Management Team

Current Chair: Mr. Andy Branch (Acting)

Safeguards Officer: Mr. Andy Branch

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN - POLICY & PROCEDURES

Purpose

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- Children out of school
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Purpose

INTRODUCTION – WHY A CHILD SAFETY POLICY?

"Child safety is a society-wide responsibility. It is important for library volunteers to be aware that as a part of the community working with children, they share in this responsibility."

A Safe Place for Children CILIP 2005.

Hathern Community Library's policy follows guidelines set out in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding/Child Partnership Safeguarding Arrangements which should be read in conjunction with this policy and which can be viewed on the following link:

LRSCP Website - https://lrsb.org.uk/lrscp

LRSCP Safeguarding Arrangements

https://lrsb.org.uk/uploads/leicestershire-rutland-multi-agency-safeguarding-arrangements-october-2020.pdf

Policy Statement

Hathern Community Library believes that the safety and welfare of children in libraries is the responsibility of every volunteer, from front-line through to the Trustees. It is every child's legal right to feel safe and secure in our library and all volunteers have a responsibility to ensure that this basic principle is upheld.

Library volunteers are not generally in loco parentis (i.e., taking the responsibility of the parent), but we have a duty of care to ensure that visitors will be reasonably safe in using the premises for the purpose for which they are permitted to be there. The standard of care expected in relation to children is higher than in relation to adults because volunteers must expect children to be less careful than adults.

All library volunteers should be guided at all times by the essential principle in the 1989 Children Act: "The welfare of the child is paramount", reinforced in the 2004 Children Act. This policy provides a framework of good practice to make Hathern Community Library a safe place for children to use and enjoy.

Hathern Community Library's Designated Safeguarding Officer: Mr Andy Branch

Contact number: 07736 204383

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Scope and responsibilities

GENERAL VOLUNTEERS' GUIDELINES FOR ENSURING CHILD SAFETY

We must ensure that Hathern Community Library is a place where children can feel safe. Hathern Community Library will follow this code of behaviour when dealing with children:

- Always listen to children and value and respect them as individuals
- Always ensure another volunteer listens and/or observes, when in a difficult or sensitive situation involving a child
- Avoid being alone with a child – a meeting with a child or young person should take place as openly as possible – always remain in public view
- Comfort a child who is obviously distressed, but always remain in public view
- Never initiate physical contact with a child
- Never lead a child by the hand out of the library in search of a parent or carer – the child should be kept safe in the library until the parent or carer returns
- Do not make contact with children for non-library business
- Never do things of a personal nature for a child that the child can do for themselves
- Never accompany a child to a toilet, or assist a child in using the toilet or in adjusting their clothes
- Call a Trustee or the police if there is cause to believe that the child has been abandoned or forgotten
- Follow LCC's Child Protection Procedure flow chart if you have serious concerns about a child's welfare. Remember – it is not the responsibility of anyone in the library service to decide whether or not abuse has taken place, but there is a responsibility to pass on concerns to the designated Safeguarding Officer or a Trustee.

Useful Contact Numbers

Police: 999
Non-emergency: 101
Safeguarding Officer: 07736 204383

Procedure

UNSUPERVISED CHILDREN

The way in which Hathern Community Library volunteers deal with unaccompanied children discovered in the library must be based on an awareness of the legal responsibility of the parent or carer, and the library's duty of care to all children on library premises.

Children under the age of 8 years should be accompanied and supervised by a parent, carer or other suitable responsible adult.

A sign should be displayed to this effect, and all publicity relating to children's activities should include the statement.

There will always be occasions when very young children visit the library unaccompanied. Whilst not wishing to discourage children from visiting the library, volunteers need to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of the child if the child is (apparently) under 8 years of age, bearing in mind that children are 'less careful' of their own safety than adults (see good practice response below).

A letter may be sent by Hathern Community Library to the parent or carer of the child, reminding them of library policy regarding unaccompanied young children.

However, the library is a safer place for children than the streets, and, while following the suggested courses of action, library volunteers should allow children to remain in the library.

