Empowering children, young people and families living with Usher syndrome

Safeguarding Policy v 3.1

Date of publication	June 2026
Owner	CEO/Designated Safeguarding Officer
Consultation	Chair of Trustees Trustee Safeguarding Lead
Supersedes document	Safeguarding Policy v3.0

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1.0 Purpose and scope

1.1 Usher Kids UK exists to empower children and young people (aged 0-25yrs) and their families living with Usher syndrome. We provide

information, support and opportunities to connect, giving every child and family the tools they need to thrive.

1.2 Usher Kids UK is committed to safeguarding, protecting and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk across all of our services. The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children and adults at risk who have contact with Usher Kids UK from harm
- to provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and adults at risk and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding

1.3 This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Usher Kids UK, including paid staff and the board of trustees, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and mentors. The procedures in this document are non-contractual. They are designed to indicate how such matters should be dealt with within Usher Kids UK although we reserve the right to vary, replace or terminate them at any time.

1.4 For the purpose of this policy a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

1.5 An adult at risk is someone of 18 years or over who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

2.0 Context

2.1 Abuse is defined as the misuse of adult or peer power over children or adults at risk. It is the result of a failure to respect the rights, autonomy, physical integrity and privacy of a child or adult at risk. A person may abuse a child or adult at risk by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children or adults at risk may face abuse in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by people known to them, or by a stranger.

Abuse includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

Abuse can be carried out by adults or by children and young people. Children and young people may abuse other children (child-on-child abuse), and abuse may also involve adults at risk.

Further detail on types of abuse and possible indicators is included in Appendix B.

2.2 Differences in adult at risk and child safeguarding

Usher Kids UK recognises that there are significant differences in the safeguarding of adults at risk and that of children, including:

- Children and adults may each face a different set of issues
- The definitions and terms used differ
- Procedures for reporting abuse and handling cases are not the same
- There is different legislation and policy

As a charity which supports children and young adults between the ages of 0-25, it is important for all those representing Usher Kids UK to understand these differences. Internal safeguarding training and the designated safeguarding officer will support staff and volunteers to understand key differences, and in particular how to respond to safeguarding incidents or concerns that involve 18-25 year olds.

One important difference between safeguarding adults and safeguarding children is an adult's right to self-determination. Adults may choose not to act at all to protect themselves, and it is only in extreme circumstances that the law intervenes. This will often only happen when an adult is assessed to lack capacity in that area, or where the concerns may extend to children, such as when they are living in the same household.

2.3 This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and adults at risk in the UK.

A summary of the key legislation and guidance relating to children is available from Child protection system in the UK | NSPCC Learning

A summary of the key legislation and guidance relating to adults at risk is available from Safeguarding Adults at Risk Key Legislation and Government Initiatives

3.0 Supporting Documents

3.1 This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents:

Separate policies:

- whistleblowing
- health and safety
- GDPR and privacy notice
- complaints

Within other policies:

- antibullying and harassment (staff handbook)
- code of conduct for staff, volunteers and trustees (staff, volunteer and trustee handbooks)
- behaviour codes for children and young people (managing events)
- photography and sharing images guidance (managing events and working in partnership)
- adult to child supervision ratios (managing events)
- preventing and responding to bullying (managing events)
- online safety (managing events)
- safer recruitment (recruitment)
- induction, training, supervision and support (recruitment and staff handbook)

Within this policy:

- responding to a safeguarding incident
- responding to concerns about a child or adult at risk
- recording and sharing information
- radicalisation and extremism
- recruitment, induction and training (summary)
- managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- roles of the designated safeguarding officer and trustee safeguarding lead

4.0 Policy Statement

4.1 We believe that:

- children and adults at risk should never experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and adults at risk, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them

4.2 We recognise that:

- the welfare of children and adults at risk is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take

