



MILTON KEYNES ZIMBABWE
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



Safeguarding policy for Children and young people

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Milton Keynes Zimbabwe Community Association Safeguarding policy and procedure for Child Protection & Youth.

1. Introduction

Safeguarding is a Shared Responsibility: The purpose of this document is to outline the Milton Keynes Zimbabwe Community Association's Safeguarding policy and procedures for the protection of children, and young people. A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18. This policy applies to all association members, volunteers, contractors, and anyone involved in the association's activities.

All adults who interact with children and young people have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their well-being. Child protection refers to the specific actions taken to protect children who are suffering or at risk of significant harm.

The Children Act 2004 places a legal obligation on organisations to safeguard and promote the well-being of children and young people. This includes ensuring that all adults working with or on behalf of children and young people are competent, confident, and safe to do so (Guidance for Working together to safeguard children, December 2023) [link](#).

Within this policy, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

It is the responsibility of every member and volunteer of the Milton Keynes Zimbabwe Community Association to uphold these safeguarding principles and prioritise the protection and well-being of children, young people, and vulnerable adults in all our activities and events.

2. Safeguarding Policy

The Milton Keynes Zimbabwe Community Association strives to provide a safe environment where everyone can participate in our activities without risk of harm. We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people involved in our programs by protecting them from neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.

It is our policy to:

- Carefully select, screen and train all volunteers, trustees and staff who work with children, and young people. This includes DBS checks, reference checks, and ensuring they understand their responsibility for safeguarding.

- Raise awareness about child protection and safeguarding issues amongst our members, partners, and the wider community. We encourage adoption of robust safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Prioritise the welfare of children, and young people above all else when planning and delivering our programs and activities, regardless of age, gender, ability or background.
- Respond swiftly and appropriately to any allegations or suspicions of abuse, ensuring confidentiality and involving the proper authorities.
- Provide ongoing safeguarding training and updates to our volunteers, staff and partners. Regularly assess and mitigate risks.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of this safeguarding policy on a regular basis.
- Require all organisations and individuals we partner with to adopt policies that meet the same high standards for safeguarding children, and young people.

We will effectively manage risks through:

- Conducting thorough risk assessments to identify and mitigate potential risks for all activities involving children, and young people.
- Implementing all actions identified in risk assessments and reviewing their effectiveness regularly.
- Ensuring appropriate DBS checks are conducted for any roles involving work with children or young people.
- Requiring new volunteers, staff and partners to review this policy, associated codes of conduct, and receive proper safeguarding training.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Chairperson, Board of Trustees and Executive Committee

The Board of Trustees holds ultimate responsibility for implementing the Milton Keynes Zimbabwe Community Association's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

The Executive Committee will ensure this policy, procedures and guidelines are adhered to across all Association activities and events.

Safeguarding Officer: Fadzai Beatrice Mashingaidze will act as the Safeguarding Champion, responsible for:

- Maintaining resources to support members on safeguarding issues.

- Continuously reviewing safeguarding implications in all Association activities
- Developing and updating the Association's safeguarding approach as needed
- Ensuring safeguarding is considered for all new staff/volunteer appointments.
- Facilitating safeguarding training for members as required

3.2 Activity/Event Coordinators

Coordinators are responsible for:

- Allowing members to confidentially discuss safeguarding concerns and receive guidance.
- Fully implementing the Safeguarding Policy for their activities/events
- Promptly reporting all safeguarding issues to the Safeguarding Officer
- Ensuring members are aware of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities.
- Facilitating required safeguarding training for members involved in their activities.
- Ensuring new members/volunteers complete required background checks.

3.3 All Members, Volunteers and Staff

Every member, volunteer and staff member are expected to adhere to this Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action or termination of membership/role.

The Milton Keynes Zimbabwe Community Association takes safeguarding extremely seriously. This policy outlines clear responsibilities to ensure a comprehensive approach to protecting children, and young people engaged in our activities.

4. Procedure

4.1 Recruitment and Screening

The recruitment process for members, volunteers, and trustees aims to appoint the best individuals while protecting the interests of children, and young people. We balance these priorities by:

The Milton Keynes Zimbabwe Community Association has a comprehensive process for recruiting members, volunteers, and trustees that prioritises safeguarding while being fair and non-discriminatory:

Requiring appropriate references: References must be obtained from credible sources who can vouch for the individual's suitability to work with children, and youth.

Providing safeguarding training to new members/volunteers: All new members and volunteers must complete safeguarding training that covers recognising signs of abuse, reporting procedures, promoting safe practices, and understanding their legal obligations.

