SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK POLICY

St Mary's Chequerfield Community Project Limited

St Mary's Community Centre, The Circle, Chequerfield, Pontefract, WF8 2AY

Every child and adult has the right to feel safe, valued and respected. Safeguarding is central to everything we do

Policy owner	Board of Trustees
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Denise Pallett
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Lisa Rooke
Version	3.0 - September 2026
Approved by Trustees	To be completed
Next review	Annually, or sooner if guidance or circumstances change

This policy applies to trustees, employees, volunteers, sessional workers, centre users, learners, placements and others acting on behalf of St Mary's

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1. Policy Statement

St Mary's Chequerfield Community Project Limited, operating St Mary's Community Centre, is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk who come into contact with our organisation.

We believe that everyone has the right to live free from abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination. We aim to create a welcoming environment in which people are treated with dignity and respect, concerns are listened to, and action is taken promptly when somebody may be at risk.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every trustee, employee and volunteer has a responsibility to recognise concerns, respond appropriately and report them without delay. No member of staff or volunteer is expected to investigate abuse or decide whether abuse has occurred.

The Board of Trustees retains overall responsibility for safeguarding, even where day-to-day safeguarding responsibilities are delegated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

2. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out how St Mary's will prevent harm, recognise safeguarding concerns and respond appropriately. It applies to all activities delivered by or on behalf of St Mary's, including community support, adult learning, wellbeing activities, children's and family activities, food and café provision, events, outreach, digital support, volunteering and partnership work.

It applies to trustees, employees, volunteers, sessional workers, students, work placements, contractors working directly with service users, and anyone acting on behalf of St Mary's.

Organisations hiring rooms remain responsible for safeguarding within their own activities. St Mary's nevertheless expects hirers and partners to have safeguarding arrangements appropriate to their work and reserves the right to act where a safeguarding concern arises on its premises.

3. Safeguarding Principles

- The welfare of a child is paramount.
- Adults have the right to live safely and free from abuse and neglect.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Concerns will be listened to, taken seriously and acted upon promptly.
- People will be treated with dignity, respect and without discrimination.
- For adults, safeguarding should be person-led and outcome-focused wherever possible, reflecting the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal.
- Information will be shared lawfully and proportionately when necessary to protect a child or adult at risk.
- St Mary's will work cooperatively with statutory agencies and safeguarding partners.
- Safeguarding practice will be reviewed and improved in the light of learning, incidents and changes in guidance.

4. Definitions

4.1 Child

A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

4.2 Adult at risk

For the purposes of adult safeguarding, an adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support (whether or not those needs are being met), is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves from the risk or experience of abuse or neglect.

4.3 Safeguarding

Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, preventing harm where possible, and responding appropriately where abuse, neglect or exploitation is suspected or disclosed.

4.4 Abuse

Abuse may be a single act or repeated acts. It may be deliberate or result from neglect, poor practice or failure to act. It may occur in person or online, within families, organisations or communities, and may be perpetrated by adults or by children and young people.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for ensuring that St Mary's has effective safeguarding arrangements. Trustees will:

- approve and review this policy at least annually;
- ensure safeguarding risks are identified and managed;
- ensure suitable safer recruitment, training, supervision and reporting arrangements are in place;
- ensure safeguarding concerns, complaints, whistleblowing and allegations are handled appropriately;
- ensure serious incidents are reported to the Charity Commission or other bodies where required;
- seek assurance that partners and hirers have appropriate safeguarding arrangements where relevant;
- support a culture in which concerns can be raised without fear of retaliation.

5.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Denise Pallett, Operations Manager. Denise holds current Designated Safeguarding Lead (Level 3) training, issued 29th July 2026, with a recommended renewal date of 28 July 2028.

The DSL will:

- act as the main point of contact for safeguarding concerns;
- advise staff, volunteers and trustees on safeguarding practice;
- assess information and decide whether advice, referral or other action is required;
- make or support referrals to Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, the Police, LADO or other appropriate agencies;
- maintain secure and accurate safeguarding records;
- ensure safeguarding learning and updates are shared appropriately;
- escalate concerns when a response from another agency does not adequately address risk;
- report to trustees in a way that supports oversight while respecting confidentiality.

5.3 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Lisa Rooke. Lisa completed the Safeguarding Adults and Children qualification through Wakefield Adult Education on 14th September 2026, further strengthening the Centre’s safeguarding knowledge and capacity.