- working in partnership with children, adults at risk, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare
- all children and adults at risk, 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 and adults at risk are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other additional needs
- extra safeguards may be needed to keep children and adults at risk who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse

4.3 We seek to keep children and young adults safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- emphasising a person-centred approach, tailoring support to individual needs
- appointing a designated safeguarding officer and a lead trustee for safeguarding
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an online safety procedure
- 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
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, young people and their families
- making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- supporting early help by signposting families to local services and sharing concerns with safeguarding partners where appropriate
- using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, adults at risk, parents, families and carers appropriately
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately

- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns
- ensuring that safeguarding procedures are communicated to children, young people and their families at face-to-face events, online communications and through our website
- providing safeguarding information in accessible formats appropriate to the communication needs of our community

5.0 Contact Details

Nominated designated safeguarding officer

Name: Emma King

Email: emma.king@usherkidsuk.org

Nominated deputy safeguarding officer

Name: Penny Lockhart

Email: penny.lockhart@usherkidsuk.org

Trustee safeguarding lead

Name: Laura Ross

Email: laura.ross@mft.nhs.uk

Chair of trustees

Name: Chloe Joyner

Email: chloe.joyner@usherkidsuk.org

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

External safeguarding contacts

If you are unable to contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer, the following services can be contacted:

- NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (24 hours)
- Childline: 0800 1111
- Emergency services: 999 (if there is an immediate risk)

Concerns should be referred to the local authority children's or adult social care team in the area where the concern has arisen.

If an individual is in immediate danger, emergency services must be contacted without delay.

This policy was last reviewed in: June 2026

Name: Laura Ross

Signed: 

Date: 17/06/26

Safeguarding procedures

6.0 Responding to a safeguarding incident

In the case of a safeguarding incident occurring during an Usher Kids UK event, the following procedures should be followed by the adult who has witnessed or been informed about the alleged incident:

- If there is any ongoing immediate risk to safety, the police should be called on 999 and any remaining risks removed, if this can be done safely. Police should be contacted by an adult present at the time. The designated safeguarding officer should be informed, as soon as it is safe to do so without jeopardising anyone's safety.

- If there is no immediate risk, the adult should ensure that all people involved are safe from any additional harm and have emotional support, for example from another volunteer or member of staff, then contact the safeguarding officer as soon as it is safe to do so.
- The safeguarding officer will seek advice from the NSPCC (in the case of a child) or the Ann Craft trust (in the case of an adult at risk) or the local safeguarding board on further actions to take and will lead on these actions on behalf of Usher Kids UK.
- The safeguarding officer will advise the witness/reporter on further actions they will need to take, which will include recording the incident on a record of safeguarding concern form (Appendix A) and an explanation of confidentiality requirements. Support will be available for this step as needed.
- A debrief will follow with the safeguarding officer. It may not be possible to inform the witness/reporter of the outcomes, due to confidentiality requirements. Follow-up support will be offered, and feedback will be requested on the process for future learning.

7.0 Responding to concerns about a child or adult at risk

Safeguarding concerns may arise in the following situations:

- a child or adult at risk wishes to disclose, or discloses, information concerning alleged abuse
- an individual has concerns about a child or adult at risk being abused or harmed
- an individual has safeguarding concerns about another's attitude/behaviour towards a child or adult at risk

7.1 Procedures to respond to concerns

In all these cases, the safeguarding officer should be contacted immediately (once immediate safety of the people involved has been ensured) and the concerns should not be discussed, or investigated, with others. The safeguarding officer will seek advice from the NSPCC (in the case of a child) or the Ann Craft trust (in the case of an adult at risk) or the local safeguarding board on further actions to take and lead on these actions on behalf of Usher Kids UK. Where appropriate, concerns will be referred to the local authority children's or adult social care services in the area where the incident or concern has arisen. In situations where a crime may have been committed, the police will be contacted.

The person reporting the concern will be supported by the safeguarding officer with further steps, which will include completing a safeguarding form and a debrief.

If the concern relates to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, it must be reported directly to the Trustee Safeguarding Lead or the Chair of Trustees.

If it is not appropriate or possible to report internally, staff and volunteers should contact an external safeguarding agency such as the NSPCC Helpline (0808 800 5000) or contact the relevant local authority safeguarding team directly.

Additional guidance can be found below regarding disclosures and spotting the signs of abuse.

7.2 Disclosure

Disclosure is the process by which children and adults at risk start to share their experiences of abuse with others. This can take place over a long period of time – it is a journey, not one act or action.

They may disclose directly or indirectly and sometimes they may start sharing details of abuse before they are ready to put their thoughts and feelings in order.

Not all disclosures will lead to a formal report of abuse or a case being made or a case being taken to court, but all disclosures should be taken seriously. It takes extraordinary courage for a child or adult at risk to go through the journey of disclosing abuse.

7.3 How disclosure happens

Children and adults at risk may disclose abuse in a variety of ways, including:

- directly– making specific verbal statements about what's happened to them
- indirectly – making ambiguous verbal statements which suggest something is wrong
- behaviourally – displaying behaviour that signals something is wrong (this may or may not be deliberate)
- non-verbally – writing letters, drawing pictures or trying to communicate in other ways.

Children and adults at risk may not always be aware that they are disclosing abuse through their actions and behaviour.

7.4 Responding to disclosure

The NSPCC identifies three key interpersonal skills that help a child feel they are being listened to and taken seriously:

Show you care, help them open up: Give your full attention to the child or young person and keep your body language open and encouraging. Be compassionate, be understanding and reassure them their feelings are important. Phrases such as 'you've shown such courage today' help.

Take your time, slow down: Respect pauses and don't interrupt the child – let them go at their own pace. Recognise and respond to their body language. And remember that it may take several conversations for them to share what's happened to them.

Show you understand, reflect back: Make it clear you're interested in what the child is telling you. Reflect back what they've said to check your understanding – and use their language to show it's their experience.

If a child or adult at risk tells you they are experiencing abuse, it's important to reassure them that they've done the right thing in telling you. Make sure they know that abuse is never their fault.

Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the disclosure.

It's important to maintain an unbiased approach when responding to disclosures to ensure each case is treated in a fair and transparent manner and that the child or adult at risk gets the protection and support that they need.

7.5 Recognising signs of abuse

Children and adults at risk who have been abused may want to tell someone, but not have the exact words to do so. They may attempt to disclose abuse by giving adults clues, through their actions and by using indirect words.

There may also be other signs of abuse, such as physical or behavioural changes. Adults need to be able to notice the signs that a child or adult at risk might be distressed and ask them non-leading questions about what might have caused this.

All Usher Kids UK staff and volunteers will be given safeguarding training which includes recognising signs of abuse. A factsheet on the definitions and signs of abuse can be found here.

If you have concerns, you should never wait until a child or adult at risk tells you directly that they are being abused before taking action. Waiting for them to be ready to speak about their experiences could mean that the abuse carries on and they, or another person, are put at further risk of significant harm. Instead, ask them if everything is OK or discuss your concerns with the designated safeguarding officer, who can support you or lead the discussion. Any such discussions with a child or adult at risk should always be reported immediately to the safeguarding officer, regardless of outcomes.

8.0 Recording and sharing information

8.1 Making notes

It's important to keep accurate and detailed notes on any disclosures or concerns you have about a child or young person. You will need to share these with your designated safeguarding officer.

Include:

- the person's details (name, age)
- the date, time and location
- what they said or did that gave you cause for concern (if they made a verbal disclosure, write down their exact words without adding your subjective opinions)
- any information they have given you about the alleged abuser

If you have access to the record of safeguarding concerns form (Appendix A), this should be used. Otherwise, the content can later be transferred and any paper records securely destroyed.

