

Child Safeguarding Policy

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SECTION 1

1.1 Policy Statement

The Kids Network (TKN) supports children at a crucial time in their development by providing them with a volunteer mentor to help build their confidence, resilience and curiosity for ambitious futures.

As an organisation, TKN is committed to promoting the welfare of all children and young people to keep them safe from abuse, harm, neglect, radicalisation and exploitation. A child or young person is any one under the age of 18, and all children and young people have an equal right to protection regardless of any personal characteristics. We believe no child or young person should be subject, or vulnerable to, abuse of any kind.

We recognise that, as an organisation working with children and young people, we have additional responsibilities to ensure we have measures, practices policies and the right organisational culture in place to protect children from harm perpetrated by those who have a duty to keep them safe. We have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

This policy outlines TKN's commitment to keeping children safe from any possible harm caused by staff, operations or programmes. It sets out the collective and individual expectation and responsibility for all representatives of TKN to comply with legislation, codes of conduct and behaviours required as a representative of TKN.

1.2 Scope of this Policy

All TKN staff, trustees and volunteers must act in accordance with this policy in both their professional and personal lives. This includes, but is not limited to: TKN employees, volunteers (including volunteer mentors), Trustees and other affiliates of TKN.

Donors, journalists, celebrities, politicians and others must be made aware that this policy applies to them when they act with or on behalf of TKN or while interacting with children in our network. This policy applies during or outside of working hours, every day of the year.

1.3 Policy Principles

- The welfare of a child is of paramount importance and will be at the heart of all decisions when planning, organising, advising on and delivering TKN's mission.
- TKN believes all children, regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socio-economic situation and identity have a right to equal protection from all types of harm.

- TKN will actively engage with children and their carers to ensure they are valued, listened to and respected.
- TKN will ensure staff and volunteers have access to this policy as well as appropriate safeguarding materials, training and support to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people.
- TKN will proactively assess, monitor, respond and learn from safeguarding risks.
- The contact details of the Designated Safeguarding Officer will be given to mentees, their families/ caregivers and other representatives so they may report any worries or concerns.
- TKN will review this policy at least annually, sooner if additional safeguarding risks are identified or if there is a change in government legislation and/or advice.
- TKN will record, store and use information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and internal policies and procedures.

1.4 Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility of all representatives of TKN, and requires effective collaboration between volunteers, staff, agencies and professionals that have different roles. In addition to the responsibilities outlined in this policy, individuals at different levels of the organisation have additional responsibilities, to ensure there are clear lines of accountability.

Employees

Employees of The Kids Network may have additional responsibilities for ensuring safeguarding processes, including: monitoring attendance registers for mentoring sessions, gaining consent and medical information in advance of supporting a mentee, and keeping a log of safeguarding concerns in line with the data protection policy.

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

The DSO is the person appointed to take lead responsibility for safeguarding and protection at TKN. The Volunteer Coordinators are the first point of contact to monitor and record concerns and liaise with schools. This is then escalated to the DSO to receive and respond to safeguarding and protection concerns. The DSO is provided with quality training to ensure they can fulfil their role.

The DSO is **Amy Campo McEvoy, Head of Programmes**

a.campomcevoy@thekidsnetwork.org.uk or 07718 602048

Their role is to oversee and ensure that our safeguarding policy is embedded into organisational culture and adhered to.

Their responsibilities are:

- ✓ monitoring and recording concerns
- ✓ making referrals to social services, the police or any other government or regulatory body as necessary, without delay
- ✓ liaison with other agencies
- ✓ arranging training for all staff

Board of Trustees

All board members are expected to hold themselves and the organisation accountable for ensuring safeguarding is championed within TKN and a culture of safe practice and safeguarding is embedded. The Safeguarding trustee leads on guidance, support and accountability, with support from the People and Safeguarding Committee.

Safeguarding is a recurring agenda item at board meetings and the DSO is expected to submit a safeguarding report ahead of every board meeting.

The Safeguarding Trustee is **Amy Henderson**, who can be contacted on:

ahenderson@live.co.uk or 07738 003394

SECTION 2

2.1 Safeguarding Code of Behaviour

All TKN employees, volunteers, including volunteer mentors, Trustees and other affiliates of TKN must follow the below code of behaviour to keep children safe.

