

Unity safeguarding children and vulnerable adults policy

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

1. Purpose and scope

Unity Lewes CIC, trading as The Unity Centre, (“Unity”, “we”, “us”, “our”) is committed to providing a safe environment for all children, young people under 18 (“young people”, “young person”) and vulnerable adults who participate in our activities. Our activities include but are not limited to

- Children’s yoga, Pilates and dance classes
- Young people’s yoga, Pilates and dance classes
- Children’s dance
- Creative workshops, art workshops and music workshops
- Storytelling
- Yoga, Pilates, dance and wellness classes for adults
- Wellness therapies

The purpose of this policy is to:

- protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive Unity’s services, including the children of adults who use our services;
- provide parents legal guardians, directors, staff, volunteers and service users with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and protecting vulnerable individuals; and
- ensure that all participants, regardless of age or vulnerability, are safeguarded from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Unity, including any trustee, director, senior manager, manager, staff member, contractor, volunteer, sessional worker, agency staff member and student (“you”).

2. Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and vulnerable adults in England. A summary of key legislation and guidance is available from the NSPCC (<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/england>).

Our commitments

3. We believe the following:

- Children, young people and vulnerable adults should never experience abuse of any kind and have the right to protection against neglect and exploitation.
- We and you, individually and collectively, have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all individuals under our care, ensuring they are safe and ensuring we are practicing in a way that protects them.
- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some individuals are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, vulnerable adults, their parents, legal guardians, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.

4. We will seek to keep children, young people and vulnerable adults safe by

- valuing, listening to and respecting them;
- appointing a nominated Child Protection/Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Safeguarding Lead (deputy DSL), together with a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding where the DSL is not also a trustee or board director;
- developing child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures that reflect best practices;
- using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies that need to know, and involving children, young people, vulnerable adults, parents, families and carers appropriately;
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have policy and procedure to deal effectively with any bullying that does arise;
- developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures;

- sharing information about child protection and safeguarding best practices with children, vulnerable adults, their families, staff and volunteers via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions, as appropriate;
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made where necessary;
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures;
- implementing a code of conduct for staff and volunteers;
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately;
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place;
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, vulnerable adults, staff and volunteers by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance; and
- recording and storing information professionally and securely.

Procedures and Code of Conduct

5. Personal safety

1. At no time should you leave any group of children or young people unattended.
2. You should avoid being alone with an individual child, young person or vulnerable adult for a long time. If there is a need for you to be alone for a short time with an individual (eg to provide first aid or if they are distressed), make sure a colleague knows where you are and why, and who you are with, and keep the time to the minimum necessary.
3. You must only be alone (and we will only permit you to be alone) with a child, young person or vulnerable adult for more than a brief period if
 - the service you provide professionally (eg because you are a professional therapist or counsellor) requires you to be alone with them in order to provide your professional services, and
 - the recipient of your services is 12 years of age or over, and
 - you hold a current DBS certificate with an 'Enhanced with Barred List(s) DBS check' that was issued not more than two years prior to the session and that has been seen or obtained by us, and
 - we have explicitly confirmed to you that we are satisfied with your certification and any checks and your eligibility to work with a child, young person or vulnerable adult, and

- the parent or legal guardian of the child or young person, or the carer (if applicable) of the vulnerable adult has explicitly agreed to you being alone with the child, young person or vulnerable adult, and
 - you have told us or ensured we are aware of who you are with, where you are and how long you will be there.
4. If you cannot meet the requirements immediately above for working with a child, young person or vulnerable adult, you must ensure that they are accompanied at all times by a parent or legal guardian, or a by chaperone approved by a parent or legal guardian.
 5. You must never be alone with a child under 12 and we will not accept appointments for therapies with under-12s.
 6. You must never arrange to meet a child, young person or vulnerable adult away from the activity without someone else being there. Such meetings should be planned and approved by a senior member of staff.
 7. Teenage assistants must always be supervised.