*A **good practice response** to discovering a very young child, under 8 years of age unaccompanied in the library:*

If you are concerned about their safety;

- *Ask the child if an adult is aware that they are here and if he/she is expecting to be collected*
- *If the child can give an address or telephone number, try to contact the parent or carer*
- *Check if the child or guardian are library members for contact details*
- *Avoid being left alone with a child – try to ensure a colleague is present when dealing with unsupervised children and remain in public view*
- *Record any response from the parent or carer on an incident form (Appendix 2) – a letter may be sent to the parent or carer as outlined above.*

If volunteers are not happy to allow the child to leave alone, and if all attempts to contact the parent or carer fail, the volunteer should encourage the child to stay in the library while they contact the Safeguarding Officer or a Trustee.

If this is not possible then contact the local police station.

Unaccompanied young children expecting to be met at closing time

Library volunteers should:

- Check on the child's situation with the support of another volunteer – are they waiting for a parent/carer to collect them?
- The child may be allowed to use the library phone to phone home and ask parent/ carer to collect them. Remind the child to organise this in advance if it becomes a regular occurrence
- Telephone the child's home from the library to clarify the situation if necessary
- Wait for the parent/carer to collect the child and explain the library's policy to them. Two volunteers should wait with the child.
- Where a parent or carer cannot be contacted, contact the Safeguarding Officer or a Trustee for advice
- If you are unable to contact anyone for advice, contact the police. No volunteer should ever take a child out of the library
- If a child wishes to leave the library, every effort should be made to persuade them to stay until their parent/carer arrives. However, volunteers must never attempt to to physically restrain a child except to prevent an accident or injury and when there are reasonable grounds to believe there is a real risk to the child or in self defence
- Complete a written incident report (Appendix 2) and give it to the designated Safeguarding Officer, who will raise the matter with the Trustees. A letter will be sent to the parents/carer reminding them of Hathern Community Library's policy regarding unaccompanied children

CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL

During term time, children of school age would not normally be using the library during school hours, unless as part of a class visit or organised library activity. If a child or group of children is using the library when they would normally be in school, library volunteers should:

- Talk to the children and attempt to discover why they are out of school
- Ask to see a pass or letter of permission if they have been allowed out of school

- If no pass letter is produced and the name and school can be identified, phone the school for advice
- If the school cannot be contacted, volunteers should contact the Safeguarding Officer or a Trustee
- Complete an incident form (Appendix 2) outlining the action taken

The library is a safer place for children than the streets and while following the above courses of action, volunteers should allow children and young people to remain in the library.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION OF THE BUILDING

A poster displaying Hathern Community Library's fire regulations and assembly points must be displayed in the library. All volunteers must be familiar with the procedures to ensure the safety of children in the event of the evacuation of the library premises.

If the alarm sounds, volunteers must check that no unaccompanied children are left in the library and related spaces.

In the event of an evacuation, volunteers should take any unaccompanied children to the assembly point.

An assessment of the length of the expected evacuation should be made in consultation with the designated fire officer. If it is not possible to return to the library before the library is expected to close, volunteers should stay with the child/children until they are collected by a parent/carer. Children who are not expecting to be met may be advised to call home to check a parent/carer is in before they make their own way home.

If there is an evacuation during an organised activity for children, the volunteers must lead the children to the assembly point, taking the register of children attending the event. The register must be checked to ensure that all the children are present and if a child is unaccounted for this should be immediately reported to the emergency services.

ADULTS IN THE LIBRARY

Adults will use the library whilst children are present, as customers or to supervise children. Volunteers must be aware of adults acting in ways that may threaten a child's safety in the library, and they must be responsive to a child's concerns. This is a sensitive area and volunteers should be cautious, but the child's welfare must come first.

