



Yes Futures

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Prepared by Yes Futures

www.yesfutures.org

Updated: October 2026

Version: 1.6

Yes Futures is a registered charity in England and Wales. Registered Charity Number: 1155082

Important Contacts

Role	Contact
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (Director of Programmes)	Harry Paige harry.paige@yesfutures.org / 07491 257510
Deputy DSL (Chief Executive)	Ali Jaffer ali.jaffer@yesfutures.org / 07535 738 292
Safeguarding mailbox (monitored by the DSL and Deputy DSL)	safeguarding@yesfutures.org
Trustee Safeguarding Lead	Jo Amand trustee.safeguarding@yesfutures.org

Anyone with concerns about the welfare of a child on a Yes Futures programme can contact the DSL, the Deputy DSL or the safeguarding mailbox.

Concerns about the behaviour of an adult who works or volunteers with Yes Futures should be reported to the DSL, or to the Chief Executive if the concern is about the DSL. Concerns about the Chief Executive should be reported to the Trustee Safeguarding Lead. Where the concern may meet the threshold of harm, it will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

ALTERNATIVELY, they can contact the school safeguarding lead, the local authority children's social care team or the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 (24 hours) or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

If a child is in immediate danger, call the Police on 999.

1. Introduction

1.1 Everyone who participates in Yes Futures is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. Yes Futures has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, staff, Coaches, volunteers and partners provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

1.2 Yes Futures is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities. Staff and volunteers working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.

1.3 The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of Yes Futures and to allow staff, volunteers and third-party providers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

1.4 Yes Futures is an organisation which works with young people, often via schools and colleges. Consequently, it will have regard to the Department for Education's annually updated statutory guidance, "Keeping Children Safe in Education" and to "Working Together to Safeguard Children" when carrying out its duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Trustees will also have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on safeguarding and protecting people. When working in a school or college, Yes Futures staff and volunteers also follow that setting's own safeguarding procedures.

1.5 A child is anyone under the age of 18 (Children Act 1989). In this policy:

- a. "child" and "young person" mean anyone under 18;

- b. "participant" means anyone taking part in a Yes Futures programme, including those aged 18 and over;
- c. "staff" means everyone who works for or volunteers with Yes Futures, whether employed, freelance or voluntary. Where a provision applies only to one group, the policy refers to that group;
- d. "employees" means people employed by Yes Futures;
- e. "associates" means freelancers, such as freelance coaches and consultants;
- f. "volunteers" means volunteer coaches, trip volunteers, interns and office volunteers;
- g. "trustees" means members of the Yes Futures Trustee Board;
- h. "third-party providers" means organisations or individuals engaged to provide activities, venues or transport, or to host visits.

1.6 Some participants are aged 18 or 19 and are therefore adults. The standards of conduct and good practice in this policy apply to them in full. Any concern about the welfare of a participant aged 18 or over should be reported to the DSL in the same way, and the DSL will consider whether a referral to the local authority's adult social care team is needed under the Care Act 2014.

1.7 This policy applies to all staff and trustees, and sets out the safeguarding expectations of third-party providers. It also contains Yes Futures' safer recruitment arrangements, which replace the separate Safer Recruitment Policy.

1.8 The legislation and guidance this policy draws on are listed in Appendix A. They will be checked for updates as part of each annual review of this policy.

2. Policy Statement

2.1 Yes Futures is committed to the following:

- a. the welfare of the child is paramount;
- b. all children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in Yes Futures programmes in a fun and safe environment;
- c. taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings;
- d. all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- e. all staff who work with children will be recruited in line with the safer recruitment arrangements in this policy and with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction, which is regularly updated, and at least annually;

- f. working in partnership with schools, parents/carers and children; this is essential for the protection of children;
- g. the DSL and Deputy DSL will be trained to the same standard, with formal training updated at least every two years and their knowledge refreshed at least annually, for example through briefings or safeguarding updates;
- h. all trustees will complete safeguarding training within the first year of their term of office, and the Trustee Safeguarding Lead will complete further safeguarding training annually;
- i. a central record will be kept of the safeguarding and safer recruitment training completed by staff and trustees.

2.2 The implementation of procedures will be regularly monitored and reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or Deputy who will regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements, gaps and areas where changes are required to the Trustee Board. There is a named trustee who is nominated as the lead for Board oversight. Each year, staff, volunteers and trustees will be asked a short set of questions about safeguarding culture, and the results will be reported to the Board.