The DDSL supports the DSL and undertakes safeguarding responsibilities when the DSL is unavailable. The DDSL will receive training appropriate to the responsibilities of the role.

5.4 Staff and Volunteers

- read and follow this policy and the Code of Conduct;
- complete safeguarding training appropriate to their role;
- remain alert to signs that a child or adult may need help or protection;
- report concerns immediately and never assume somebody else has done so;
- record concerns factually and promptly;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- never promise to keep a safeguarding concern secret.

6. Recognising Abuse and Safeguarding Concerns

Safeguarding concerns do not always present clearly. Staff and volunteers should remain professionally curious, notice changes, listen carefully and report concerns rather than attempting to prove what has happened.

6.1 Children - categories and examples

Physical abuse: including hitting, shaking, burning, poisoning, drowning, suffocating, inappropriate restraint or deliberately causing illness.

Emotional abuse: including persistent criticism, humiliation, intimidation, rejection, coercive or controlling behaviour, and exposure to domestic abuse.

Sexual abuse: including sexual assault, inappropriate touching, grooming, exploitation, forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activity and online sexual abuse.

Neglect: persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, including adequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, medical care, education or emotional support.

Other concerns may include child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, county lines, domestic abuse, bullying and cyberbullying, harmful or abusive behaviour between children, online grooming, modern slavery, trafficking, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, honour-based abuse, radicalisation, missing children and self-harm.

The presence of one sign does not prove abuse. Equally, the absence of visible signs does not mean a child is safe.

6.2 Adults at risk - categories and examples

Physical abuse: assault, inappropriate restraint, misuse of medication or other physical harm.

Domestic abuse: including physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse and psychological or emotional abuse.

Sexual abuse: sexual activity without consent, sexual harassment, exploitation or coercion.

Psychological or emotional abuse: threats, humiliation, intimidation, isolation, coercion or controlling behaviour.

Financial or material abuse: theft, fraud, scams, misuse of benefits or property, coercion concerning money, wills or possessions.

Modern slavery: human trafficking, forced labour, domestic servitude or exploitation.

Discriminatory abuse: harassment, slurs or unequal treatment because of protected or personal characteristics.

Organisational abuse: poor practice or neglect within an organisation or service that causes avoidable harm.

Neglect and acts of omission: failure to provide necessary care, medication, food, heating, medical attention or support.

Self-neglect: serious neglect of personal care, health or surroundings, including hoarding where this creates significant risk.

6.3 Possible indicators

- unexplained or repeated injuries;
- sudden changes in behaviour, mood, attendance or appearance;
- fearfulness, withdrawal or anxiety around a particular person;
- poor hygiene, malnutrition or unmet health needs;

- sexualised behaviour or knowledge inconsistent with age or circumstances;
- unexplained financial difficulty or loss of possessions;
- a person appearing controlled, intimidated or prevented from speaking freely;
- unsafe living conditions or serious self-neglect;
- concerning online contact, messages or relationships.

7. Creating a Safe Environment

St Mary's aims to prevent harm as well as respond to it. We will use appropriate risk assessments, supervision, safe premises, clear conduct expectations, safer recruitment, safeguarding training and accessible routes for raising concerns.

Activities involving children or adults at risk will be planned with safeguarding in mind. The level of supervision and any consent or registration arrangements will be proportionate to the activity, the participants and the identified risks.

8. Children and Young People

A person remains a child until their 18th birthday. St Mary's will not treat a 16- or 17-year-old as an adult for safeguarding purposes simply because they are independent or attending without a parent.

Where St Mary's directly provides an activity for children, appropriate arrangements will be made for registration, emergency contacts, consent where required, collection arrangements, supervision and activity-specific risk assessment.

Children under 16 attending general St Mary's events that are not specifically organised as supervised children's provision should normally be accompanied by a responsible adult unless the activity has its own approved arrangements.

Concerns about a child must be reported regardless of whether a parent or carer agrees. Parents or carers will normally be involved where appropriate, unless doing so could increase risk, prejudice an investigation or otherwise be contrary to the child's welfare.

9. Adults at Risk

9.1 Choice, consent and Making Safeguarding Personal

Adults should be involved in decisions about their safeguarding wherever possible. St Mary's will listen to the adult's views, wishes and desired outcomes and will seek to preserve choice and independence while responding proportionately to risk.

