

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. Introduction

WHP is run for the following purpose: to provide extracurricular health, fitness and well-being classes for children both indoors and outdoors in a safe and engaging environment.

The projects' fitness work is based at: Unit 6 Price Street Business Park, Park Street, Birkenhead, CH41 3PE. WHP office is 28 Annesley Road, Wallasey, CH44 9DA.

WHP has adopted this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and expects every adult working for, or volunteering at WHP to support it and comply with it. Consequently, this policy should apply to all employed staff, directors, contractors, agency workers and volunteers, or anyone else working on behalf of Wirral Health project CIC.

2. Policy Statement

This policy applies to all children and young people who engage with Wirral Health Project CIC services, including those who may attend our programmes independently, or as dependants of adults receiving our support.

Wirral Health Project CIC is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. We believe that every child, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, has the right to protection from all forms of harm, abuse, and neglect. No child or young person should ever experience abuse of any kind.

We recognise our responsibility to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, and we take our duty of care seriously. This policy sets out clear safeguarding principles and provides guidance for all those who represent the organisation, including staff, volunteers, sessional workers, and contractors. It supports our wider commitment to creating a culture of vigilance, accountability, and transparency in all our work with children and young people.

Understanding Risk

While the majority of children grow up in safe and supportive environments, some may be at risk of significant harm. Safeguarding means protecting a child's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect, and taking appropriate action when concerns arise.

Children and young people may be vulnerable to a range of risks, including but not limited to:

- Sexual abuse and exploitation
- Grooming (online and offline)
- Physical and emotional abuse
- Neglect and lack of basic care
- Domestic abuse and violence in the home
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Peer-on-peer abuse, including harmful sexual behaviour
- Inappropriate or inadequate supervision
- Acts of violence or aggression in group settings
- Victimisation and discrimination
- Self-harm and suicidal ideation
- Exposure to unsafe environments or activities

- Involvement in criminal activity or gangs
- Online harms, including access to harmful content
- Radicalisation and extremism

We acknowledge that safeguarding risks are not always visible and can occur in any setting. All representatives of Wirral Health Project CIC must remain alert to signs of abuse, respond to concerns appropriately, and always act in the best interests of the child.

3. Wirral Health project CIC recognises that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount;
- All children regardless of race, gender, religious belief, disability, age, sexual orientation or identity have a right to equal protection from harm;
- Some children are more vulnerable to harm as a result of their circumstances, prior experiences, communication needs or level of dependency; and
- Working with children, young people, their parents and/or guardians, carers or other agencies is essential to protecting their well-being.

4. Safeguarding Children

Definition of Activities

For safeguarding purposes, "events and activities" refers broadly to any service provided by Wirral Health Project CIC. Our programmes fall into four main categories:

- **Mixed-age activities:** open to both adults and children
- **Parent-supervised children's activities:** for children attending with a parent or guardian
- **Unaccompanied children's activities:** for children attending without a parent/carer
- **Alternative provision:** primarily for children and young people attending without parental supervision

Mixed-age activities

- Children under 16 must be accompanied at all times by an adult (18+) who is responsible for bringing and collecting them.
- Young people aged 16–17 may attend unaccompanied only with written consent and contact details from a parent or guardian.

Parent-supervised children's activities

- Children under 16 must be supervised at all times by an adult (18+) who brings and collects them.
- If one adult brings multiple children, the children must stay together to ensure proper supervision.
- Young people aged 16–17 may attend unaccompanied with written parental consent and contact details.

Unaccompanied children's activities

- Children under 16 may attend only if enrolled in advance by a responsible adult. Enrolment must include: Child's full name, age, and address, parent/carer's names, addresses, and emergency contact details

Alternative provision

- These sessions are specifically for children and young people who attend without a parent or carer. The same enrolment and contact information requirements as above apply. Enrolment must include: Child's full name, age, and address, parent/carer's names, addresses, and emergency contact details

5. Safer recruitment and DBS checks

Certain roles within our organisation require adults to undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check in line with the **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**. The level of check depends on the nature and frequency of contact with children, particularly where this involves unsupervised or regulated activity.

Wirral Health Project CIC is committed to safe recruitment practices and ensures that all appropriate checks are completed before staff or volunteers begin working with children.

For more information, please read our **Safer Recruitment Policy**.

6. Allegations against staff or volunteers

Any allegation of abuse, inappropriate behaviour, or misconduct by a staff member or volunteer will be treated with the utmost seriousness.