2.3 The policy will be reviewed and approved by the Board every year, and whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation. It will also be reviewed in light of emerging safeguarding issues and lessons learnt. Each annual review will include the safeguarding leadership and oversight arrangements, including the DSL and Deputy DSL roles.

3. Promoting Good Practice

3.1 To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities in our programmes everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework set out in sections 3 and 4 of this policy and, for coaches, the Coach Code of Conduct and the Coaching Declaration, which are issued as part of the Coach Induction Pack.

3.2 It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of staff to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child, as explained in section 12.

3.3 This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

Good Practice

3.4 All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action:

- a. always put the welfare of the young person first;
- b. always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets);
- c. be clear to all that coaching conversations between children and adults will be treated in confidence, but any concerns about any child's welfare will be appropriately escalated on a 'need-to-know' basis;
- d. make the experience of Yes Futures programmes fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying;
- e. treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity;
- f. maintain a safe and appropriate distance with young people (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them);
- g. avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given;
- h. involve parents/carers wherever possible;
- i. request written parental consent if any staff or volunteers are required to transport young people in their cars;
- j. gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements e.g. overnight stays;
- k. ensure that if mixed gender groups take part in trips with overnight stays, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff or volunteer;
- l. ensure that during residential programmes adults should not enter a young person's room or invite young people to their rooms without at least one other adult present;
- m. be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people;
- n. always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism;
- o. recognise the developmental needs and capacity of the young person and do not risk sacrificing welfare in a desire for 'Yes Futures', or personal, achievements. This means avoiding excessive competition and not pushing them against their will;
- p. secure written parental consent for the organisation to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises;
- q. keep a written record in the incident log of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given, recorded as a first aid or health and safety incident so that it is kept separate from safeguarding concerns;
- r. keep risk assessments for each element of the programme up-to-date and instigate

appropriate mitigations;

- s. follow up to date guidance from Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) for school trips and residential;
- t. record significant near misses in the incident log so that lessons can be learned;
- u. share health, medical and allergy information about young people only on a need-to-know basis with the staff who need it to keep a young person safe during a session; it must not be posted in group chats and must be deleted when the programme ends. An incident relating to a young person's medical condition does not in itself require a safeguarding referral, but staff must tell the DSL where it suggests a young person may be at risk of neglect or abuse, for example being repeatedly sent without essential medication.

3.5 Any elements of programmes delivered online will also:

- a. expect all parties to follow same standards of behaviour as in-person;
- b. be supervised adequately;
- c. use secure and password protected links;
- d. use a limited set of online platforms/programmes;
- e. use an appropriately filtered internet connection in line with school acceptable use policies or agreements.

4. Poor Practice

4.1 The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- a. unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others;
- b. unnecessarily taking young people alone in a car on journeys, however short;
- c. taking young people to your home where they will be alone with you;
- d. sharing a room with a young person;
- e. engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
- f. allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
- g. allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- h. making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun;
- i. reducing a young person to tears as a form of control;
- j. allow allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- k. do things of a personal nature that the young person can do for themselves;
- l. contacting young people through personal social media or messaging accounts, or sharing personal contact details with them.

4.2 When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g.

transporting a young person in your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/carer and the young person involved.

4.3 If during your care you accidentally hurt a young person, the young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague, and make a written note of it and send it to the DSL or the safeguarding mailbox the same day, so that it is kept in the safeguarding log. The school, parents/carers should also be informed of the incident.

5. Online Safety

5.1 Yes Futures prioritises keeping young people safe as they work online and this is paramount in programme planning and design. Yes Futures adheres to the filtering and monitoring standards of the host school or college, and endeavours to ensure that the platforms it uses are secure.

5.2 All Yes Futures students under the age of 16 working online with a Yes Futures coach only do so while under the supervision of a Yes Futures member of staff in a safe environment. Participants aged 16 and over may work online with a coach without direct supervision where the DSL has agreed this is appropriate for the programme.

5.3 Before any digital platform or AI tool that holds young people's data, or through which young people interact with adults or AI, is used (including in a pilot), the DSL and Data Protection Officer will assess the risks, covering access, consent, information sharing, retention, supervision and how concerns are raised.