8.2 Confidentiality and seeking consent to share information internally

Never promise a child or young person that you will keep the things they're telling you a secret. Explain that you need to share what they've told you with someone who will be able to help. In most cases, the witness/reporter will only need to ask for consent to share information internally, with the designated safeguarding officer.

They will then lead on seeking consent for sharing information with others.

If consent is refused or if you're unable to seek consent, you can still share information with the safeguarding officer and/or external services as a defined legitimate interest.

This includes protecting children and adults at risk from neglect or physical, mental or emotional harm, and protecting the physical, mental or emotional wellbeing, as outlined in the Data (use and access) Act 2025. Safeguarding a child or adult at risk is a clear and legitimate reason for sharing information. Therefore, if there are concerns about a child or adult at risk's welfare, these must be shared with the designated safeguarding officer even if consent has not been given.

8.3 Seeking consent to share information externally

Children and adults at risk should be given the opportunity to decide whether they agree to their personal information being shared externally (beyond Usher Kids UK's safeguarding officers). Consent will normally be sought by the safeguarding officer, who will follow the procedures outlined below.

In the case of a child, if they don't have the capacity to make their own decisions, ask their parent or carer (unless doing so would put the child at risk of harm).

Tips for getting consent:

- be open and honest
- make sure the person you're asking for consent understands what information will be shared and why
- explain who will see the information and what it will be used for
- make sure the person you're asking for consent understands the consequences of their information not being shared
- get the consent in writing, in case there are any disputes in the future. If it's only given verbally, make a written record of this
- make sure the person knows they can withdraw consent at any time

8.4 Sharing information externally without consent

When deciding whether to share information without consent beyond the designated safeguarding officer, each case will be considered individually by:

- Deciding if the need to share information is in the public interest and whether it outweighs the need to maintain confidentiality
- Considering all the implications of sharing the information, for example if you are sharing sensitive details about a person's life
- Considering whether an adult is an 'adult at risk of harm' and their mental capacity

When making these decisions, the designated safeguarding officer will consult with the NSPCC, the Ann Craft Trust or the local safeguarding board for advice.

If sharing information without consent, a written record will be kept explaining:

- what steps were taken to get consent
- the person's reasons for not giving consent (if known)
- why it was felt necessary to share information without consent.

A copy of this record will be passed on to the agency/agencies that information is being shared with.

8.5 Record keeping, retention and storage

Safeguarding records are any records which relate to concerns about a child or young person's welfare and safety, and/or concerns about possible risks posed by people working or volunteering with children.

Initial notes should be transferred onto section A of the Usher Kids UK 'Record of safeguarding concern' form (Appendix A) and shared with the designated safeguarding officer as soon as possible and always within 24 hours of the incident/concern. All parts of section A of the form should be completed; the designated safeguarding officer can support the witness/reporter in this process. The designated safeguarding officer will complete section B.

The report should be factual. Any inference or interpretation drawn from what was observed, said or alleged should be clearly reported as such. The record should always be signed and dated by the person making the report.

All files should be digital, with any paper copies securely destroyed. Digital files are password protected and stored securely in Usher Kids UK's Microsoft Safeguarding folder. Digital copies should not be downloaded or stored on personal devices. Files are shared through a password protected and encrypted platform such as Egress.

Files will be kept internally until the child/adult at risk reaches their 25th birthday, in line with safeguarding best practice for organisations working with children. After this period, records will be securely deleted or destroyed in accordance with data protection requirements.

9.0 Child-on-child abuse

Usher Kids UK recognises that child-on-child abuse can occur online and offline, inside or outside our activities, and between children of any age and sex. It exists on a continuum from troubling behaviours to criminal offences (including sexual harassment and sexual violence) and is never acceptable. We maintain a zero tolerance approach and an organisational attitude of "it could happen here."

Child-on-child abuse includes (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyberbullying), physical abuse, sexual harassment and sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviour, coercive control, hate incidents, hazing/initiation, exploitation, and online harms such as sharing nudes or semi-nudes and other technology assisted behaviours.

9.1 Prevention of child-on-child abuse

We will reduce the risk of child-on-child abuse by:

- **Clear expectations & culture:** Reinforcing behaviour codes for children/young people and our staff/volunteer Code of Conduct; explicitly challenging "banter" or minimising language; promoting respect and inclusion.
- **Training & awareness:** Providing annual safeguarding training that covers child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour (HSB), online risks and reporting routes.
- **Listening & reporting environment:** Making it easy to speak up; using NSPCC resources (e.g., Let children know you're listening) in volunteer briefings and youth facing materials.

- **Risk informed planning:** Conducting event specific risk assessments (including supervision ratios, safe spaces, and accessibility), and contextual safeguarding considerations.
- **Online safety alignment:** Addressing online behaviours (including sharing nudes/semi-nudes) using UKCIS guidance; ensuring staff know **not to view, copy, or save** imagery and to follow device handling rules.

9.2 Responding to concerns or incidents of child-on-child abuse

When child-on-child abuse is suspected or disclosed:

1. **Immediate safety first:** Remove any immediate risk and reassure the child that they will be taken seriously, supported, and kept safe. If nude or semi-nude images are involved, do not view, copy or save imagery. Do not ask for it to be deleted at this stage.
2. **Inform the DSO:** Contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) without delay; do not investigate beyond necessary initial clarification.
3. **Recording:** Record facts, the child's own words, date/time, setting, and any contextual information (do not promise confidentiality).

9.3 DSO triage and decision-making

The DSO will:

- **Review risk** to any child; initiate interim safety measures (e.g., separate supervision, adjusted groupings, temporary pause on activities if necessary).
- **Determine threshold** for external referral, with advice from NSPCC or the local safeguarding board.
- **Inform parents/carers** of involved children at the earliest appropriate stage unless doing so places a child at additional risk, documenting the rationale.

If thresholds for external referral are met, our practice is as follows:

- Children's Social Care leads assessment; we cooperate fully with multi agency planning, recognising the needs of all children involved (those harmed and those who harmed).
- Police will be involved where a crime is suspected; we preserve evidence and follow UKCIS instructions for imagery.

- Internally, we implement and monitor a safety plan (e.g., supervision changes, boundaries, restorative approaches where appropriate), and review suitability to attend events on a case by case basis.
- We maintain a confidential case record, documenting all decisions, actions, referrals and outcomes; we set a review point to reassess safety measures.

9.4 Supporting children affected by child-on-child abuse

We will provide trauma-informed, childcentred support that may include:

- A safety plan and measures to ensure participation can continue safely if appropriate (adjusted supervision, seating, group changes).
- Access to emotional support and signposting families to early help where appropriate.
- Recognition that children who harm others may also be vulnerable and require assessment/support.
- Accessibility adjustments for children with sensory or communication needs to ensure they can understand, express, and be heard.

10.0 Radicalisation and extremism

10.1 Understanding radicalisation

Radicalisation and extremism can put a child or young person at risk of being drawn into violence and criminal activity and has the potential to cause significant harm. Radicalisation is a process by which an individual, or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals and aspirations that reject or undermine the status quo or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of a nation.

Children and young people may become radicalised if they feel:

- isolated and lonely or wanting to belong
- unhappy about themselves and what others might think of them
- embarrassed or judged about their culture, gender, religion or race
- stressed or depressed

- fed up with being bullied or treated badly by other people or by society
- angry at other people or the government
- confused about what they are doing
- pressured to stand up for other people who are being oppressed
- the desire to be valued and respected
- there are few other options open to them
- no one is listening to them/have no voice.

The threat from terrorism and extremism in the UK is real and can involve the exploitation of vulnerable children, young people and adults at risk. Usher Kids UK staff, volunteers and Trustees must be aware of radicalisation and extremism and discuss any suspicions of radicalisation and extremism immediately with the designated safeguarding officer.

11.0 Recruitment, induction and training

11.1 Recruitment procedures

Usher Kids UK follows detailed procedures for recruitment and selection of its staff and volunteers (including mentors) to minimise the risk of recruiting unsuitable individuals. This includes references, proof of identity and criminal record checks for every colleague who works directly with children or adults at risk on our behalf. Further information can be found in the recruitment (including safer recruitment) policy.

11.2 Induction and training

All staff and trustees receive safeguarding training as part of their induction and are required to read the safeguarding policy and its related procedures at induction and at the time of the policy's annual review. Knowledge and understanding of the policy and procedures is discussed during staff's regular supervision sessions. Safeguarding training is refreshed at least annually.

Volunteers working directly with children or adults at risk on behalf of Usher Kids UK are required to read the safeguarding policy and all procedures relevant to their role. Safeguarding training is required to be completed prior to their first role at an event, and refreshed prior to camp each year.

A code of conduct is signed by staff and volunteers when they accept their role with Usher Kids UK.

12.0 Managing allegations against staff and volunteers

12.1 Expected behaviours

Usher Kids UK expects that staff and volunteers take steps to safeguard everyone who comes into contact with the charity from harm, and ensure that they do not place themselves in a position where an allegation can be made against them. Such steps may involve, but are not limited to, the following:

- treating children and young people with respect and dignity at all times
- ensuring contact with children and young people occurs in the company of others wherever possible
- maintaining a professional approach to children and young people that involves behaviour such as not divulging personal information, ensuring there is no inappropriate physical contact, avoiding inappropriate familiarity (including discussing inappropriate matters and losing self-control)
- discussing potential concerns with the designated safeguarding officer before any allegations are raised

12.2 Sharing concerns about staff or volunteers of Usher Kids UK

Sometimes concerns might be raised about an adult who works or volunteers with children. This could be because they've:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child or young person
- committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child or young person
- behaved in a way that indicated they are unsuitable to work with young people.

If suspicion, concern, or a disclosure involves possible abuse by an employee, volunteer, trustee or external contractor/partner organisation, the designated safeguarding officer must be notified immediately. They will seek advice from the NSPCC or Local Authority Designated Officer to determine and action next steps and reporting requirements, which will be aligned with the charity's whistleblowing policy.

The suspicion does not need to be proven before reporting to the safeguarding officer– a reasonable belief is enough. The reporter is

not responsible for investigating the matter – it is the governance team's responsibility to ensure an investigation takes place.

Information about the concern should not be shared with anyone who does not need to know.

12.3 Recording concerns about adult behaviour

Clear and comprehensive records of all allegations made against

adults working or volunteering with young people will be made, including:

- what the allegations were
- how the allegations were followed up
- how things were resolved
- any action taken
- decisions reached about the person's suitability to work with children and young people

These records will be kept securely in the person's personnel file and a copy given to the individual. The records will be kept until they reach their normal retirement age or for 10 years – whichever is longer. This applies to volunteers and paid staff.

Records will be kept regardless of whether the allegations were unfounded. However, if the allegations are found to be malicious, the records will be destroyed immediately.

Information will be retained even if the person stops working or volunteering for the organisation.

12.4 Low-level concerns

A low-level concern is any behaviour by a staff member, volunteer, or mentor that:

- is inconsistent with Usher Kids UK's Codes of Conduct
- does not meet the threshold for a safeguarding allegation (i.e., does not involve harm or potential harm to a child or adult at risk)
- may indicate a pattern of behaviour or pose a future risk if not addressed.

Examples include:

- Inappropriate comments or jokes.
- Over-familiarity with children or young people.
- Breaching professional boundaries (e.g., unnecessary physical contact, private messaging without prior parental and DSO consent).

- Failing to maintain appropriate supervision ratios.
- Sharing personal information with children or young people.

It is important to report any such low-level concern promptly to the DSO, in order to prevent escalation into more serious issues, protect staff and volunteers from misunderstandings and promote a safe and transparent culture. If you are not sure whether something counts as a low level concern, please contact the DSO to discuss.

Concerns should be reported using the record of safeguarding concern form (Appendix A), marking it as a low-level concern, and should not be discussed with others.

The DSO will log the concern, review patterns or risks and decide whether further action is needed. All low-level concerns are recorded and stored securely and only shared on a need-to-know basis.

13.0 Roles of the designated safeguarding officer and trustee safeguarding lead

13.1 The role of the designated safeguarding officer

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and Usher Kids UK's relevant policies and procedures outline the roles of individuals to safeguard everyone who comes into contact with the charity from harm. The safeguarding officer has additional responsibilities to:

- liaise with the LA, social services, police and other agencies on individual cases of suspected or identified abuse
- act as the contact person/s within the charity for all safeguarding issues
- be responsible for co-ordinating action on safeguarding issues
- liaise with others on a 'need to know' basis so that young person's rights to confidentiality are ensured
- represent the charity at safeguarding meetings if required
- ensure staff and volunteers are familiar with this policy and procedure and receive regular training
- report safeguarding incidents and concerns to the board of trustees, with any externally reportable incidents reported to the trustee safeguarding lead and the chair of trustees within 24 hours
- report safeguarding incidents to the relevant bodies and in a timely manner. See 'additional guidance for DSO' document in safeguarding folder for information on reporting requirements

13.2 The role of the board of trustees and the trustee safeguarding lead

All charity trustees have a responsibility to take steps to protect everyone who comes into contact with their organisation from harm. This includes:

- ensuring safeguarding policies, procedures and measures are fit for purpose and up-to-date
- making sure everyone in the organisation is aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and knows how to respond to concerns
- having a lead trustee for safeguarding and child protection
- challenging any decisions which adversely affect anyone's wellbeing
- managing allegations of abuse against someone involved in the organisation
- reporting serious incidents as necessary

The nominated lead trustee for safeguarding has additional responsibilities to:

- work with the designated safeguarding officer to review safeguarding policies and associated procedures
- support the safeguarding officer as required during investigations and incidents
- lead incident debriefs with the safeguarding officer, acting as a 'critical friend' to review what happened and improve policies and procedures for the future
- lead charity-wide safeguarding audits and ensure nominated people are held accountable for any improvements identified
- report to the board on identified improvements to safeguarding measures

14.0 Monitoring compliance

14.1 Policy and procedure review

Reviews of procedure are held by the safeguarding leads and the board of trustees following any incidents or concerns raised. In addition, an annual safeguarding audit is conducted by the designated and trustee safeguarding leads, with findings reported to the board.

This safeguarding policy and procedures are reviewed annually by the designated safeguarding officer and trustee safeguarding lead.

The review reflects any relevant updates to legal requirements and guidance, alongside learning from incidents, raised concerns and audits.

14.2 Dissemination and understanding of safeguarding policy and procedures

A safeguarding training record is maintained, with any outstanding training completed prior to in-person events. This includes a read-receipt for the safeguarding policy and procedures, as relevant to role.

Discussions on charity safeguarding policy and procedures are embedded in staff supervision to ensure understanding. For volunteers, time is ring-fenced for these discussions prior to in-person events, and for trustees during board meetings.

15.0 Document Review History

Version no.	Type of Change: Major, minor, none or taken out of use	Date	Author of change	Description of change
2.0	Major	December 2024	Emma King (DSO/CEO)	Complete review of content and format
3.0	Major	January 2026	Emma King (DSO/CEO)	New sections on child on child abuse; additional sections on adult behaviour; change of Deputy DSO details; updated to include all relevant new guidance/laws
3.1	Minor changes	May 2026	Emma King (DSO/CEO)	NSPCC definitions of abuse summary included as appendix; external reporting and escalation strengthened; flowchart of response added

Executive approval is subject to the understanding that the policy Owner has followed the organisation process for policy ratification.

