

BE ME PROJECT

identity ~ truth ~ purpose

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

May 2025



Signed :

Also signed on paper copy by Liz Marlow, Deputy Safeguarding Trustee

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Charity Number: 1175239

Insurance Company: Access Insurance Public Liability, Employers Liability, Professional Liability, Management Liability

All staff and volunteers must have access to this policy, and sign to confirm that they have read, understood and will adhere to its contents.

Safeguarding Statement

Be Me Project recognises our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all Children and Adults At Risk who attend any Be Me course.

Most of Be Me Project work is with Children and young people, and a small percentage are Adults who can be at risk (they are not adults as defined under the Care Act 2014 who need support for their daily living).

We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where they are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. Child protection forms part of our safeguarding responsibilities.

Introduction to Be Me Project

Be Me Project supports young people struggling with confidence, low self-esteem, and having a negative way of thinking about themselves. We run self-esteem courses in secondary schools across Surrey, Kent, and Cumbria supporting young people. Our participants have a range of mental health issues that can come from, for example: anxiety, depression, low self-worth, friendship difficulties, family issues, and abuse. Many of our participants can be particularly vulnerable. Staff members, volunteers, trustees and Safeguarding Officers take seriously their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; working together with the schools to ensure adequate arrangements to support those who are suffering harm.

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding terminology:

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to children's health or development
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

Policy overview

The model policy and procedures have been divided into six sections covering all **10 standards of thirtyone:eight's safeguarding standards**.

Governance

Be Me Project has good governance which helps the organisation prevent abuse and means it can respond quickly and with integrity when concerns arise. Central to this is the Governance Board or Board of Trustees.

Culture

The Culture of Be Me Project is open and safe, and we have strong values and beliefs.

- Trustee meetings are held four times a year
- Weekly meetings at Head Office for Hub Leaders to communicate any safeguarding or wellbeing concerns for course participants with staff.
- Management of safeguarding responsibilities are set in place between Lead Safeguard and Deputy with Trustee oversight.
- A team organised and structured to support wellbeing of staff members with a designated trustee in place for support if needed.
- An encouraging environment for open communication for all staff to feel supported and able to speak up.
- Be Me has Christian values and beliefs that

Inspiring people to know they have identity, truth and purpose

Respecting the unique worth of each individual

Encouraging and building up

Compassion and care

Being **real**

Christian love

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children and adults regardless of age, gender, culture, language, race, ability, sexual identity or religion have equal rights to protection, safeguarding and opportunities.

- All staff believe that Be Me should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

Safe Staff Recruitment

- We are committed to recruiting the right members of staff to fulfil positions.
- Our procedures are rigorous in order to deter those who are unsuitable.
- We ask questions at interviews to explore their attitudes towards children and adults at risk.
- Candidates are required to confirm their identity through official documentation.
- DBS checks are required for all staff and volunteers, course leaders/assistants, Trustees and office staff.
- References are taken up prior to employment/engagement (in whatever capacity). Be Me asks for 2 references (one can be verbal).
- All Be Me staff will receive information about safeguarding arrangements, the Child Protection policy, the role and names of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and their deputy(ies).
- All staff will undergo regular, mandatory safeguarding and child protection training in keeping with good practice.
- We ensure all new staff are aware of our guidance for their use of mobile technology. Please refer to our social media policy.
- Please refer to our Safeguard and employment policy.

Safeguarding Training

- Both the Lead and Deputy have completed the lead training by the Thirty One Eight.
- Recruitment training is given to all new members of staff and volunteers and they must read the Staff Handbook and the safeguarding policy must be read by all staff and signed and dated.
- All Be Me Staff in-house training takes place once a year and topical subjects are arranged for all staff during the year. This training is logged and tracked for the training that they have completed. Reminders are sent to complete training missed, and supervisors are responsible for ensuring it is completed. Ultimately, anyone not completing training will cease to work with Be Me.
- Staff also are mandated to take the Government online Prevent training.

All staff are trained in Confidentiality

- Personal information about children and families is subject to a legal duty of confidence and should not normally be disclosed without the consent of the subject. However, the law permits the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child or children in the public interest, that is, the public interest in child protection may override the public interest in maintaining confidentiality.
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets that might compromise the child's safety or well-being.
- However, we also recognise that all matters relating to child protection are personal to children and families. Therefore, the managers or DSL will only disclose information about a child to other members of staff on a need to know basis.

Working safely

- Be Me is aware that they have a legal and moral duty of care towards those they work with and treats those they are caring for with respect and dignity.
- We run 3 wellbeing sessions throughout the year to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our staff, at these wellbeing sessions we ask whether they have any safeguarding concerns.
- See our staff handbook for details on our code of conduct and other relevant policies.

