

Date of issue	2012	Reviewed	Sept 2021	Next review	Sept 2022	Approved by	Board of Trustees
For	Employees, volunteers, students, visitors, members, referrers						



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Introduction

- Safeguarding is defined as¹:
 - Protecting children from maltreatment;
 - Preventing impairment of children’s health and development;
 - Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and
 - Taking action to enable all children 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.
- Under the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Ride High has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in its care (hereinafter together referred to as “young people”) by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect.
- Ride High’s first priority must at all times be the protection and safety of young people in its care.
- Ride High employees have a full and active part to play in protecting young people from harm.
- All employees should be able to recognise, and know how to act upon, evidence that a young person’s health is, or may be being, impaired, especially when a young person is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
- This policy applies to all young people irrespective of race, gender, age, etc.

¹ Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2018)

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Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- To ensure Ride High employees are aware of the need to safeguard young people and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse to other agencies.
- To develop a structured procedure that will be followed consistently by all employees in cases of suspected abuse.
- To support the development of young people in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To ensure that all employees, volunteers and Trustees have had their suitability checked so that they are able to work with young people.
- To ensure that all parents/carers are aware of how child protection issues will be dealt with.

It is not the responsibility of Ride High employees, volunteers or Trustees to investigate suspected or alleged abuse.

The Centre Manager

The Centre Manager is a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and has overall responsibility for the safe delivery of sessions and services, as such they must be made aware of all child protection issues and ensure staff react appropriately.

The Children's Manager

The Children's Manager is a DSL and as such has day-to-day responsibility for child protection matters and will therefore:

- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise within Ride High for any safeguarding matters that may arise;
- Have a working knowledge of Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures if a safeguarding issue is suspected;
- Refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating authorities;

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- Ensure that written records of concern about a young person are kept, even if there is no need to make an immediate referral to the Milton Keynes Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (“MASH”). These records will be kept confidentially and securely in the young person’s file and a reference to the written record of concern will be added to the Child Protection Incident Book;
- Ensure that all members of the children’s team have induction training covering child protection and are able to recognise and report concerns as soon as they occur;
- Undertake relevant training every two years;
- Ensure the details of all concerns are shared with the Centre Manager.

The Designated Trustee

Ride High has a Designated Trustee (Lindsey Styles) with relevant knowledge of, and overall responsibility for child protection matters.

The Designated Trustee must ensure that all these requirements are adhered to by the Centre Manager and Children’s Manager; the Designated Trustee, Centre Manager and the Children’s Manager will discuss child protection issues generally and review safeguarding records at the monthly meeting of the Children’s Committee (a sub-committee of the Board of Trustees). The Centre Manager, and in their absence the Children’s Manager, will discuss serious incidents which require immediate support with the Designated Trustee at the time of occurrence.

If deemed appropriate, the Designated Trustee should inform the Chair of the Children’s Committee about any child protection issues that have been discussed, and confirm to the Children’s Committee that it has been dealt with in accordance with this policy.

DBS checks and references

- All employees and volunteers must complete a satisfactory enhanced DBS check before they can work unsupervised with young people. Our DBS checks are renewed every three years.
- Satisfactory references for employees must be obtained before a post is offered and any gaps in an applicant’s employment history will be investigated.
- Trustees must complete a satisfactory enhanced DBS check (renewable every three years) before they are appointed.

This information (together with safeguarding training records) will be stored online in a central register.

Procedures

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Information disclosed to one of Ride High's employees (either directly or indirectly) which concerns the welfare of a young person must be taken seriously.

The flow chart in the Appendix summarises the action to be taken in the event of any concerns about a young person's welfare.

Employees who suspect that a young person is being abused either through personal observation (e.g. a worrying change in the young person's behaviour or appearance), or through information passed to them (possibly from the young person concerned), must:

- First warn the young person that they cannot keep any information revealed by them confidential. Instead they will pass it on to the Children's Manager or Centre Manager in accordance with the Ride High Safeguarding Children Policy.
- Then, if the young person wishes to talk, listen to them rather than directly questioning him/her, and support and respond to the young person as much as possible.
- Write a record of concern, taking care to record all the details set out below, and sign it. Put the written record of concern in the young person's file and note the concern in the Child Protection Incident Book.
- Inform the Children's Manager and/or Centre Manager who will in turn, if (s)he considers it appropriate, involve the parent/carer, contact the young person's referrer, and/or make a referral to MASH. If deemed necessary, the Centre Manager will also inform the Designated Trustee or (if the Designated Trustee cannot be contacted) the CEO.
- Confirm any referral to MASH in writing within 48 hours.
- Record all and any subsequent events in the written record of concern up to the time of seeing specialist advice from MASH.