5.4 Safeguarding training for staff will cover online harms, including risks linked to AI such as AI-generated or manipulated images of young people and harmful interactions with AI tools, and how to report them.

5.5 Yes Futures will operate clear rules for both staff and young people regarding the safe and appropriate use of technology, including AI. These are set out in the Yes Futures AI Policy.

5.6 Our reporting of concerns process can also be applied to any concern arising out of the potential misuses of AI or any other digital harm. All concerns will be taken seriously and handled in line with our full safeguarding procedures.

6. Defining Child Abuse

6.1 Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

6.2 There are four main types of abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including classroom and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by adults or by other children.

6.3 Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood.

6.4 Young people who have physical or neuro-disability, communication support needs or special educational needs may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

7. Types of Abuse

7.1 **Physical Abuse:** where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse.

This category of abuse can also include when a parent/carer reports non-existent symptoms or illnesses or deliberately causes ill health in a young person they are looking after. This is called fabricated or induced illness (FII).

In a programme situation, physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of activities disregard the capacity of the child's delicate and growing body.

7.2 **Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may include verbal abuse, such as persistent criticism, belittling or name-calling, or deliberately silencing a young person or making fun of what they say. It may feature expectations of young people that are not

appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn. Ill treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse in developmental programmes may occur when the young person is constantly criticised, given negative feedback, expected to perform at levels that are above their capability. Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying.

7.3 Bullying may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are different types of bullying: It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages or online messages and posts (cyberbullying)), emotional (e.g. untoward peer pressure, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments). In developmental programmes, bullying may arise when a parent, Coach or teacher pushes the young person too hard to succeed, or uses bullying behaviour.

7.4 Neglect occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical or emotional harm or danger, failing to ensure adequate supervision, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect. Neglect in Yes Futures programmes could occur when an employee or volunteer does not keep the young person safe, or exposes them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

7.5 Sexual Abuse involves forcing, causing or inciting a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. It may involve physical contact, including penetrative and non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching over clothing, or non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at or producing sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online as well as offline. It is not only committed by adult men: women and other children can also commit sexual abuse, and children are more likely than not to know their abuser.

In activity programmes, activities which might involve physical contact with young people could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also the power of the Coaches over young people, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.

8. Indicators of Abuse

8.1 Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- a. unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries;
- b. an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent;
- c. the young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them;
- d. another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person;
- e. unexplained changes in a young person's behaviour e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper;
- f. inappropriate sexual awareness;
- g. engaging in sexually explicit behaviour;
- h. distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected;
- i. difficulty in making friends;
- j. being prevented from socialising with others;
- k. displaying variations in eating patterns including over eating or loss of appetite;
- l. losing weight for no apparent reason;
- m. becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt;
- n. having unexplained gifts, money or new possessions, going missing or regularly missing school, or associating with older people or groups, which may indicate exploitation.

8.2 Signs of bullying include:

- a. behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to participate in activities;
- b. an unexplained drop off in performance;
- c. physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or

cigarettes;

- d. a shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions.

8.3 It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is NOT the responsibility of those working in Yes Futures to decide that child abuse is occurring. It IS their responsibility to act on any concerns, as per section 12.

9. Other Safeguarding Concerns

9.1 **FGM.** There is a specific legal duty on teachers to report female genital mutilation (FGM). If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police. All Yes Futures staff and volunteers should report any concerns about female genital mutilation to the school, ensuring their designated safeguarding lead becomes aware.

9.2 **Mental Health.** Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. However, Yes Futures staff and volunteers, due to the nature of our work, are well placed to identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

9.3 Mental health problems can, in some cases, develop into safeguarding concerns, including self-harm, suicidal thoughts or risk of suicide. They can also be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Warning signs may include significant changes in behaviour, ongoing difficulty sleeping, withdrawing from social situations, losing interest in things they usually enjoy, and physical signs of self-harm or self-neglect.

9.4 Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

9.5 Yes Futures delivery staff are encouraged to have Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training and volunteers are signposted to appropriate MHFA training.

9.6 If a member of staff has a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, they should report it to the DSL or Deputy DSL straight away, and to

the school's DSL where the child is in school. If a child is in immediate danger, call 999 or arrange for them to be taken to A&E by a parent, carer or other suitable adult. If a child needs urgent mental health help but it is not an emergency, contact NHS 111 and select the mental health option.

