

# MOORLAND ROAD COMMUNITY LIBRARY

## Safeguarding Policy & Procedure for Children



### 1. Introduction

“Child safety is a society-wide responsibility. It is important for library volunteers to be aware that as part of the community working with children, they share in this responsibility.” A Safe Place for Children CILIP 2005\* (\*CILIP are the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals)

Moorland Road Community Library (the Organisation) believes that the safety and welfare of children in their library is the responsibility of every volunteer, from front line through to the management committee. It is every child’s legal right to feel safe and secure in our library and all volunteers have a responsibility to ensure this basic principle is upheld.

Library volunteers are not generally ‘in loco parentis’ (i.e. taking the responsibility of the parent), but we do have a duty of care to ensure that visitors will be reasonably safe in using premises for the purposes of a library. The standard of care expected in relation to children is higher than in relation to adults, because volunteers must expect children to be less careful than adults. All library volunteers should be guided at all times by the essential principle of the 1989 Children Act: ‘The welfare of the child is paramount’ reinforced in the 2004 Children Act.

This Safeguarding Policy covers three areas:

- a) Guidelines for Volunteers for ensuring child safety at Moorland Road Community Library (Section 2)
- b) How to deal with emergencies and unexpected events which may arise in relation to children in Moorland Road Community Library (Sections 3 & 4, Appendices 1 & 2)
- c) Guidance on how to deal with foreseeable problems which may arise in relation to children in Moorland Road Community Library (Section 5, Appendix 3)

### 2. Guidelines for Volunteers for ensuring Child Safety

We must ensure that libraries are places where children can feel safe. Library volunteers should follow this code of behaviour when dealing with children:

- Always listen to children and value and respect them as individuals
- When in a difficult or sensitive situation involving a child, always ensure another volunteer listens and observes.
- Avoid being alone with a child – always remain in public view.
- Volunteers may comfort a child who is obviously distressed, but always remain in public view
- Never initiate contact with a child
- Never take a child out of the library in search of a parent or carer – the safe place is to remain in the library until the parent or carer returns.
- Do not make contact with children at or from the library for non-library business using;
  - Social media
  - Photographs
  - Phones – texting
- Never do things of a personal nature for a child that a child could not do for him or herself.

- Never accompany a child into a toilet or assist a child in using the toilet or in adjusting his/her clothes.
- If there is reason to believe that a child has been abandoned or forgotten, use the flowchart in Appendix 1 to guide you. Call the Police on 999 and contact the Central Duty Team.

### **3. Dealing with emergencies and unexpected events which may arise in relation to children in Moorland Road Community Library**

You have a problem in the library where a child's wellbeing is at risk – what to do next?

Use the flowchart in Appendix 1 to help you decide the order and level of involvement of other agencies. You have three different groups to support you:

The police as a matter of emergency

The Council's Safeguarding team – Central Duty Team, daytime or emergency out of hours

The Moorland Road Community Library Designated Safeguarding officers.

You also have the Appendix 2 form to record what you have experienced. It's important you do this as soon as possible, using the child's words where appropriate.

Don't investigate – just report.

There are two scenarios where you might need to act. The first is when you observe a situation and think that something's just not right. A child is in a tricky place and you think someone needs to intervene to help them. The second is when a child discloses something to you that needs action to keep them safe. In both cases use the flowchart in Appendix 1 to help you.

### **4. Child Protection**

If library volunteers have serious concerns about a child's general welfare, or suspect that abuse (physical, sexual, emotional or neglect) is taking place, they should contact the designated safeguarding officer and follow the safeguarding / child protection guidelines flow chart. The designated person will contact the Central Duty Team to discuss the concerns and decide a course of action.

If the designated person is not available, the library volunteer can call the Central Duty Team for advice or the local police and let the designated officer know what has happened. Always complete an incident report.

If a child tells you that they are or have been abused (disclosure abuse) –

- Tell the child that you take what they have said seriously
- Allow the child to say what has happened to them, but do not ask leading questions
- Make a note of what the child says on the incident form
- Tell the child you are glad that they have told you
- Reassure the child that it is not their fault
- Be honest with the child – tell them who you will have to contact and why – do not promise confidentiality, by which we mean secrecy.
- Keep the child fully informed about what you are doing
- Contact the designated officer who will take advice from the Central Duty Team

## **5. Library management**

Appendix 3 contains some guidance on what action to take in possible scenarios which may occur in the Library.

## **6. Bath NES Council**

Further information about the Council's services about Safeguarding can be currently found at:

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/report-concern-about-child>

The Duty Team can be contacted on:

01225 396111 or 01225 477929 8.30 – 5.00 Mon -Thurs and 8.30 – 4.30 Fridays

If outside of office hours please call the Emergency Duty Team on 01454 615165

## **7. Organised Activities for Children on the Library Premises**

General Guidelines for activities

Do a risk assessment to include

- Access to an emergency phone
- Equipment used conforms to safety standards
- Access to a First Aid kit
- Maximum groups size for the space
- Number of supervising adults
- All children will be accompanied by a parent or carer
- The activity is within the capability of the leading adults to supervise

## **8. Use of the library premises by other organisations**

If an individual or external organisation wishes to use the library for children's events or activities, they must fill in the appropriate room bookings form. In completing the application form they agree to comply with this Children's Safeguarding Policy.

## **9. Use of volunteer toilets.**

The toilet at Moorland Road Library is for the use of volunteers only. It physically does not meet the legal requirements for the general public and should not be offered to the general public, unless there is a significant urgent medical need.

Moorland Road Community Library's Designated Safeguarding Officers are:

|           |                             |
|-----------|-----------------------------|
| Liz Hearn | 01225 334621 / 07902 315688 |
| Josh Hale | 07507 492575                |

**The Trustees of Moorland Road Community Library have approved this Policy.**

**Date: 2 February 2022**

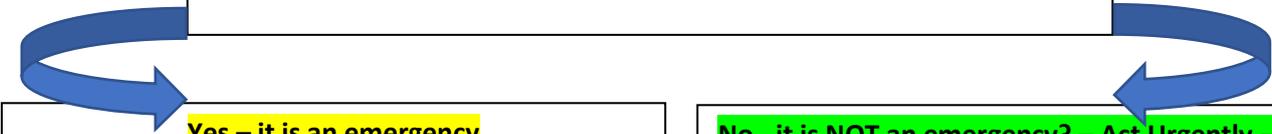
**Review Date: 22 February 2024**

**SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION**

GUIDELINES FOR URGENT ACTION AND REFERRAL

You have serious concerns that a child or young person is being abused or at risk of abuse. This may be because of what the child has told you or of an incident you have witnessed  
 Child abuse may be physical, emotional, sexual or neglect.

**Is the situation an emergency?**  
 Is someone in immediate danger and /or a crime has been committed



**Yes – it is an emergency**  
 Call the police on 999  
**Do it now, act immediately**  
 Record the incident on a safeguarding incident form including as much information as possible.  
 Contact the Bath NES Safeguarding Duty Team – numbers below  
 Contact the Moorland Road Community Library designated safeguarding officer – numbers below

**No - it is NOT an emergency? – Act Urgently – today!**  
 Record the incident on a safeguarding incident form including as much information as possible.  
 Contact the Moorland Road Community Library designated safeguarding officer – numbers below  
 Contact the Bath & NES Safeguarding Duty Team – numbers below. This call may be made by the MRCL designated Safeguarding officer.

Contact the **Bath & NES Safeguarding Duty Team** on 01225 396111 or 01225 477929  
 If outside of office hours please call the **Emergency Duty Team** on 01454 615165  
 This is part of Bath & NES Council.

Contact the **Moorland Road Community Library Designated Safeguarding Officer:**  
 Liz Hearn on 01225 334621 or 07902 315688  
 Josh Hale 07507 492575

**REMEMBER:** If a disclosure has been made, listen to what the child may wish to tell you, but don't promise confidentiality (secrecy) or ask questions. Explain that you will need to speak to someone else about the disclosure / concern.

If there is an allegation about a library volunteer contact the Moorland Road Community Library designated safeguarding officer.  
 Report what has occurred, don't investigate.

Moorland Road Community Library supports the good work of its Volunteers. If you have had to activate this plan on behalf of a child then please know that there is emotional and pastoral care for you too. Volunteers are valued by our organisation and dealing with difficult situations is maybe not what you signed up for.  
**Please know our Trustees and Volunteer Coordinators are here for you too – at any time.**

**Moorland Road Community Library Safeguarding Incident Form**

|   |          |                     |                      |  |
|---|----------|---------------------|----------------------|--|
| Name of person completing the form  |          |                     |                      |  |
| Name of person witnessing the incident or disclosure  |          |                     |                      |  |
| Date and time of Incident   | Date     |                     | Time                 |  |
| Was the incident reported to the police?  | Yes / No | Police Crime number |                      |  |
| Was the incident discussed with the Bath & NES Safeguarding Duty Team?  | Yes / No | Date                | Name of Duty Manager |  |
| <p>Details of the Child or Vulnerable adult concerned:</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>Any other identifying information, e.g. School / institution / name of carer</p>   |          |                     |                      |  |
| <p>What Happened? – Describe the incident and / or the nature of the disclosure – don't investigate, just report what the child or vulnerable adult has disclosed in their words.</p> <p>Include information about any sighting of any physical injury including shape, size and colour. If a child or vulnerable adult has an injury but no explanation is volunteered it is acceptable to enquire how the injury was sustained</p> <p style="text-align: right;">PTO for more</p> |          |                     |                      |  |

What next: You need support – contact volunteer coordinator and trustee name & phone/email

**Keep this report in a secure place.**

### Possible scenarios and some guidance on how to handle them

#### App 3.1 Unaccompanied children expecting to be met at closing time

Library volunteers should:

- Check on the child's situation with the support of another volunteer – are they waiting for a parent or carer to collect them?
- The child may be allowed to use the library phone to phone home to ask a parent or carer to collect them. However, parents should be reminded to organise this in advance if it is happening on a regular basis.
- Telephone the child's home from the library to clarify the situation if necessary.
- Wait for the parent / carer to collect the child then explain that this is unacceptable. Two volunteers should wait with the child.
- Where a parent or carer cannot be contacted after half an hour, contact the Central Duty Team for advice.
- If the central duty team cannot be contacted, contact the police. No volunteer should ever take a child home.
- Complete a written incident report (Appendix 2) and send to the appropriate designated officer copied to the Central Duty Team. A letter will be sent to the parents and carers, reminding them of the library's policy regarding unaccompanied children.
- If a child wishes to leave, every effort (except restraint) should be made to persuade them to stay until help has arrived.

#### App 3.2 Children "Out of School"

During term-time, children of school age would not normally be using the library during the period of the school day, unless as part of a class visit or organised library activity. If a child or group of children and young people are using the library when they would normally be in school, the library volunteers should:

- Talk to the child and attempt to discover why they are out of school. Maybe they are an independent learner being home schooled or from outside the county and on a different school holiday.
- Ask to see a pass or permission slip if they have been allowed out of school
- If no pass or letter is provided and the child's name and school is known, then contact the school for further advice.
- If the child says they have been excluded from school – then contact the school for advice.
- Complete the incident report form in Appendix 2 to outline the action taken
- Use Appendix 1 to help your decision making – call the Central Duty Team if the child is at risk of harm.

#### App 3.2 Unsupervised Children

The way in which library volunteers deal with unaccompanied children discovered in the library must be based on an awareness of the legal responsibility of the parent or carer, and the library's duty of care to all children on the premises.

## Appendix 3

Children under the age of 8 years (year 3 at school) should be accompanied and supervised by a parent or carer or other suitable, responsible adult. The library will display a sign to this effect, and all publicity relating to children's activities should include the statement.

A good practice response to discovering a very young child (below the age of 8) unaccompanied in the library:

If the child is under 8 and you are concerned for their safety:

- Ask the child if an adult is aware that they are here and if they are expecting to be collected.
- Contact the parent or carer – ask for a phone number or address or use the library registration details if the child is a member.
- Avoid being left alone with the child. Ensure Colleagues are present and remain in public view.
- Use Appendix 1 to decide what to do next.
- Use the form in Appendix 2 to record the incident including what was said on the phone and also record what the child has said, if it causes concern.
- If there is no response from the parent or carer or if there is no practical way to contact them then call the Central Duty Team for advice. Failing this call the police.

### **App 3.4 Emergency evacuation of the library**

A poster clearly displaying the library's fire regulations and assembly points is displayed in the library. All library volunteers must be familiar with procedures to ensure the safety of children in the event of an evacuation of the library premises. When the alarm sounds, library volunteers will check that no unaccompanied children are left in the library.

In the event of an evacuation volunteers should take any unaccompanied children to the assembly point. An assessment of the length of the expected evacuation should be made in consultation with the designated fire officer at the location. If returning to the premises is not feasible before the library is expected to close, children who are expecting to be met by a parent / carer should be kept with library volunteers until the parent or carer claims them. Children who are not expecting to be met and who are allowed to leave the library unaccompanied should be allowed to make their own way home.

If there is an evacuation during an organised library activity for children, the responsible volunteers must lead the children to the assembly point, taking the register of children attending the event. The register must then be checked to ensure that all the children are out of the building. If a child is unaccounted for this should be reported immediately to the emergency services.

### **App 3.5 Adults in the library areas designated for children's use.**

The physical set up of Moorland Road Community Library means that there is just one room for use by children and adults. There is no space segregation between these areas. It is important that children using the area are protected from harm from other adults using the same area.

Volunteers should be watchful of adults acting in ways that may threaten a child's safety in the library and should be responsive to a child's or parents' concerns. This is a very sensitive area and volunteers should be cautious, but the child's welfare must come first.

If necessary, the adult should be asked to leave the library. If the adult argues against this, volunteers should point out they are not accusing the adult, but that this policy is there to protect children and that they are required to apply it.

Concerns about an adult's behaviour: using Appendix 1 call the MRCL designated safeguarding officer. Record using Appendix 2.

If a public disturbance occurs then call the police.

Use our discrete alarm for emergency attendance of the police.

### App 3.6 Dealing with Unacceptable behaviour

All library volunteers should take the following steps if confronted by unacceptable behaviour:

- Remind the child/children or young people concerned that they, like adults, are expected to act considerately towards volunteers and other users.
- Communicate with children and young people on an individual basis as much as possible. 'Blanket' condemnation and eviction of whole groups should be avoided where possible.
- Deal with challenging or unacceptable behaviour calmly and quietly and avoid putting volunteers or other members of the public in danger.
- Children and young people should be asked to leave the library only if the behaviour is not resolved, and as a temporary measure.
- If library volunteers feel that they or other library users are threatened or are at risk from a situation they cannot resolve, they should call the police.
- If volunteers witness a child being bullied, or if a child complains of being bullied in the library, volunteers have a duty to do whatever they can to stop it. The aggressive or abusive child should be told that their behaviour is not acceptable. If necessary volunteers will insist that they leave the premises.
- An incident form (Appendix 2) should be completed.
- Only the Committee, after proper consideration of the incident, may ban a child or young person from using the library service for a specified period.