



HACS

Hillingdon Autistic Care & Support
Registered Charity Number 1066859

SAFEGUARDING STRATEGY

In recognition that Safeguarding encompasses every aspect of our work, the Charity has employed a Safeguarding Strategy which includes all policies relevant to promoting the safety and well-being of all individuals who access the Charity's services.

<i>Safeguarding Policy</i>	2
<i>Safer Recruitment</i>	5
<i>Child Protection</i>	11
<i>Staff Behavioural Expectations</i>	14
<i>Concerns about staff conduct</i>	15
<i>Preventing Extremism</i>	17
<i>E-Safety and Acceptable Use</i>	18
<i>Photography</i>	21
<i>Absconding Child</i>	22
<i>Uncollected Child</i>	24

Safeguarding Policy

Rationale

Protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults is an essential part of our work. The process is complex and involves commitment from all staff, Trustees and volunteers. The charity recognises we have a legal duty to work with other agencies, in protecting children from harm and responding to harm. This policy will be reviewed annually.

The aim of the Safeguarding Strategy is to reduce the risk of harm taking place in the first instance. By cultivating an awareness that all autistic people using our services are potentially at risk by virtue of their disability, we hope to encourage an atmosphere which reduces the possibilities of harm. To this end, this policy incorporates the following areas of practice:

- Child Protection
- Safer Recruitment
- Staff Behavioural Expectations
- Concerns about staff, Trustee or volunteer behaviour
- Preventing Extremism
- Safety and Acceptable Use
- Photography

The Charity has statutory responsibilities in relation to safeguarding under the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (2015)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)

The Charity also has statutory responsibilities to ensure that all learners and staff are protected under health and safety legislation and practice (**please see Health and Safety Strategy**).

Statement of Intent

HACS are committed to promoting the best outcomes for children, young people and vulnerable adults that access our services. All children, young people and vulnerable adults regardless of age, disability, gender, culture, religion or sexuality will have the right to equal protection from all forms of harm or abuse. In all areas of our work, we will therefore strive

for every individual to be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.

Safeguarding is the process of promoting children's welfare and putting measures in place to improve children's safety and prevent abuse. This includes protecting children from harm, preventing impairment of children's health or development and ensuring children are living in safe and supportive care environments. All those who come into contact with children and families in their everyday work, including practitioners who do not have a specific role in relation to child protection, have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Our Safeguarding Strategy is governed by the following principles:

- Everyone has a right to be safe and children, young people and vulnerable adults need to be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect
- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility;
- early intervention is essential, before issues escalate and become more damaging
- individuals and their families are best supported and protected when there is a coordinated response from all relevant agencies

Implementation

Autistic people are particularly vulnerable because of their:

- Dependency on others for basic and social needs
- Lack of control over their own life
- Compliance and obedience 'instilled' as good behaviour
- Lack of knowledge about sex, and the misunderstanding of sexual advances
- Inability to communicate experiences
- The inability to distinguish between different types of touch

We will seek to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults by respecting each person as an individual. Staff, volunteers and Trustees will provide an environment where all individuals and their families are valued and listened to. Our aim is for them to feel free to talk about concerns and see HACS as a safe place when there are difficulties. The individual's worries and fears will be taken seriously, if they seek help from a member of the team. However, staff cannot guarantee confidentiality, if concerns are such that a referral must be made to the appropriate agencies. Safeguarding is our first priority, and the Trustees and Chief Executive will ensure that sufficient resources are made available, to enable the necessary tasks to be carried out properly. Staff will be released from normal duties for essential meetings, to prepare written reports, or to attend training as required.

The nominated Safeguarding Officer for the Charity is the Chief Executive, Antoinette Mullally. In the absence of the nominated person, there will be Duty Safeguarding Officers available who are trained in Level 3 Safeguarding.

Induction and Training

Every new member of staff, volunteer or Trustee will receive appropriate induction training on their responsibilities in relation to Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. All staff, Trustees and volunteers will complete "Safeguarding Everyone" training within their induction period so that they are fully informed of signs and symptoms of abuse and procedures within the Safeguarding Strategy. Safeguarding training will be refreshed annually. The training sessions will be offered regularly on a variety of days and times to accommodate the requirements of all Trustees, staff and volunteers. If a member of staff is unable to attend the sessions, they will need to complete the "Safeguarding Everyone" e-learning module. In order to validate their training, they will need to provide an original certificate as evidence of learning together with a signed learning declaration form.

