

# **PITSTONE PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Youth Café Safeguarding Policy**

Pitstone Youth Cafe is firmly committed to the welfare of all young people who use its facilities and protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

Pitstone Youth Cafe will aim to ensure that all young people meet in a safe environment with people they can trust. It will also ensure that all risks which young people encounter are carefully assessed and the necessary steps taken to minimize and manage them.

All adult leaders will be provided with a copy of this policy and will be requested to indicate their commitment to it by completing a signed copy which will be kept in the club records.

### **1. What is abuse and what responsibilities exist**

#### **1.1. Policy Statement**

Pitstone Youth Cafe, is firmly committed to the belief that all children and young people have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, and fully recognise their responsibility for child protection and to promote the welfare of children and young people. The safety and protection of all children and young people that Pitstone Youth Cafe supports is paramount and has priority over all other interests.

Pitstone Youth Cafe encourages a culture of listening to and engaging in dialogue with children, seeking their views in ways that are appropriate to their age, culture and understanding.

The purpose of this Safeguarding Policy is to ensure, at all times, the maximum protection from any kind of harm for all young people involved in any way with Pitstone Youth Cafe. For the purposes of this policy, Pitstone Youth Cafe has defined harm as:

- abandonment
- emotional abuse
- neglect
- physical abuse
- racial abuse
- sexual abuse or sexual exploitation
- exposure to drug/ alcohol misuse
- bullying – Including cyber bullying
- grooming
- radicalisation
- female genital mutilation

This policy's purpose is to protect the personal safety of all children and young people using the facilities, resources and activities provided by Pitstone Youth Cafe, by actively

promoting awareness, good practice and sound procedures. This policy also seeks to protect the interests of the volunteers and staff that operate the Pitstone Youth Café.

The policies laid out in this policy are in accordance with Children's Act 1989, Children's Act 2004 and the guidance "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015".

## **1.2. Recognising abuse and neglect**

Abuse may occur in different forms. Abuse can be split into the main categories below:

- **Physical Abuse**

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

- **Emotional Abuse**

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child 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 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. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

- **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 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 in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children 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.

- **Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. It is vital to take action that is needed to safeguard the child/children. The decision

should be discussed by the Café Manager and Council Chairman before any action is taken or a decision made to escalate.

- Harm

'Harm' means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

Domestic violence is very damaging to a child's emotional development; where a child is living with domestic violence, schools should consider making a referral to Social Care if the child shows any indicators of significant harm.

Based on the findings of the Victoria Climbié case, it is important to remember that often, only when information held by a number of workers is put together, that a picture of child abuse emerges. In addition to this, whilst respecting cultural differences, the basic requirement that children are kept safe is universal and cuts across cultural boundaries.

If any of these occur, young people often display problems in the following areas:

- behaviour
- education
- mental health
- drugs and alcohol
- physical evidence e.g. bruising
- relationships

### **1.3. Responsibilities (organisation)**

Pitstone Youth Café will ensure that the youth café manager is trained to the appropriate level to act as designated Safeguarding Officer with responsibility for child protection and the implementation of this policy. The Assistant Youth Café Worker will also be trained in safeguarding. It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Officer to take appropriate action following any expression of concern and make referrals to the appropriate agency.

Pitstone Youth Café will offer all volunteers and staff safeguarding training and ensure that all staff members/volunteers receive information to update them on Safeguarding via this policy at least annually.

Pitstone Youth Café will ensure that advice is sought from relevant child protection agencies when dealing with issues.

Pitstone Youth Café will ensure that all employees/volunteers receive regular monitoring and supervision in their work with children and young people.

### **1.4. Responsibilities (employees/volunteers)**

All employees/volunteers of Pitstone Youth Café have a responsibility for the welfare of the children and young people that they work with.

All employees/volunteers have a duty to ensure that any suspected incident, allegation or other manifestation relating to child protection is reported using the reporting procedures detailed in this policy.

Never assume that others are monitoring a child or young person. Others may have doubts but you could be the only person taking action.

If in any doubt about what action to take, employees must seek advice from the Youth Café Safeguarding Officer or in their absence the Parish Council Chairman.

## **2. Dealing with allegations**

The following procedures will apply in the identification or suspicion of abuse towards a young person.

A young person may disclose that he/she is being abused; he/she may show signs of abuse; or he/she may speak about third party abuse.