6. Supporting Staff

We recognise that staff who have become involved in working with a child who has suffered harm or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting.

We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSLs and to seek further support as appropriate.

7. Partnership working

When working with our partnerships Be Me supplies a service agreement where we detail our commitment partnership, see service agreement.

8. Responding to concerns

Be Me Safeguarding procedure

If staff are concerned about a child's welfare or staff notice any indicators of abuse/neglect or signs that a child may be experiencing a safeguarding issue they should record these concerns on an Expression of Concern Form and pass it to the DSL of the school and the DSL of Be Me Project. They may also discuss their concerns in person with the DSL but the details of the concern should be recorded in writing on the form and will be stored safely at HO. See detail below on safe storage and on immediate email deletion.

Records of concerns

Be Me Project will keep detailed accurate records of all concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral

We will ensure that :

all such records are kept confidential, and stored securely, until the child's 25th birthday.

We recognise that it takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, guilty or scared, their abuser may have threatened that something will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults or believe that what happened is their fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abuse.

A child who makes a disclosure may have to tell their story on a number of subsequent occasions to the police and/or social workers. Therefore, it is vital that their first experience of talking to a trusted adult is a positive one.

Responding well to concerns includes five steps:

Recognise that a person may be at risk of harm or abuse.

Respond by taking appropriate action in a sensitive and timely way.

Record the concerns or disclosures of abuse that have been made.

Report any concerns to the right person so action can be taken.

Reflect on what happened and act on any learning.

During their conversation with the pupil, staff will:

listen to what the child has to say and allow them to speak freely

- Remain calm and not overreact or act shocked or disgusted – the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting the listener
- Reassure the child that it is not their fault and that they have done the right thing in telling someone
- Not be afraid of silence – staff must remember how difficult it is for the pupil and allow them time to talk
- Take what the child is disclosing seriously
- Ask open questions and avoid asking leading questions
- Avoid jumping to conclusions, speculation or making accusations
- Not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who is being abused.
- Avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing sooner. Saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about it when it started’ may be the staff member’s way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean they have done something wrong.
- Tell the child what will happen next.
- If a pupil talks to any member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing the staff member will let the child know that they will have to pass the information on – staff are not allowed to keep secrets.
- The member of staff should write up their conversation as soon as possible on the Expression of Concern Form in the child’s own words. Staff should make this a matter of priority.

The incident form should include: See on appendix 1

- the staff members name, signature and date
- the name of the child
- the name of the Partner Organisation
- it should also detail where the disclosure was made
- the time of the disclosure
- a record of who else was present.
- whether the parent was informed and by whom
- The record should be handed to the DSL.

Making a referral

- Responsibility for liaising with our Partner organisation and statutory authorities will be undertaken by the DSL or Deputy. Concerns need to be referred to them as soon as possible.
- Concerns about a child or a disclosure should be discussed with the DSL of the school or community organisation ASAP and either discussed or copy all emails to the Be Me DSL.
- If a referral is needed then the DSL should make it. However, anyone can make a referral and if for any reason a staff member thinks a referral is appropriate and one hasn't been made they can and should consider making a referral themselves.
- The child will be told that a referral is being made, unless doing so would increase the risk to the child.
- The referral of the child's situation must be acknowledged by the school or community organisation and they must take the responsibility to follow their procedure and duty of care for the child. This action must be confirmed via email to the Be Me DSL.
- If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately. Anybody can make a referral.

We aim to report within 24 hours to the school and if we do not receive an acknowledgement within 7 days (24 hours for a time-critical concern), we will report directly. For community courses referral should be made directly by one of the safeguarding leads.

Safeguarding procedure

Find out who	the Designated Safeguard lead within the organisation is where you will be running a Be Me Project course (school/community/ church organisation)
What to do next	if a safeguarding issue arises you must 1) Fill in expression of concern form (with the participant present) 2) Email a copy of the expression of Concern form to the DSL officer of the organisation you are working with and CC lucy@bemeproject.org or sue@bemeproject.org on email. 3) The DSL from the organisation must return an email to you confirming they are dealing with the safeguard issue that has arised, hence closing the gap between charity and the organisation. All emails must be

	filed and stored securely, and deleted off emails. TO NOTE: if there is a risk of genital mutilation taking place you must ring 999 immediately. If the child has indicated that there is an imminent likelihood for suicide you should not leave them unattended; stay with the child whilst getting support.
What do I do if	a no response email is confirmed by the DSL officer of the organisation. The safeguarding issue MUST be reported to the outside organisations that are all listed in the Safeguarding policy for each area which the DSL lead or Deputy will report. All emails must be printed or and stored at Head Office.