6. A safe environment

1. You should ensure that the area you are using for activities is fit for purpose – eg remove furniture or other objects that could cause injury during energetic activities.
2. We will ensure that all workers and assistants know
 - where the emergency phone is and how to operate it,
 - where the first aid kit is,
 - who is responsible for first aid and how to record accidents or injuries in the incident book, and
 - what to do in the event of a fire or other emergency.
3. We will conduct a fire practice annually.
4. You and we will ensure that children do not go home without an adult unless the parent or legal guardian has given specific and explicit permission for this to happen. You and we must never allow a child to leave with an adult who is not the parent or legal guardian unless the parent or legal guardian has informed you or us in advance that this will happen with their authority.
5. If private cars are used for an outing, any driver must be approved by us, properly insured, rested before driving and have a full, clean license. There should always be at least one other responsible adult in each vehicle. Full seatbelts should be fitted and used at all times.
6. You should only give a lift home to a child, young person or vulnerable adult if their parent or legal guardian (or, as appropriate for a vulnerable adult, their carer) has specifically requested it. This should be communicated clearly, including in the case of trips or outings.

7. Responding to allegations and concerns

If you receive a disclosure about the welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult or have concerns about their welfare, you must

- listen carefully to what the individual is saying, taking it and the individual seriously and non-judgementally, and
- avoid asking leading questions and avoid showing shock or disbelief, and
- report it immediately to the DSL or, if unavailable, the deputy DSL, and
- make notes as soon after the disclosure or event as possible, recording exactly what was said or what took place without assumptions or conjecture.

You **must not**

- promise to keep secrets – you should let the individual know that their disclosure will only be shared with those who need to know in order to protect them;
- investigate the matter yourself – report it to the DSL for further action and leave any investigation to the DSL and appropriate authorities;
- discuss the matter with anyone except the relevant people in authority;
- form your own opinions; or
- decide to do nothing – once a disclosure has been made to you or once you have concerns, you must act and leave the relevant authorities to decide how to proceed.

Things to say or do:

- "What you are telling me is very important."
- "This is not your fault."
- "I am sorry that this has happened/is happening."
- "You were right to tell someone."
- "What you are telling me should not be happening to you and I will find out the best way to help you."

8. Recruitment and training of new managers, staff and volunteers

Our recruitment process for staff members and managers (whether employed or as contractors) and volunteers will include

- completion of an application form,
- an interview by three people from the management team, who will make the final decision, and
- identifying reasons for gaps in employment and other inconsistencies in the application.

Prior to a successful candidate starting work, we will

- check their identity (passport or driving license) with the recruit present,
- take up at least two references,
- ensure that CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checks are carried out where needed and as described under our 'Procedures and Code of Conduct' herein, and
- take appropriate advice before employing someone with a criminal record.

Once a candidate has started work, we will

- not permit unaccompanied access to children, young people or vulnerable adults until all checks are completed, and
- have a probationary period of 3 months from the start of work or volunteering.

And always we will

- maintain ongoing supervision and support for staff, contractors and volunteers,
- ensure good practice by providing appropriate training and guidance, and
- have a child protection/safeguarding representative on the management team.

9. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually – or sooner if there are changes in legislation, or guidance, or significant and relevant changes within the organisation.

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through feedback, audits and ongoing training.

Getting in touch

10. Unity contact details

- **Nominated child protection lead / delegated safeguarding lead (DSL)**
Name: Jo-Anne Atwood (Sevanti): sevanti@being-in-unity.com / 01273 778400
- **Deputy child protection lead (deputy DSL) / management team representative**
Name: Robert Shepherd: comms@being-in-unity.com / 01273 778400
- **Lead trustee/board member for safeguarding and child protection**
Name: Jo-Anne Atwood (Sevanti): sevanti@being-in-unity.com / 01273 778400

11. Professional support and emergencies

In an emergency call 999 .


Otherwise

- **during the opening hours** of Monday-Thursday 8.30am-5pm, Friday 8.30am-4.30pm **contact the Single Point of Advice (SPOA) team** on **01323 464222** (or see <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/children-families/professional-resources/spoa>)
OR
- **out of hours**, if you have a serious concern about a child's welfare that cannot wait until the following working day
call the Emergency Duty Service on **01273 335906** or **01273 335905**
(weekday evenings and nights, 5pm-8.30am (after 4.30pm on Fridays), and during weekends and bank holidays
- NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Signed

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

This policy was last reviewed on: 24 June 2025

Signed:  (Sevanti Jo-Anne Attwood)

Date: 24 June 2025

Next review due: June 2026