Please contact the policy owner should you require this policy in an alternative format.

Appendix A: Record of safeguarding concern form

Record of safeguarding concern form

This form should be used to document clear and comprehensive records of all safeguarding incidents, allegations or concerns, which occur in the course of the work of Usher Kids UK.

Section A: To be completed by the person who is reporting the incident, allegation or concern	
Name and role of person completing this form	
Names of person(s) involved in incident, allegation or concern and nature of the named person's involvement: (i.e. alleged victim, witness, alleged perpetrator etc). Include any witnesses.	
Date, time and location of the incident, allegation or concern	
What has occurred / What are the allegations or concerns?	
How were you made aware of the incident/concern/allegation?	
Date and time this incident, allegation or concern was first reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer	
Signed and dated by witness/reporter	

THANK YOU

Please return this form via password protected email to emma.king@usherkidsuk.org within 24 hours of the incident/concern.

If you are reporting a safeguarding incident that occurred during an Usher Kids UK event which resulted in first aid treatment, emergency service involvement or behavioural/disciplinary procedures being triggered, you will also need to complete an incident form.

SECTION B: To be completed by the designated safeguarding officer	
Date and time form received by designated safeguarding officer	
Who has been contacted for advice on actions to take?	
What follow up actions have taken place?	
Who has information been shared (including with parents/carers, referrals made to outside agencies and the trustees)?	
Was consent requested and received prior to sharing information? (If no, please state why consent was not given (if known) and why it was felt necessary to share information without consent)	
What feedback has been given to people involved (including the person who made this report)?	
What decisions have been reached about changes required to Usher Kids UK processes and policies as a result of this concern/incident?	
Signed and dated by the designated safeguarding officer	
Please save this form, with section A and B completed, in the confidential safeguarding folder in Charity Governance/CEO in a folder named after the child/adult at risk. File name should be the full name of the child/adult at risk involved and the date of the incident, allegation or concern. Password protect the file.	

Appendix B: Types of Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child or adult at risk. Somebody may abuse or neglect a person by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse can take place in any setting and may be carried out by adults or by children and young people.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is deliberately causing physical harm to a child or adult at risk. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or otherwise causing physical injury. It may also include fabricating or inducing illness.

Possible indicators may include unexplained injuries, injuries that are inconsistent with the explanation given, or fear of certain individuals.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or adult at risk that causes severe and adverse effects on their emotional development or wellbeing.

This may include conveying to a person that they are worthless or unloved, imposing inappropriate expectations, or preventing them from expressing their views. It can include bullying (including cyberbullying), humiliation, intimidation or isolation.

Possible indicators may include low self-esteem, withdrawal, anxiety, or extreme behaviour.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or adult at risk to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening.

This may include physical contact (such as assault) or non-contact activities (such as involving a person in looking at images, grooming, or encouraging inappropriate behaviour online).

Possible indicators may include changes in behaviour, knowledge or interest in sexual matters inappropriate for age, or avoidance of certain people or situations.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or adult at risk's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious harm.

This may include failing to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, failing to protect from harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or supervision. It may also include emotional neglect.

Possible indicators may include poor hygiene, malnutrition, untreated medical issues, or a lack of appropriate supervision.

Additional note

Abuse can be a one-off incident or a pattern of behaviour over time. It can occur in person or online. Recognising the signs of abuse can be complex, and indicators should always be considered in context.

These definitions are drawn from NSPCC safeguarding guidance. Further detail on the different types of abuse and their indicators can be accessed via the NSPCC website: Types of Child Abuse & How to Prevent Them | NSPCC

Appendix C:

(flowchart can be found in pdf version of policy and on canva for reviewing)