If the Children's Manager, Centre Manager or other staff member has serious concerns that the young person is being abused (s)he must inform MASH. It is not Ride High's role to investigate such allegations, and inappropriate questioning in such circumstances may risk further harm to the young person or interfere with further investigations.

If the parent/carer is the possible perpetrator, **they must not be questioned**, but in all other circumstances must be involved. Where the parent/carer has been involved in the discussions, the Children's Manager or Centre Manager will arrange to see the parent/carer to review together a written report of the incident, which must be signed by the parent/carer, and a copy given to the parent/carer.

If a volunteer or Trustee has any concerns about the welfare of a young person, they should raise them immediately with the Children's Manager or Centre Manager.

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Written records of concern

All written records of concern are confidential and must be kept in locked files. A reference to a record of concern must be noted in the Child Protection Incident Book. Records of concern should be written as soon as possible after the observation or disclosure but in any event within 24 hours and should cover the following:

General

- Time, date and place of observation or disclosure
- Name, address and age of young person
- Name of parent/carer
- Name of Employee/Volunteer/Trustee who had the concern
- Name of any other person present at the time

What took place?

- Source of information (e.g. direct or indirect disclosure)
- Exact words spoken by the young person as far as possible
- Observed behaviour/physical concerns

Action taken

- Have parents/carers been contacted?
- When was the concern reported to the Children's Manager or Centre Manager and the Designated Trustee or Chief Executive (time and date)?
- When was MASH contacted (time and date) and who was the contact?
- Was anyone else contacted? If so, who and when?

Allegations made against Ride High employees, Trustees and volunteers

No Ride High employee, volunteer or Trustee must ever be alone with a young person without another employee, volunteer or Trustee being aware. If working with a young person alone (for example conducting a review), another employee, volunteer or Trustee must be informed.

If an allegation of unacceptable behaviour or abuse is made against a Ride High employee, volunteer or Trustee by a young person or their parent/carer, the Chief Executive (or in the case of an allegation against the Chief Executive, the Designated Trustee) must be informed immediately. The Chief Executive (or the Designated Trustee) will immediately inform MASH and request them to carry out an independent investigation into the allegation. Ride High will cooperate fully with any such investigation.

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The employee/volunteer/Trustee will be suspended from all activities with Ride High which involve any direct contact with young people until the investigation has been completed. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but to protect the employee/volunteer/Trustee concerned as well as young people and families throughout the process.

Parent/carer concerns

A parent or carer who has concerns about unacceptable behaviour or possible abuse by other young people should contact the Children’s Manager or Centre Manager in the first instance. The Children’s Manager, Centre Manager and the Designated Trustee will discuss the concerns with the parent/carer and make a written record of concern, and a note in the Child Protection Incident Book. The action taken will be recorded in the written record of concern and the parent/carer informed. If the parent/carer still has concerns they should contact the Chief Executive.

Racism and bullying

Our policies on racism and bullying by young people are set out in our Behaviour Policy. Repeated racist or bullying incidents may lead to consideration under this Safeguarding Children Policy.

Health and safety

Our Health and Safety Policy sets out the consideration we give to protecting young people in our care:

- Within the Ride High clubroom;
- When being transported to and from the clubroom
- When undertaking field trips.

Social networking

Guidance/protection for employees and volunteers on using social media

No employee or volunteer should interact with any member, former member or client under the age of 18 on social media (unless a family member). Therefore, no employee or volunteer should have a member, former member or client under the age of 18 (other than a family member) as a “friend” to share information with.

No employee or volunteer should post any information or comment on their own Twitter or Facebook page concerning a member, former member or client.

No charity member should be able to see employees’ or volunteers’ profiles on social media.

It is illegal for an adult to give their age and status as a child when using social media.

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Our Social Networking Policy sets out the consideration we give to protecting Ride High members when using social networking applications.

If the Centre Manager, Children’s Manager or CEO receives a disclosure that an employee or volunteer is using social media in an inappropriate manner as detailed above they should deal with that disclosure in accordance with the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and/or Disciplinary Procedure.

Photographs

Photographs and videos of young people in our care may only be taken by Ride High employees, volunteers and Trustees or their authorised agents. Unless otherwise authorised by Ride High, photographs and videos may only be taken on a camera or other device owned by Ride High. Such photographs and videos may be used on Ride High’s website and/or in Ride High’s printed material and by the media (including newspapers and broadcast media) for the promotion of Ride High and its activities, but may not be used for any other purpose, and only if we have received prior written permission from the young person’s parents/carers.

