

HARMONY MAIDSTONE

www.harmonymaidstone.co.uk
Charity no. 1128513

Safeguarding Policy

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By: Designated Safeguarding Lead

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Policy statement

- We safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. This includes employees, volunteers, trustees and contracted freelancers.
- We make Harmony Maidstone a place where members feel secure, have their viewpoints valued and are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- We listen to children and young people and take account of their wishes and feelings.
- Our safeguarding procedures meet legal requirements.
- We have a designated person for safeguarding.
- We give training and support to our staff, contractors and volunteers.
- We have documented safe recruitment procedures including DBS checks.
- We show respect for and understanding of our Human Rights as enacted by the Human Rights Act 1998, safety and welfare and the rights, safety and welfare of others.
- We involve outside agencies when needed.
- We give parents, carers and guardians information about how we keep people safe.
- We make sure members know there are adults they can approach if they are concerned about the immediate safety of a child, themselves or an adult at risk.
- We behave in a way that reflects the principles of Harmony Maidstone.

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Scope of policy

This policy applies to all:

- Staff, volunteers, trustees, and freelance creative practitioners.
- Children and adults at risk who attend Harmony Maidstone activities.
- Online and offline activities including workshops, events, performances, and digital communications.

Legal definitions

A **child** is legally defined under UK law as ‘anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday (Children Act 1989 & 2004). At Harmony Maidstone, some of the children we work with are additionally vulnerable due to their sexuality, gender identity, learning disabilities, neuro diversity and mental health issues.

An **adult at risk** (Care Act 2014) is a person aged 18 or over who: has care and support needs, is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect or as a result of their care and support needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Members are the children, young people, adults and volunteers who attend Harmony Maidstone sessions.

Types of abuse

At Harmony Maidstone, we categorise the types of abuse that are covered in this policy as the following:

- Physical,
- Emotional,

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- Sexual,
- Neglect,
- Financial,
- Domestic,
- Modern day slavey,
- Peer on peer abuse (including bullying, harassment or exploitation by another child or young person).

Prevent

Prevent is a national programme which aims to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It works to ensure that people who are susceptible to radicalisation are offered appropriate interventions, and communities are protected against radicalising influences. We all have a role in protecting children, young people and adults from being drawn into terrorism. Extremism and radicalisation in our community are very real and being aware is the first step. We can help reduce the threat from terrorism, radicalisation, and extremism by knowing what to report and reporting it. Prevent referrals are likely to be made in the first instance by people who encounter those who appear to be at risk of being radicalised. There is no single model of a person's radicalisation journey or single profile of a radicalised person. When deciding whether to make a referral, we will consider whether we believe the person that we are concerned about may be on a pathway that could lead to terrorism.

Under the Prevent Duty, we will:

- Identify individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism or extremist ideologies.
- Undertake training on identifying and reporting concerns related to radicalisation.
- Promote British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect.
- Refer individuals to the Channel programme via the DSL where concerns of radicalisation are identified.

Code of conduct

ALWAYS:

- Treat others with respect

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- Be an example you wish others to follow.
- Make sure another adult is with you when you are with members, avoid lone working.
- Respect people's privacy.
- Remember someone might misinterpret your actions and your comments, no matter how well intentioned.
- Be careful, particularly in sensitive moments, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement, grief or abuse.
- Be careful about any physical contact with members.

NEVER:

- Show favouritism to any member.
- Make suggestive remarks or gestures.
- Allow kissing or extended hugs (a short hug with appropriately placed hands is okay in some circumstances).
- Do things of a personal nature for a member that they could do for themselves.
- Allow members to use inappropriate language unchallenged (such as swearing or language which shows prejudice against others)
- Allow abusive activities between members (such as bullying)
- Jump to conclusions
- Let yourself be drawn into any inappropriate behaviour by members (such as crushes)
- Exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues
- Believe 'it could never happen to me', both when dealing with abuse or being accused of abusing someone else.

Responding to disclosures

RECEIVE:

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is said and react calmly so as not to frighten the child/young person.

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- Make a note of what has been said as soon as you can.

REASSURE:

- Reassure the person, but only so far as is honest and reliable.
- Tell them they are not to blame and that it was right to tell; I am glad you came to me.
- Do not promise to keep it a secret as you will need to tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or your workshop leader.

REACT:

- React to the person only as far as is necessary for you to have some information to tell the DSL. Do not interrogate for full details.
- Take what the person says seriously.
- Bear in mind that some people have difficulties expressing themselves using words. Do not ask 'leading' questions, for example 'what did he do next?' (This assumes he did!).
- Explain what you have to do next and whom you must talk to.

RECORD:

- Make some brief notes at the time on any paper which comes to hand.
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are needed by a court.
- Record the date, time, place, persons present and any non-verbal behaviour.
- Be specific when noting the words used.

