



## HOPE Charity Project Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Version 2.1 (July 2025)

Next Review: July 2026

### 1. Introduction, Aims & Objectives

The HOPE Charity Project (HOPE) was established to offer early intervention and emotional wellbeing support to young people and their families. We believe that, given the right conditions, everyone can grow and flourish. HOPE is a not-for-profit charity supporting children and young people (primarily aged 10+) and their families through tailored emotional wellbeing services.

Our Aims:

- - Improve emotional wellbeing for young people
- - Provide a safe space where families know they are not alone
- - Ensure people feel heard and respected
- - Deliver consistent, ongoing support in education and the wider community
- - Respect young people and enable autonomy
- - Offer inspirational, creative, and therapeutic workshops and support groups

Our Objectives:

- - Build trust and confidence in young people
- - Offer safety, stability, and a secure space
- - Help young people make sense of their world
- - Make sure every voice is heard and every story matters
- - Support young people in developing coping strategies
- - Provide a nurturing environment
- - Ensure HOPE team members access regular CPD and safeguarding training

This policy applies to the protection of all children, young people, and adults at risk engaged in HOPE's work, including at our Family Support Centre and during outreach work in schools or the community.

### 2. Policy Framework & Definitions

For safeguarding purposes:

- - A child is any person under 18
- - An adult at risk is a person who may need community care services due to disability, illness or age, and who may be unable to protect themselves
- - A person up to age 24 with an active Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) is treated as a child under safeguarding law

Safeguarding is defined as:

- - Protecting children from maltreatment
- - Preventing impairment of health or development
- - Ensuring safe, effective care environments
- - Taking action to enable best possible outcomes

All staff and volunteers are required to read Part 1 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and confirm understanding in writing.

### 3. HOPE Safeguarding Roles & Training

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Claire Sparrow, Founder and CEO

- - All staff and volunteers receive safeguarding training at induction and annual refreshers
- - DSL and complete enhanced safeguarding training every two years

### 4. Referral, Recording and Escalation

All concerns will be recorded and stored securely using HOPE's safeguarding concern form. This includes date, signature, and verbatim wording where possible.

Concerns may be escalated to:

- - Integrated Front Door (IFD)
- - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- - West Sussex LADO (for concerns about staff)
- - Sussex Police (if urgent risk)

Where appropriate, concerns are assessed using the West Sussex Continuum of Need (2022) framework.

### 5. Process Following a Disclosure – Reassure, Record, Refer

If a child, young person, or adult at risk discloses abuse:

Do:

- - Stay calm and listen
- - Reassure them they've done the right thing
- - Explain your duty to share the concern
- - Record exactly what they say, in their own words
- - Sign and date your written record
- - Refer the concern to the DSL (or Deputy DSL if unavailable)

Don't:

- - Promise confidentiality
- - Ask leading questions
- - React with shock or anger
- - Trivialise, dismiss or delay taking action

HOPE staff should never investigate but instead immediately refer and record.

### 6. Specific Risk Situations

Suicidal disclosures (under 18s):

- - Take all disclosures seriously

- - Contact GP or parents
- - If immediate risk, call emergency services
- - Inform social care if already involved

Peer-on-peer abuse or sexual harassment:

- - Treat as safeguarding issue
- - Follow normal recording and referral protocol

Transport, lone working, and external visits:

- - Risk assessments must be completed
- - Young people must never be left in distress or dismissed without support
- - School or parent/carer should be notified immediately

## **7. Information Sharing & GDPR**

HOPE follows GDPR and Data Protection law. Information is shared:

- - With consent wherever possible
- - Without consent if there is significant risk
- - With relevant agencies, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)

## **8. Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers**

- - Any allegations must be reported to the DSL
- - DSL will refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours
- - HOPE will cooperate with external investigation processes

## **9. Partner Agencies**

HOPE works closely with:

- - West Sussex County Council and the Early Help team
- - Social Services
- - Sussex Police
- - CAMHS
- - Local schools and support networks

## **10. Commitment**

Everyone at HOPE is responsible for creating a safe, respectful, and responsive environment. We take this responsibility seriously — because every child deserves to feel safe, heard and supported before they reach crisis point.

Policy Owner: Claire Sparrow (Founder & DSL)

## **11. Code of Conduct**

All HOPE staff and volunteers are expected to follow a professional Code of Conduct, including clear boundaries, respectful communication, and safeguarding-first decision making at all times. A full copy is available in the Staff Handbook.

## **12. Whistleblowing**

HOPE encourages anyone with safeguarding concerns about staff, volunteers or leadership to raise them without fear. Concerns can be shared with the DSL, Deputy DSL or referred externally to the LADO or NSPCC whistleblowing line.

## **13. Online Safety and Digital Contact**

HOPE does not currently deliver support via online platforms. If future digital contact is introduced, it will follow strict safeguarding protocols in line with statutory guidance and best practice for youth work.

## **14. Young People's Participation and Voice**

HOPE values young people's voices and actively includes their feedback in service development, ensuring support remains accessible, relevant and empowering.

## **15. Policy Review and Approval**

This policy was reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees in July 2025. It will be reviewed annually, or sooner if statutory guidance changes.