly and appropriately.
- Be clear about everyone’s roles and responsibilities.
- Implement safeguarding procedures that are compliant with the expectations of the safeguarding arrangements in the areas where we operate.

- Have in place clear arrangements for how we would respond to concerns about how we implement safeguarding in practice within the organisation.

To achieve safe information, we will:

- Be clear with the people we work with about how the things they tell us will be used.
- Publish our Safeguarding policies on our website.
- Communicate promptly and clearly within CLASS and with external agencies and partners and follow the requirements of information sharing protocols in the localities in which we operate.
- Keep good records of our work with community groups and also of our management of staff member's work.
- Hold information about people and groups we work with, with care, and use it for agreed purposes only.
- Confidential Safeguarding records will be kept for 7 years

To achieve safe staff, we will:

- Recruit Board members, staff and volunteers with regard to their suitability for work with adults at risk (we do not work directly with children), including use of Disclosure and Barring Service checks (*see also Recruitment, induction and training policy for DBS check policy and procedure).*
- Provide Board members, staff and volunteers with guidance and training in their safeguarding role, and ensure they have access to our policies and procedures.
- Ensure that all CLASS staff carrying out work directly with community groups and individuals complete Safeguarding Level 3 training.
- Make sure everyone always has access to advice on safeguarding in the course of their work.
- Be clear with everyone what their individual role and responsibility is in safeguarding.
- Support staff and volunteers to carry out their job with appropriate supervision.

9. Procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns about a child or young person

Staff members, volunteers, or Boards of CLASS who have safeguarding concerns about a child or young person should follow the procedure below and discuss these concerns as a matter of urgency with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If the Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, you should contact the Deputy Safeguarding Lead. If both these people are unreachable, you should contact the Board Safeguarding Lead. Contact details for all these Leads are provided in the header section of this policy document.

If an allegation has been raised about the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or another volunteer or staff member of CLASS, you must report the allegation or concern to the

Board Safeguarding Lead (contact details are in the header section of this document). The Board Safeguarding Lead will treat any such report in confidence so that there is no risk of any form of recrimination on the person raising a concern about a staff member or volunteer of CLASS.

The Board Safeguarding Lead will follow the below procedure to protect the Safeguarding needs of the adult in question and will also follow the CLASS Complaints policy.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Step One
A child/young person makes an allegation or raises concerns about abuse, or your assessment of the level of risk to a child changes
Or
An allegation or concern is raised by someone about a child/young person</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">● Listen to the concern – do not ask detailed questions at this stage.
● Believe the child/young person and reassure them they have done the right thing by talking to you.
● Be very clear that you can't keep the information they have shared with you a secret but that you will only share it with appropriate professionals and anyone necessary to protect them from harm.
● Explain what you will need to do with the information and what might happen next.
● Information on what will happen after making a referral to Children's Services at Manchester City Council can be found here and you will be asked to read this as part of your induction:
● https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/info/100010/social_services/3843/tell_us_about_someone_being_abused_or_neglected/2</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Is the child/young person under 18 years of age?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Yes</td><td>No</td></tr>
<tr><td>Follow this safeguarding procedure for a child/young person under 18 years</td><td>Refer to the separate CLASS Safeguarding adults at risk policy</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Step Two
● Make an immediate confidential record of the concern or allegation, include details of the referrer, any alleged victim, any alleged perpetrator/s, date and time, how received (phone, text, email, letter, in person)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Step Three
● Discuss what immediate action to take with the CLASS Safeguarding Lead. If s/he is not immediately available, then discuss with the Board Safeguarding Lead. If neither are immediately available, discuss with a colleague if possible.
● However, if no-one is immediately available, proceed directly to Step Four which must be carried out as soon as possible.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Step Four
● You, or the Safeguarding Lead or Board Lead, must refer your concerns to the Duty Lead within Children's Services for the relevant Local Authority as soon as possible.
● The contact details for making a referral to Manchester City Council are: 0161 234 5001 / mcsreply@manchester.gov.uk
● Follow up by emailing all details (see Appendix 1) to the agreed recipient within 48 hours of referral. The form must say which Safeguarding Lead and which Children's Services Lead, have agreed the referral.</td></tr>
</table>

Step Five
● Check that all actions have been taken. ● Record and sign all discussions and actions taken on the file confidentially.

10. Procedure for supporting an investigation or plan for safeguarding a child or young person.

This process applies where Children's Social Care is investigating an allegation or concern under safeguarding procedures and CLASS has been or is involved as a referrer, or the subject of the referral is known to us.

It is not the referral procedure for a safeguarding concern or allegation – see above Steps One through Five.

Procedure for Supporting a Safeguarding Investigation, or Plan
Step Six You have followed the procedure for making a safeguarding referral Or You are working with someone who is subject to a safeguarding investigation or plan
Step Seven ● Respond to requests for reports or information from the relevant authorities. ● Log all requests and responses on the file.
Step Eight ● Record the outcome of any discussions with other agencies or partners and any decisions about the child or young person and pass on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (the Safeguarding Lead should share this with the Board Safeguarding Lead). ● The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Board Lead will then be responsible for confirming whether there is any further action required by CLASS.

11. Whistleblowing

If you've reported a situation and are worried it is not being dealt with properly, speak to a whistleblowing specialist.

For independent advice speak to Protect who are specialists in whistleblowing related to charities via their advice line: 020 3117 2520

For whistleblowing relating to children, use the NSPCC's dedicated whistleblowing line: 0800 028 0285 or find out more about it on the dedicated whistleblowing page.

If you want to know about whistleblowing to the Charity Commission about a charity then you can read the Charity Commission whistleblowing guidance.

Appendix 1: Safeguarding referral form

TO:

Agency:	*(e.g. Children's Social Care, Manchester City Council)*
Worker:	
Address:	
Telephone:	
Email:	

FROM:

Agency:	**Community-Led Action and Savings Support**
Lead/Member:	
Address (where based):	
Address of the organisation	
Telephone:	
Email:	

SUBJECT: Safeguarding Referral

Name of child/young person being referred:	
DOB / Age:	
Address	
Ethnicity	
Reason for Referral:	
Details:	

REFERRAL AGREED WITH:

Named worker:	
Name of Agency:	
Date and Time:	

NAME of CLASS staff member/volunteer involved with the Child or Young Person at risk (if different to the person making the referral):

Date sent: **Time:**

Please acknowledge receipt to the CLASS representative named above.