Conducting background checks for roles involving vulnerable groups: Roles that involve direct interaction or responsibilities with children, and youth under 18 will require an

enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to screen for any relevant criminal history.

4.2 Working with Children, and Youth

All members working directly with these groups must follow these procedures to create a safe environment:

4.2.1 Guidance for safer working practice

The following procedures must be followed by any members or volunteers working directly with these vulnerable groups during Association activities/events:

- **Conduct risk assessments:** Identify potential hazards and put mitigation plans in place before activities commence. Considerations include activity appropriateness, equipment safety, supervision levels, emergency plans, etc.
- **Appropriate training/qualifications:** Members must have the proper training, certifications, or qualifications relevant to the activities they will be leading or supporting (e.g. first aid, sports coaching, etc.)
- **Maintain recommended ratios:** The recommended adult-to-child ratio is 1:8 for children under 8. For older children/youth the ratio is 1:10. There must be a minimum of two legally responsible adults present.
- **Avoid one-on-one situations:** Members should make efforts to avoid direct one-on-one situations with children/youth whenever possible for everyone's protection.
- **Non-intrusive guidance only:** When instructing or coaching, only provide guidance in a respectful, non-invasive manner. Participants should be responsible for their own needs like changing clothes.
- **Comply with governing bodies:** Activities should be conducted per standards and best practices set by relevant governing organisations (sports, arts, etc.)
- **Maintain records:** Keep accurate attendance logs and have emergency contact information readily available for all participants and their parents/guardians.
- **Obtain consents:** Parental/guardian consent forms including any medical conditions must be collected prior to all activities directly involving minors.
- **Provide a 'named person':** Clearly advertise the name and contact information for a designated member/volunteer that participants can report any issues or concerns to.
- **Follow schedules/locations:** Ensure all activities occur during the scheduled times and pre-approved locations/facilities for accountability.

- Model ethical conduct: Members must exemplify the Association's values of fairness, trust and ethical conduct at all times when working with vulnerable groups.
- Maintain professional presence: Members are expected to dress and behave appropriately, promoting recognised safeguarding best practices.
- Report accidents/incidents: Any accidents, injuries, safety incidents or concerning behaviours must be promptly documented and reported.
- Know safety protocols: Members must review and understand all relevant facility safety information like fire procedures, first aid equipment locations, etc.
- Report suspected abuse: Any reasonable suspicion of potential abuse or inappropriate conduct towards a vulnerable participant must be reported immediately to the Association safeguarding lead and relevant authorities.

4.2.2 Good Practice to Protect Against Allegations of Abuse

You should not:

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children, and young people away from others.
- Take children, and young people to your own home.
- Offer a lift to a child, or young person unless you have written parental consent, or a second adult (preferably group leader) is present.

If these situations are unavoidable, they must be done with full knowledge and consent of the person in charge and/or the individual's parents/guardians.

Never:

- Engage in rough physical activities including horseplay.
- Engage in sexually provocative activities.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form. (Note: Where contact is essential for safety requirements, e.g. an instructor assisting an activity participant, this is done through clear communication, with participant consent and following training guidelines.)
- Allow children, or young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child, or young person, even in jest.
- Let an allegation made by a child, or young person during a group session go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- Do things of a personal nature for children, or young people that they can do themselves.
- Place yourself in a situation where you will be left alone with a child, or young person. Always seek help from another worker.
- If you do have to assist with personal matters for children, or young people (support, give lifts), particularly if they are very young or disabled, obtain full parental consent and ensure a second adult is present.

- In an emergency requiring this type of assistance, parents should be fully informed as soon as practicable.

4.2.3 Photography and Interviews

- Appropriate rules should be set regarding photography/filming in line with the activity.
- Use models or illustrations rather than identifying photographs to promote activities.
- Names should never be matched to photographs.
- Photographs should focus on the activity rather than specific individuals.
- Formal permission must be obtained for use of any images, quotes or interviews involving children or young people, as these are considered personal information governed by Data Protection laws.

4.2.4 Signs of Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of mistreatment. A child or young person may be abused by an adult or another child, within a family, institutional or community setting.

Potential signs that could indicate abuse include:

- Unexplained bruising or injuries
- Sexually explicit language or actions
- Sudden changes in behaviour
- Something the individual has said.
- Observed changes over time e.g. weight loss, poor hygiene.

If an individual displays these signs, it does not necessarily mean abuse is occurring. Similarly, there may not be obvious signs. If you are concerned, it is your responsibility to report it appropriately, not to investigate.

4.2.5. Reporting Suspected Abuse

It is not your responsibility to deal with suspected abuse directly, but to report any concerns properly. Follow these procedures:

1. If an individual's behaviour, appearance, injury, or statement raises concerns:
 - a. Immediately inform your coordinator or the safeguarding officer.
 - b. Use the Incident Record Form to document what was said/observed.
 - c. Ensure the individual has access to an independent, trusted adult.
 - d. If abuse is suspected, report concerns directly to the safeguarding officer.
2. If you receive an allegation about another adult:
 - a. Inform your coordinator or the safeguarding officer immediately.
 - b. Record the facts and provide a copy to the coordinator.
 - c. If an allegation is suspected, report it to the safeguarding officer.
3. If you receive an external request for advice about suspected abuse:
 - a. Advise them to document the details and conversation.

- b. Recommend they contact social services with the concerns.
 - c. Inform your coordinator or safeguarding officer.
 - d. If abuse is suspected, the safeguarding officer will report it.
4. If you are concerned an individual may be subject to abuse:
 - a. Make a written, dated record of your observations.
 - b. Immediately inform your coordinator or safeguarding officer.
 - c. They will make enquiries and/or refer to the appropriate authority.
 5. If you are concerned about the behaviour of a staff member/volunteer:
 - a. Report your concerns immediately to your coordinator, officer, or authorities
 - b. Appropriate procedures or external referral will be initiated.

If you have urgent concerns about someone's immediate safety and cannot reach the safeguarding officer, do not hesitate to contact social services or the police directly. Details below:

Police: 999
Social Care 1010

Making a Referral

If you believe an individual may be at risk or has disclosed harm, inform your coordinator or safeguarding officer.

Safeguarding officer: Fadzai Mashingaidze
Email: fadzai.mashingaidze@zimheritagefest.com

Monday-Thursday 17:00-21:00 (Social Worker office based in MK)

Friday 16:30-21:00 (Social Worker office based in MK)

Saturday-Sunday and bank holidays 09:00-21:00 (Social Worker office based in MK)

21:00--9:00 7 days a week – Social Worker will be taking emergency calls at home.

They will assess and determine if an external referral needs to be made, in which case the safeguarding officer will report it to the authorities for investigation. Anonymity may not be maintained in such reports.

4.2.6 Radicalisation & Extremism

The threat from terrorism and extremism in the UK is real and severe. Vulnerable children and young people can be exploited and drawn into extremist activity, putting them in extreme danger. We must be aware of radicalisation and report any suspicions immediately to the Safeguarding Officer.

Radicalisation is a process where an individual or group adopts increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals that reject or undermine accepted norms. Children and young people may be vulnerable if they feel isolated, unhappy about themselves, embarrassed about their identity, stressed, bullied, angry, confused, pressured by others or voiceless.

Extremism refers to very strong, hateful opinions that are dangerous or illegal. Extremist groups may use hate, fear, or violence to influence people. They can negatively affect young people, so we need to support those at risk of radicalisation.

The Association treats radicalisation extremely seriously. Please contact the Safeguarding Officer if you need further information or have any concerns about a child or young person potentially being radicalised or exploited by extremist groups.

5. Further Information

For up-to-date legislation and guidance on safeguarding children and young people, see the government [website](#).

Local authorities have Social Services Departments, Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs), and Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASHs) responsible for inter-agency child protection assessments and decisions.

For radicalisation and extremism guidance, refer to the Prevent Duty Guidance and Preventing Violent Extremism resources.

The [NSPCC](#) helpline (0808 800 5000) can be contacted with concerns about a child's welfare.

Children England is a charity working to ensure children and young people are valued, protected and their rights realised.

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection ([CEOP](#)) command deals with child sexual abuse and exploitation.

6. Supporting Policies

This safeguarding policy should be read in conjunction with the following Association policies and procedures:

[Whistleblowing act 2022](#)

[Recruitment and Selection equality act 2010](#)

[Equality act 2010](#)

[GDPR and Data Protection act 2018](#)

It is influenced by key legislation such as the [Children Act](#), [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act](#), Equality Act, Data Protection laws and more.

7. Policy Review

This safeguarding policy and procedures will be reviewed every 3 years at minimum to incorporate any legislative changes or updates required.

The Milton Keynes Zimbabwe Community Association is committed to adopting robust safeguarding practices aligned with current laws and guidance to protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults across all our activities.

8. Contact details:

Nominated child protection lead.

Name: Chi Chiringa

Phone/email: chiringa.c@gmail.com

Deputy child protection lead

Name: Nyarai Nyachuru

Phone/email: nyarai_nyachuru@outlook.com

Senior lead for safeguarding and child protection

Name: Fadzai Beatrice Mashingaidze

Phone/email: fadzai.mashingaidze@zimheritagefest.com

This policy was last reviewed on: 14/03/2024.