The nominated person (Safeguarding Officer) must be trained to Level 3 standard in Designated Safeguarding Officer training. This is available through the London Borough of Hillingdon's "Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People" training. The nominated person will receive refresher training every three years and will be responsible for keeping up-to-date with changes in legislation and other specific training requirements as required.

All persons who are leading Recruitment processes and/or chairing an interview panel should have training in Safer Recruitment. This is available as an e-learning module, "Safeguarding Everybody" from Virtual College.

Safer Recruitment

Recruiting and selecting the right people is of paramount importance. The Safer Recruitment policy applies to all staff, Trustees and volunteers who wish to apply for a position within the Charity. The Procedure provides specific and detailed guidance on recruitment and pre-employment vetting checks which must be carried out to ensure effective safeguarding in recruitment.

The policy will ensure, as far as possible, that the best people are recruited on merit and that the recruitment process is free from bias and discrimination on the grounds of age, race, gender, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief or social class. The procedure applies to all appointments within the Charity.

Legal Context

In recruiting staff the following legislation affects recruitment and selection and underpins this procedure:

- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992
- Asylum & Immigration Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (2006)
- Protection of Freedom Act (2012)

Advertising Vacancies

All positions will be advertised internally. The Trustees and Chief Executive will jointly make a decision whether a post will be advertised externally.

All adverts for staff, Trustee and volunteer positions shall include the following statement in a prominent position:

“HACS is an equal opportunities and inclusive employer. Applications from people with disabilities and ethnic minorities who meet the essential criteria are actively encouraged as a diverse workforce is vital to our continued success. HACS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be required to undergo an enhanced DBS disclosure.”

The Chief Executive will be responsible for recruitment of permanent staff and Trustees and will be the named contact on all job adverts. The Recreation Coordinator will be the named contact for sessional staff member positions. Vacancies will instruct interested applicants to contact the Charity using named contact details to request an application pack.

Application Stage

Application Packs for Employees (permanent and sessional)

Application packs for positions of paid employment will include the information listed below:

Section 1: About HACS

A brief description of the Charity's services together with mission statement, values and aims.

Section 2: Finding us

A guide including the Charity's full address, public transport links, access by road and accompanying map of the local area.

Section 3: Job Profile

The job profile will include the Job Description and Person Specification. The content of the Job Description and Person Specification will be determined by the Chief Executive and approved by the Board of Trustees before advertising. All job descriptions and person specification must comply with the Charity's Equal Opportunities Policy and most recent Employment Legislation. As a minimum, the job description will identify the post name, main place of work, salary, hours of work, purpose of job and key responsibilities. All job descriptions will include a responsibility to comply with the Charity's Safeguarding procedures. The Person Specification will set out role requirements, qualifications and experience, knowledge and skills and personal qualities. The criteria must be clear, fair and justifiable and must not directly or indirectly discriminate. The criteria must also be job related, reasonable and will include values that are based upon a commitment to supporting children, young people and vulnerable adults. As a minimum, personal qualities for all permanent staff, sessional staff, volunteer and Trustee positions will include:

- A commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- A commitment to promoting inclusion of people on the autism spectrum so they may take an active role in society and lead rewarding and fulfilling lives
- Commitment to anti-discriminatory practice and implementation of equal opportunities

Once the criteria have been agreed it must be weighted as either ESSENTIAL or DESIRABLE. Essential criteria are those, which the candidate must have to be appointed, while the desirable criteria are those that may be acquired following appointment. Once the criteria have been agreed the person specification is the tool used throughout the selection process for short-listing, designing interview questions, scoring and selecting candidates.

Section 4: Eligibility

All candidates for paid positions whether permanent or sessional must complete the Eligibility to work in the UK form. Should the candidate be invited to interview they will be required to produce evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK.

Section 5: Application form

The application form will be the main source of evidence for short-listing candidates. Application forms will be standard for all positions. Applicants will be required to list their qualifications, relevant training/continuous personal development and a personal statement outlining how they meet the person specification for the role. All applicants must list a full history in chronological order since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary education or training and part-time or voluntary work as well as full-time employment with start and end dates, explanations for periods not in employment, education or training and reasons for leaving each employment. Application forms will also include a requirement to declare any family or close relationship to any existing employees or Trustees. Applicants must provide details of referees, one of whom must be from the applicants current or most recent employer. Referees should not be accepted from relatives or persons writing solely in the capacity of friends. Where an applicant who is not currently working with children has done so in the past, it is important that a reference is also obtained from the employer by whom the person was most recently employed in work with children. Careful consideration needs to be given where the applicant has been working as a locum or on a series of temporary contracts. The need to request an additional reference from the last permanent employer should be considered.

