21. Magic Club Contextual Safeguarding Policy (Children & Young People)

Approved by: Trustees – September 2025
Review Date: August 2026 - reviewed annually or sooner if required

21.1. Purpose and Scope

This policy aims to:

- Provide clear protection for children and young people who come into contact with Magic Club.
- Provide guidance to staff, volunteers and trustees on procedures to follow if they have concerns.
- Ensure safeguarding practice reflects the contextual safeguarding framework, considering risks to child and young people in all contexts in which they exist.
- Provides information to parents, carers, partners, funders and wider stakeholders on our approach to contextual safeguarding and child protection.

This policy applies to:

- Trustees
- All paid staff
- Volunteers
- Student placements
- Contractors and those working with or representing Magic Club at any occasion

21.2. Statement of Commitment

Magic Club recognises its moral and statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people. We believe that:

- It is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- Contexts (families, peer groups, schools, neighbourhoods, and online spaces) must be made safe in order to protect children effectively.
- Inequality contributes to vulnerability and risk, and our safeguarding work must be anti-oppressive and inclusive.

This policy is mandatory for all trustees, staff, volunteers, students, and contractors.

21.3. Safeguarding and Child Protection

This policy encompasses our approach to Safeguarding and Child Protection.

Key distinctions:

- **Safeguarding** is the broad approach to promoting welfare and protecting children and young people from harm, including preventing impairment of health or development, ensuring safe and effective care, and enabling children to grow up in safe environments.
- **Child Protection** is the specific process of protecting individual children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm due to abuse or neglect.

21.4. Accessibility and Publicity

- The policy will be publicised, promoted, and distributed to all relevant audiences.
- It will be available on our website, provided to new staff/volunteers/parents & carers, and shared on request.
- Information will also be shared with children and young people verbally with age-appropriate guidance
- If you require this policy in an alternative format (e.g. large print, easy-read, translation, Braille), please contact info@magicclub.org.uk or talk to a member of the team.

21.5. Principles of Contextual Safeguarding

Our approach is based on three key principles

Contextual Safeguarding:

1. **Hope and Change** – Harmful environments can change over time, and safeguarding must work to transform unsafe contexts.
2. **Anti-Oppressive Practice** – We recognise that inequality is both a cause and a consequence of harm. Not all young people experience the same context in the same way.
3. **Shared Responsibility** – Safeguarding is everybody's business, involving families, peers, professionals, and communities in creating safe spaces.

21.6. Definitions of Abuse and Harm

Abuse is defined as a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any person or persons.
Types include:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional/psychological abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Financial or material abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational/institutional abuse

We also recognise and record 'low-level concerns', which may not meet statutory thresholds but indicate that a child may be at risk or unsafe now or in the future.

21.7. Roles and Responsibilities

Trustees & Chief Officer

- Approve and endorse this policy.
- Ensure resources and oversight for safeguarding practice.
- Hold the Designated Safeguarding Lead accountable.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Provides leadership, advice, and decision-making on safeguarding.
- Receives and triages all safeguarding concerns via MyConcern.
- Refers cases to statutory agencies as required.
- Provides a bi-monthly safeguarding report to the Board.

Deputy DSLs support and act in the absence of the DSL.

Staff and Volunteers

- Must be familiar with this policy and code of conduct.
- Must report all concerns, including low-level concerns, to their line manager immediately.
- Line managers must record concerns promptly and accurately using MyConcern.

21.8. Procedures

If You Are Concerned About a Child

- **Listen** carefully; do not promise confidentiality.
- **Report** immediately to the Line Manager. Line Managers to share immediately with the DSL if there is an immediate (within 24 hours) risk of harm.
- **Record** on MyConcern within 12 hours.
- **Do not investigate** – practice professional curiosity to obtain information that young people are willing to share, where other parties are concerned allow the DSL and statutory agencies to follow up.

DSL Actions

- Consider risk and decide on immediate safety measures.
- Make referrals to Children's Social Care, Police, or Emergency Services where appropriate.
- Inform parents/carers unless doing so would place the child at greater risk.

Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

- Reported immediately to the DSL.
- DSL must contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for advice.
- Magic Club will follow disciplinary procedures where appropriate.

21.9. Safe Recruitment and Induction

- Recruitment follows safer recruitment practice, including DBS checks, references, and clear role descriptions.
- All new staff/volunteers complete an induction which includes safeguarding policy, safeguarding procedures, mandatory safeguarding training and code of conduct.

21.10. Training, Supervision and Support

- All staff and volunteers receive safeguarding training at induction and refresher training at least every 2 years.
- DSL and deputies undertake advanced training and refresh at least every 2 years.
- Regular supervision and support are provided, especially following incidents.

21.11. Supporting Young People, Children and Families

- We provide safe, supportive environments where young people and children feel heard and respected.
- Young People and children subject to child protection plans will be supported through partnership with statutory agencies.
- Young People, children and families are given information in accessible formats about how to seek help.

21.12. Online Safety, Exploitation and Emerging Risks

We actively address risks including:

- Online safety
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Criminal exploitation (CCE)
- Radicalisation and extremism
- Relationships & Sex Education (RSE)

We provide young people and children with age-appropriate education and support to help them keep themselves safe.

21.13. Information Sharing

- Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance.
- Confidentiality must never prevent action where a child is at risk.

21.14. Monitoring, Review and Consultation

- This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner in line with legislation or organisational changes.
- Safeguarding practices will be evaluated at least every two years, and sooner where new learning and/or incidents highlight the need for improvement.

- Children, young people, and parents will be consulted as part of any reviews.
- All incidents, concerns, and allegations are monitored and reported to the DSL.
- The Chief Officer will share bi-monthly reports with the Board of Trustees.

21.15. Key Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Laura White, laura@magicclub.org.uk
Deputy DSL(s): Currently Vacant
Trustee Safeguarding Lead: Aviel Lowndes, aviel.magicclub@outlook.com
Local Authority Children's Social Care: Mon-Fri 9am-5pm - 01253 477299, Out of hours - 01253 477600
Police (non-emergency): 101
Police (emergency): 999
NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
Childline (for children): 0800 1111

21.16. Approval

This policy has been reviewed and approved by:
Board of Trustees
September 2025

Appendix A – Types of Abuse and Indicators

(Adapted from Working Together to Safeguard Children; includes physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, discriminatory, organisational abuse.)

Appendix B – Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

(Flowchart and staff guidance, adapted from MyConcern system process.)

Appendix C – Allegations Against Staff/Volunteers

(Guidance on contacting LADO, suspension procedures, and disciplinary processes.)

Appendix A – Types of Abuse and Indicators

As outlined in this policy, safeguarding is the broader responsibility of protecting children's wellbeing and ensuring safe environments, while child protection refers to specific actions taken when a child is at risk of significant harm.

It is essential that all concerns, including 'lower-level' observations or disclosures, are recorded on *MyConcern* so that patterns of concern are not missed and children receive support at the earliest opportunity. Where there is any indication of immediate harm or risk of harm (within 24 hours), this must be reported directly and immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), in addition to being recorded on *MyConcern*.

Abuse is defined as a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any person or persons. Children may be abused in a family, institutional, or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by strangers. Abuse can occur in person, online, or in wider contexts such as peer groups and public spaces.

1. Physical Abuse

Definition: Includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication or restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

Indicators may include:

- Unexplained injuries or repeated injuries in various stages of healing
- Injuries with clear patterns (e.g. marks shaped like an object, cigarette burns, immersion burns)
- Frequent unexplained "accidents" or injuries inconsistent with explanations given
- Fear of contact, reluctance to go home, flinching on approach
- Inadequate or inappropriate explanations for injuries

2. Sexual Abuse

Definition: Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including contact and non-contact activities. Sexual abuse includes acts to which the child has not consented, could not consent, or was pressured into consenting.

Indicators may include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour or school performance
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour or language for age
- Difficulty walking or sitting, pain or itching in genital areas
- Sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, or unexplained genital injuries
- Fear of a particular person or group of people
- Disclosure or hints of sexual abuse

3. Emotional / Psychological Abuse

Definition: The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on emotional development. Includes humiliation, intimidation, threats, blaming, isolation, exploitation, or exposure to domestic abuse.

Indicators may include:

- Developmental delay or regression
- Low self-esteem, withdrawal, or excessive clinginess
- Extreme behaviour (e.g. aggression, over-compliance, fearfulness)
- Fear of making mistakes or expressing opinions
- Delayed or inappropriate emotional responses
- Self-harm, eating disorders, or risk-taking behaviour

4. Neglect

Definition: The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of health or development. Includes ignoring medical needs, failing to provide food, clothing, shelter, supervision, or access to education.

Indicators may include:

- Inadequate food, clothing, hygiene, or shelter
- Untreated medical issues or lack of dental/optical care
- Frequent lateness or absence from school/activities
- Poor physical condition (sores, lice, malnutrition)
- Lack of supervision or exposure to unsafe situations
- Indifference from parents/carers to the child's needs

5. Discriminatory Abuse

Definition: Harassment, slurs, or unfair treatment because of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or any protected characteristic. Includes exclusion from cultural, religious, or community life.

Indicators may include:

- Derogatory remarks, name-calling, or inappropriate jokes
- Failure to provide appropriate care or support for specific cultural or religious needs
- Isolation from peers or support networks
- Unequal treatment in access to services or opportunities
- Child expressing feelings of being marginalised or treated differently

6. Organisational / Institutional Abuse

Definition: Occurs when the systems, processes, or culture of an organisation contribute to poor or unsafe care and safeguarding failures. It can include neglect, discriminatory practice, and tolerance of unsafe behaviour.

Indicators may include:

- Poor standards of care, supervision, or safeguarding practice
- Failure to follow safeguarding procedures or respond to concerns
- Lack of individualised care or recognition of children's needs
- Rigid routines that do not meet the needs of children
- Culture of silence, secrecy, or covering up concerns

Be aware: Children and Young People may show none, some, or many of these indicators. Indicators do not prove abuse but should prompt careful consideration and referral where appropriate.