### **2.1. Reporting procedures**

Any suspicion, allegation or disclosure must be reported immediately (as soon as practicably possible on the day of the occurrence) to the Youth Café Safeguarding Officer. In the event that an allegation relates to the Youth Café Safeguarding Officer, the report should be made to the Parish Council Chairman. Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in a number of ways, including a comment made by a child, physical evidence such as bruising, a change in behaviour or inappropriate behaviour or knowledge.

The Youth Café Safeguarding Officer must record the concern, with the employee/volunteer, using the Incident/Accident Reporting Form. The Youth Café Safeguarding Officer is responsible for informing the Parish Council Chairman immediately and ensuring that a copy of the Incident/Accident Report is kept strictly confidential and stored securely following data protection procedures.

It is the responsibility of the Youth Café Safeguarding Officer to deal with any safeguarding matters initially and then escalated as appropriate.

All stages of the reporting procedure must be documented, marked confidential and stored securely following the procedures laid out in the data protection policy.

### **2.2. If abuse is suspected**

Observations, conversations or concerns will be recorded, signed and dated.

- The matter must not be investigated or discussed with anyone other than the Youth Café Safeguarding Officer
- The Youth Café Safeguarding Officer will assess the information and contact the appropriate local statutory services e.g. schools/social services.
- Action4Youth is always available for advice and guidance.

### **2.3. If abuse is reported/alleged**

- The young person will be listened to and encouraged to speak without interruption, comment or judgment.
- It will be explained that in terms of Pitstone Youth Cafe Confidentiality Policy, information may need to be shared in certain circumstances.
- **The matter must not be investigated or discussed with anyone other than the Youth Café Safeguarding Officer, or in their absence the Parish Council Chairman.**

- A written account of the report or allegation will be made, signed and dated by two people.
- Youth Café Safeguarding Officer will inform the appropriate statutory service (school or Social Services).

If the matter is regarded as critical it should be referred immediately and directly to the Safeguarding Officer of Buckinghamshire Council and details of the referral passed to the Youth Café Safeguarding Officer and the Parish Council Chairman as soon as possible.

#### **2.4. How to react to a disclosure**

Listen, rather than directly question

Never stop anyone who is freely recalling significant events

Do not ask leading questions

Do not promise confidentiality

Allow silence

No distractions

Positive prompts

Allow the child/young person to be upset

Listen to them carefully

Reassure the child/young person that they will be supported

Make an accurate record of the information you have been given, taking care to make sure your record is correct.

### **3. Protecting our staff and volunteers**

#### **3.1. Protection of Staff & Volunteers**

Pitstone Youth Cafe recognises the importance of protecting its staff/volunteers from possible allegations of abuse and recommends the following guidelines:

Staff/volunteers should not:

- Be alone with young people. Two adults should be on duty in each area of the premises that the youth café is operational.
- Lock and unlock premises without another adult present.
- Transport young people in a car or mini bus without another adult being present.
- Take young people to their homes.
- Make inappropriate contact with young people i.e. develop relationships outside the club setting.
- Leave young people unattended.
- Leave young people in the presence of adults who are not suitably trained.

- Leave young people in the presence of adults not known to leaders.
- Leave young people in the presence of adults who have not had relevant DBS checks.
- Show favouritism to young people within the club.

### **3.2. Code of conduct for staff/volunteer interactions with young people**

Pitstone Youth Cafe adheres to the following guidelines as to how young people and adults interact with each other:

- Abusive behaviour and language, violence, aggression, bullying or discrimination will not be tolerated Leaders will respond quickly and effectively to any such reports which if necessary will result in the offender(s) being suspended from the club
- No alcohol will be consumed on the premises. Leaders will refrain from consuming alcohol prior to assuming responsibility for young people.
- The appropriate ratios of leaders to young people will be applied:
  - 1:15 where the element of risk is similar to that encountered in everyday life
  - 1:8 for all trips
  - 1:6 for children under 10 years, or groups with special needs

Over-riding this, 2 leaders should be present in each area of the youth café to safeguard both staff and attendees
- This is a drop in facility, young people are free to leave the club when they wish
- Requirement for parents or carers involved in sessions to be DBS checked.
- Consider consequences if anyone behaves inappropriately in accordance with the
- Youth Café Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policies.

### **3.3. Allegations against staff/volunteers**

When any form of complaint is made against an employee/volunteer, it must be taken seriously and the complaint should initially be dealt with by the most senior member of the team ie the Youth Café Manager. If the complaint is against the most senior member of the team, then the Parish Council Chairman must be informed.

The Youth Café Safeguarding Officer will seek advice and guidance from the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) within 24 hours of the allegation.