DO:

- Treat all children and their families with dignity and respect
- Allow TKN mentees to talk about their concerns
- Take all allegations, concerns and suspicions of abuse, harm, neglect, radicalisation and exploitation seriously and log/report them straight away. If a child discloses something to you, listen carefully, only ask questions to clarify and tell them you need to pass this information on to keep them safe
- Challenge attitudes and behaviours that contravene this code of behaviour or our Safeguarding policy, procedures and/or guidelines

DO NOT:

- Spend excessive amounts of time with TKN mentees alone, isolated from others. Mentors should always meet TKN mentees in public, populated places and restrict session to between two to three hours
- Offer a lift to a TKN mentee. In the exceptional circumstance where it is unavoidable or would put the child in danger if you did not, ensure it is done with the full knowledge and consent of a TKN staff member and/or the children's caregiver
- Engage in rough physical activities including horseplay with TKN mentees – apart from structured activities that have been approved by TKN in advance, such as boxing or rock-climbing
- Engage in sexual activities or make sexually suggestive comments of any kind about or to a child under any circumstances
- Take part in inappropriate physical, verbal or sexual behaviour with or in the presence of children (including online or via mobile phone) or knowingly put a child in danger or harm's way
- Let an allegation a child makes go unrecorded and unreported or allow personal relationships to prevent you from reporting an incident
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves. Any personal care must always be agreed in advance by TKN and parents/ carers
- Take TKN mentees to your own home or meet with them in private
- Exchange personal details or send private messages, online or via mobile phones, to children you've met through The Kids Network. You should not befriend a mentee or caregiver on any form of social media
- Leave a child unattended whilst in your care or place a child in unsafe situations or situations that are inappropriate for their age (unless in situations of bathroom breaks where privacy is needed)
- Engage in relationships that could be an abuse of trust, for example, a romantic or sexual relationship with a mentee's family member
- Disclose personal or sensitive information about a mentee or their family with anyone other than a TKN staff member.

2.2 Safer Recruitment

- TKN will recruit staff, volunteers, Trustees and other affiliates in line with safer recruitment best practice; ensuring all necessary checks are carried out prior to commencement.
- This process is outlined in TKN's Safer Recruitment Process and includes (but is not limited to): a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, suitable references and interview questions that ensure potential recruits understand and accept their responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

2.3 Training

- TKN commits to ensuring staff, volunteers and Trustees have quality training and continuing professional development in child safeguarding, child protection and

reporting mechanisms, so they are competent and confident to undertake their roles and responsibilities.

- Staff and volunteers must attend safeguarding training before meeting mentees.

Staff at TKN must undertake refresher training at least every two years or sooner if there is a change in procedure or role requirements change.

We trust and have confidence in all our staff to put the best interests of children first and to make safe and fair decisions when it comes to their safeguarding responsibilities. However, we don't expect them to have all the answers and recognise that engaging with safeguarding concerns can be emotionally demanding. We are therefore committed to providing support for staff and encourage them to reach out to their line manager, the DSO, CEO and Trustees if needed. They will be able to offer guidance and provide practical support.

Recognising abuse in children and young people.

As part of our commitment to safeguarding, we train our team, as appropriate, to recognise abuse in children and young people. Our team understands that it is important to be observant, to listen to what is being said and record, for example, whether what they are observing and being told about an injury is consistent with the injury. Our team understands that abuse may involve, among other indicators:

- alcohol and substance misuse
- 'county lines'
- concealed pregnancy
- discriminatory actions
- domestic violence, including "honour"-based violence
- emotional abuse
- exploitive use of technology (e-safety)
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- financial or material abuse
- gambling
- hate and "mate" crime
- misuse of technology
- modern slavery
- neglect and acts of omission
- organisational or institutional
- psychological abuse
- physical abuse
- radicalisation
- self-neglect
- sexual

- sexual exploitation
- spiritual abuse
- trafficking

This list is not exhaustive.

Handling disclosures

It is not the responsibility of staff or volunteers to investigate suspected abuse, but it is their responsibility to handle disclosures sensitively and seriously and report all concerns in line with guidance on reporting child abuse.

When a disclosure is made by a child, young person or adult at risk, it is important to remember to:

- take what they are being told seriously
- stay calm and reassure them
- do not investigate
- do not delay

and always

- seek advice from the DSO
- make a careful record of anything they are told or observe, and date and sign this record.