Support for Ride High employees

We recognise that employees and volunteers who have become involved with a young person who has, or appears to have, suffered harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such employees and volunteers by providing the opportunity for regular supervision with their line manager (or in the case of volunteers, with the Centre Manager) to talk through their anxieties and to seek further support as appropriate, in accordance with our Stress Policy.

Training and awareness

A copy of this policy will be shown to all employees and volunteers, and each must sign to indicate they have read and understood it. It will also be made available to all referrers and members and/or their parents/carers, and shown to all students undergoing training with Ride High.

A breach of this policy by an employee will be regarded as misconduct that could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

Employees will be trained in child protection matters as appropriate to their roles at Ride High. Such training is designed to ensure employees are able to recognise the signs of abuse and that they know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns.

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Safeguarding Children Policy: COVID-19 addendum

The lifting of restrictions means that face to face sessions can resume. The COVID-19 addendum may need be implemented in the event of the reintroduction of restrictive measures.

1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies if RH is advised to reintroduce restrictive measures. Unless covered here, our normal safeguarding children policy continues to apply.

Ride High will still have regard to statutory guidance. Although operating in a different way, Ride High employees and volunteers continue to follow these important safeguarding principles:

- The best interests of children and young people must come first.
- Employees and volunteers should act on safeguarding concerns immediately.
- A designated safeguarding lead (DSL) should be available at all times.
- Children must be protected when they are online.

2. Reporting Concerns

All staff and volunteers must continue to act on any concerns they have about a child immediately. It is vitally important to do this, both for children attending the centre and those accessing Ride High online.

3. DSL arrangements

A DSL will be available to staff at all times. Where possible, Ride High aims to have a trained DSL on site whenever children are in attendance. Employees and volunteers will be informed by email as to who will be the DSL on any given day.

4. Concerns about an employee or volunteer

Employees and volunteers should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately – whether those concerns are about staff/volunteers working on site or remotely.

5. Safeguarding all children

Employees and volunteers are aware that this difficult time potentially puts children at greater risk.

Employees and volunteers will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on young peoples' mental health, and act on concerns immediately in line with procedures set out in the safeguarding children policy.

5.1 Children returning to Ride High sessions

The Children's Team will do all they reasonably can to ascertain whether there have been any changes regarding welfare, health and well-being that they should be aware of before the young person returns to Ride High.

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Employees and volunteers will be alert to any new safeguarding concerns as they begin to work with the young person the information relates to.

5.2. Children at home

Ride High will attempt to maintain contact with young people who are not yet returning to sessions on site. Employees will use Ride High phones and devices to make calls. Or, if necessary they will use personal phones but with the number withheld.

6. Online safety

Where employees are interacting with young people online, they will continue to follow the existing Ride High Social Networking Policy.

It is acceptable for employees and volunteers to engage with members via social media using Ride High Facebook groups. These groups are private and can only be viewed by those people deemed to be appropriate by their administrator, Hannah Thompson (Children's Manager and DSL).

Employees will continue to be alert to the signs that a child may be at risk online, and act on any concerns immediately following the reporting procedure as set out in the safeguarding children policy.

7. Safeguarding induction and training

Ride High will ensure that employees and volunteers are aware of changes to our procedures. New staff and volunteers will continue to receive:

- A safeguarding induction.
- Basic safeguarding training

7.1. Train the Trainer and Everybody's Business safeguarding training and refreshers.

Employees may not be able to attend training during this period. If this is the case, employees will be classed as trained. However, attendance must take place as soon as training becomes available.

The Centre Manager and Children's Manager will do what they reasonably can to keep up to date with safeguarding developments and ensure these are disseminated throughout the team.

8. Keeping records of who is in the centre

Ride High keeps a record of which employees and volunteers are on site each day, and that appropriate checks have been carried out for them.

Ride High will continue to keep the Single Central Record up to date.

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Approval and review

This Safeguarding Children Policy was approved at a Board Meeting of the Trustees. It will be reviewed annually, or more frequently if appropriate.

