

## Children's Safeguarding Policy & Procedure<sup>1</sup>

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Kegworth Community Library (KCL) Safeguarding Incident Form is at end of this document

## Introduction - Why a child safety policy?

"Child safety is a society-wide responsibility. It is important for library volunteers to be aware that as part of the community working with children, they share in this responsibility." A Safe Place for Children CILIP 2005

The KCL policy follows guidelines set out in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding /Child Protection Procedure which should be read in conjunction with this policy and can be viewed on the following link: <http://lrsb.org.uk/children>

KCL 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 libraries 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 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 our library a safe place for children to use and enjoy.

Our Designated Safeguarding Officer: Nicola Mullins

Contact number: 07812114001

## General volunteer guidelines for ensuring child safety

We must all ensure that Libraries are places where children can feel safe.

KCL will follow this code of behaviour when dealing with children:

- Always listen to children and value and respect them as individuals.
- Always ensure another member or 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 / 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 could do for him or herself.
- Never accompany a child into a toilet, or assist a child in using the toilet or in adjusting his / her clothes.
- Call the Central Duty Team on 0116 305 0005 or the Police if there is a cause to believe that a child has been abandoned or forgotten.
- Follow the Leicestershire Council'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 service to decide whether or not abuse has taken place, but there is a responsibility to pass on concerns to the designated officer or Central Duty Team.

## Useful contact numbers

Police	999
Non-emergency	101
Central Duty Team	0116 305 0005

## Unsupervised children

The way in which 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. All libraries should display a sign to this effect, and all publicity relating to children's activities should include the statement.

However, 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 KCL 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 (below 8 years) unaccompanied in the library and you are concerned about their safety:

- Ask the child if an adult is aware that they are here and if she / he is expecting to be collected.
- Try to contact the parent or carer; see if the child can give an address or telephone number; check registration details to see if the child or a parent/carer is a library member.
- Avoid being left alone with a child - try to ensure colleagues are present when dealing with unsupervised children and remain in public view.
- Record any response from the parent or carer on an incident form (appendix 1) - 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, volunteers should encourage the child to stay in the library while they contact the Central Duty Team for advice. If this is not possible, then contact the local police station.

If an unaccompanied young child is expecting to be met at closing time KCL volunteers should:

- Check on the child's situation with the support of another volunteer – are they waiting for a parent or carer to collect them?
- The child may be allowed to use library phone to phone home to ask a parent or carer to collect them. However, children should be reminded to organise this in advance if it is happening on a regular basis.
- Telephone the child's home from the library to clarify the situation if necessary;
- Wait for the parent/carer to collect the child and then explain the library's policy. Two volunteers should wait with the child.
- Where a parent or carer cannot be contacted, contact the Central Duty Team for advice.
- If the Central Duty Team cannot be contacted, contact the police. No volunteer should ever take a child home.

- Complete a written incident report (appendix 1) and send to the appropriate designated officer, copied to the Central Duty Team. A letter will be sent to the parents and carers, reminding them of the library service's policy regarding unaccompanied children.
- If a child wishes to leave, every effort should be made to persuade him or her to stay until help has arrived. However, volunteers must not attempt physically to restrain a child except to prevent accident or injury when there are reasonable grounds to believe there is a real risk to the child or in self-defence.

### Children out of school

During term-time, children of school age would not normally be using the library during the period of the school day, unless as part of a class visit or organised library activity. If a child or group of children and young people are 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 the appropriate pass or letter of permission if they have been allowed out of school.
- If no pass or letter is produced, and the child's name and school can be identified, library volunteers should contact the school for advice.
- If the child says they have been excluded, contact the school for advice.
- If the school cannot be identified, library volunteers should contact the Central Duty Team.
- Complete an incident form outlining action taken (appendix 1).

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

### Emergency evacuation of the library

The library's fire regulations and assembly points are clearly displayed. All library volunteers must be familiar with procedures to ensure the safety of children in the event of the evacuation of the library premises. When the alarm sounds, we will check that no unaccompanied children are left in the library or related spaces (meeting room, toilet, etc).

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 at the location. If returning to the premises is not feasible before the library is expected to close, children who are expecting to be met by a parent/carer should be kept with library volunteers until the parent/carer claims them. Children who are not expecting to be met and who are allowed to leave the library unaccompanied should be allowed to make their own way home.

If there is an evacuation during an organised library activity for children, the responsible volunteers must lead children to the assembly point, taking the register of children attending the event. The register must be checked to ensure that all children are out of the building. If a child is unaccounted for report immediately to the emergency services.