REPORT:

- Tell the DSL as soon as possible. (**Anna Glascott**)
- Don't investigate yourself.
- Write down what you know.
- Do not approach a suspected abuser yourself.
- Do not pass judgement on a situation.
- Stick to the facts.

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If the allegation is against the DSL, report it to the Operations Manager.

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Mental health and emotional wellbeing

Harmony Maidstone recognises that mental health is a key part of safeguarding. Children and young people may experience a wide range of social, emotional and mental health issues, which can affect their ability to engage, learn, and feel safe. We are committed to identifying emerging concerns early and offering appropriate support and signposting.

We understand that participation in music and creative expression can support mental wellbeing but also acknowledge that:

- Music and poetry can bring up powerful emotions or trauma.
- Young people may disclose mental health concerns during sessions.
- Self-harm, eating disorders, anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts are increasing among under-18s.

We will:

- Treat mental health concerns as safeguarding issues where a young person's safety or wellbeing is at risk.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are trained to identify early signs of mental health difficulties.
- Provide safe spaces where members feel heard, respected, and supported.
- Respond appropriately and refer concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Work with families, schools, and external agencies (e.g. CAMHS, Early Help) when needed.
- Respect confidentiality while recognising when disclosure is necessary to protect the individual.

Signs to be aware of may include:

- Sudden changes in behaviour or mood.
- Withdrawal from activities or peers.
- Expressions of hopelessness or low self-esteem.
- Talk of self-harm or suicide.
- Risk-taking behaviours.

Staff and volunteers must:

- Listen calmly and non-judgementally if a young person discloses mental health concerns.
- Avoid offering clinical advice or diagnoses.

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- Reassure the young person and explain that concerns will be passed on to someone who can help.
- Record and report the concern to the DSL within 24 hours.

Mental health is everyone's responsibility. We aim to create an environment that promotes resilience, supports emotional health, and ensures all young people feel safe, included, and empowered.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Harmony Maidstone is committed to promoting equality, celebrating diversity and ensuring inclusion in all areas of our work. We recognise that every individual has the right to be treated with dignity, fairness and respect, regardless of their background or identity.

We believe that safeguarding is strengthened by a clear commitment to equality and inclusion. Discrimination, harassment, victimisation or exclusion based on any of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 will not be tolerated. These characteristics include:

- Age,
- Disability,
- Gender reassignment,
- Marriage and civil partnership,
- Pregnancy and maternity,
- Race,
- Religion or belief,
- Sex,
- Sexual orientation.

We also recognise that some children and adults may face additional barriers to safety or participation due to socio-economic background, neurodiversity, language, trauma, or care experience.

We commit to:

- Creating a culture where all individuals feel safe, respected and valued.
- Challenging stereotypes and discriminatory behaviour wherever it occurs.
- Embedding inclusive practices in recruitment, programming, safeguarding, and communication.
- Providing training to staff and volunteers on equality and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Actively listening to the voices of our members, especially those from underrepresented or

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marginalised groups.

- Adapting our environment, resources and language to ensure accessibility and participation.

In our creative sessions, we celebrate cultural diversity and support creative expression that reflects the identities and experiences of our members.

One to one situation's

If one-to-one contact cannot be avoided:

- Make sure it is for as short a time as possible.
- Make sure you remain accessible to others.
- Tell someone where you are going, what you are doing and why.
- Try to move with the member to an area where there are more people.
- Get permission from the member before any physical contact is made, for instance if you need to give first aid.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact especially if it may be misconstrued

Transporting children/young people

Do not give lifts to members alone - however short the journey, unless it cannot be avoided. When this is unavoidable, get consent from the young person's parents or guardian and agreement from the Operations Manager. Make sure the young person sits in the back of the car. Make sure you have the necessary insurance cover.

Telephone communication

Volunteers and contractors should not make or receive calls or texts to or from members using their personal mobile phones. There is a Harmony mobile phone available on site for making contact via Whatsapp etc. Sometimes group leaders may communicate directly with members when it is agreed with the Operations Manager. In these cases, formal and professional language should always be used.

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Online safety

Any online communications with children or young people (e.g. Zoom sessions) must be preapproved by the Operations Manager in advance of the session taking place. Only official Harmony accounts may be used. Professional conduct must be used at all times. Ensuring another professional adult is attending the session or the session is recorded.

Social media

We recognise social media is a good way to communicate with people. Current social media applications frequently used by members include TikTok, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. Volunteers and contractors should use the official Harmony Maidstone Facebook or Instagram page or other organisational forums to communicate with members. They should not use their personal accounts. Contact with colleagues who are classed as adults at risk is appropriate in some circumstances, upon agreement from both parties, but should always remain professional.

Photo, audio and video

The Operations Manager, workshop leaders and volunteers may take photos of members and visitors on site for promotional purposes providing the photography sign is displayed at the front door. For front facing images an image waiver must be completed and countersigned by a parent or guardian if the person is under 16. Any external contacts such as the press or television will only take photographs, video or audio of our members with written parental consent and the consent of the child (in the case of children and where possible) or the consent of the person themselves (in the case of adults).

Record keeping and confidentiality

- Record incidents as soon as possible and within 24 hours.
- Attach written notes if any are made separately from the safeguarding report sheet.
- Print your name, state your role and sign and date any notes or reports.

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- Pass notes and reports to the designated safeguarding lead or operations manager.
- The operations manager will keep them safe and deal with the safeguarding concern.
- Treat all information with strict confidentiality.

Safer recruitment

Any posts advertised, job descriptions and interviews must make clear all responsibilities and expectations regarding safeguarding

- Volunteers and contractors who have contact with children or adults at risk must complete an enhanced DBS check which will be renewed every 3 years.
- Contractors and volunteers will undergo safeguarding training annually and will be provided with a copy of this policy
- For more info on our recruitment process, we have a 'Safer Recruitment Policy'

Roles and responsibilities

Operation Manager

- Responsible for coordinating action regarding referrals, liaising with social services and other relevant agencies in cases of abuse and allegations of abuse, regarding both young people and members of staff/volunteers.
- Make sure everyone knows our safeguarding policy and has the appropriate training.
- Keep accurate, detailed and secure written records of concerns and referrals.
- Make sure appropriate DBS checks are in place.

Safeguarding lead trustee – designated person

- Act as a source of advice, support and expertise within Harmony Maidstone.
- Support the Operations Manager when dealing with any concerns raised so that all action meets this policy, the law and local authority rules.

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- Be the main point of contact for any safeguarding issues raised by members, parents/carers, volunteers or staff
- Deliver safeguarding training to staff and volunteers.
- Support the Operation Manager with any matters relating to safeguarding including DBS checks.

Trustees

- To report safeguarding matters to the relevant agencies (such as the police, social services or Ofsted) and for putting matters right if things go wrong.
- Trustees should promote an open and positive culture and ensure all involved feel able to report concerns, confident that they will be heard and responded to.

We expect all trustees to make sure Harmony:

- Has appropriate policies and procedures in place, which are followed by all trustees, volunteers and beneficiaries
- Checks that people are suitable to act in their roles
- Knows how to spot and handle concerns in a full and open manner
- Has a clear system of referring or reporting to relevant agencies as soon as concerns are suspected or identified
- Sets out identified risks and how they will be managed in a risk register which is regularly reviewed
- Follows safeguarding statutory guidance, good practice guidance and legislation relevant to their charity: this guidance links to the main sources of information
- Is quick to respond to concerns and carry out appropriate investigations
- Does not ignore harm or downplays failures
- Has a balanced trustee board and does not let one trustee dominate its work – trustees should work together
- Makes sure protecting people from harm is central to its culture
- Has enough resources, including trained staff/volunteers/trustees for safeguarding and protecting people

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- Conducts periodic reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures and practice

Whistle blowing

Whistleblowing is the act of reporting concerns about unsafe, unethical or unlawful practices within an organisation. At Harmony Maidstone, we are committed to creating a culture of openness, honesty and accountability, where staff, volunteers and members feel safe to raise concerns without fear of reprisal.

Everyone has a responsibility to raise concerns where they believe the safety or welfare of children, adults at risk, staff, or the reputation of the charity may be at risk. Whistleblowing may relate to:

- A breach of safeguarding policy or procedures
- Misconduct by staff, volunteers or contractors
- Concerns about poor practice, neglect or abuse
- Criminal or unlawful behaviour
- Concerns about the handling of a safeguarding case

All concerns should be reported in the first instance to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Operations Manager. If the concern relates to one of these individuals, it should be reported to a member of the Trustee board.

Reports can also be made directly to external agencies such as:

- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Ofsted (if relevant)
- The Charity Commission
- NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line (0800 028 0285)

Harmony Maidstone will:

- Take all concerns seriously and investigate appropriately
- Treat whistleblowers with respect and protect their identity as far as possible
- Ensure no one is victimised for raising a concern in good faith

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We encourage anyone with concerns to speak up — safeguarding and accountability are everyone's responsibility.

Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually or after any significant changes. Safeguarding practices are monitored by the Designated safeguarding lead and the Operations Manager.

Contact details

Designated safeguarding lead - Anna Glascott - safeguarding@harmonymaidstone.co.uk

Operations Manager – Zoe Sparkle - sparkle@harmonymaidstone.co.uk

Local Authority Safeguarding number – 03000 41 61 61

Out of hours Local Authority safeguarding number – 03000 41 91 91