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Ownership / Responsible for monitoring:	Ownership – Executive Director Monitoring – Head of People
Responsible body:	Mary's Meals UK Board

Purpose and context

It is the responsibility of the organisation to make sure our employees and volunteers do no harm to children or protected adults or expose them to the risk of harm and abuse; and that any concerns we have about children or protected adults' safety are reported to the appropriate authorities.

This policy exists to protect children and protected adults from harm and abuse, to affirm Mary's Meals UK's (MMUK) commitment to the safety and protection of those we come into contact with and to ensure that, in our work, we do not perpetuate or reinforce systematic or structural abuse and discrimination of children and protected adults. The policy provides definitions and it outlines our guiding principles, roles, responsibilities and approach towards implementation which will ensure that this commitment is integrated into all areas of our work.

Policy statement

MMUK raises awareness and funds across the UK to support the Mary's Meals vision that every child receives one daily meal in their place of education and that all those who have more than they need, share with those who lack even the most basic things.

We are not responsible for the safety of children at the schools MMUK attends for creating awareness and fundraising purposes. However, we have a duty to ensure that we undertake a job role risk assessment to ensure we minimise any risk to children who come into contact with our people, directly or indirectly, and that we will always take account of child safety.

Volunteering with Mary's Meals offers opportunities to a diverse workforce, which may, on occasion, be attractive to protected adults. We have a duty to ensure our people are well trained to ensure anyone that we come into contact with or enter into a volunteer agreement with are supported.

This policy is intended as a guide for MMUK employees, volunteers and other stakeholders. Its fundamental purpose is to provide protection from harm, primarily to children and protected adults, but also to Mary's Meals UK staff and volunteers and to the organisation itself.

Principles

- All children and protected adults have an equal right to development and their welfare should always be promoted.
- Children and protected adults should always be protected from any form of sexual, physical, verbal or emotional abuse, both from adults and other children.
- Children and protected adults should always be protected from exploitation.
- The data and information held on children and protected adults should be managed confidentially and sensitively.
- The health and safety of children and protected adults should always be paramount.
- All children have the right to participate freely in decisions which affect their lives and should be empowered to act upon this, recognising the importance of parents, families, and other carers in children's lives.

- Children and protected adults should always be treated with respect and valued as individuals and equals with respect to the context of their own culture, religion, and ethnicity.
- Children and protected adults should always feel empowered to raise and discuss any issues or concerns and should always be listened to.
- Any allegations of any form of abuse should always be treated seriously and appropriately and promptly dealt with. Victims and other involved parties should always be supported, and perpetrators must always be held to account.
- Investigation of any concerns regarding the allegations of harm or abuse of a child or protected adult should always be conducted with reference to national laws and employment rights and immediately referred to any relevant statutory authorities where appropriate.
- Our people should always be recruited, supported and trained with respect to child and protected adult protection and child health and safety.

The policy is intended as clear guidance on our belief that all children (as defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as anyone under the age of 18, even where defined otherwise in national contexts) must be protected from abuse or exploitation. It is accompanied by relevant procedures which are guided by the principles.

MMUK is highly committed to protecting children from exploitation and abuse. MMUK takes its duty of care seriously, particularly in protecting children and protected adults.

For regulated work, MMUK will only employ people who are members of the Protected Vulnerable Group (PVG) scheme for UK nationals, as it is against UK law for an organisation to employ someone who will undertake regulated work with children or protected adults if they are barred from doing so.

All of our people doing regulated work who are a UK national, outside Scotland, will have a DBS check (or national equivalent) every three years.

The Children Act 2004 states that every organisation should have a named person for safeguarding children and young people. The Head of People will have responsibility for safeguarding children issues as part of their responsibilities. The role will be the Designated Safeguarding Person and has a responsibility at both a strategic level within the organisation and on a day-to-day basis. This will include monitoring the charity's work on children and protected adults, providing guidance to the organisation where necessary.

Although we have safeguarding roles, safeguarding is the responsibility of every individual who represents this organisation; not just one department or person.

Our representatives agree to abide by our Code of Conduct and we will support staff and volunteers by developing resources, toolkits and forms of support.

Anyone connected with MMUK and travelling overseas to visit our programmes is obliged to sign and abide by the policy, code of conduct and procedures in place. Enforcement of this policy will be monitored through an annual Safeguarding Audit, risk assessments and a policy review every two years.

In addition to the Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct, our HR policies for recruitment, induction, staff development and training, performance management, disciplinary procedures, whistleblowing, complaints, investigation mechanisms, safeguarding procedures and HR policies and procedures are designed to support the protection of children and protected adults.

Adults in vulnerable circumstances

Whilst the primary safeguarding principles of this policy are with regards to children and protected adults, there may be instances of working with or alongside, or coming into contact with, adults in vulnerable circumstances.

Our People in Vulnerable Circumstances and Fundraising policy exists to identify and protect people in vulnerable circumstances from harm and abuse, to affirm our commitment to the safety and protection of those people and to ensure that, in our work, we do not perpetuate or reinforce systematic or structural abuse and discrimination.

The policy is intended as a guide for our employees to ensure we take reasonable care to identify supporters who may be in vulnerable circumstances, and what actions we will take if we suspect a person is vulnerable.

Reporting and accountability

MMUK has a legal duty to report any concerns about actual or suspected abuse to Disclosure Scotland.

Any allegations and concerns relating to our staff and partners in this crucial area are reported centrally to the Executive Director and any allegations will be fully investigated.

The Head of People will set up a safeguarding committee to meet quarterly to share good practice, advise on changes and actions required, and conduct a review of policy and procedures. In the event of any safeguarding incidents, the committee will be convened immediately and will report to the senior leadership team on the matter.

The policy will be reviewed every two years, and the procedures, and their implementation will be regularly monitored. A report on any incidents relating to child protection will also be made to the Board of Directors on an annual basis.

The policy has been approved and endorsed by MMUK's Board of Directors and is a key element of our organisational policy. Compliance with the policy is mandatory for all our employees, volunteers and other stakeholders.

For all concerns please follow the reporting process below:

Contact emergency services immediately and explain that your concern is of a safeguarding nature.

And;

Any concerns should be reported to the Executive Director, Daniel Adams, 07403 321 495 / Daniel.adams@marysmeals.org immediately where concerns are potentially serious, or within 24 hours otherwise.

In Daniel's absence please contact a senior member of the team or Head of People, Mary Lavrie, 0141 729 9185 / mary.lavrie@marysmeals.org.

Reporting framework

Our Safeguarding Policy Statement will be reviewed by the Head of People every two years.