9.2 Mental capacity

Adults must be presumed to have capacity unless it is established otherwise. A person is not to be treated as lacking capacity simply because they make a decision others consider unwise. Where there is reason to doubt capacity in relation to a specific decision, the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 should be followed and appropriate professional advice sought.

Adults do not require parental or carer consent simply because they are considered at risk. Information may, however, need to be shared without consent where there is a lawful safeguarding reason, for example where there is serious risk to the adult or another person, coercion, a crime, or a public-interest basis for sharing.

10. Safer Recruitment and Professional Boundaries

10.1 Safer recruitment

- clear role descriptions and safeguarding expectations;
- identity and right-to-work checks where applicable;
- references appropriate to the role;
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks at the correct level where the role is eligible;
- appropriate consideration of gaps, suitability and relevant declarations;
- safeguarding induction before unsupervised duties;
- ongoing supervision and training.

DBS checks will only be requested where legally eligible and at the appropriate level. Where St Mary's removes a person from regulated activity, or would have removed them had they not left, because the legal referral conditions are met, the organisation will make any required referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

10.2 Professional boundaries

- behave respectfully and professionally;
- avoid favouritism or relationships that could exploit a position of trust;
- not borrow from or lend money to service users;
- not accept gifts that could compromise professional judgement;
- avoid unnecessary private communication with children or adults at risk through personal accounts;
- use physical contact only when appropriate, proportionate and consistent with the person's welfare and the activity;
- report any concern about boundaries, conduct or suitability.

11. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

If somebody is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical attention, call 999. Do not delay emergency action while trying to contact the DSL.

Every concern must be taken seriously. A member of staff or volunteer does not need proof before reporting a concern. **If in doubt, report it.**

The normal internal route is to report immediately to the DSL, Denise Pallett, or if unavailable to the DDSL, Lisa Rooke. If neither can be reached and delay could place somebody at risk, contact the appropriate statutory service directly.

12. Responding to a Disclosure

12.1 Do

- stay calm and listen carefully;
- allow the person to speak in their own words;
- take what they say seriously;
- reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling someone;
- explain that you cannot keep the information secret and will share it only with people who need to help keep them safe;
- record the disclosure as soon as possible, using the person's exact words where possible;
- report it immediately.

12.2 Do not

- promise confidentiality;
- ask leading or repeated questions;
- investigate or try to establish proof;
- confront the person alleged to have caused harm;
- express shock, disbelief or blame;
- make promises about what will happen next;
- delay reporting.

13. Recording and Reporting Concerns

13.1 Recording

Records should be made as soon as possible and should distinguish fact, observation, what another person has said, and any professional judgement. Records should include:

- name of the person concerned and, where known, date of birth or age;
- date, time and location of the incident or disclosure;
- who was present;
- exact words used where possible;
- observations, including injuries or behaviour, without speculation;
- action taken and advice received;
- who the concern was reported or referred to, and when;
- name, role, signature and date of the person making the record.

Original records must not be altered. If information needs correction or additional information becomes available, this should be added transparently, dated and attributable.

13.2 Internal reporting

Report immediately to the DSL or DDSL. Do not wait until the end of a shift or meeting if a person may be at risk.

13.3 External referrals and escalation

The DSL will consider the available information and seek advice or make a referral where appropriate. A member of staff or volunteer may contact Social Care Direct, the Police or emergency services directly if the DSL/DDSL is unavailable or if waiting would create unacceptable risk.

If St Mary's remains concerned after a referral or consultation, the DSL will follow up and, where necessary, escalate the concern through the relevant local safeguarding procedures.

14. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Safeguarding information is confidential, but confidentiality is not absolute. Data protection law does not prevent proportionate information sharing where this is necessary and lawful to safeguard a child or adult at risk.

St Mary's will share information on a need-to-know basis, record the reason for significant sharing decisions, and consider consent where appropriate. Information may be shared without consent where there is a lawful basis and safeguarding need, including where seeking consent would increase risk, where a person is unable to give valid consent, where another person may be at risk, or where a legal or public-interest basis applies.

For children, St Mary's will have regard to current statutory information-sharing guidance and Working Together to Safeguard Children. For adults, decisions will reflect the Care Act framework, Making Safeguarding Personal, mental capacity principles and relevant data-protection requirements.