Child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence)

9.7 All Yes Futures staff and volunteers should be aware that children can abuse other children and that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online, including through the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes. Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the child harmed and the child who is alleged to have caused harm. It is important that all staff and volunteers recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

9.8 It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

9.9 All staff play an important role in preventing child-on-child abuse and in responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

9.10 Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

9.11 Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence, or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons. Exploitation may be carried out by an organised network or gang, and children may see themselves as part of the group. Children who are exploited are victims, cannot consent to being exploited, and may be treated as offenders for actions they took under coercion. Girls are at risk of criminal exploitation as well as boys. Exploitation of this kind may also be modern slavery, and the DSL will consider whether a modern slavery referral is needed alongside a child protection referral.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

9.12 CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, or non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

9.13 CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence, and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect 16- and 17-year-olds, even though they can legally consent to sex. Some young people do not realise they are being exploited and may believe they are in a genuine relationship.

Children potentially at greater risk of harm

9.14 Some children, because of their experiences or needs can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

9.15 Yes Futures staff ask partner schools to identify students where this might be the case, for example:

- a. Children who need a social worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)
- b. Children requiring mental health support
- c. Looked after children and previously looked after children
- d. Care leavers
- e. Children with special educational needs and disabilities
- f. Young carers
- g. Children with medical conditions

10. Preventing Radicalisation

10.1 Children can be vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk is of critical importance. Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. Radicalisation is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence. Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of

advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

10.2 There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home).

10.3 All schools and colleges are subject to the Prevent duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism".

10.4 As with other safeguarding risks, Yes Futures staff and volunteers should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, comments or actions which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. If there is a concern, this must be passed on to the school's designated safeguarding lead in order to make a Prevent referral. The Yes Futures DSL will also be informed. Where the concern arises outside a school setting, or the school's DSL cannot be reached, the Yes Futures DSL will make the Prevent referral through the local authority or police.

11. Photographs and Filming

11.1 Photographs and film of young people can be misused, including by people who use events as an opportunity to take inappropriate images, and by those who copy published images and manipulate them using AI. All employees and volunteers should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Yes Futures DSL.

11.2 Photographs and film should not be stored on personal devices, except for transfer to Yes Futures storage, and must be deleted from personal devices and chats within 7 days of transfer. Images may only be shared in messaging groups set up and managed by Yes Futures staff.

11.3 Consent must be gained from young people, and from parents or carers for those under 18, before taking photographs or film footage of them. Consent is checked before any image is used or shared, and any withdrawal of consent is applied promptly. Published images are reviewed periodically and removed when no longer needed.

11.4 Yes Futures follows NSPCC guidance on photographing and filming children. For

example, a young person's full name is not published alongside their image.

12. Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

12.1 It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Yes Futures in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person. This applies BOTH to allegations/suspicions of abuse occurring within Yes Futures and to allegations/suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

12.2 This section explains how to respond to allegations/suspicions.

Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

12.3 We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in sections 8 and 9 of this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person affected.

12.4 In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- a. stay calm so as not to frighten the young person.
- b. reassure the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell.
- c. listen to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously.
- d. keep questions to a minimum so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify.
- e. do not promise to keep what the child says a secret. Inform the child that you have to inform other people about what they have told you.
- f. safety of the child is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue.
- g. record what the child said, using their own words, as soon as possible (see section 13).
- h. report the incident to the DSL or the safeguarding mailbox the same day and, where the child is in school, to the school's DSL. A volunteer may tell the Yes Futures member of staff leading the session first, who will make sure it reaches the DSL.

12.5 All safeguarding concerns about a child should be recorded in the safeguarding log,

including those where no further action is needed, so that patterns can be identified. Low-level concerns about adults should also be recorded in writing. Keeping Children Safe in Education (paragraph 509) defines a low-level concern as “any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a ‘nagging doubt’” that an adult working for Yes Futures may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the standards in sections 3 and 4 of this policy or the Coach Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and that does not meet the harm threshold or is otherwise not serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO. Examples include being overfriendly with young people, having favourites, taking photographs of young people on a personal phone contrary to this policy, or being alone with a young person in a secluded area. The Programme Manager will collect evidence, and pass to the DSL who will categorise the conduct and determine what further action should be taken and further escalation procedures.