Surrey Referral	For Surrey, the SPA responds to initial enquiries about children, young people and adults. Contact details for SPA (Surrey): 0300 470 9100 (available 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) 01483 517 898 Out of Hours Concerns can be discussed with Thirty-One Eight, and The Diocese of Guildford
Kent Referral	If you have submitted a referral form via kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk Contact details for LADO Contact details for Area Safeguarding Adviser Education Safeguarding Team Tel: 03000 412284 e-Safety Development Officer ▪ 03000 415797
Cumbria Referral	Children's Services Safeguarding Hub on 0333 240 1727.

9. Those who pose a risk

Some of the following signs might be indicators of abuse or neglect or other risks:

- Children whose behaviour changes – they may become aggressive, challenging, disruptive, withdrawn or clingy, or they might have difficulty sleeping or start wetting the bed;

- Children with clothes which are ill-fitting and/or dirty;
- Children with consistently poor hygiene;
- Children who make strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends, without an obvious reason;
- Children who don't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities;
- Children who are having problems at school, for example, a sudden lack of concentration and learning or they appear to be tired and hungry;
- Children who talk about being left home alone, with inappropriate carers or with strangers;
- Children who reach developmental milestones, such as learning to speak or walk, late, with no medical reason;
- Children who are regularly missing from school or education;
- Children who are reluctant to go home after school;
- Children with poor school attendance and punctuality, or who are consistently late being picked up;
- Parents who are dismissive and non-responsive to practitioners' concerns;
- Parents who collect their children from school when drunk, or under the influence of drugs; • Children who drink alcohol regularly from an early age;
- Children who are concerned for younger siblings without explaining why;
- Children who talk about running away; and
- Children who shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements
- Children who give indications of suicidal thoughts.

Definition of Children Abuse (NSPCC guidance)

Physical abuse	happens when a child is deliberately hurt, causing physical harm. It can involve hitting, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or suffocating. It's also physical abuse if a parent or carer makes up or causes the symptoms of illness in children. For example, they may give them medicine they don't need, making them unwell. This is known as fabricated or induced illness.
Neglect	is not meeting a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. This can result in serious damage to their health and development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer not: • providing adequate food, clothing or shelter • supervising a child or keeping them safe from harm or danger(including leaving them with unsuitable carers) • making sure the child receives appropriate health and/or dental care • making sure the child receives a suitable education • meeting the child's basic emotional needs – this is known as emotional neglect. Neglect is the most common type of child abuse. It often happens at the same time as other types of abuse.
Sexual abuse	is forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. It doesn't necessarily involve violence and the child may not be aware that what is happening is abuse.

	Child sexual abuse can involve contact abuse and non-contact abuse. Contact abuse happens when the abuser makes physical contact with the child. It includes: • sexual touching of any part of the body whether the child is wearing clothes or not • rape or penetration by putting an object or body part inside a child's mouth, vagina or anus • forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity • making a child take their clothes off or touch someone else's genitals
Online sexual abuse	• persuading or forcing a child to send or post sexually explicit images of themselves, this is sometimes referred to as sexting • persuading or forcing a child to take part in sexual activities via a webcam or smartphone • having sexual conversations with a child by text or online. Abusers may threaten to send sexually explicit images, video or copies of sexual conversations to the young person's friends and family unless they take part in other sexual activity. Images or videos may continue to be shared long after the abuse has stopped. Abusers will often try to build an emotional connection with a child in order to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse. This is known as grooming.
Child sexual exploitation	is a type of sexual abuse. Young people may be coerced or groomed into exploitative situations and relationships. They may be given things such as gifts, money, drugs, alcohol, status or affection in exchange for taking part in sexual activities. Young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. They often trust their abuser and don't understand that they're being abused. They may depend on their abuser or be too scared to tell anyone what's happening. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol before being sexually exploited. They can also be groomed and exploited online. Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation can also happen to young people in gangs (Berelowitz et al, 2013). Child sexual exploitation can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults and involve multiple perpetrators.
Harmful sexual behaviour	Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour which is displayed by children and young people and which may be harmful or abusive. It may also be referred to as sexually harmful behaviour or sexualised behaviour. HSB encompasses a range of behaviour, which can be displayed towards younger children, peers, older children or adults. It is harmful to the children and young people who display it, as well as the people it is directed towards. HSB can include: • using sexually explicit words and phrases • inappropriate touching • using sexual violence or threats • sexual activity with other children or adults.
Emotional abuse	• humiliating, putting down or regularly criticising a child • shouting at or threatening a child or calling them names