15. Allegations or Concerns About Staff, Volunteers or Trustees

Any allegation or concern that a person working or volunteering with children has harmed or may have harmed a child, may have committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, may pose a risk of harm to children, or may be unsuitable to work with children must be taken seriously.

Concerns about a staff member or volunteer should normally be reported immediately to the DSL. The DSL/organisation will seek advice from Wakefield's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where the criteria may be met. Wakefield guidance requires LADO referrals meeting the criteria to be made within one working day.

If the concern is about the DSL, it must be reported to the Chair of Trustees. If it concerns the Chair, another trustee should take responsibility and seek advice directly from the LADO or other appropriate authority.

For concerns about a person working or volunteering with adults at risk, contact Wakefield Social Care Direct for advice on the appropriate process.

St Mary's will not conduct its own safeguarding investigation where this could prejudice statutory enquiries. Employment or volunteer-management action will be coordinated with safeguarding advice as appropriate. Suspension is a neutral precautionary measure and will not be automatic; any decision will be proportionate to risk and advice received.

16. Whistleblowing

St Mary's encourages a culture in which unsafe practice, misconduct, attempts to conceal concerns or failures to act can be raised openly. Nobody should suffer disadvantage for raising a genuine concern in good faith.

Where a concern cannot appropriately be raised with the person's line manager or DSL, it should be raised with the Chair of Trustees or another trustee. Individuals may also contact the relevant statutory or regulatory body where appropriate.

17. Online Safety, Photography and Digital Communication

17.1 Online safety

- maintain professional boundaries online;
- use organisational channels where possible rather than personal accounts;
- avoid unnecessary private messaging with children or adults at risk;
- report online grooming, exploitation, harassment, sexual content, coercion or other concerning behaviour;
- risk assess online activities where St Mary's is the provider.

17.2 Photography and video

- obtain appropriate consent before planned photography or filming;
- explain the intended use of images;
- respect requests not to be photographed;
- avoid publishing a child's full name alongside an image unless there is a clear, appropriate reason and consent;
- store organisational images securely;
- do not use personal devices to photograph children or adults at risk unless specifically authorised for an exceptional and legitimate purpose.

18. Room Hire and Partnership Working

Hirers and partner organisations are responsible for the safeguarding of participants in activities they organise. Where their activity involves children or adults at risk, St Mary's may require evidence of appropriate safeguarding policies, safer recruitment arrangements, insurance, DBS arrangements where eligible, and a named safeguarding contact.

Safeguarding responsibilities and reporting routes should be clear in partnership arrangements. Any safeguarding concern arising on St Mary's premises must be reported to St Mary's DSL as well as being handled under the hirer's or partner's own procedures where appropriate.

St Mary's may suspend or terminate use of its premises where safeguarding concerns are not adequately managed.

19. Training, Supervision and Support

Safeguarding learning will be proportionate to role and responsibility.

- Trustees will receive safeguarding awareness appropriate to their governance responsibilities.
- The DSL will maintain suitable advanced/DSL training and keep up to date with local and national safeguarding developments.
- The DDSL will receive training sufficient to undertake the role effectively.
- Staff and volunteers will receive safeguarding information at induction and refresher learning appropriate to their duties.
- Where roles involve greater safeguarding exposure, additional role-specific training will be provided.
-

- Safeguarding may be discussed in supervision, team meetings or trustee oversight where appropriate and without unnecessary disclosure of personal information.

Safeguarding incidents can be distressing. Appropriate support will be offered to staff and volunteers involved, while maintaining confidentiality.

20. Record Storage and Retention

Safeguarding records will be stored securely and separately from routine operational records where practicable, with access restricted to those who need it. Electronic records will be protected by appropriate access controls; paper records will be kept in secure storage.

Retention periods will reflect the nature of the record, legal and regulatory requirements, insurance considerations and current safeguarding guidance. St Mary's will not destroy safeguarding information simply because the person has stopped using the service if there remains a legitimate safeguarding, legal or regulatory reason to retain it.

21. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Safeguarding protection applies equally to everyone. St Mary's recognises that disability, communication needs, discrimination, poverty, isolation, language barriers and other circumstances can increase vulnerability or make it harder for somebody to disclose harm or access support.

Reasonable steps will be taken to make safeguarding communication accessible and to avoid assumptions based on age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, socio-economic circumstances or any other personal characteristic.