The Youth Café Safeguarding Officer may attend the site of the allegation to gain an initial account of what has occurred from all relevant parties, including the person against whom the allegation has been made. If this is not possible, contact will be made by telephone.

The Parish Council may suspend from duty and/or the premises, any person who is a party to the allegation until a full investigation has been made (following advice from the LADO).

This action does not imply in any way that the person suspended is responsible for, or is to blame for any action leading up to the complaint. The purpose of any such suspension is to enable a full and proper investigation to be carried out in a professional manner.

Pitstone Youth Cafe will co-operate fully with the Police, Social Services and all other parties involved.

The Youth Café Safeguarding Officer will ensure that the Parish Council Chairman, is fully briefed. An agreed statement will be prepared for the purpose of accurate communication with external sources and for the protection of the legal position of all parties involved.

The Youth Café Safeguarding Officer will make a full written report of the incident and the actions taken. This report will be stored securely following the procedures detailed in the data protection policy.

The Parish Council may take disciplinary action where this may be considered necessary and appropriate.

### **3.4. Supporting our staff/volunteers**

All staff/volunteers at Pitstone Youth Cafe will regularly receive an invitation to attend safeguarding training and will be issued with an annual reminder of safeguarding policies.

Staff/volunteers to whom a young person has disclosed may be distressed by the disclosure and counselling will be offered. It is the responsibility of the Parish Council Safeguarding Officer to ensure this is provided if required.

## **4. Initial recruitment of staff and volunteers**

All long term staff and volunteers should complete an application form supplying the following information:

- personal details
- names of 2 independent referees
- previous experience
- any criminal convictions
- competencies and areas of interest
- signature and date

All staff and volunteers should complete a Disclosure Form (Disclosure and Barring Service) at enhanced level. These clearances will be renewed every 3 years.

All new volunteers must work alongside a fully vetted and trained member of staff until references have been received and DBS checks completed.

In accordance with guidance from the Disclosure and Barring Service a record will be kept of the disclosure number, completion date and whether or not the check is satisfactory.

## **5. Casual parent/guardian volunteers**

Pitstone Youth Café operates a parent/guardian rota to ensure sufficient safe supervision of the young people that attend.

If these parents have an existing DBS, they should provide the Parish Council with the details. If not, they do not require one if attending once within a 2-month period as the DBS guidelines are only applicable for those with regular contact.

The parish council is happy to support any parent by obtaining a DBS if they wish one and/or they wish to attend more regularly. Please advise the Café Manager and he will be happy to arrange.

The lack of a DBS should not prevent parents/guardians attending infrequently as a visitor/helper.

## **6. Confidentiality**

Pitstone Youth Cafe operates under a policy of confidentiality. However, under no circumstances will any individual who is employed by/volunteers for Pitstone Youth Cafe keep confidential any information that raises concerns about the safety and welfare of a child or young person.

This statement relating to confidentiality must be made known to all who access any provision of Pitstone Youth Cafe.

All staff/volunteers must be aware that they have a responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and young people in accordance with the Information Sharing Policy of the Children's Trust.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child that they will keep secrets.

## **7. Photography**

Since young people may be photographed while participating in club events and activities, written permission from parents/guardians must be obtained which will also allow photographic material to be used in the public domain.

## **8. Review and maintenance of the policy**

The Parish Council shall undertake to review this policy, its implementation and effectiveness annually. The views of all employees/volunteers shall be sought where necessary and reflected in the review process.

Any new legislation or developments in existing legislation will be considered as and when required and the policy will be updated to reflect these developments.

This policy was adopted by Pitstone Parish Council on .....31/8/23.....

minute reference .....137/23..... and will be reviewed on at least an annual basis (Action4Youth will inform all clubs of changes to existing legislation).

Signed on behalf of Pitstone Parish Council by:

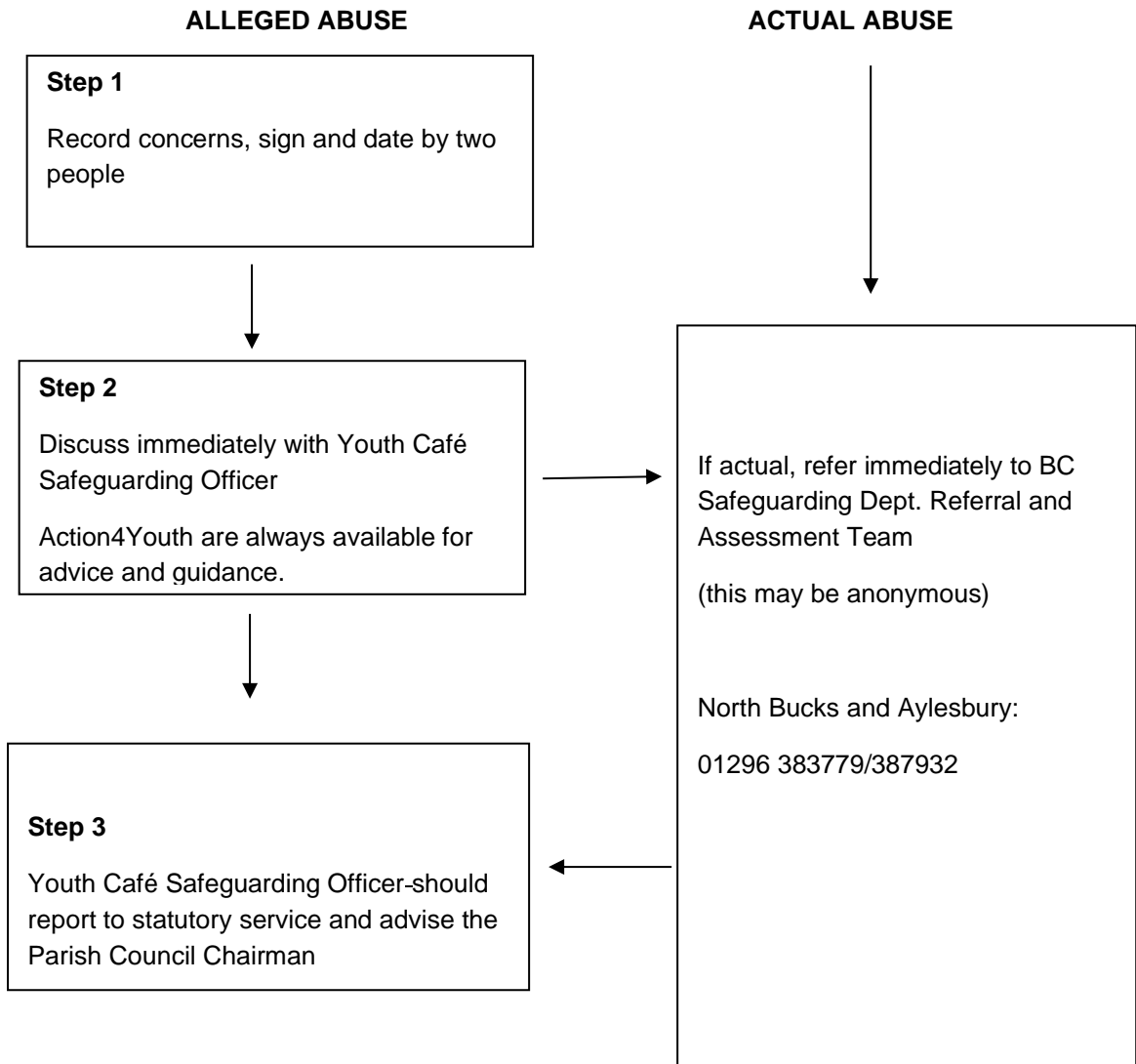
*D Nicholls*

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Chairman



# PROCEDURE TO BE ADOPTED BY LEADERS IN CASES OF ABUSE



**Contact details**

CEO Action4Youth	01296 631319
Youth Café Manager & Safeguarding Officer, Dave Rollins	07977 926596
BC Safeguarding Dept.	01296 382070
Parish Council Chairman	01296 661910

## **Volunteer Application Form**

Please complete all sections of this form. Further information can be included if you wish. All information supplied will be treated in the strictest confidence.

**Personal Details**

Name.....

Address .....

Postcode ..... Mobile .....

Please outline any previous experience, skills and areas of special interest

**REFEREES** - Please give details of two referees.

1. Name .....

Address .....

.....

Telephone number .....

2. Name .....

Address .....

This voluntary role is exempt from the provision of Section 4(2) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 by virtue of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) Order 1975. Applicants are therefore, not entitled to withhold information about convictions which for other purpose are spent under the provisions of the Act and in the event of employment, any failure to disclose such convictions could results in dismissal or disciplinary action. Any information given will be completely confidential and will be considered only in relation to any application for positions of which the order applies.

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence? YES /NO

If YES, please give details (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Signed .....

Date .....

**All essential personal details will be stored and protected under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulations.**