### Adults in library areas designated for children's use

It is important to remember that adults will use a children's library to borrow or return material and to supervise their children. However volunteers must be watchful of adults acting in ways that may threaten a child's safety anywhere in the library and they should be responsive to a child's concerns. This is a very sensitive area and volunteers should be cautious, but the child's welfare must come first.

An adult in a children's library area, but not seeming to use it, should be offered seating in the adult library, or help in finding the information they require. Concerns about an adult's behaviour should be immediately shared with the designated officer on duty. If the designated officer is not on site or unavailable, volunteers should record the incident.

If necessary, the adult should be asked to leave the area which is designated for children's use. If the adult argues against this, volunteers should point out they are not accusing the adult, but that the policy is there to protect children and that they are required to apply it.

#### Dealing with unacceptable behaviour

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

- Remind the child / children or young people 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 calmly and quietly and avoid putting volunteers or other members of the public in danger.
- Children and young people should be asked to leave the library only if the behaviour is not resolved, and as a temporary measure.
- If library 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 aggressive or abusive child should be told that his or her behaviour is not acceptable. If necessary volunteers will insist that he or she leaves the premises.
- An incident form should be completed (a copy can be found at the end of this policy).
- Only the Trustees after investigating an incident may ban a child or young person from using the library service for a specified period.

#### Use of toilets

KCL has no public toilet however volunteers should allow children to use the facilities.

#### Use of public access computers by children:

KCL'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 library volunteers should be alert to the possibility that children and young people may still be able to access unsuitable material. If this happens, library volunteers should:

- Inform the child or young person that it is not appropriate, and explain why.
- Pass information about the site to ICT to ensure that future access is reviewed and blocked where necessary.
- Warn the child their session could be terminated if they continue to access inappropriate material.

#### Child protection

If library volunteers have serious concerns about a child's general welfare, or suspect that abuse (physical, sexual, emotional or neglect) is taking place, they should contact the designated safeguarding officer and follow the safeguarding / child protection guidelines flow chart. The safeguarding officer will contact the Central Duty Team to discuss the concerns and to decide a course of action. If the

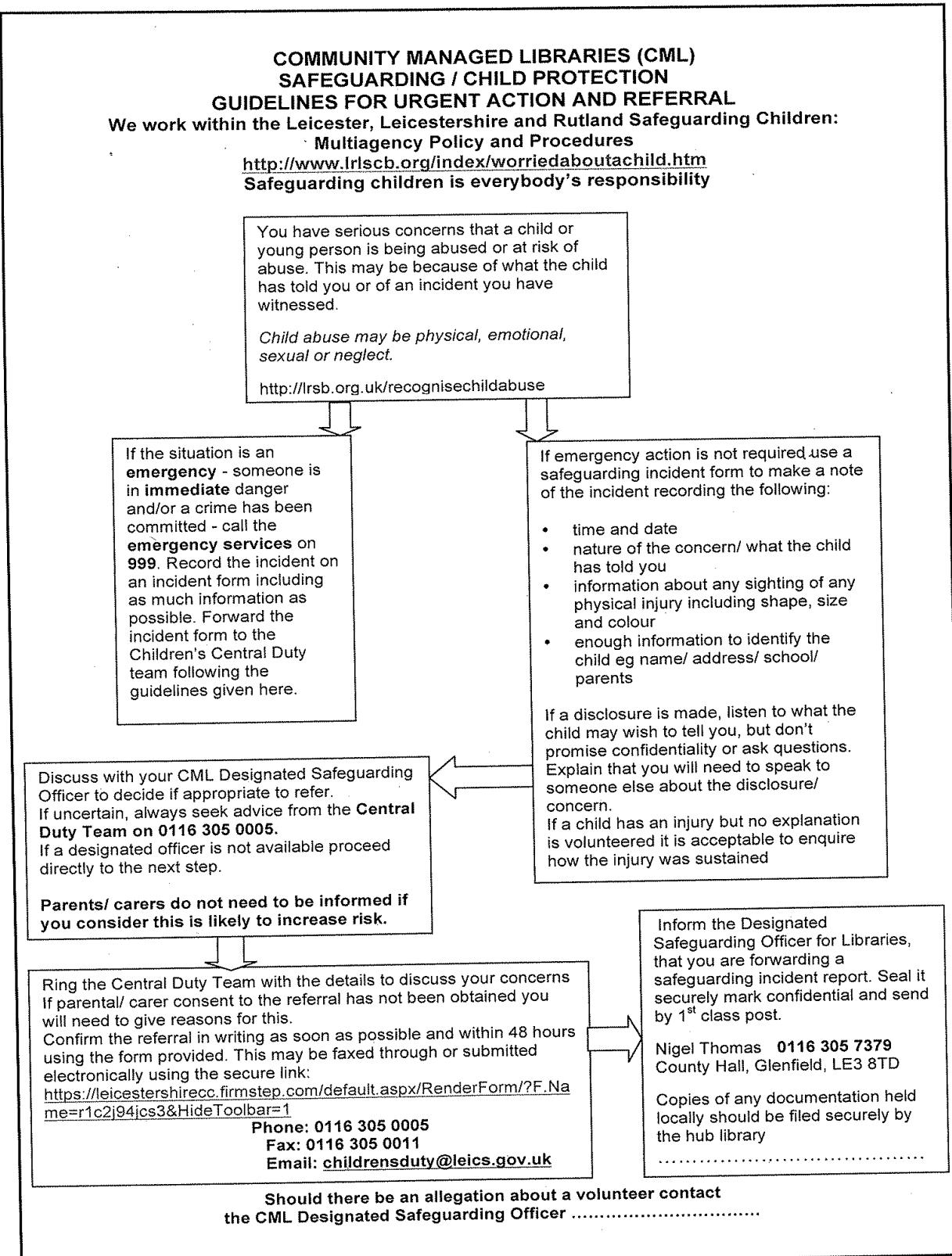
designated person is not available, contact the Central Duty Team for advice, or the local police station and let the designated officer know what you have done and complete an incident report (appendix 1). Always follow this procedure if you are worried or concerned about a child.

If a child tells you they are or have been abused (discloses abuse):

- Take the child seriously and tell them so.
- Allow the child to say what has happened to him or her, but do not ask leading questions.
- Make a note of what the child says on the safeguarding incident form (appendix 1).
- Tell the child that you are glad they told you.
- Reassure the child that what happened is not their fault.
- Be honest with the child – tell them who you will have to contact and why – do not promise confidentiality.
- Keep the child fully informed about what you are doing.
- Contact the designated officer who will take advice from the Central Duty Team.

Numbers for child protection helplines (such as NSPCC 0808 800 5000 or Childline 0800 1111) can be found by an internet search. Children should be allowed to use library phones to call these numbers if they wish.

## Safeguarding Procedure



## 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 and Safety (First Aid) Regulations on the premises.
- Risk assessments for each activity or event should be carried out by the relevant volunteer designated by them.
- Maximum group size for each activity in each location should be estimated in advance of the activity and on safety grounds, these numbers should not be exceeded. Publicity material should advise of maximum numbers.
- No child under 8 years of age should be left unaccompanied; a parent, carer or responsible older sibling must stay with the child.

### Volunteering at events and activities

At least 2 adults must be present during the activity.

### Risk assessments

The Trustees are responsible for a general Risk Assessment of the KCL building and ensure that activities carried out in the library have been risk assessed in advance of the activity.

### Planning the activity

When planning an activity, library volunteers should:

- Ensure there are suitable numbers of adults to supervise the event. If a class or group is visiting, one volunteer can supervise the activity if the accompanying adults remain with the group. When using outside speakers/entertainers, one volunteer should remain with the group at all times.
- Consider general 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 an anticipated high demand, the option of issuing tickets should be considered.
- Ensure that 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 they are aware of KCL's first aid arrangements.

### Publicity

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

### Before and during the activity or event

- All children attending an event should be registered. Children under 8 should be registered by their parents and carers.

- Volunteers must register all unaccompanied children attending the event and keep a written record of their name and, if possible, their address and telephone number.
- This register must be checked during an emergency evacuation.
- All volunteers must wear their name badges at the event.

## Photographs

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

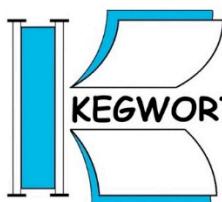
## Use of library premises by other organisations

If an individual or external organisation wishes to use KCL for children's events or activities they must fill in the appropriate room bookings form. In completing this application form they agree to comply with this Children's Safeguarding Policy.

This policy will be reviewed regularly.

Signed: ..... Dated: .....

Signed: ..... Dated: .....



## KEGWORTH COMMUNITY LIBRARY

### Safeguarding Incident Form

Please use this form to record an incident in the library. A copy of this form should go to our safeguarding officer. She will forward to the Central Duty Team as necessary.

Name of person completing form			
Name of person who witnessed the incident/received disclosure			
Date & time of safeguarding incident	Date		Time
Was the incident reported to the Police?	Yes/No	Police Crime Number	
Was the incident discussed with the Central Duty Team?	Yes/No	Date	Duty Manager
Has a verbal safeguarding referral been made?	Yes/No		
DETAILS OF THE CHILD OR VULNERABLE ADULT CONCERNED			
Name:			
Address (if known):			
Any other identifying information eg School/Institution/Carer			
WHAT HAPPENED? Describe the incident and/or the nature of the disclosure			