22. Serious Incidents and External Reporting

The Board of Trustees will consider whether a safeguarding incident must be reported to the Charity Commission as a serious incident and whether notifications are required to insurers, the Disclosure and Barring Service, Police, local authority or other bodies.

Making an external regulatory report does not replace immediate safeguarding action or referral to statutory services.

23. Legal and Guidance Framework

This policy is informed by legislation and guidance applicable in England, including, where relevant:

- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- Care Act 2014 and statutory guidance;
- Mental Capacity Act 2005;
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Disclosure and Barring Service framework;
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021;
- Modern Slavery Act 2015;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR;
- current statutory guidance on information sharing to safeguard children and young people;
- Charity Commission safeguarding guidance for charities and trustees;
- Wakefield Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and Wakefield and District Safeguarding Adults Board policy and procedures.

Important: 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' was updated in March 2026. This policy therefore refers to the 2026 statutory guidance rather than the 2023 edition used in earlier drafts.

24. Monitoring and Review

The Board of Trustees will review this policy at least annually and sooner where there is a significant safeguarding incident, organisational change, learning from practice, or a material change in law or guidance.

The review will include checking key contact details, DSL/DDSL arrangements, training, safer recruitment practice, safeguarding records and any learning from concerns or incidents.

25. Key Safeguarding Contacts

Contact	Telephone	Email / Notes
Emergency services	999	Immediate danger or urgent medical emergency
Wakefield Social Care Direct - Children	0345 8 503 503	social_care_direct_children@wakefield.gov.uk
Wakefield Social Care Direct - Adults	0345 8 503 503	social_care_direct@wakefield.gov.uk
Wakefield LADO	01977 727032	lado.referrals@wakefield.gov.uk
Wakefield & District Safeguarding Adults Board	-	wdsab@wakefield.gov.uk
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000	Advice about concerns for a child

Social Care Direct provides an out-of-hours service on the same telephone number for immediate safeguarding concerns outside normal service hours.

Contact details should be checked as part of every annual review.

Appendix A - Safeguarding Reporting Flowchart

Display the quick-reference poster prominently in staff and volunteer areas. The poster below is a visual aid; this policy remains the full procedure.



Appendix B - Safeguarding Concern Record

Complete as soon as possible. Record facts and exact words. Do not investigate. Submit securely to the DSL/DDSL. Please feel free to use additional sheets where necessary.

Date and time record completed	
Name of person completing record	
Role	
Name of child/adult concerned	
Date of birth / age (if known)	
Date, time and location of concern	
Who was present	

Nature of concern / what was observed or disclosed

Exact words used (where possible)

Any visible injuries or relevant observations

Immediate action taken

Who the concern was reported/referred to and when

Advice received / next steps

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____ **Time:** _____

Appendix C - Body Map Guidance

A body map may be used to record the location and appearance of a visible injury. It is a recording aid only and must not be used to investigate.

- Only record what you can see or what the person tells you.
- Do not ask a person to remove clothing solely to inspect an injury.
- Do not photograph injuries unless this has been specifically authorised and is lawful and appropriate.
- Mark the location of the injury and describe size, colour, shape and appearance as objectively as possible.
- Record the person's own explanation in their exact words where possible.
- Sign, date and time the body map and store it with the safeguarding record.

FRONT	**BACK**

Description / reference numbers:

_____

Completed by: _____

Signature: _____

Date/time: _____

Appendix D - Staff / Volunteer Safeguarding Declaration

I confirm that I have read and understood the St Mary's Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy. I understand my responsibility to report safeguarding concerns promptly, to maintain appropriate confidentiality, and not to investigate concerns myself.

Name: _____

Role / Position: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Trustee Approval

Approved by the Board of Trustees of St Mary's Chequerfield Community Project Limited.

Chair of Trustees - Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date approved: _____

Next review due: _____

Reference Sources Checked for this Revision

- Department for Education - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 (updated 18 March 2026).
- Department for Education - statutory information-sharing guidance for safeguarding children and young people (September 2026).
- Charity Commission - Safeguarding for charities and trustees / safeguarding and protecting people guidance.
- Wakefield Council - Social Care Direct and safeguarding contact information.
- Wakefield Safeguarding Children Partnership - LADO and managing allegations guidance.
- Wakefield and District Safeguarding Adults Board - local adult safeguarding principles and procedures.