

DANSON YOUTH TRUST

Safeguarding Children Policy

DANSON YOUTH TRUST for Children and Young People has a duty to safeguard and promote best practice in child protection at all times.

Within HM Government's '**Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018**' it is required that there is a duty for charities to have a safeguarding policy in place and to "safeguard and promote the welfare of children", and within **Bexley Council's 'Safeguarding Partnership for Children and Young People'** there is a requirement that agencies should have a designated 'Safeguarding Champion' with a responsibility to ensure a collaborative role is undertaken with other professionals, and to ensure that relevant information is disseminated to all within the agency.

'Working Together' states clearly that safeguarding is the responsibility of **EVERYONE** within the organisation (trustees, staff and volunteers) and must be reflected in every aspect of our work, that everyone should understand the role they play, and that collaboration within Danson and with external practitioners, agencies and partners is vital to ensure children receive the right help at the right time.

Definitions of Safeguarding

The Children Act 1989 states that "*The welfare of the child...shall be paramount*" and the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' document states that; *Children may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives. These threats can take a variety of different forms, including: sexual, physical and emotional abuse; neglect; exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Whatever the form of abuse or neglect, practitioners should put the needs of children first when determining what action to take.*

The Children Act and 'Working Together' offer a comprehensive foundation for all safeguarding practice and Danson staff and volunteers should be aware of their purpose.

Any form of abuse may lead to the child or young person experiencing '**Significant Harm**'.

Sometimes, a single traumatic event may constitute Significant Harm. In other circumstances Significant Harm is caused by the cumulative effect of significant events, both acute and long-standing, or the damaging impact of neglect which interrupt and change or damage the child's physical and psychological development.

Types of abuse

There are many forms of behaviour that may be seen as child abuse, including;

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation

- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Online abuse
- Domestic Abuse

All staff and volunteers within Danson should be alert to signs and symptoms of abuse (Definitions, signs and symptoms of abuse details at Appendix 1). **Basic safeguarding training will be offered to staff and volunteers at induction, and then through participation in internal, online or external courses.**

What to do if you have safeguarding concerns

The NSPCC has described the '5 R's' of safeguarding, and Danson staff and volunteers should have awareness of the correct process to follow when there are concerns about the welfare of any child.

It is important to pay attention when a young person wants to talk about or disclose their experiences, or if you observe something of their presentation or behaviour which appears unusual, worrying, or significant.

If the young person does make a disclosure it is important to;

- **Receive** – Listening to the child or young person is very important. Do not prevent a young person who wants to talk about what has happened from doing so but do not ask leading, interrogating or probing questions – 'open' questions are preferred. You do not need to 'investigate' the allegation – this is the role of Police and Social Services. It is **very** important not to appear shocked or make judgement about the situation or individuals concerned.
- **Respond** - Reassure the young person that they were right in telling you, acknowledge any distress or difficulty in disclosing and explain what will happen next and who will be informed. **Do not promise confidentiality**, but reassure the young person that the information will only be passed when this is necessary to help them. The young person may wish to retract the disclosure. This usually reflects the anxiety they feel about the consequences of the disclosure and should not be taken as an indication that the original disclosure was false.
- **Report** – Disclosures, concerns, or allegations **should be reported to the Safeguarding Champion at the very earliest opportunity and within 24 hours where possible. (Contact details can be found at Appendix 2).** If any volunteer or staff member receives information that suggests it is unsafe to a child to return home after a Danson activity, and it is not possible to access the **Safeguarding Champion**, then Police should be contacted via 999. Parents or guardians should only be contacted if safe to do so and if this does not place the young person or child at risk of further harm or where it may 'silence' them from making further disclosure.
- **Refer** – Danson staff will make referral to Bexley's Children's Social Care MASH team (Multi Agency Service Hub) with any disclosure or concerns regarding a young person and particularly when information has been received that places them at risk of harm. It may be relevant for staff or volunteer to have direct conversation with the MASH team, particularly if their first-hand knowledge of the allegation or incident is specific and relevant, and they will be supported by a staff member to have this conversation if necessary.

Referrals to Children's Social Care will be made via Bexley's referral details (Appendix 2) form (Appendix 3).

- **Record** – The referrer should keep a clear record of the incident and discussions with the child and of allegations made or issues raised, and of any conversation with another party (family member, staff or volunteer). This should be completed as close as possible to the time of the incident. Contemporaneous notes should be made if possible. Clear details should be recorded of actions taken and outcomes and placed on file.

To assist record keeping it may be helpful to think '**SOAP**';

- notes are **SPECIFIC** and relate to the disclosure and allegations received,
- **OBJECTIVE** and without personal attitudes or comment regarding the situation,
- as **ACCURATE** as possible including times, locations and direct comment made,
- and demonstrate an obvious **PLAN** of action to demonstrate response and outcome to the situation.

If you have any concern or uncertainty regarding the wellbeing of a child or young person, please discuss this with a member of the Danson team at the very earliest opportunity.

Informing Families

Parents or carers should be informed of any potential referral to Social Services with discussion of the reason for this if safe to do so, and if this does not place the young person or child at risk of further harm or where it may 'silence' them from making further disclosure.

Any report or presentation to a Child Protection conference must be shared with the family at least 48 hours before the event.

Child to child abuse

It is possible that child to child abuse (including bullying) may occur between participants of Danson activities.

Any disclosure, concerns, or information received must be referred and recorded using the same process described above.

Concerns regarding staff and volunteers

If any safeguarding concerns are identified, or allegations made against, any Danson staff member or volunteer, the Safeguarding Champion, Chief Executive or senior manager must be informed immediately. This must be escalated to Safeguarding lead on the Board of Trustees for information. (Currently Maria Guest-Naharnowicz).

These allegations or concerns must be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) **within 24 hours** of coming to notice.

If a staff member or volunteer is removed from the Danson team due to the risk of harm or confirmed concerns to a child or young person, a referral must be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service to consider if the individual should be added to the barred list.

Role of Trustees

Protecting people and safeguarding responsibilities should be a governance priority for all charities

and Danson Trustees must take reasonable steps to protect those who come into contact with Danson from harm.

HM Government has clear guidelines for the role of Trustees;

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>

These should inform the leadership and management of safeguarding responsibilities within the Project.

A delegated member of the board of trustees (currently Maria Guest-Naharnowicz) will have oversight for leading on Safeguarding issues and with the Committee will ensure that:

- all safeguarding procedures and processes are followed effectively
- appropriate safeguarding induction, support and training programme is implemented
- recruitment procedures for staff and volunteers safeguard young people's welfare
- There is adequate financial support for the services and activities offered by Danson in order for the organisation to operate effectively and safely.

Role of Safeguarding Champion

As of April 2020 the designated Safeguarding Champion at Danson is **Joy Toghil (Contact details found in Appendix 2)**.

Bexley's Safeguarding Partnership arrangements make clear the role of the safeguarding champion as being;

- a focal point for partnership with the local authority in disseminating learning and local/national priorities to staff and volunteers at Danson
- to meet with Danson's Trustees on a regular basis to ensure best practice in safeguarding is delivered within Danson
- a conduit for cascading safeguarding learning and information to staff and volunteers within the project.

Within Danson the Safeguarding Champion will have some responsibility for the review and delivery of policies and procedures, and provide overview of best practice within the organisation.

The designated Safeguarding Champion will also have the following responsibilities;

- To ensure that this policy is implemented and is adhered to at all times.
- To be familiar with, and have understanding of, all relevant and current legislation.
- To liaise with the Bexley's local Safeguarding Partnership which provides child protection advice to professionals working with children.
- To arrange appropriate training and support for all relevant workers including volunteers.
- To ensure that safeguarding is part of Danson's working culture.
- To provide support to relevant parties during and after incidents involving safeguarding and referrals to Social Services or the police.
- To provide the Board of Trustees with appropriate information on the number and outcomes of incidents or concerns involving safeguarding young people when required.
- To attend regular training and professional development for current safeguarding practice.

Information sharing

Children and their families should be given information about Danson's safeguarding procedures in an appropriate form, and advised that concerns will always be shared with other professionals when necessary. Young people and their parents/ guardians should also be made aware of their entitlement to use our Complaints Procedure if required.

Young people attending any groups, clubs or activities within Danson should be supported to draw up ground rules for their safe participation that they understand and agree to abide by.

Undertaking work with Danson is intended to be a rewarding and fun experience for volunteers and young people alike.

However, by the very nature of our work with some of the more vulnerable and 'at risk' young people in the community, it is almost inevitable that there will be occasions when concerns arise, or disclosures made that require us to take steps to ensure the welfare and protection of these young people is met.

In any situation it is important not to over react, and to seek advice from the appropriate agencies whenever there is any doubt about the significance of concerns.

These procedures are intended to provide a framework to remind us of our responsibilities and what steps to take when a situation might arise that requires to act accordingly.

Please take time to read these procedures accordingly, and to continue to ensure that good practice is undertaken within Danson at all times and if you have any concern about the wellbeing of a child or young person, please discuss this with a staff member at the very earliest opportunity.

All staff require an Enhanced DBS

The recruitment process is found in 'Safe Recruitment Policy'

No photos or images of children and young people are taken without parent consent. Photos or images are not stored or shared inappropriately.

Policy review due July 2026

Appendix 1

Definitions, signs and symptoms of abuse

(Taken from HM Governments 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' document 2018)

'Children' – Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

'Safeguarding children' – Defined as

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of a child's health or development
- Ensuring all children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking actions to enable children to have best outcomes.

'Child protection' – The activity that is undertaken to protect specific children experiencing significant harm

'Abuse' – Any form of maltreatment of a child through inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. This may be within a family, institutional or community setting, and by those known to them or occasionally by others. Abuse may be online or technology used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an individual or group of adults, other children or children.

'Physical abuse' – A form of abuse that may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child ('FII').

Emotional Abuse – This is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may also occur alone.

Sexual Abuse – Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at - or involvement in – the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women and children can also commit acts of sexual abuse.

Neglect - Is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse (drugs or alcohol leading to Foetal Addiction).

Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of - or unresponsiveness to - a child's basic emotional needs.

Significant Harm – Harm is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development. This may include, "impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another".

Sometimes a single violent episode may constitute significant harm but more often it is an accumulation of events, both acute and longstanding, which interrupt, damage or affect the child's development.

Appendix 2

Useful Contact Numbers

Joy Toghill, Safeguarding Champion, Danson Youth Trust – 020 8303 6052
(joy.toghill@dansonyouth.org.uk)

Bexley Council Multi-Agency Service Hub (Children’s Service) - 0203 045 5440
(Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)

Bexley Council Out of Hours Service – 0208 303 7777/0208 303 7171 (Mon-Fri 5pm-9am)

Police (Emergency) 999

Childline – 0800 1111

Appendix 3

Bexley Referral Form

All safeguarding referrals to Bexley Social Care should be sent using the following link -

https://mybexley.firmstep.com/service/Early_help_family_wellbeing_and_children_s_social_care_referral