

# SAFEGUARDING POLICY

## Safeguarding Officer: Jason Royce

This policy was approved on 8th March 2022 by the Souster Youth Trust Board. Reviewed March 2023

## **REVIEW DATE: March 2024**

Signature:	(Chair of Souster Youth Trust Board)
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Section	Contents	Page No.
1	Souster Youth Safeguarding Statement	3
2	Scope of Policy	4
3	Safeguarding Awareness	4
4	<ul> <li>Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse</li> <li>(a) Understanding abuse and neglect</li> <li>(b) Definitions of abuse</li> <li>(c) Signs and indicators of abuse</li> <li>(d) How to respond to a child wishing to disclose abuse</li> </ul>	4 4 5 6
5	Responding to allegations of abuse	7
6	Detailed procedures where there is a concern about the welfare of a child	8
7	Prevention	8
8	Pastoral Care	9
9	Record Keeping	9
10	Practice Guidelines	10
11	General safe practice guidelines for working with children and young people	10
Appendix 1	Flow Chart - Safeguarding a Child or Young Person	12
Appendix 2	Flow Chart - Online Safety	13

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#### **1** Souster Youth Safeguarding Statement

- 1.1 The Souster Youth Trust recognises the importance of its work with children and young people and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care. We are committed to creating and enabling a healthy culture in order to minimise any coercion and control within our organisation.
- 1.2 The Souster Youth Trust is committed to the safeguarding of children and young people and ensuring their wellbeing. Specifically: -
  - (a) We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people (those under 18 years of age) and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect;
  - (b) We believe that every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children and young people we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm;
  - (c) All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse;
  - (d) We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and young people;
  - (e) We believe in the necessity of creating a healthy culture in the Souster Youth Trust where the value of all people is recognised and challenges are responded to appropriately.
- 1.3 We are committed to: -
  - (a) Following the requirements of UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and young people, and good practice recommendations;
  - (b) Respecting the rights of children and young people as described in the UN convention on the Rights of the Child;
  - (c) Implementing the requirements of legislation in regard to people with disabilities;
  - (d) Ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy;
  - (e) Keeping up-to-date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding;
  - (f) Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by the Souster Youth Trust;
  - (g) Supporting parents and families;
  - (h) Nurturing, protecting and safeguarding children and young people;
  - (I) Supporting, resourcing, training, monitoring and providing supervision to all those who undertake this work;
  - (j) Adopting and following the 'Safe and Secure' safeguarding standards developed by the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service.
- 1.4 We recognise: -
  - (a) Children's Social Services has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child or young person;
  - (b) Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency
  - (c) Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

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#### 2 Scope of Policy

- 2.1 This documentation was developed in conjunction with Thirtyone:eight (formerly known as CCPAS)
- 2.2 The standards in this policy build on and incorporate legislation and government expectations for children and adults at risk of harm. This includes HM Government 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)' and new safeguarding duties under the Care Act 2014.
- 2.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Souster Youth Health & Safety Policy, Risk Management Policy and the Recruitment Policy.

#### 3 Safeguarding Awareness

- 3.1 The Souster Youth Trust is committed to ongoing training and development opportunities for all workers in order to develop a culture where everyone is aware of our responsibilities in relation to the protection of children and young people.
- 3.2 The Souster Youth Trust has appointed Jason Royce as the Safeguarding Officer who will oversee arrangements for protecting children and young people. It is the duty of the Safeguarding Officer to inform appropriate agencies promptly of any notifiable events of concern including allegations, disclosures or suspicions of abuse concerning children or young people. In the event of any doubt as to whether this is the appropriate step, Thirtyone:eight may also be contacted for advice on their 24 hour Helpline (0845 120 4550 or 01322 517817).
- 3.3 All staff, volunteers and trustees of Souster Youth Trust will have a DBS check carried out on appointment, and it would be requested that all new volunteers and staff sign up for the update service. This is free for volunteers, but for paid staff there would be a small charge of £13 per year, but was agreed that Souster Youth would cover this cost.
- 3.4 The Safeguarding Officer will receive training annually. All workers (paid or voluntary) will be provided with safeguarding training on induction and then annually. This may be provided by the Safeguarding Officer (following their annual training/update), by Thirtyone:eight, or by another recognised body, organisation or qualified individual.
- 3.5 The Souster Youth Trust will also ensure that children and young people are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