	• mocking a child or making them perform degrading acts • constantly blaming or scapegoating a child for things which are not their fault • trying to control a child's life and not recognising their individuality • not allowing a child to have friends or develop socially • pushing a child too hard or not recognising their limitations • manipulating a child • exposing a child to distressing events or interactions • persistently ignoring a child • being cold and emotionally unavailable during interactions with a child • not being positive or encouraging to a child or praising their achievements and successes.
Domestic abuse	is any type of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between people who are, or who have been in a relationship, regardless of gender or sexuality. It can include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse. Exposure to domestic abuse is child abuse. Children can be directly involved in incidents of domestic abuse or they may be harmed by seeing or hearing abuse happening. Children in homes where there is domestic abuse are also at risk of other types of abuse or neglect.
Bullying	is when individuals or groups seek to harm, intimidate or coerce someone who is perceived to be vulnerable. Bullying includes: • verbal abuse, such as name calling • non-verbal abuse, such as hand signs or glaring • emotional abuse, such as threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone • exclusion, such as ignoring or isolating someone • undermining, by constant criticism or spreading rumours • controlling or manipulating someone • racial, sexual or homophobic bullying • physical assaults, such as hitting and pushing • making silent, hoax or abusive calls. Bullying can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. When bullying happens online it can involve social networks, games and mobile devices. Online bullying can also be known as cyberbullying. Cyberbullying includes: • sending threatening or abusive text messages • creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos • 'trolling' - sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games • excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups • setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child • encouraging young people to self-harm • voting for or against someone in an abusive poll • creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name.
Child trafficking	Child trafficking is child abuse. It involves recruiting and moving children who are then exploited. Many children are trafficked into the UK from overseas, but children

	can also be trafficked from one part of the UK to another. Children may be trafficked for: • child sexual exploitation • benefit fraud • forced marriage • domestic servitude such as cleaning, childcare, cooking • forced labour in factories or agriculture • criminal exploitation such as cannabis cultivation, pickpocketing, begging, transporting, drugs, selling pirated DVDs and bag theft.
Female genital mutilation	is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision or cutting. The age at which FGM is carried out varies. It may be carried out when a child is new-born, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during pregnancy (Home Office et al, 2016). FGM is child abuse. There are no medical reasons to carry out FGM. It's dangerous and a criminal offence.

What is adult abuse? (thirty one eight guidance)

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's well-being is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings, and beliefs in deciding any action. We must recognize that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances (Care Act guidance Sec 14)

The Care Act gives guidelines on the types of abuse associated with adults;

Physical abuse	is to inflict pain or physical injury, which is either caused deliberately or through lack of care. Examples include hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, burning, hair pulling, misuse, or using inappropriate restraint or sanctions and the misuse of medication.
Sexual abuse	is the involvement in sexual activities to which the person has not consented, or does not truly comprehend and so cannot give informed consent. It may occur where the other party is in a position of trust, power or authority and uses it to override or overcome lack of consent or to which they felt pressurised into consenting such as rape, or sexual assault, being made to watch pornography would also be within this definition.
Domestic Abuse	Includes physical, sexual, psychological and financial abuse for those in family or close relationships as well as so called 'honour' based violence.
Psychological or emotional abuse	is acts or behaviour which causes mental distress or anguish or negates the wishes of the adult. It is also behaviour that has a harmful effect on the adult's emotional health and development - or any other form of mental cruelty. This includes verbal abuse, humiliation, bullying, blaming, the use of threats of harm

	or abandonment, being deprived of social or any other form of contact, or being prevented from receiving services or support.
Financial or material abuse	is the inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions including theft, fraud, exploitation, applying pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
Modern slavery	includes slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters using whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment. Discriminatory abuse is the inappropriate treatment of an adult because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality, or disability.
Discriminatory abuse	exists when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies opportunity to some groups or individuals.
Organisational abuse	includes neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. It can occur through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect, or poor professional practice, or ill treatment.
Neglect or acts of omission	are the repeated deprivation of help that an adult-needs which, if withdrawn, will cause them to suffer. This includes failing to intervene in behaviour which is dangerous to the adult, or to others.
Self-Neglect	includes a wide range of behaviour neglecting one's personal hygiene, health or surrounding and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Ref Thirtyone eight

Appendix I

Be Me Project Safeguarding incident of concern form

Child/student's name	
Name of partnership/school	
Date and time of Observation/discussion/concern Where was this incident divulged	
People involved (identify who is who in terms of their role)	
Nature of incident	
Signature of Be Me project staff member:	
Signature of parent (if appropriate):	
Date:	
Action to be taken: e.g. reported concern to the partnership involved.	

I have read through the Be Me Project safeguarding policy and will follow the procedures.

Print name.....

Sign

Date