Contacts and services

Milton Keynes Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).....01908 253169/
01908 253170
Children’s Emergency Social Work Team Out of hours.....01908 265545
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.....0808 800 5000
Samaritans.....01908 667777
Child Line..... 0800 1111
Thames Valley Police Family Protection Unit..... 01908 868392
Milton Keynes General Hospital..... 01908 660033
Family Counselling Service..... 01908 231131
Ride High Designated Trustee (Lindsey Styles)..... 01908 684444
Ride High Chief Executive (Olivia Sugdon)..... 01908 666434
Ride High Centre (For the Centre Manager).....07507 308943
Ride High Centre (for the Children’s Manager)..... 07507 308943

References

Every Child Matters: Change for Children (Dept for Education, November 2004)
What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused (HM Government) (2006)

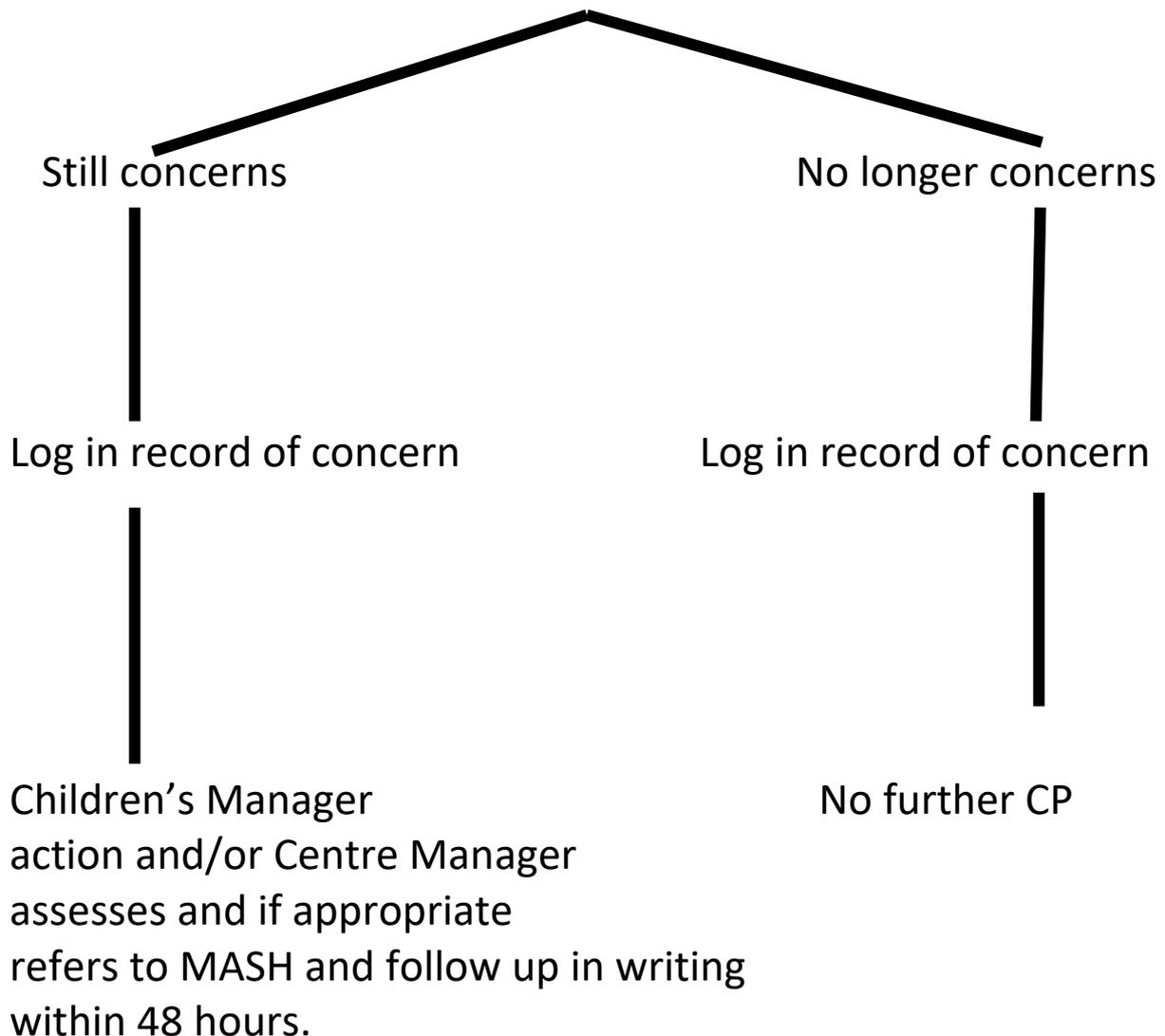
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APPENDIX 1

Concern about young person's welfare



Discuss with the Children’s Manager, Centre Manager and/or Designated Trustee. Write a record of concern and make note in Child Protection Incident Book



In either case, the issue should be referred to the young person’s referrer, even if no further action is taken.