



Support Inform Signpost Empower

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

FINAL DRAFT

The aim of this policy is to ensure an understanding of how Bexley Voice, (Parent Carer Forum for Bexley, Kent) meets its responsibilities to promote the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children/young people and protect them from harm.

This policy is to provide all members of Bexley Voice and the Bexley Voice Team (made up of Management Committee, Trustees, Staff and Volunteers) with clear guidance about their role and responsibilities with regards safeguarding. Also, to advise parents and carers about the safeguarding measures that the Bexley Voice Team are expected to understand and comply with.

Whilst recognising that the Bexley Voice Team will have little direct contact with children and young people, its work with parent carers means that they may indirectly have contact with children and young people and certainly have contact with parent carers who often live in particularly challenging situations.

Whilst it is not the responsibility of Bexley Voice to determine whether abuse has taken place, this is undertaken in liaison with external child protection professionals, it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns in relation to children or vulnerable adults to the relevant authority.

This policy operates within the expectations and procedures of Bexley Local Authority and National bodies.

Safeguarding disabled children and young people

There is clear evidence that disabled children and young people have an increased vulnerability to being abused and that the presence of multiple impairments further increases their vulnerability. There are many reasons for this. It is important that all those who work with disabled children and young people have some understanding of these reasons and ensure that they offer appropriate support to any parent/carers, child or young person who discloses abuse and are constantly vigilant to any signs of possible abuse.

Bexley Voice Team members safeguarding yourselves

- It is best practice to avoid going into a room or area on your own with a parent/carers, whatever the circumstances. Instead, remain in the main room – move to a quiet corner if need be.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour or report it to the event lead
- You must not put yourself in a position where your physical or verbal conduct could be misunderstood.



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Legislation and guidance that underpins this policy

This Policy and Procedures have been developed in line with the principles of The Children Act 1989/2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 and with reference to the following:

- What to Do If You're Worried a Child Is Being Abused (2006) updated 2015
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Mental Capacity Act (2005)
- The Care Act (2014)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) updated 2023
- Health & Social Care Act (2012)
- Non-Statutory Guidance on Safeguarding Disabled Children (2009)
- SEND Code of Practice age 0-25 (2014) updated Jan 2015

The principles behind this Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and protect them from harm. In today's world all agencies and individuals now share the responsibility to protect these groups from harm/risk of harm.

The application of Bexley Voice's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures is based on the following key principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All members of the team have a safeguarding responsibility for any children, young people and vulnerable adults they may come in contact with.

Policy Statement

Anyone engaging with Bexley Voice should be aware that:

- Any concerns that a child, young person or vulnerable adult has, or may be experiencing harm, which comes to the attention of the Bexley Voice Team, will be referred to the local statutory agency.
- The Bexley Voice Team will be recruited using safe recruitment practices to ensure they are suitable individuals to take on a role which puts them into contact with large numbers of parent carers.
- The Bexley Voice Team should complete an Induction, including key policies and procedures; read the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure on joining Bexley Voice and every two years, thereafter.
- The Bexley Voice Team should undertake Level 1 Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults training on joining Bexley Voice and every two years thereafter.



Allegations against Adults who work with Children

If you have information of any circumstances which suggest an adult who works with children, young people or vulnerable adults (in a paid or unpaid capacity) has done any of the following, then follow the Bexley Voice Internal Safeguarding Procedure:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child or young person.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or may be related to, a child or young person.
- Behaved towards a child or young person in a way that indicated s/he is unsuitable to work with children or young people.

Definitions and signs of abuse

There are four recognised types of abuse, and it is important that all the Bexley Voice Team know what they are and how to recognise them. The following definitions are based on those from Working Together to Safeguard Children (DCSF 2023):

1 - Physical Abuse

Physical abuse 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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to, a child whom they are looking after. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention, they get through having a sick child. Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

2 - Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse 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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the 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, 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 occur alone.

3 - Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual on-line images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.



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4 - Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, 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. Once a child is born it may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers) or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Contact and Further Information

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Contact Telephone daytime 020 3045 5440

Out of hours/weekends 020 8303 7777 or 020 8303 7171

This is the link for making a referral: <https://www.bexley.gov.uk/services/health-and-social-care/social-care-for-children/reporting-concerns-about-child/worried-about-child>

The Bexley **Local Authority Designated Officer** (LADO) manages allegations of abuse made against people who work with children and young people in any setting. The LADO process is concerned with managing allegations or concerns about the neglect, sexual, physical or emotional abuse of children. It can also be used to manage wider concerns about grooming or other less obvious possibly harmful behaviour.

Contact Email: LADO@bexley.gov.uk

Contact Telephone: 0203 045 3436

0203 0455645 (LADO Business Support)

0203 0455440 (MASH)

Please use Egress Switch for sending referral forms or any other sensitive information.

The **Bexley Local Offer** provides information and contacts for services in Bexley.

Website: <https://www.bexleylocaloffer.uk/Search?search=safeguarding>

If you are concerned about a child or young person's safety, you can contact the **Local Authority** by calling the numbers below:

Contact Telephone: 020 8303 7777, Mon – Thurs 9am-5pm, Fri 9am 4.30pm

Outside of these times contact the

Emergency Duty Team: 020 8303 7777 or 020 8303 7171

The Bexley Safeguarding Partnership provides information for professionals, volunteers, children & young people and their families.

Telephone: 0203 045 4320



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Website: <https://bexleysafeguardingpartnership.co.uk/>

Email: shield@bexley.gov.uk

NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) provides information and a helpline for parents, carers and children.

Telephone: 0808 800 5000

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/>

If you are concerned about a vulnerable adult, you should contact the **Bexley Care Team**;

Email: screeners@bexley.gov.uk

Bexley Contact Centre: 0203 045 5159

The Contact Centre based at the Bexley Civic Offices is open to take calls between 8.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday. Outside these hours and on Sundays and Bank Holidays, in emergency only, please contact the Out of Hours Duty Service on **0208 303 7777**.

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