



# London Young Counselling

## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

London Young Counselling's mission is to provide emotional and therapeutic support to young people in schools. Through the process of counselling, young people may discuss experiences or incidents which have happened to them either through verbal disclosure, through play or art therapy or counsellor's may notice a physical sign. London Young Counselling counsellor's recognise their responsibility to keep young people safe and report all forms of maltreatment, neglect, physical abuse, mental abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse.

All employees, self-employed, associates and volunteers of London Young Counselling shall make the safety and protection of young people their first priority. We will meet our commitment to making young people safe by making all members aware of Keeping Children Safe in Education and London Young Counselling Child Protection Policy.

### Definitions:

*Young People* are people aged 0 to anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

*Staff* are all employees, self-employed, associates and volunteers of London Young Counselling.

### London Young Counselling will commit itself to:

- Taking the welfare of the young person as their first priority and reporting any concerns raised during sessions.
- Working with all young people referred to the service regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.
- Understanding that all young people have the right to protection from abuse and will take positive steps to ensure the protection.
- Supporting young people, staff or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns.
- Acting appropriately, professionally and effectively in instigating or co-operating with any subsequent process of any investigation.
- Guiding anyone making disclosures or involved with disclosures through the child protection process.

### London Young Counselling will safeguard young people by:

- Valuing, listening and respecting them.
- Adhering by safeguarding and child protection guidelines.
- Recruiting volunteers safely and ensuring all necessary checks are made, including DBS.
- Sharing information about the child protection policy with students and staff.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies that need to know appropriately.
- Providing effective management for volunteers through supervision, support and training.

All disclosures or concerns raised by a young person, either in face to face sessions, video or telephone sessions or chat sessions are all covered by this policy and will be treated the same.

The Children's Act 1989 and 2004 provides the overall framework for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The young person's welfare is to be the paramount consideration in all decision making.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 sets out what schools in England must do to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people.

### **Reporting and Recording:**

All London Young Counselling staff will be made aware of the correct way to report and record any safeguarding concerns raised in or outside counselling sessions. All staff will be made aware of the correct safeguarding and child protection contact at the school and will be made aware of the schools safeguarding and child protection procedures.

After each counselling session brief notes will be kept to adhere to the confidentiality agreement and client work will be discussed during their supervision. If a safeguarding case is raised these notes can be called upon if subpoenaed.

Any suspicions regarding a member of staff shall be reported to the Child Protection Officer as soon as possible and an 'At Risk Form' shall be completed.

Any staff who is made aware that an individual is an abuser or has been an abuser, is being abused, suspects that an individual is an abuser, is being abused or is informed that a young person is seriously self harming or is at risk of seriously self-harming or suicide, will ensure that they make a factual record of the statement given, the accusation made or their suspicions and write this information on the 'At risk form'.

Staff must then report this information to their designated Child Protection Officer both at London Young Counselling and their placement school. Ami Jameson is the Child Protection Officer for London Young Counselling and her email address is [schools@londonyoungcounselling.com](mailto:schools@londonyoungcounselling.com).

If all concerns are allayed having consulted with the appointed senior personnel, the staff member with the original concern should file a copy of the 'At Risk Form' with the client record file and forward a copy to the Child Protection Officer. The Child Protection Officer will also complete an 'At Risk Form' with information of what they have heard and from whom. All 'At Risk' forms must be signed and dated.

If following discussions, if there is still cause for concern the Child Protection Officer shall report the person to Social Services and/or the police in order for them to assess the risk and decide on any further action.

In addition, if the concern relates to any staff member (paid or unpaid) they will proceed in line with the Disciplinary Policy.

Where appropriate, a client who has reported information that gives rise to concern that a child or vulnerable adult is being or has been abused by themselves or by a third party, will normally be given the opportunity with support, to help make the disclosure themselves to the statutory authorities. Support and guidance from the Child Protection Officer is available or the Counsellor's Supervisor shall be consulted.

In the event that child protection issues affect a member of a regulated profession, e.g. teachers, medical practitioners, this allegation must be reported to the appropriate authorities. Circumstances may arise whereby the service must report to the police without consulting the client.

**It is the responsibility of the person to whom the disclosure is made to follow the procedure and share information regarding the disclosure to ensure the right measures are taken to make safe any young person.**

### **Online counselling sessions:**

Where counselling sessions are being held online between counsellor and client the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy must be followed in the same way. All online sessions whether, video, telephone or messenger will be done via ZOOM, the BACP approved online platform.

All counsellor's must take responsibly to continue to look out for signs that a young person might be at risk and should any concerns arise, record and report them the same as if they were carrying out a face to face session.

Where online sessions are being carried out, parents or carers consent must be gained and communication should be carried out to ensure the parents and carers are aware of the importance of being safe online, what platform is being used for the sessions and who the young person will be interacting with.

Counsellors should use a confidential email address and should not give out personal telephone numbers.

### **Confidentiality:**

Once counselling sessions start with a young person, in the initial session the counsellor must explain and make the young person aware of the confidentiality policy and agreement. Counsellor's must explain that all sessions are confidential, however, if the client is at harm, a harm to themselves or harm to someone else then the counsellor must report this to the safeguarding and child protection lead. It is then up to the young person to choose what they discuss in assessment and in sessions.

### **Safe recruitment:**

To safeguard young people from harm from those placed in positions of trust or care we ensure the following steps are taken before any direct work with young people is started:

- An application form has been submitted and a face to face interview conducted.
- A DBS clearance has been carried out for working with young people and will be updated on a three yearly basis or registered with the update service.
- Two satisfactory references have been returned.
- Copies of all counselling qualifications have been received and/or a letter from a tutor/college to confirm their place on a counselling course.
- London Young Counselling Handbook Agreement and Confidentiality Agreement have been signed and returned.
- Keeping Children safe in Education and Document training agreements have been signed and returned.
- Group or individual Supervision Agreements have been signed and returned.