Any concern must be reported immediately to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Adam McCreevy**

Allegations will be investigated in line with statutory guidance and organisational procedures. This may involve temporary suspension, a referral to external agencies (e.g. police, local authority), or permanent exclusion from further involvement with Wirral Health Project CIC, depending on the outcome.

All decisions will be made in line with the principles of natural justice and safeguarding best practice.

For more information, please read our **Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy**

7. Prevention of bullying

Wirral Health Project CIC maintains a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of bullying, whether between children or by adults towards children.

- Any instance of child-on-child bullying will result in immediate intervention and, if needed, separation of the parties involved.
- Parents or carers will be informed and involved in resolving the situation.
- Persistent or serious bullying may result in a child being excluded from future activities, in line with our disciplinary procedures.

Allegations of adults bullying children will be dealt with under our safeguarding procedures and may result in formal investigation and disciplinary action.

For more information, please read our **Anti-Bullying Policy**.

8. Use of photography and video

No photographs or videos of children will be taken or published without **prior written consent** from a person with parental responsibility.

If there are any concerns about individuals taking photographs at an event, please report this immediately to a member of staff.

For more information, please read our **Privacy Notice**.

9. Managing behaviour, discipline, and physical intervention

a. Behaviour management

Children are expected to behave respectfully and safely at all times. Staff will use positive behaviour strategies to promote engagement and inclusion.

b. Physical intervention

Corporal punishment is **strictly prohibited**. Physical restraint may only be used when absolutely necessary to prevent:

- Injury to the child or others
- Serious damage to property

Only the minimum force necessary should be used, and any incident must be reported to the DSL and recorded.

c. Disciplinary sanctions

Where necessary, a child may be removed from an activity or banned from future events (for a period of up to 12 months). This decision will be made by: **Adam McCreedy**

d. Appeals

Parents may appeal any disciplinary decision. Appeals should be made in writing to **Adam McCreedy**, who will consult relevant parties before reaching a final decision.

For more information, please see our **Behaviour Policy**

10. Recognising abuse and harm

Staff and volunteers must remain alert to the signs and symptoms of different types of abuse:

i. Physical Abuse

- Unexplained bruises, burns, fractures
- Fearful behaviour, depression

ii. Neglect

- Malnutrition, poor hygiene
- Untreated medical issues

iii. Emotional Abuse

- Low self-esteem, depression
- Behavioural changes, withdrawal

iv. Sexual Abuse

- Sexualised behaviour, genital soreness

- STIs, pregnancy, difficulty walking/sitting

v. Financial Abuse

(Most relevant to adult safeguarding, but listed for awareness)

- Missing money, unpaid bills, exploitation

vi. Organisational Abuse

- Rigid routines, poor care practices, lack of dignity

vii. Self-Neglect

- Hoarding, poor hygiene, neglecting health or safety

viii. Modern Slavery

- Signs of coercion, restriction of movement, fearfulness

ix. Domestic Abuse

- Physical, emotional, sexual, financial abuse
- So-called 'honour'-based violence, FGM, forced marriage

x. Discriminatory Abuse

- Abuse based on race, gender, disability, religion, etc.

xi. Sexual Exploitation

- Exchange of sex for gifts, status, money, shelter
- Relationships that are manipulative or controlling

11. Reporting concerns: The 5 Rs of Safeguarding

Wirral Health Project CIC follows the **5 Rs** approach:

1. **Recognise:** be alert to signs of abuse or neglect
2. **Respond:** ensure the immediate safety of the child
3. **Report:** notify the DSL (Adam McCreevy) immediately
4. **Record:** write a clear, factual account (including verbatim statements where possible), signed and dated
5. **Refer:** if necessary, escalate to local safeguarding partners or police within **24 hours**

If the DSL is unavailable and there is an immediate concern, contact the local Safeguarding Children Partnership or the Police without delay

12. Writing and reporting disclosures

When a disclosure is made:

- Take it seriously and remain calm
- Do not promise confidentiality. Explain that the information may need to be shared
- Listen carefully and avoid asking leading questions
- Write down the disclosure word-for-word, sign and date your record
- Report to the DSL immediately

If the child is in immediate danger, take action to ensure their safety, including removing or suspending the person of concern if needed.

13. Legal Framework

This policy aligns with the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Data Protection Act 2018 / GDPR
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (DfE)

14. Important Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Adam McCreavy	adam@wirralhealthproject.co.uk	07734151176
Deputy DSL	Jade Carter	Info@wirralhealthproject.co.uk	

15. Policy Review

This policy is approved and robustly endorsed by Wirral Health project CIC and is due for review every one year.

Policy reviewed: 01/11/2025

Next review date: 01/11/2026