Concerns about an adult's behaviour should be immediately shared with the Safeguarding Officer or a trustee. If necessary the adult should be asked to leave the area and volunteers should point out

that they are not accusing the adult but that the policy is there to protect children and that Hathern Community Library is required to apply it.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

All library volunteers should take the following steps if confronted by unacceptable behaviour:

- Remind the child/children concerned that they, like adults are expected to act considerately towards volunteers and other users
- Communicate with children and young people on an individual basis as much as possible
- 'Blanket' condemnation and eviction of whole groups should be avoided where possible.
- Deal with challenging or unacceptable behaviour in a calm and quiet manner and avoid putting other people in danger
- Children and young people should only be asked to leave the library if the issue is not resolved, and as a temporary measure
- If volunteers feel that they or other library users are threatened or are at risk from a situation they cannot resolve they should call the police
- If volunteers witness a child being bullied, or if a child complains of being bullied in the library, volunteers have a duty to do whatever they can to stop it. The aggressor should be told that their behaviour is not acceptable, and if necessary they should be asked to leave the building
- An incident form should be completed
- Only the Trustees, after investigating the incident, may ban a child or young person from using the library for a specified period

USE OF TOILETS

If a child is using the toilet, volunteers should, whenever possible, prevent other users who need to use the facilities access to the area until the child has exited.

USE OF PUBLIC ACCESS COMPUTERS BY CHILDREN

Hathern Community Library's Conditions of Use for Public Access Computers and children and young people have the same conditions and rights of access as adults, unless their parent or carer has indicated in writing that they do not wish their child to have this access. Access to the internet is filtered, but volunteers should be alert to the possibility that children and young people may still be able to access unsuitable content. If this happens, volunteers should:

- Inform the child or young person that it is not appropriate and explain why
- Pass information about the site to the Hub staff to ensure that future access is reviewed and blocked where necessary
- Warn the child that their session could be terminated if they continue to access inappropriate content
- If necessary complete an incident report (Appendix 2)

CHILD PROTECTION

If volunteers have serious concerns about a child's general welfare, or suspect that abuse (physical, mental, emotional or neglect) is taking place, they should contact the Safeguarding Officer who will contact the Trustees to discuss and decide a course of action, and follow the Safeguarding/Child Protection flow chart. (Appendix 1).

If contact is not possible with the Safeguarding Officer or Trustees you may contact the local police station

Inform the Safeguarding Officer what you have done and complete an incident report (Appendix 2).

Always follow this procedure is you are worried or concerned about a child. **If a child tells you they are or have been abused (discloses abuse):**

1. Take the child seriously and tell them so.
2. Allow the child to say what has happened to them but do not ask leading questions.
3. Make a note of what the child is saying on the incident form (Appendix 2)
4. Tell the child you are glad that they told you
5. Reassure the child that what happened is not their fault
6. Be honest with the child – tell them who you will have to contact and why – do not promise confidentiality
7. Keep the child fully informed about what you are doing
8. Contact the Safeguarding Officer who will take advice from the Trustees

Posters giving information about child protection helplines (such as NSPCC 0808 800 5000 or Childline 0800 1111) are displayed in the library and volunteers should allow children to use the library phone to call these numbers if they wish.

ORGANISED ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN ON LIBRARY PREMISES

General guidelines for activities:

- There must be access to a telephone on the premises
- Any equipment used must conform to safety standards
- There must be a first aid box complying with the Health & Safety (First Aid) Regulations on the premises
- Risk assessments for each activity or event should be carried out by the relevant volunteer designated for the activity
- Maximum group size for each activity should be estimated in advance of the activity and on the grounds of safety these numbers should not be exceeded. Publicity material should advise on maximum numbers
- No child under 8 years of age should be left unaccompanied; a parent, carer or other responsible adult must stay with the child

Volunteering at events and activities:

- At least 2 adults must be present during all events and activities

Risk Assessments:

Hathern Community Library Management Team is responsible for a general Risk Assessment of Hathern Community Library and should ensure that activities carried out in the library have been risk assessed in advance of each activity

Planning the activity:

When planning an activity, volunteers should:

• Ensure there are suitable numbers of adult volunteers to supervise the event. If a class or group is visiting, one volunteer should supervise the activity whilst the accompanying adults remain with the group. One volunteer should remain with the group at all times

- Consider health and safety issues
- Carry out a Risk Assessment

- Determine a maximum attendance figure based on volunteer numbers, space and the type of activity. If there is any doubt about the ability to control numbers or anticipated high demand, the option of issuing tickets should be considered
- Ensure the obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act are met, taking reasonable steps to enable disabled children to use the service and attend the activity
- Ensure that volunteers are aware of the library's first aid arrangements

Publicity:

Publicity should specify the age of the children at whom the activity is aimed and that children under the age of 8 must be accompanied by a parent/carer. It must clearly state starting and finishing times.