12.6 If the DSL or deputy are not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should email the safeguarding mailbox, which is monitored by both the DSL and Deputy DSL, and, if the matter is urgent, take advice from the local authority children’s social care team. In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the DSL (or deputy) as soon as is practically possible.

12.7 In all cases if you are not sure, anyone can contact the local authority children’s social care team or gain help from the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 (24 hours) or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

12.8 Furthermore, support for the young person can be sought from Childline who provide confidential help and advice for children and young people. Calls to 0800 1111 are free and children can also contact Childline online.

13. Recording Information

13.1 To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions. The record should be sent to the DSL or the safeguarding mailbox the same day and will be kept in the safeguarding log.

13.2 Information should include the following:

- a. the child’s name, age and date of birth.
- b. the child’s home address and telephone number, if known.

- c. whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's.
- d. the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information.
- e. a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- f. details of witnesses to the incidents.
- g. the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred.
- h. have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said?
- i. has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- j. has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail.

13.3 All records will be kept in compliance with Yes Futures Data Protection Policy and retained for the periods set out in its retention schedule. Safeguarding concerns, first aid incidents and health and safety incidents are recorded and categorised separately.

14. Reporting the Concern

14.1 Yes Futures staff ensure they have the details of a school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) prior to a programme commencing.

14.2 All suspicions and allegations MUST be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

14.3 Yes Futures expects its volunteers, Coaches and staff to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with the person in charge and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

14.4 Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Data protection law allows information to be shared for safeguarding purposes, including sensitive information, without consent where necessary. Safeguarding information is shared promptly with the partner school's DSL or the person they nominate. Staff share only what is relevant and necessary for the school to act. Where a child may be at immediate risk, staff telephone the school DSL first and follow up in writing; security measures must never delay urgent action. A record of what was shared, with whom and when, is kept in the safeguarding log.

14.5 If Yes Futures' DSL or the Deputy DSL or the school safeguarding lead is not available you should take responsibility and seek advice from the NSPCC helpline, the local authority children's social care team for the area where the child lives, or the police. Contact details are on each local authority's website.

14.6 Where there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation:

- a. Criminal in which case the police are immediately involved
- b. Child protection in which case the local authority children's social care and possibly the police will be involved
- c. Disciplinary or misconduct in which case Yes Futures will be involved

14.7 As mentioned previously in this policy document Yes Futures are not child protection experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection.

14.8 Local authority children's social care has a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern.

14.9 Any suspicion that a child has been abused by an employee or a volunteer should be reported to the DSL who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- a. The DSL will inform the Chief Executive, who will act as case manager, and the Trustee Safeguarding Lead. The Chief Executive will refer the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay, and will inform the partner school where the concern relates to work in that school. Where the allegation concerns the Chief Executive, the Trustee Safeguarding Lead will act as case manager.
- b. The parent/carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the LADO or children's social care.
- c. The Chief Executive should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings.
- d. Where a child has been harmed or is at immediate risk, the DSL will also refer the matter to local authority children's social care and, where appropriate, the police, straight away.

14.10 Allegations of abuse are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such an allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures. Where the allegation is about an adult who works or has worked with Yes Futures, it will be referred to the LADO. This is because other children in the event or outside it may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone barred from working with children by the Disclosure and Barring Service must not work or volunteer with Yes Futures in any role involving children.

14.11 In all cases, all safeguarding concerns escalated to the DSL will be recorded in a secure and confidential safeguarding log. Significant issues will be raised in a timely manner to the Trustee Safeguarding Lead. A summary of all reports will be shared at every Board meeting as a standing item. The Trustee Safeguarding Lead will make sure that any serious incident is reported to the Charity Commission.

14.12 Where Yes Futures removes a member of staff or volunteer from work with children, or would have done so had they not left, because they have harmed or posed a risk of harm to a child, the Chief Executive will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service, as required by law.

15. Concerns outside the immediate environment (e.g. a parent or carer)

15.1 If you have concerns outside the immediate environment, you must report your concerns to the DSL, your line manager or the Chief Executive.

15.2 If the DSL or Chief Executive is not available, the person being told or discovering the abuse should contact the local authority children's social care team or the police immediately. Children's social care and the Chief Executive will decide how to inform the parents/carers.

15.3 The Chief Executive should also report the incident to Yes Futures Trustee Board. The Board should ascertain whether or not the person(s) involved in the incident play a role in the organisation and act accordingly.

16. Confidentiality

16.1 Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a 'need to know' basis only. This may include the following people:

- a. The DSL and Deputy DSL/Chief Executive
- b. The parents of the child
- c. The person making the allegation
- d. Local authority children's social care, the LADO and/or the police

- e. Trustee Board
- f. The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)
- g. The partner school's DSL

16.2 Seek advice from the LADO or children's social care on who should approach the alleged abuser.

16.3 All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

17. Internal Inquiries and Suspension

17.1 The Chief Executive, as case manager, will decide promptly whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further inquiries, taking advice from the LADO. Suspension is not automatic, and alternatives such as removing the person from work with children will be considered first. Where the allegation concerns the Chief Executive, the Trustee Safeguarding Lead will make this decision.

17.2 Irrespective of the findings of children's social care or police inquiries the Yes Futures Trustee Board will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases the Yes Futures Trustee Board must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

18. Whistleblowing

Staff should raise concerns about safeguarding practice within Yes Futures with the DSL or the Chief Executive. If the concern is about the Chief Executive, or they feel it has not been addressed, they should contact the Trustee Safeguarding Lead (trustee.safeguarding@yesfutures.org). Where a member of staff feels unable to raise an issue within the organisation, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they can call the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285 (8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday) or email help@nspcc.org.uk. Further detail is set out in the Yes Futures Whistleblowing Policy.

19. Safer Recruitment

19.1 Yes Futures is committed to safer recruitment practices that prevent unsuitable people from working with children and young people. This applies to all staff and trustees, whether full or part time. Our safer recruitment practices help us to:

- identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable to work with children and young people;
- respond to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process;
- respond to concerns about the suitability of staff once they have begun their role;
- make sure all new staff take part in an induction which includes safeguarding.

19.2 The checks required for each role are set out below.

	Employees	Associates	Volunteer coaches	Trip volunteers	Interns and office volunteers	Trustees
Selection	CV and cover letter; shortlisting by two people; panel interview of at least two, including safeguarding questions	Interview including safeguarding questions	Application form including criminal record self-disclosure; interview including safeguarding questions	Application form including criminal record self-disclosure	Application or agency referral	Board appointment process
References	Two	Two	Two	Two	Two, or agency checks	Two
Identity	ID, right to work and qualifications	ID	ID	ID	ID, or agency checks	ID and a signed declaration that they are not disqualified from acting as a trustee
DBS	Enhanced, with children's barred list	Enhanced, with children's barred list	Enhanced, with children's barred list	Enhanced, with children's barred list	Where the role involves contact with young people	Where the role involves contact with young people

	Employees	Associates	Volunteer coaches	Trip volunteers	Interns and office volunteers	Trustees
	information	information where eligible	information where eligible	information where eligible		
Training and induction	Safeguarding training at induction and annually; probation period	Safeguarding training at induction	Coach training with knowledge check; Coaching Declaration	Trip volunteer induction; supervised by Yes Futures staff at all times	Safeguarding briefing; no unsupervised contact with young people	Safeguarding training within the first year (see 2.1h)

DBS checks

19.3 Yes Futures requests the highest level of DBS check each role is legally eligible for. For all roles working directly with young people this is an enhanced DBS check, including children's barred list information wherever the role is eligible. Adults' barred list information is not requested. Under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, roles are eligible for children's barred list information where they involve regulated activity, which includes working with children weekly or more often, on more than three days in any 30-day period, or overnight.

19.4 No one will start regulated activity until their enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information has been received. Anyone else whose DBS check is pending may start only with the agreement of the DSL and under the direct supervision of a member of staff who holds a cleared enhanced DBS check.

19.5 DBS checks are renewed every three years. All staff complete an annual self-declaration confirming any change relevant to their suitability to work with young people. Where a person has lived or worked outside the UK, Yes Futures will make any further checks it considers appropriate, such as obtaining a certificate of good conduct.