Application Packs for Trustees and Volunteers

Application packs for Trustees and volunteers will include Section 1 and 2 as listed above. An appropriate role description proportionate to the position will also be included; it should be noted that some volunteers will apply to support the Charity with non-specific and occasional voluntary input and therefore a role description may not be appropriate on this occasion. Applicants must provide contact details for at least one referee, preferably the applicants current or most recent employer. The Charity recognises that many young people in the local community wish to volunteer from a young age and this may be their first professional work experience. A reference from their school is therefore acceptable.

Short-listing

Once the closing date has been reached, the Chief Executive will short-list the candidates using the person specification criteria. Decisions made will be recorded on a short-listing form to provide evidence of how the decision was reached. When short-listing, staff must ensure objectivity and look for examples/evidence of how candidates meet both the essential and desired criteria, they must not make assumptions.

The Chief Executive will invite short-listed candidates to interview using the standard template letter which will instruct candidates to bring photographic ID, proof of their eligibility to work in the UK and original copies of their qualifications to the interview. They must produce the necessary original documents (valid work permit and passport) to evidence that they are eligible to work and reside in the UK. This is an important part of the pre-employment vetting process and the Chief Executive is personally responsible for ensuring the process is carried out in accordance with this procedure and is also responsible for the

employment of a candidate who was not eligible to work in the UK. Candidates will also be asked to provide details of any reasonable adjustments required at the interview.

Interview

The interview panel will consist of a minimum of 2 people. The Chief Executive and/or a member of the Board of Trustees will preside on the panel for recruitment of permanent staff members and Trustees. Where possible it is preferable for a third panel member who is a parent/carer or an autistic adult is present to ensure service user representation and voice in the recruitment process. For recruitment of sessional workers, the Recreation Coordinator will be supported on the panel by the Chief Executive, a Trustee or another member of staff who is trained in Safer Recruitment. All interview panels where possible should also be balanced to include a mix of gender and race/ethnicity. The interviewing panel will consist of the same people for each individual advertised position. Should a conflict of interest arise in that, a relative of a Trustee or member of staff apply for a position within the organisation, the Chief Executive or Chair (whoever is independent of the candidate) will adopt the procedures outlined in the Charity's conflict of interest policy to ensure the process is open and transparent.

The interview panel will meet to determine a list of appropriate questions which will be asked of all prospective candidates. Interview questions will vary depending on the position but all positions will include at minimum questions based on the following:

- The candidate's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- The candidate's commitment to promoting inclusion of people on the autism spectrum so they may take an active role in society and lead rewarding and fulfilling lives
- The candidate's commitment to anti-discriminatory practice and implementation of equal opportunities
- The candidate's motivation for working with children, young people or vulnerable adults

For each candidate, each panel member will be given an interview pack. All candidates will be asked the same set of questions and will be allocated the same amount of time for their interview. One of the panel members must be given the responsibility to discuss gaps in employment or any issues on the application form that requires clarification. Each panel member is required to score the candidates response against the set criteria. It is essential that appropriate recording of the candidate's responses is made to ensure that scoring can be carried out accurately and fairly. The panel members should ensure that appropriate probing takes place to gain and validate evidence.

Selection Process

No one person will have responsibility for a recruitment decision. The Chief Executive is responsible on the day for ensuring all staff involved in the selection process know what role they are required to undertake. The decision should be made based on the scoring from application and interview.

At this point all equal opportunities data will be separated from interview data and retained for monitoring purposes.

Pre-Employment Checks

References

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support the appointment decision. References must not be accepted except where they have been sought directly by the candidate. Open "To whom it may concern" references must never be accepted. A copy of the job description and the person specifications should be included with all reference requests. Standard reference templates are available for staff, Trustees and volunteers (separate forms). All requests for references will ask:

- About the referee's relationship with the candidate, e.g. did they have a working relationship; if so, what; how long has the referee known the candidate, and in what capacity;
- Whether the referee is satisfied that the person has the ability and is suitable to undertake the job;
- Whether the referee is completely satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults and if not, for specific details of the referees concerns and the reasons why the referee believes the person might be unsuitable;
- Confirmation of details of the candidates current post, salary and sickness record;
- Specific verifiable comments about the candidates performance history and conduct;
- Details of any disciplinary procedures the candidate has been subject to in which the disciplinary sanction is current;
- Details of any disciplinary procedures the candidate has been subject to involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children, including any in which the disciplinary sanction has expired, and the outcome of those;
- Details of any allegations or concerns that have been raised about the candidate that relate either to the safety and welfare of children or behaviour towards children and the outcome of those concerns, e.g. whether the allegations or concerns were investigated, the conclusions reached, and how the matter was resolved. In relation to teachers and staff (including volunteers) in a school or FE college that provides education for children under 18, cases in which an allegation was proven to be unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious should not be included in employer references. A history of repeated concerns or allegations which have all been found to be unsubstantiated, malicious etc. should also not be included in any reference

Reference requests should remind the referee that:

- They have a responsibility to ensure that the reference is accurate and does not contain any material misstatement or omission;
- Relevant factual content of the reference may be discussed with the applicant.
- Requests for references should be addressed to a candidate's current or previous employer. Unsolicited references are not acceptable.

Disclosure and Barring Service Enhanced Disclosure:

We will comply with DBS Guidance for Employers Code of Practice throughout all aspects of the disclosure process. (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/dbs-check-requests-guidance-for-employers>)

The Charity is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) (Amendments) Order 1986. It is the policy of the Charity that all Trustees and staff should complete a DBS application form and provide the appropriate original documents as evidence. Volunteers who will engage in "regulated activity" as defined by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 will also be required to complete an Enhanced DBS disclosure. The new definition of regulated activity relating to children comprises only: (i) Unsupervised activities: teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children, or provide advice/guidance on well-being, or drive a vehicle only for children; (ii) Work for a limited range of establishments ('specified places'), with opportunity for contact: for example, schools, children's homes, childcare premises. Permanent or sessional staff members will not commence work until a satisfactory DBS disclosure has been received. Trustees and volunteers are not able to commence work including direct contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults until their enhanced DBS disclosure is received.

It is unlawful for a prospective employee to withhold or not to disclose details of any criminal convictions (even if time spent), arrests or police cautions pending or otherwise. The member of staff responsible for the DBS checking process must ensure that they only accept original documents from the list of "acceptable identity documents" from the DBS applicant's guide. The documents must be photocopied and counter signed by the member of staff undertaking the verification checks. The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 provides the legislative framework for the new Vetting and Barring scheme, stating that an employer must not knowingly engage a "barred" person in regulated activity. The requirements of this legislation are that a person who is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults will be breaking the law if they work or volunteer or try to work or volunteer in such a capacity. Should HACS knowingly employ or allow a person to volunteer who is barred from working with these groups will be breaking the requirements of Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment.

During the course of employment, employees are required to notify the Director within 24 hours of any criminal conviction, police caution, or arrest by the Police, being investigated from any source or any bind over order. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action leading to the employee's dismissal.

Trustee, staff and volunteer DBS checks will be renewed every 3 years. For sessional staff members, if there is a break in service of over three months, a new DBS disclosure will be required.

Child Protection

Child Protection is part of Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare. This refers to the action taken to protect specific children who are at risk of harm. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment - a person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Definitions of Abuse

The following definitions of abuse are recognised in "Care and Support Statutory Guidance" issued under the Care Act 2014 and "Keeping children safe in education" statutory guidance for schools and colleges:

Physical abuse including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child/adult.

Domestic violence - including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence.

Sexual abuse including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Neglect including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating

Self-neglect - this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Psychological/emotional including emotional abuse, threats of harm and abandonment, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing a person to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment, although it may occur alone.

Modern slavery - encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Mate Hate Crime - is 'any criminal offence that is motivated by hostility or prejudice based upon a person's disability' and is done by someone known to the disabled person.

Female Genital Mutilation comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for nonmedical reasons. It involves removing and damaging healthy and normal female genital tissue, and hence interferes with the natural function of girls' and women's bodies. The practice causes severe pain and has several immediate and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth also causing dangers to the child.

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

The following signs and symptoms may indicate that a child is at risk of or has already been harmed. Practitioners must remember one or more of following signs/symptoms should indicate concern but are not a definite indicator that abuse has taken place. Staff should therefore follow the Child Protection Procedure if they observe one or more of the below:

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

Children who shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements.

Parents do not mention injuries which have occurred to their child, give no explanation, give an inappropriate explanation, or keep changing the explanation

Parents do not seek medical help when their child is unwell

Parent's delay seeking treatment for an injury, or make visits to Accident & Emergency Departments very frequently

Parents have unrealistic expectations of their child, and generally negative attitudes towards them

There are things about the parents that concern you - signs of possible alcohol or drug use, or signs there may be an abusive relationship between adults in the home (often referred to as "domestic violence")

Child Protection Procedures

Staff, volunteers and Trustees should follow five key steps to help identify and respond appropriately to possible abuse and/or neglect:

- *Be Alert* to the signs and symptoms of abuse
- *Question Behaviours* if something seems unusual
- *Ask for Help* from their manager or Safeguarding Officer if they are unsure
- *Report Concerns* to the Safeguarding Officer
- *Record Concerns* following the appropriate recording procedures

Concerns may arise in one or more of the following areas:

- The child's behaviour
- The child has a physical injury
- The child makes a disclosure or allegation
- The child's physical presentation
- Information from or observation / behaviour of a parent

Staff members who have concerns must report their concerns to the HACS Safeguarding Officer, or in their absence their immediate supervisor/manager. Staff members do not carry out investigations, nor decide whether children have been harmed. This is a matter for the specialist agencies.

Any concerns of the above nature should be recorded on a "Welfare Concern form". Staff should ensure:

- The form is dated, signed and all details are legible
- The incident / event / observation of concern is described clearly and concisely
- The form is completed using straightforward language
- Only facts are included not opinion or speculation
- If recording a disclosure, the child's own words are recorded and any questions you may have asked are included
- Physical marks and injuries are recorded on a body map where appropriate
- Specify any action you have taken

The HACS Safeguarding Officer will maintain a record of Safeguarding concerns. Records will be retained for up to five years after they have left HACS. These records will be available for inspection by a HM Ofsted Inspector. All documents relating to Safeguarding will be kept securely locked.

If the Safeguarding/Deputy Safeguarding Officer believes a client is at risk of/has been harmed, they will discuss their concerns with the Local Authority Duty Social Worker who will recommend whether a referral should be made. If there is a reasonable belief that Female Genital Mutilation has taken place, the Safeguarding Officer has a legal duty to report this to the police as well as Local Authority.

Staff Behavioural Expectations

HACS have implemented a Code of Conduct for all Staff, volunteers and Trustees. This should be provided as part of the induction procedure and should be returned, signed by the individual to indicate their commitment to abiding by this code throughout their engagement in HACS whether this be in a paid or voluntary capacity.

Staff, volunteer and trustee code of conduct

Guiding principles

The welfare of the child is paramount. All staff have a duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of individuals in their care

Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions

Staff should work and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way

The same professional standards should always be applied regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity

Staff should continually monitor and review their practice and ensure they follow the guidance contained in this code of conduct.

You must:

Treat all individuals and colleagues with respect

Act as a positive role model for children, young people and vulnerable adults at all times

Ensure that, whenever possible, you are not left unsupervised with a child, young person or vulnerable adult - try to remain within sight of others

Respect all children, young people and vulnerable adults' right to personal privacy

Keep personal information relating to service users or the Charity business confidential

Encourage children to voice their concerns

Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions no matter how well intentioned

Be aware that physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted

Recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people

Operate within the organisation's principles, procedures and guidance, and any specific procedures

Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspensions of abuse

You must not:

Behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question your suitability to work with children or act as a role model

Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or young people

Make suggestive or derogatory remarks in front of children or young people

Jump to conclusions about others without checking the facts

Use your position to gain access to information for your own advantage, personal use and/or a child's or family's detriment

Abuse your position of responsibility and trust to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine service users

Use your position of responsibility and trust to form or promote relationships with children, which are of a sexual nature

Concerns about staff conduct

This policy should be used where it is alleged that a member of staff, volunteer or Trustee has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child; or
- Behaved inappropriately towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

Early warning signs of inappropriate behaviour may include:

- A child/young person receiving special attention, preferential treatment or additional help especially if it is without knowledge of parents or other staff
- Excessive time spent alone with a child or young person, or time with a child or young person in private or isolated areas
- Using texts, telephone calls or other social media networking sites to communicate inappropriately with children or young people (including children/young people that don't attend the setting)
- Concerns raised by other pupils
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Sharing personal photos

Whistle-Blowing

Any safeguarding concerns or allegations of current or historical harm must be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Officer. This is known as "Whistle blowing". Staff should not think, "what if I'm wrong"? Rather, they should ask themselves, "what if I'm right?" All those who come into contact with children and young people have a duty to raise concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour. Reporting concerns immediately will prevent the problem worsening or widening, protect or reduce risks to others and prevent staff/volunteers becoming implicated themselves.

If the allegation meets the above criteria the Safeguarding Officer will immediately report their concerns the Local Safeguarding Children's Board within 24 hours. If it is suspected that a criminal offence has been committed, the Safeguarding Officer will also contact the Police. If the Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the allegation it should be reported directly to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. If the allegation meets the above criteria the Board of Trustees will immediately report it to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board within 24 hours.

Parents/carers of the child concerned should be informed immediately that there is a Safeguarding concern in relation to their child. However, the Safeguarding Officer will need

to make a decision, informed by LSCB and/or Police about how much information to divulge at this stage to ensure that a Police investigation is not compromised.

The member of staff who is the subject of the allegation/s will also be kept informed of the progress of the case. The Trustees of the Charity will provide appropriate support to the individual while the case is ongoing.

Parents/carers will be informed of the outcome of the case even where there is no criminal prosecution, however if an investigation is opened by LSCB or Police, HACS will no longer be responsible for sharing information in relation to the investigation. HACS will share the outcome of any disciplinary action taken in relation to Safeguarding, however the deliberations of a hearing information or evidence taken into account in reaching decision cannot normally be disclosed.

The possible risk of harm to children posed by an accused person needs to be effectively evaluated and managed in respect of the child(ren) involved in the allegations, and any other children in the individual's home, work or community life. In some cases, the Trustees may have to suspend the member of staff/volunteer concerned. The individual will continue to receive full pay during the investigation. Suspension will be considered where there is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, or the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or is so serious that it may form grounds for dismissal.

If the member of staff is suspended, appropriate arrangements will be made to keep the individual informed about developments in the workplace. If this person is a member of a trade union or professional association, they should be advised to contact that body at the outset.

Employee confidentiality will be maintained at all times. The Charity will endeavour to guard the employee against publicity while the allegation is being investigated. The Police do not normally provide any information to press or media that might identify an individual under investigation unless and until the individual is charged with a criminal offence.

If the employee chooses to tender his/her resignation or cease to provide their services, the allegation will continue be investigated in accordance with these procedures. It is important to reach a conclusion in all cases, including any in which the person concerned refuses to cooperate with the process. All outcomes shall be reported back to the Board of Trustees for their consideration.

By the same token, so called "compromise agreements" by which the individual agrees to resign, or whereby the Charity agrees not to pursue disciplinary action and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference, **will strictly not be used**. In any event, a thorough police investigation will be carried out where appropriate. Nor can it override the Charity's statutory duty where culpability is proven to make a referral to the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

Preventing Extremism

We recognise that extremism and exposure to extremist materials and influences is a national priority and so should be addressed as a safeguarding concern. We also recognise that if we fail to challenge extremist views we are failing to protect the individuals in our care and fail in our obligation to promote a safe, equal and diverse society.

The Charity will emphasise the importance of prevention in all its actions, to reduce the risk of extremism. Through promotion of British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs, we will foster and encourage learners and staff to respect one another and to respect and tolerate difference. The Charity will actively promote an ethos of safe and acceptable behaviour so that everybody knows and understand what safe and acceptable behaviour is in the context of extremism and radicalisation.

Staff members who have concerns about apparently discriminatory or extremist views, must report their concerns to the HACS Safeguarding Officer, who will discuss a potential referral with the Local Authority's Channel Team.

E-Safety and Acceptable Use

The E-Safety and Acceptable Use policy and procedures apply to all staff, volunteers and trustees.

The aim of the policy is to:

- Protect children, young people and vulnerable adults using HACS services who who make use of information and communication technology (such as mobile phones, games consoles and the internet) as part of their involvement with HACS
- Provide staff and volunteers with the principles that guide HACS approach to E-Safety.
- Protect professionals.
- Ensure that, as an organisation, HACS operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use information technology.

The following are the range of technologies which can be used positively but which can also put people at risk:

- Internet
- E-mail
- Instant messaging Blogs
- Podcasts
- Social networking sites
- Chat rooms
- Gaming Sites
- Mobile phones with camera and video functionality
- Mobile technology (eg games consoles) that are internet ready and include webcams
- E-smart phones with e-mail, web functionality, camera and video functionality and secure text network

Risks can come under the categories outlined below:

	Commercial	Aggressive	Sexual	Values
Content That the user may come across either accidentally or via a deliberate search	Adverts Spam Sponsorship Requests for personal information Exposure to age-inappropriate	Violent/hateful content	Exposure to illegal material, eg, images of child abuse Pornographic/unwelcome sexual content	Bias Racist Misleading information/ advice

	material			
Contact Unsuitable contact from another user	Tracking Harvesting Publishing information about themselves	Being bullied, harassed, stalked	Meeting strangers Being groomed	Self-harm Unwelcome persuasions
Conduct User's behaviour that creates risk either through illegal activity or lack of awareness of the potential consequences	Illegal downloading Gambling Hacking Financial scams	Bullying or harassing another	Creating and uploading inappropriate/abusive material 'Sexting'	Providing misleading information/advice

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is the use of technology such as mobile phone, internet, e-mail, social networking sites, chat rooms and instant messaging services to deliberately upset someone else. It can be used to carry out all the different types of bullying, an extension of face-to-face bullying. It can also go further, by invading home/personal space and can involve a greater number of people. It may or may not be an anonymous method by which bullies can torment their victims at any time of day or night. It can draw bystanders into being accessories.

Cyberbullying includes: threats and intimidation; harassment or 'cyber-stalking'; vilification/defamation; exclusion or peer rejection; impersonation; unauthorised publication of private information or images ('happy-slapping'); and manipulation. It includes sexting, sending explicit images electronically. These images can be widely distributed. It also includes trolling, the online posting of inflammatory messages with the intention of provoking an emotional response. This can involve violent threats, poking fun, making trouble and causing annoyance. It can involve setting up hate websites or groups on social networking sites. It can take place across age groups and adults working with children can be targeted, for example, by pupils and/or parents.

The victim may receive email, chat, text messages or posts on social networking sites that make them feel embarrassed, upset, depressed or afraid. This can damage their self-esteem and pose a threat to their psychological wellbeing. Cyberbullying can pose a serious threat to their physical and emotional safety.

Cyberbullying will be dealt with through HACS Safeguarding Strategy, specifically Child Protection and Bullying procedures.

Acceptable Use

The Acceptable Use Policy clearly identifies the expectations and boundaries for the use of technology both provided by HACS and those provided by individuals for their personal use. AUP applies to the use of computers, laptops, mobile phones, smart phones, cameras and video cameras, webcams, games consoles and other technology that may be available within the organisation.

HACS provides additional software and/or settings to limit the E-Safety risk for children, young people and vulnerable adults when using ICT. For off-site activities in Local Authority buildings we will work within their acceptable use framework and make use of their security features.

- In general, use of HACS ICT equipment should be for the administrative purposes of the organisation
- Your use of the organisation's ICT services must at all times comply with the law.
- Your use of the organisation's ICT services must not interfere with any others' use of these facilities and services.
- You are not entitled to use a computer that you have not been authorised to use.
- You must not access any program or data which has not been specifically authorised for your use.
- You must not alter computer material belonging to another user without the users' permission.
- You must not use the organisation's ICT services to harass, defame, libel, slander, intimidate, impersonate or otherwise abuse another person
- You must not use the organisation's ICT services for the creation, collection, storage, downloading or displaying of any offensive, obscene, indecent or menacing images, data or material capable of being resolved into such.
- You must not use the organisation's ICT services to conduct any form of commercial activity without express permission.
- You must not use the organisation's ICT services to disseminate mass (unsolicited) mailings.
- You must not use any IRC or messenger software including, but not limited to AOL, MSN, Yahoo! or other "Messengers", IRC or "chat" clients unless expressly authorized to do so for work related purposes
- You must not post or subscribe to newsgroups, on-line discussion boards or email list groups from the organisation's ICT services, unless specifically related to organisational activities
- You must not play computer games of any nature whether preinstalled with the operating system or available online

Photography

Rationale

Photographs are an excellent way to share experiences with family members, supporters and funders. Photographs are also a visual cue for people with communication difficulties to remind them of the activities they have completed. Photographs provide good evidence of an individual's achievement for assessment purposes.

Guidance

Parental permission must be obtained for children and young people via the client personal information form indicating permission for photographs to be taken and used for publicity purposes. Parents/carers are made aware that photographs may be used for "purposes which may include charity newsletter, charity webpage, brochures, display and any professional publicity, such as brochures, local newspaper article or to be shared with external funders for evidence purposes". If parents/carers do not grant permission for their child's photograph to be taken, the Supervisor of that client's group will be advised accordingly, and all photographs will be screened to ensure that child is not in any of the photos.

Visiting professionals may take photographs at the setting at the discretion of the Charity Chief Executive after determining the purpose of how these photos will be used. Parents/carers will be advised in advance if a professional is visiting and will be taking photos, and can withdraw their child from the photos if they so wish.

Photographs will be taken using one of the Charity's cameras by H.A.C.S. staff or volunteers. Personal photography equipment or camera mobile phones are not permitted to be used at any time to take photographs at the setting. Use of personal photography equipment or camera mobile phones by staff or volunteers, will be treated as gross misconduct and will be dealt with accordingly, potentially resulting in dismissal of the staff member concerned.

Each client personal information file will have a photograph of the client on the front of the file for identification purposes. These files are stored in a lockable filing cabinet at the H.A.C.S. Resource Centre. Photographs are stored electronically on the H.A.C.S. Computer Shared drive. Only members of H.A.C.S. Resource Centre staff have access to these photographs. Old or disused photographs from displays will be shredded before being put in the recycling bin.

Parents/carers may request that any photographs of their child are destroyed if the client leaves the setting.

Absconding Child

HACS aim to provide an environment in which clients will feel safe and secure. However, clients on the Autism Spectrum can exhibit unpredictable behaviours if they are suffering anxiety. One of the behaviours can be "escape" behaviours, such as running away or trying to leave the setting. This will become apparent if a key carer is unable to locate their allocated client for more time than expected for them to visit the toilet, deliver or collect something from another area of the building. Their non-return will give rise for concern and all staff will follow the Absconding procedure.

The H.A.C.S. Resource Centre is a physically secure environment. There is secure fencing around the outdoor areas, and members of staff will be present in the outdoor areas at all times when clients are using the area. The external green gate will remain closed at all times when clients are on site. During morning registration, and at the end of the day when parents/carers are picking clients up, a member of staff or volunteer will be allocated to guard the gate to ensure clients are not leaving alone without a parent or carer.

If a client has been identified as posing a high risk of absconding when off site, or has a history of absconding incidents in the care of other settings, they will be individually identified on off-site risk assessments. Specific strategies will be employed to minimise the risk of this behaviour.

When the client is found, there will be a thorough investigation of how the client absconded from their key carer. Any weakness in the system of client security will be remedied effectively. The Absconding policy and procedure will be scrutinised in the light of the experience to ensure it is as effective as possible.

Procedure for Absconding Client

1. When a member of staff identifies that a client is missing/has potentially absconded, they should immediately notify their supervisor. Note the time.
2. If on an off-site trip, the supervisor should immediately alert staff at the venue and request that all exits are guarded by staff. They should give the staff a description of the child and request that they ensure any children of a similar description are not allowed to leave the venue.
3. The supervisor will reallocate clients to enable two members of staff to search the area. The staff members searching for the client will carry client's photograph to gain help from venue staff or members of the public who may have seen or may see the client.
4. The supervisor will contact the Duty Safeguarding Officer and inform that a client is missing. Search of the area will continue. If possible other staff to reallocate their children to join the search. Staff will carry their mobile phones to keep in touch with each other.

5. After twenty minutes from the time that the alarm was raised, the Duty Safeguarding Officer will contact the police if the client has not been found. **Depending on the nature of the client's needs, the Duty Safeguarding Officer will use discretion and may contact the police sooner.**
6. The Chief Executive or Duty Safeguarding Officer will contact the client's parents/carers after the Police have been called.
7. While the police are being called, the two members of staff searching will extend their search to the local area (photographs of client should remain at the venue for police use). One will go on foot in one direction and one will travel by car in a different direction. They will investigate the land and roads around the immediate area.
8. When the police arrive, staff will give the police copies of the client's photograph. They will reinforce this with a verbal explanation and any other relevant information related to the client at the time that they went missing.

Uncollected Child

If in the event of a failure to collect a child/young person, the on-site Supervisor will attempt to contact the child's parent/carer by telephoning the contact telephone numbers listed on the child's personal information file, including emergency contact numbers. If staff have not been able to make contact with the parent/carer by 3.30pm, the Duty Safeguarding Officer will be notified.

Two members of staff will remain with the client at the setting, one of whom must be the on-site supervisor or duty Safeguarding officer.

If all attempts to contact the parents fail by 4.30pm, the Duty Safeguarding Officer will notify Social Services and the police. The Chair of the Trustees must also be notified at this point.