They understand that a disclosure may come from someone informing a team member that:

- they have or are being abused
- they have concerns about someone else
- they are themselves abusing or likely to abuse someone else

2.4 Reporting Concerns

The following information covers three steps to report any information on child safety

If you suspect, see, hear or witness a concern or incident that suggests a child might be at risk of harm or abuse, you MUST:

- 1 Ensure the child is not in immediate danger. If you believe they are at immediate risk, call the Emergency Services on 999 or 101.

- 2 If the child is not in immediate risk, or once they are safe, inform the DSO – or the NSPCC outside of normal office hours – immediately (at least within 24 hours of the concern occurring), both in writing and over the telephone. Remember, do not investigate – just report.
- 3 Use the Session report or Safeguarding Concern Form to record your actions, include anything the child said, anything you asked the child, and your observations. This may be used as evidence later so record only the facts as you know them, do not offer any personal interpretations or make any assumptions.

If a staff member or representative feels unable to raise a concern through any of the reporting routes outlined in this policy, they should refer to TKN's Whistleblowing Policy.

TKN is committed to implementing robust, accessible and child-friendly communication, reporting and escalation process's that complement Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and are in line with the reporting requirements of the Charity Commission.

Designated Safeguarding Officer

Amy Campo McEvoy, Head of Programmes

a.campomcevoy@thekidsnetwork.org.uk

07718 602048

Safeguarding Trustee

Amy Henderson, Trustee

ahenderson@live.co.uk

07738 003394

NSPCC Helpline

Kathryn.Westwell@nspcc.org.uk

080 8800 500

2.5 Policy Breaches

- TKN will respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse and breaches of this policy.
- Where it has been found that a representative of The Kids Network has breached this policy, or any associated procedures and guidelines, immediate action will be taken. In

serious cases this may include dismissal, ending voluntary roles and/or the termination of partnerships, contracts or other forms of relationships.

- Acts of a criminal nature will be referred to the police and/or Children’s Services and may result in a criminal investigation and conviction. Where this occurs, the Police will notify the DBS and the individual may be barred from working with children.
- Where a safeguarding concern, whether proven or not, meets the Charity Commission’s criteria for a Serious Incident, the DSO must inform the Board of Trustees as soon as practically possible who will be responsible for reporting it.
- TKN will act in accordance with TKN’s Data Protection Policy and ensure confidential information is restricted to the appropriate external agencies.

SECTION 3

3.1 Supporting Documents

Policies	Adults at Risk Policy Code of Conduct Data Protection Policy Whistleblowing Policy Social Media Policy
Process/ Procedure	Safer Recruitment at The Kids Network
Forms	Safeguarding Concern Form
Law	Children Act 1989 UN Convention of the Rights of the Children 1991 Data Protection Act 1998 Sexual Offences Act 2003 Children Act 2003 Children Act 2004 Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 Children and Families Act 2014
Guidance	Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. MH Government 2018. Information Sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers. HM Government 2018.

Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees.
Charity Commission 2018.

3.2 Definitions

Word/ term	Definition
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.
Adults at risk	Safeguarding adults at risk means protecting their right to live in safety and free from abuse and neglect.
Child	Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.
Child Safeguarding	The action taken to protect children from harm caused, intentionally or unintentionally, by the action or inaction of TKN staff or representatives
Designated Safeguarding Officer	The designated safeguarding officer is the person appointed to take lead responsibility for child safeguarding protection issues at TKN. A deputy is also appointed in case the DSO is unavailable
Emotional abuse	The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.
Exploitation	An umbrella term used to describe the abuse of children who are forced, tricked, coerced or trafficked into exploitative activities.
Extremism/ Radicalisation	Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.
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.
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 responsible adult fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Sexual Abuse Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities.

Definitions adapted from Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018, the NSPCC and Safeguarding and Protecting People for Charities and Trustees Guidance.

If the child is in immediate danger call 999

Reason for concern

Disclosure from a
child

Inform your DSO via
phone call and in
writing

Listen carefully, only
ask clarifying
questions, and let
them know you must
pass this on

Record in writing in
a safeguarding
concern form

Call your DSO or
TKN trustee
immediately