Before and during the activity or event:

- All children attending an event should be registered. Children under 8 must be registered by their parent/carer
- Volunteers must register all unaccompanied children attending the event and keep a written record of their name and if possible, their address and a contact number
- The register must be checked during an emergency evacuation
- All volunteers must wear name badges at the activity

Photographs

Children may not be photographed at activities or events, either by volunteers or by members of the press, unless permission has been given by the child's parent or carer. This may be orally at the event or by completion of a permission form signed in advance.

USE OF LIBRARY PREMISES BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS

If an individual or external organisation wishes to use the library for children's events or activities they must complete the appropriate booking form. In completing this application form they agree to comply with this Children's Safeguarding Policy.

MONITORING

This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually in accordance with the HCL Policy Schedule

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX 1

HCL Safeguarding / Child protection flowchart for urgent action and referral

1. **If there is an allegation against a volunteer,** contact the Hathern Community Library Safeguarding Officer
2. **If you have serious concerns that a child or young person is being abused or is at risk of abuse.**
    a. This may be because of what the child has told you or of an incident you have witnessed.
    b. If the situation is an emergency, someone is in immediate danger and/or a crime has been committed, **call the emergency services on 999.**
    c. Child abuse can be in the form of physical, emotional, sexual or neglect
    d. **Record the incident on a Safeguarding Incident Report Form,** including as much information as possible.
    e. **Forward the form to the Safeguarding Officer or a Trustee**
    f. **If emergency action is not required:**
        i. **Use a Safeguarding Incident Report Form** to record the incident, including the following information
            1. Time and date
            2. Nature of concern/what you have been told
            3. Information of any sighting of physical injury including shape, size, colour
            4. Enough information to identify the child e.g., name, address, school, parents
    g. **If a child makes a disclosure:**
        i. Listen to what the child tells you without asking questions.
        ii. Only record what you are told with no assumptions.
        iii. Do not promise confidentiality and explain that you will have to speak to someone else about the disclosure.
        iv. If a child has an injury but no explanation is volunteered, it is acceptable to enquire how the injury was sustained.
        v. Discuss with the Safeguarding Officer/Trustee if it is appropriate to refer the incident.

vi. If the Safeguarding Officer /Trustee cannot be contacted, move directly to the next step.

vii. Parents/carers do not need to be informed if you consider that this is likely to increase the risk to the child.

viii. Ring the LCC Central Duty Team (0116 305 0005) with the details and discuss your concerns. If parental/carer consent to the referral has not been obtained, you need to give the reasons.

ix. Confirm the referral in writing as soon as possible and within 48 hours, using the form provided. This may be faxed through or submitted electronically using the secure link:

x. https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/child-protection-and-safeguarding/multi-agency-referral-form-for-early-help-and-social-care-services-marf

xi. Phone: 0116 305 0005 – 24 hour phone line
email: childrensduty@leics.gov.uk

xii. Inform the Safeguarding Officer (Mr. Andy Branch) that you are forwarding a Safeguarding Incident Report to LCC. Seal it securely, mark it **Confidential** and send by 1st class post to:

Nigel Thomas
Leicestershire County Council
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicester
LE3 8TD

Copies of any documentation held locally should be filed securely.

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APPENDIX 2

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HCL Safeguarding Incident Report Form

This form should be used by volunteers to record disclosures or suspicions of abuse.

The completed form should be sent to the Safeguarding Officer.

a) Your name:

b) Your position:

c) Contact phone number:

The child's details:

e) Name:

f) Address and / or phone number:

g) Date of birth:

h) Other relevant details about the child: e.g. family circumstances, physical and mental health, any communication difficulties:

i) Parent/guardian/carers details:

j) Details of the allegations/suspicions:
Are you recording:

- Disclosure made directly to you by the child? Yes / No
- Disclosure or suspicions from a third party? Yes / No
- Your suspicions or concerns? Yes / No

Date and time of disclosure:

Date and time of incident:

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Details of the allegation / suspicions:

State exactly what you were told or observed and what was said. Use the person's own words as much as possible

Action taken so far:

Signed:

Date: