

Safeguarding Children

The purpose and scope of this policy statement is to ensure that every child visiting the centre is safe. A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years for the purposes of safeguarding. We believe everyone has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them. We will give equal priority to keeping all children and young people safe regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect children and young people who receive bibic's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.
- This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of bibic, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England/Northern Ireland/Scotland/Wales. A summary of the key legislation is available from Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- Working together to safeguard children 2025
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- The Prevent Duty 2024
- Criminal Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults: County Lines 2023

Supporting documents

This policy statement should be read alongside bibic's policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents.

- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Safer recruitment
- Cyber security
- Managing complaints
- Whistleblowing
- Health and safety

We believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind.
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we make. All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other difficulties.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

Categories of abuse

There are several categories of child abuse. They are:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual Abuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Domestic Abuse
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child trafficking
- Female genital mutilation
- Child on child abuse

For more information please see the NSPCC link: Definitions and signs of child abuse
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/definitions-signs-child-abuse>

Definition of abuse

The definition of child abuse is significant harm, or the risk of significant harm to a child. This can be from a parent, carer, relative, other adult or child. The harm may be the result of a direct act or by the failure to provide proper care, or both. Section 31 of the Children Act states that harm means ill treatment or the impairment of health or development. Development means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. Health means physical or mental health.

There is evidence to suggest that children with disabilities are at increased risk of abuse and that the presence of multiple disabilities appears to increase the risk of both abuse and neglect. The definition of abuse might be expanded in respect of children with disabilities to include lack of stimulation, over-protection, force-feeding, neglect of medical care, and physical restraint such as strapping into bed or chair or locking into room.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them.
- Appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people, a deputy and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding.

- Adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteer.
- Developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently.
- Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance [more information about this is available from the Information Commissioner's Office: ico.org.uk/ for organisations.

DBS Checks

All staff including therapists, and volunteers will have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. No volunteer will work with a child without a DBS check and references taken up.

All checks will be handled by the safeguarding lead or deputy lead. All checks will be entered onto the single central record which monitors safer recruitment. Those handling the checks must ensure that the result and any other records are kept on the Personnel File.

Line managers should liaise with the CEO to ensure their staff are checked on appointment (along with Reference, Medical Questionnaires and entitlement to work in the UK).

The safeguarding lead is responsible for ensuring that DBS checks are repeated every three years on the anniversary of the staff members start date. The DBS and photocopies of any paperwork relating to a DBS check (e.g: ID proofs) will be stored in the individual's personnel file.

Staff Training

Copies of all safeguarding documents are held by the safeguarding lead and deputy lead. The safeguarding documents provide a guide to the processes and procedures for good practice that aims to bring about better outcomes for children where there are concerns about a child's welfare. There are guidelines to ensure that effective co-operation can take place between different agencies and professionals should the need arise.

We require all relevant staff and volunteers to attend training with the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership with at least annual internal updates. Safeguarding leads and deputy safeguarding leads are required to attend multi-disciplinary training every two years. Relevant posts are those with any degree of contact with children, as determined by the CEO. Line Managers retain responsibility for their staff's training and should liaise with the safeguarding lead or deputy lead to make bookings, so we can try to cluster bookings.

In addition to this, bibic will refresh its staff on its internal procedures. safeguarding will form part of the staff supervision meetings when line managers also update them as/when any of our procedures and paperwork change.

Records of all training should be kept on the employee's personnel file.

Reporting safeguarding concerns

Any concerns about a situation involving a child should be raised in confidence with the safeguarding lead or deputy lead, who will then make a decision as to the appropriate action to be taken, bearing in mind the seriousness of the suspicion/allegation/risk. The procedures below will be followed.

Safeguarding procedure	
Action	Additional information
Risk of harm or potential harm is identified	
Staff to report to safeguarding team in person or via bibic's concern form	Claire Timbrell Natalie German
Decision made by safeguarding team regarding next steps	Next steps could be No further action Gather more information Monitor Call safeguarding consultation line for advice Refer to support services Refer to social services Inform CEO
Information recorded on bibic's Y drive	Y:> Family Services> CP/Safeguarding. The file is password protected.

Explicit and objective records are kept of the proceedings for accuracy and to support identification of risks that become evident over a longer period of time. Staff identifying a concern are responsible for recording the information with actions and any outcomes - the safeguarding lead or deputy safeguarding lead are responsible for updating and closing any safeguarding concerns when outcomes are met.

The CEO has a responsibility to inform the Board with any serious safeguarding issues or if concerns link to the following:

- Allegations against or involving a staff member.
- Incidents that occur on site at bibic.
- Incidents that are highlighted on social media platforms.
- Incidents that could directly put bibic's reputation at risk Safeguarding is a rolling item on every bibic Board meeting agenda.

Allegations of abuse made by a child will be discussed with the safeguarding lead or deputy lead. The nature and degree of concern will determine the response necessary in accordance with the policy and procedures. The welfare and safety of the child is paramount in any decision that is taken.

All of these principles remain the same while working digitally. Staff should raise any safeguarding concerns in the same manner via the safeguarding lead or deputy lead.

Children coming to bibic can raise concerns themselves via the safeguarding lead or deputy lead, bibic also has a clear information poster in our family room, toilets and therapy floor to support children to be able to raise a concern if they need to.

Information sharing

Information can be shared with other professionals when the parent/carer gives consent to do so or without consent when the risk of harm is significant. In all cases of information sharing, the parent/carer should be informed. Openness and partnership is a vital element in these procedures and each child and family situation demands a uniquely sensitive response.

Working alone with a child

Volunteers and work placements should not work alone with a child. The majority of the assessment at bibic takes place in the presence of the family. If a child is ever left alone with a volunteer or work placement another member of staff must be informed of the situation and the child should be looked after in an open part of the premises, this entails having the door open or being in a room with a window and clear visibility of the child and staff member.

Physical contact

It is recognised by the nature of the work undertaken by bibic that an element of physical contact may take place. Some of the children coming to bibic are unaware of social boundaries and approach staff and volunteers using physical contact. At times during the assessment, a therapist may use physical contact in order to teach a therapy. A therapist must exercise great caution in how they hold a child and ensure that it is within the bounds of a common understanding of decency and acceptability. Parents should be consulted and involved if there are any concerns over the action of a child or the need to hold a child.

Carrying children

A therapist should not be required to carry a child. Where possible a family member is requested to move a child, for example to different parts of the building. At the request of a family or if a manual handling risk is identified by a therapist a mobile hoist is available but is only to be used by a parent or carer. In an emergency situation e.g., the evacuation of the building, children can be carried out by a member of staff or a volunteer.

Giving a child food/drink

Food or drink is not to be given to a child without the parent/carer's permission and presence. If a child requires feeding the parent/carer must give the food.

Physical Restraint

bibic takes heed of the guidance published by the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health in July 2002 on the use of restrictive physical interventions for staff working with children or adults who display extreme behaviour in association with learning disability.

Wherever possible, a child with extreme behaviour will be identified at the enquiry and a risk assessment carried out. Information from parents/carers will be considered in any planning decisions made by the Therapy Team. An example of a plan may be to involve two therapists to carry out an assessment. Advice will also be taken from the parent/carer of the child as to how situations are normally dealt with so that there is a consistency of approach.

In dealing with any situation where it seems possible that the child could be a danger to themselves or others, every possible diversionary strategy should be employed without using physical restraint. Whenever possible the parent/carer will be requested to take responsibility for the child's behaviour where physical restraint may be required. However, all staff and volunteers must be aware that in the case of the child being a danger to themselves or others, they have a responsibility to ensure that the child's safety and welfare is paramount and physical restraint may be necessary.

Contact Details

CEO	Name: Philippa Buckley Email: Philippa.Buckley@bibic.org.uk
Chair of the Board	Name: Caroline Jameson Email: carolinealjameson@gmail.com
Safeguarding Lead Therapy Manager	Name: Claire Timbrell Email: claire.timbrell@bibic.org.uk
Deputy Safeguarding Lead Marketing and Operations Manager	Name: Natalie German Email: natalie.german@bibic.org.uk

NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000
Early Help Advice Line (EHA Hub)	01823 355 803
Consultation Line for Safeguarding Leads and GPs	0300 1233078
CAMHS Single Point of Access	0300 1245012
Somerset Safeguarding Boards	https://somensetsafeguardingchildren.org.uk https://somensetsafeguardingadults.org.uk

This policy was last reviewed on:08/01/2026.....(date)



P Buckley

Signed:

Date:08/01/2026.....