#### 4 Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse

- 4.1 <u>Understanding abuse and neglect</u>
  - (a) Defining child abuse is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm. Children and young people may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.
  - (b) In order to safeguard those involved with the Souster Youth Trust we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states: -
    - (1) States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.
    - (2) Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

#### 4.2 Definitions of abuse

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- (a) PHYSICAL ABUSE: may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or young person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or career fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child or young person.
- (b) EMOTIONAL ABUSE: is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or young person, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve conveying to children or young person 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 or young person 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 and young people. These may include interactions that are beyond the child or young person's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child or young people frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children and young people. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child or young people, though it may occur alone
- (c) 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 or young person 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 and young people in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children and young people 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 and young people.
- (d) 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 during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or career failing to:
  - provide adequate food, clothing or 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 caregivers); or
  - ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
  - It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

#### 4.3 Signs and indicators of abuse

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in context of the child's whole life.

- (a) PHYSICAL
  - Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
  - Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.
  - · Injuries that have not received medical attention
  - Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
  - Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
  - Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation
  - Cuts/scratches/substance abuse<sup>(\*)</sup>

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- (b) SEXUAL
  - Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse
  - Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
  - Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing
  - Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
  - Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
  - Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
  - Eating disorders anorexia, bulimia<sup>(\*)</sup>
- (c) EMOTIONAL
  - Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy
  - Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety
  - Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
  - Obsessions or phobias
  - Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
  - Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
  - Attention-seeking behaviour
  - Persistent tiredness
  - Running away/stealing/lying
- (d) NEGLECT
  - Under-nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses
  - Inadequate care etc.

<sup>(\*)</sup> These indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming. Approximately 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.

#### 4.4 How to respond to a child wishing to disclose abuse

- (a) Ensure the physical environment is welcoming, giving opportunity for the child or young person to talk in private but making sure others are aware the conversation is taking place: -
  - It is especially important to allow time and space for the person to talk
  - Above everything else listen without interrupting
  - Be attentive and look at them whilst they are speaking
  - Show acceptance of what they say by reflecting back words or short phrases they have used
  - Try to remain calm, even if on the inside you are feeling something different
  - Be honest and don't make promises regarding confidentiality
  - If they decide not to tell you after all, accept their decision but let them know that you are always ready to listen
  - Use language that is age-appropriate and, for those with disabilities, ensure there is someone available who understands sign language, Braille etc.
- (b) HELPFUL RESPONSES
  - You have done the right thing in telling
  - I am glad you have told me
  - I will try to help you
- (c) DON'T SAY
  - Why didn't you tell anyone before?
  - I can't believe it!
  - Are you sure this is true?
  - Why? How? When? Who? Where?
  - I am shocked, don't tell anyone else
- (d) Don't make notes whilst a young person is speaking to you, but this should be done as soon as possible after the disclosure.

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#### 5 Responding to allegations of abuse