Appendix B – Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff, volunteers, trustees and contractors have a duty to act if they are concerned about the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person.

All concerns, no matter how small, must be:

- Recorded promptly on *MyConcern*
- Reported directly and immediately to the DSL if there is risk of immediate harm (within 24 hours)

What to Do if You Have a Concern

1. You become aware of a concern

- Through observation, disclosure, or information from another person.
- Stay calm, listen, and reassure the child or young person.
- Do not promise confidentiality.

2. Record the concern

- Log the concern on *MyConcern* as soon as possible (within 12 hours).
- If you are not able to log on MyConcern, make notes as soon as possible and store these securely for your line manager to log the concern.
- Use the child or young person's own words wherever possible.
- Be clear, factual, and avoid assumptions or opinions.

3. Report immediate harm

- If you believe a child is at risk of immediate harm, inform the DSL straight away.
- If a child is in urgent danger, call 999 for the police/ambulance.

4. DSL action

- Promptly Reviews the concern in *MyConcern*.
- Decides on the appropriate response:
    - Monitor and support internally
    - Allocates tasks to team to gather further information or to provide support
    - Contact parents/carers (where appropriate and unless this increases risk)
    - Make a referral to Children's Social Care
    - Contact the police if a crime is suspected
- Records all actions taken in *MyConcern*.

5. Ongoing support

- DSL ensures the child or young person is safe and supported.
- Relevant staff are informed on a need-to-know basis only.
- DSL provides updates to team as appropriate.

Guidance for Staff, Volunteers & Trustees

- **Do not**: investigate, question in detail, or confront the alleged perpetrator.
- **Do**:
    - Stay calm and listen carefully.
    - Reassure the child or young person that telling you was the right thing.
    - Explain what will happen next (you will have to share this with the DSL).
    - Record only the facts and what the child has said, not your assumptions.
    - Submit your record on *MyConcern* promptly.
- If in doubt — **always speak to the DSL**.

Appendix C – Allegations Against Staff/Volunteers

Allegations that a member of staff, volunteer or trustee has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, any child or young person
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to any child or young person
- Behaved towards any child or young person in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm
- Behaved in a way that raises safeguarding concerns in relation to their suitability to work with children and young people (including conduct outside of Magic Club)

must be taken seriously and handled in accordance with statutory guidance.

1. Immediate Actions

- **Report immediately**: Any allegation or concern about a staff member, volunteer or trustee must be reported to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** without delay.
- **If the allegation concerns the DSL**: Report directly to the Chair of Trustees.
- **If the child is at immediate risk of harm**: contact the police (999) and/or Children's Social Care immediately.

2. DSL Responsibilities

The DSL must:

1. Record the concern in *MyConcern*.
2. Contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours for advice and guidance.
3. Inform the Chair of Trustees.
4. Ensure that no internal investigation begins until advice has been taken from the LADO/police/social care.
5. Maintain confidentiality — information should be shared strictly on a need-to-know basis.

3. Suspension

- Suspension of staff, volunteers or trustees is not automatic.
- Suspension may be considered if:
    - A child or young person is at immediate risk of harm
    - The allegation is so serious it could amount to gross misconduct
    - Required to prevent interference with evidence or witnesses
- Decision to suspend will be taken by the Chief Executive/Chair of Trustees, with advice from the LADO and in line with the Disciplinary Policy.
- Suspension is a neutral act, not disciplinary action.

4. Investigation Process

- LADO will advise whether the allegation should be investigated by police, children's social care, or internally.

- If a criminal offence is suspected, the police will lead the investigation.
- Internal disciplinary investigation may run in parallel or be held pending the outcome of statutory investigations.
- The organisation will cooperate fully with all external agencies.

5. Support for All Parties

- The member of staff/volunteer/trustee subject to allegation will be informed of the concerns as soon as it is appropriate and safe to do so.
- They will be advised to seek support (e.g. trade union, legal advice).
- The child or young person and their family will be offered support throughout the process.
- The Chief Officer and Chair of Trustees will ensure the organisation provides appropriate pastoral care for staff, volunteers, trustees and children and young people affected.

6. Outcomes

Following investigation, the allegation will be classified as:

- **Substantiated** – evidence supports the allegation.
- **Unsubstantiated** – not enough evidence to prove or disprove.
- **Unfounded** – allegation found to be false or mistaken.
- **Malicious** – deliberate act to deceive.

Appropriate action will then be taken, which may include disciplinary measures, referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) via LADO, or training and supervision improvements.

7. Learning and Review

- After any allegation case, Magic Club will review safeguarding procedures, staff training, and culture to ensure lessons are learned.
- Any deficiencies will be addressed promptly and reported to trustees.

Key Reminder: All allegations against staff or volunteers must be treated with fairness, sensitivity, and in line with the principle that the welfare of the child or young person is paramount.