Disclosures and DBS results that are not clear

19.6 Where an applicant discloses a criminal record, or a DBS check returns information, the DSL and Deputy DSL will decide whether they can proceed, using a written risk assessment in a standard format. The assessment records:

- a. the information disclosed;
- b. any checks still outstanding;
- c. any interim safeguards;
- d. who made the decision and why;

- e. the review that will take place when outstanding checks are received.

The decision will take account of the nature of the offence, how long ago it occurred, whether it is spent, and the applicant's conduct and references. The Trustee Safeguarding Lead is informed of every such decision and may be consulted for advice.

Recruitment process

19.7 Anyone involved in shortlisting, interviewing or approving appointments must have completed safer recruitment training or a safer recruitment briefing, recorded in the training record (see 2.1i). Anyone with a close personal or family relationship with an applicant must declare it and take no part in that recruitment.

19.8 Before anyone starts work or volunteering with young people, the member of staff responsible for their recruitment confirms that every check required for their role has been completed and recorded.

Induction and supervision

19.9 Every new member of staff receives an induction or briefing covering, as a minimum:

- a. how to recognise signs of harm;
- b. how to respond to a disclosure;
- c. how to report a concern and to whom;
- d. the standards in sections 3 and 4 of this policy and, for coaches, the Coach Code of Conduct;
- e. whistleblowing arrangements.

Employees complete a probation period with regular line management. Coaches are supported and observed by Yes Futures programme staff. All staff wear their Yes Futures ID badge during sessions with young people.

Information for schools and recruitment records

19.10 Schools and colleges may ask Yes Futures for information about staff working on their premises, for their Single Central Record. Yes Futures will confirm in writing the checks it has carried out, including enhanced DBS checks.

19.11 Recruitment records are held securely, with access limited to those who need it, in line with data protection law. Yes Futures collects only the information needed to make safe recruitment decisions, and keeps it for the periods set out in the retention schedule of its Data Protection Policy.

Third-party providers

19.12 When using a third-party provider, such as an activity provider, venue or transport company, Yes Futures takes reasonable steps to satisfy itself that the provider has appropriate safeguarding arrangements. Young people remain under the supervision of Yes Futures staff throughout, and host organisations are told who the Yes Futures safeguarding contact is.

Appendix A: Legislation and guidance

This list is checked for updates as part of each annual review of this policy.

Legislation

- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and the Crime and Policing Act 2026
- Police Act 1997 (criminal record checks)
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Care Act 2014 (safeguarding adults)
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the Prevent duty)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 (right to work checks)
- Equality Act 2010
- Charities Act 2011 (trustee disqualification and serious incident reporting)

Statutory guidance

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Department for Education, 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government)
- Information sharing to safeguard children and young people (Department for Education)
- Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales (Home Office)

Other guidance

- Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees (Charity Commission)
- How to report a serious incident in your charity (Charity Commission)
- DBS guidance on eligibility for checks and on regulated activity (Disclosure and Barring Service)

- Generative AI: product safety expectations (Department for Education)
- NSPCC Learning guidance on photographing and filming children, safer recruitment, and child protection records
- Taking photographs: data protection advice (Information Commissioner's Office)
- National Guidance for educational visits (Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel)

Related Yes Futures policies

- Coach Code of Conduct
- Coaching Declaration
- Data Protection Policy (including retention schedule)
- Whistleblowing Policy
- AI Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

Version Control: Approval and Review

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Main changes	Review period
1.0	Board	Sep 2022	Last draft approved	3 years
1.1	DOO/CEO	Mar 2024	Minor changes only: change to annual review; update to Safeguarding Lead contact details; Section 7.7: peer-on-peer terms updated to child-on-child abuse	1 year
1.2	DOO	Oct 2024	Change of Lead Safeguarding Trustee	No change
1.3	Chief Executive	May 2025	New roles and organisation structure reflected, with contacts changed	No change
1.4	Chief Executive	Aug 2025	Policy updated to reflect change in programme and trustee personnel	No change
1.5	Board	Oct 2025	Explicit section on online safety; low-level concerns; regularity of training; additions to safer recruitment section on providing information akin to a single central record; explicit reference to KCSIE	No change
1.6	Board	Oct 2026	Annual review reflecting KCSIE 2026, the 2026 external safeguarding audit and trustee comments. Safer Recruitment Policy merged into Section 19. New definitions; safeguarding mailbox; LADO and whistleblowing routes; trustee training; updated online safety, images and recruitment sections	No change