- 5.1 Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. The procedure below should be followed for all Souster-led activities (also see flowchart in Appendix 1): -
  - (a) The person in receipt of any allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Officer (Jason Royce, tel. no. 07833 251231) or, if he cannot be contacted, they should refer it to the most senior member of staff available.
  - (b) If the suspicions implicates the Safeguarding Officer, then the report should be made in the first instance to the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (Thirtyone:eight), PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ; tel. no. 0845 120 4550. A 24 hour helpline is available for advice, but where the situation is an emergency, the police or social services should be contacted.
  - (c) A written record of the concerns should be made and kept in a secure place, these records should include: -
    - . The child's name, address and date of birth
    - . The date and the time of the observation/disclosure
    - An objective record of the observation/disclosure
    - The exact words spoken by the child
    - . The name of the person to whom the report was reported, with date and time
    - The names of any other people present at the time
  - (d) In a case where a child is not in immediate danger, we try to discuss the matter with the parents before making any referrals. However it is the welfare of the child which is paramount and this is at the forefront of all our actions. We are aware that many children and young people have suffered because of lack of communication between agencies, and that government guidance now encourages the full sharing of information. We shall therefore use our professional judgement in sharing information with the agencies that 'need to know', being open and honest with parents and children/young people as to why we feel we need to share the information.
  - (e) Full records of conversations will be maintained when any referrals or discussions are held with any other agencies or with parents prior to referral. These records will include dates and times of the conversations, who we speak to and the advice they were given.
  - (f) In a case where the Safeguarding Officer feels it necessary to refer on, he will contact the Children and Families Social Work Team - the office telephone number (office hours) is 0300 126 1000; the out-of-hours emergency number is 01604 626938. Alternatively, if there is no immediate danger to the child, an online referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH team) can be made at <u>https://northamptonshire-self.achieveservice.com</u>
  - (g) The Safeguarding Officer may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern (e.g. a denominational or other officer if allegations have been made about a person who has a role with under 18's elsewhere)
  - (h) The Souster Youth Trust Board will support the Safeguarding Officer in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.
- 5.2 In the situations where a disclosure or observation is made to or by Souster staff in activities run by other agencies (i.e. school, church), this information will be reported to the person leading the activity who will establish if the information is new. This information will be handed over to the Safeguarding Officer for that organisation and their Safeguarding procedures would then take precedence. This information will also be discussed with the Souster Youth Safeguarding Officer for awareness.

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#### 6 Detailed procedures where there is a concern about the welfare of a child

#### If a child has physical injury or symptoms of neglect

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse: -

- Seek medical help if necessary and, if urgent, phone 999
- Inform your group leader immediately, who in turn must inform the Safeguarding Officer at the first possible opportunity
- The Safeguarding Officer will contact the Children's Social Services (or thirty one:eight for advice) if they suspect that the injury has been deliberate, if you are concerned about a child's safety, or if the child appears afraid to return home. Don't tell parents or carers unless advised to do so, having first contacted Children's Social Services
- For lesser concerns (e.g. poor parenting), encourage the parent/carer to seek help, but not if this
  places the child at risk of significant harm. Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to
  accompany them. If they still fail to act, contact Thirtyone:eight or Children's Social Services for
  advice

#### If you suspect sexual abuse or an allegation is made

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, follow all usual procedures as above and in addition : -

- The Safeguarding Officer will contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or the Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else at this stage
- Seek and follow advice given by Thirtyone:eight if, for any reason they are unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services/Police. Thirtyone:eight will confirm it's advice in writing for future reference.

#### Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Officer, in accordance with the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership will need to liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Information on how this is done can be found at <a href="http://northamptonshirescb.org.uk/health-professionals/taking-action/designated-officer/">http://northamptonshirescb.org.uk/health-professionals/taking-action/designated-officer/</a>.

#### 7 Prevention

7.1 Safer recruitment

Refer to Souster Youth Recruitment Policy

- 7.2 Staff and Volunteers Codes of Conduct
  - (a) Our 'duty of care' is in part exercised through the development of respectful and caring relationships, but also by staff and volunteers taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those they have responsibility for, particularly in relation to safeguarding them from sexual, physical and emotional abuse.
  - (b) All adults working in roles where there is contact with children and young people are in positions of trust; it is vital that they do not use their position of power and authority inappropriately. Professional boundaries must always be maintained and behaviour which could be misinterpreted should be avoided. Staff and volunteers should never: -
    - . Use their position to gain access to information for their own or others advantage
    - . Use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine
    - Use their status and/or standing to form or promote relationships that are or may become sexual (No kind of romantic or sexual relationship between an adult and a child/young person is ever acceptable and, if concerns arise in this area, this should be recorded and reported to the Safeguarding Officer immediately)

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- (c) The best way to safeguard children and young people we come into contact with is by following good practices that promote and protect their safety and wellbeing. These include: -
  - Not putting yourself in a situation that could be interpreted as being inappropriate
  - Not maintaining contact with a child or young person outside of agreed activities without the knowledge of the child's parents/legal guardians if such contact is agreed with the parents/ carers, it needs to be made clear that you are no longer acting on behalf of Souster Youth
  - Being vigilant if you witness any behaviour by someone else at an event, whether a team member or a guest that causes you to be concerned about the welfare of a child, please speak to the Safeguarding Officer immediately
- (d) Refer to the Employee Handbook for information relating to the use of social media. In addition to this: -
  - Any social media contact with children or young people should be restricted to accounts in the name of Souster Youth, and restricted to communication by designated adults solely about the activities of Souster Youth
  - Adult leaders should not make or accept personal friend requests to or by children and young people from activities run by Souster Youth
  - The content of the social media sites should be monitored by the designated adults. Privacy settings should be locked so that the page is used only for relevant matters and and are not used for private or general social conversations or to share personal details
- (e) Group leaders should always seek written permission from the parent/carer before taking any photographs or video footage of children or young people. This can be included in a registration form when a new member joins a group. Any photographs or video footage should be stored on a Souster Youth device (not personal phone/camera)

#### 7.3 <u>Training and Supervision</u>

- (a) Safeguarding children and young people is a core element of our professional development and training programme for all staff and volunteers. All staff will receive safeguarding training on induction and then annually
- (b) All staff and volunteers are aware of the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns
- (c) Souster Youth is committed to ensuring all workers are supported by a named supervisor. Supervisors will arrange regular meetings where any concerns or issues can be raised, work related or personal

#### 7.4 <u>Team meetings</u>

Souster Youth recognises the importance of team meetings. These will be convened on a weekly basis during term-times, and should provide an opportunity for ideas and issues to be aired, concerns expressed and feedback given

#### 8 Pastoral Care

- 8.1 Souster Youth is committed to offering pastoral care and support to all those (who have contact with or are a part of Souster Youth) who have been affected by abuse, working with statutory agencies as appropriate
- 8.2 Pastoral care is varied by nature and it will be ensured that appropriate support will be offered. Support and advice may be sought from the Thirtyone:eight 24 hour helpline on 0845 120 4550; or an appropriate counsellor (may be sourced from the Association of Christian Counsellors at <u>www.acc-uk.org</u>)

#### 9 Record keeping

9.1 Souster Youth will keep records of their activities for management and accountability purposes. These records will be proportionate and purposeful; personal data will only be kept when there is good reason for doing so

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- 9.2 When a child or young person becomes involved in an activity run by Souster Youth, a general information and consent form will be completed and returned by the parent/carer. This will contain details of the parents/carers, plus medical or other details such as allergies or special dietary requirements. This form will be renewed annually.
- 9.3 A register of those attending a club or activity will be maintained (including the workers). This will include a record of arrival and departure times, especially if the participant does not attend the whole session.
- 9.4 A review sheet/logbook will be kept for all activities and groups where workers can write down unusual events or conversations that they witnessed. Patterns of behaviour or concerns may emerge from log records that might not otherwise be so obvious. The information will be kept in such a way that does not breach confidentiality of an individual; any young person or worker should be able to view what is recorded about them on the log sheets. Information of a sensitive nature (i.e. a disclosure) will be kept separately in a secure place; however a cross-reference will be recorded on the log sheet referring to the file note. Thirtyone:eight recommends that these records should be kept indefinitely as concerns can be raised many years after an event.

#### 10 Practice Guidelines

As an organisation working with children and young people, we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation. Please refer to the Risk Management Policy and the Health and Safety Policy for further guidance.

#### 11 General safe practice guidelines for working with children and young people

- 11.1 Within Souster Youth physical contact (i.e. touch/hugs) between children/young people and adults will be consensual and should only happen in public places, and never when a young person and adult are on their own
- 11.2 Whenever possible there should be a minimum of 2 workers present with a group, and always when it is the only activity taking place on Souster Youth's premises. If the group is split into smaller groups with one worker, the groups should be in one large room or adjoining rooms.
- 11.3 When planning activities workers should consider how many adult helpers are necessary in order to conduct a safe activity.
- 11.4 Where privacy is needed (e.g. 1:1 work with a young person), workers should ensure that others know what is happening and where. Another adult helper must be in the building, preferably in an adjoining room.
- 11.5 If workers are providing transport of children and young people (e.g. lifts home), workers should only take children of their own gender or mixed. They should plan to drop off more than one person at their last stop. In the event that there is no alternative other than to transport a child or young person a short distance on their own, this should be agreed with the parent/carer and the young person should sit in the back of the car.
- 11.6 If workers visit a child or young person's home, they should only enter if a parent or carer is present. Children and young people should not normally be invited to a worker's own home. If this does happen it should only be as part of a planned activity agreed with the Souster Youth leadership and Safeguarding Officer. This should only happen with the consent of the parents. Any visit to a worker's home by a child on their own should be agreed, on each occasion, by the Safeguarding Officer.

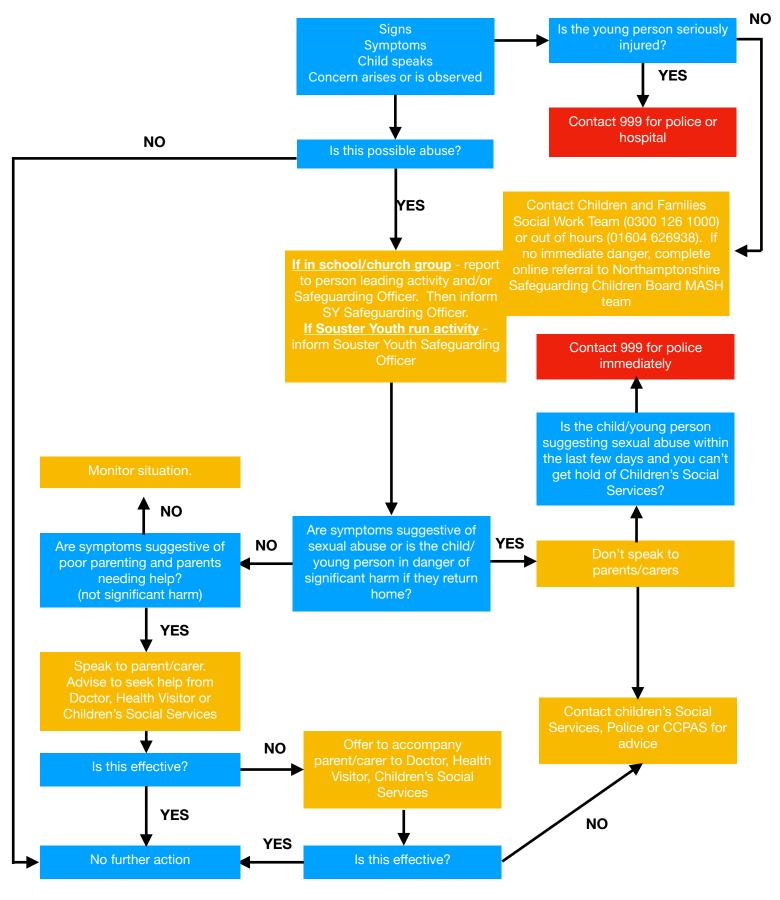
#### 11.7 Discipline

- (a) Workers should encourage good behaviour by: -
  - Saying so when it happens
  - Building healthy relationships
  - Being a good role model
  - . Setting clear ground rules and consequences for breaking them
  - . Involving young people in decision-making and giving them appropriate responsibility

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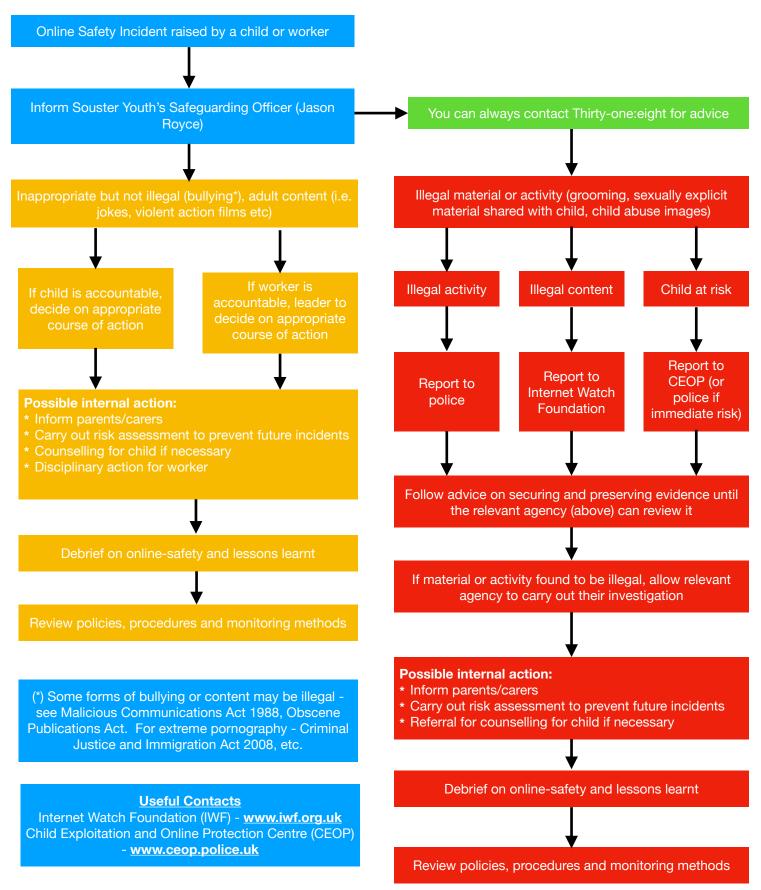
- (b) Workers should never smack, hit or physically discipline a child or young person. Only take 'hold' of a young person where this is necessary to safeguard them from an immediate risk of personal injury to them or another person. This should the minimum level of intervention necessary to keep them safe
- (c) Workers may use the tone of their voice when disciplining a young person but should not shout at them
- (d) Workers should not make threats of consequences which would be disproportionate to the situation or which they would not or should not follow through. Consequences for inappropriate behaviour should be proportionate and consistent
- (e) If workers decide to take a young person to one side to talk to them, they should do so within sight of other workers and if the matter is serious, with another worker
- (f) Workers should not compare young people to one another nor humiliate them in front of the group. The workers should work together to encourage a young person's strengths and to promote success and achievement.
- (g) If a young person's behaviour is constantly disruptive and workers are unsure what to do, they should seek advice and guidance from the Group Leader or Safeguarding Officer. If it decided to send a young person home, or exclude them, either temporarily or permanently, the group leader must ensure that their parent/carers know this, and the reasons why, as soon as possible
- (h) Workers should maintain a consistent approach both individually and as a team. However, this should take account of the individuality of each young person within consistent parameters.

#### **APPENDIX 1 - SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FLOW CHART**



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#### **APPENDIX 2 - ONLINE SAFETY FLOW CHART**



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