### **Safeguarding Policy**

**Responsibilities**

* We have a responsibility to protect and to support the welfare of vulnerable members of our community, and to respect their needs and wishes; communicating honestly and with sincerity at all times. It is especially important that we know how to proceed if we suspect that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is at risk because of abuse or neglect. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, all children, young people and vulnerable adults have a positive and enjoyable experience of participation at Yogahub in a safe environment and are protected from abuse within Yogahubs activities.

**Definitions**

* Safeguarding is about embedding practices throughout the business to ensure the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults wherever possible.
* In contrast, child and adult protection is about responding to circumstances that arise.
* Abuse is a selfish act of oppression and injustice, exploitation and manipulation of power by those in a position of authority. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm.
* Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture. It can take a number of forms, including the following: Physical, Sexual, Emotional/Psychological, Bullying, Neglect, Financial (or material)

**Definition of a child:**

* A child is under the age of 18 (as defined in the United Nations convention on the Rights of a Child).

**Definition of Vulnerable Adults:**

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This may include, but is not limited to a person who is:

* Elderly and frail
* Has a mental illness including dementia
* Has a physical or sensory disability
* Has a learning disability
* Has a severe physical illness
* Is a substance user
* Is homeless

**Professional Boundaries**

Professional boundaries are what define the limits of a relationship between teacher and student. They are a set of standards we agree to uphold that allows this necessary and often close relationship to exist while ensuring the correct detachment is kept in place. Yogahub expects all staff and partners to protect the professional integrity of themselves and the business. The following professional boundaries must be adhered to (the list is not exhaustive):

* Be considerate of the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of students
* Be considerate of the preferences and limitations of students
* Recognise the power-imbalance between teacher and student and not harass or exploit students physically, psychologically, emotionally, sexually or financially
* Take appropriate steps to address any conflict of interest that may arise in dealings with students
* Avoid relationships that could compromise the integrity of the teacher-student relationship

**Managing Information**

All staff and partners must be aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. The public interest in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need to know basis only. All staff and partners must be aware that they cannot promise students that they will keep secrets.

**If you have Safeguarding concerns:**

If any teacher, volunteer, or member of staff has reason to believe that abuse is or may be taking place, they have a responsibility to act on this information. If a child, young person or vulnerable adult discloses abuse to you directly, use the following principles to respond to them:

* Assure them that you are taking the concerns seriously
* Do not be judgemental or jump to conclusions
* Listen carefully to what they are telling you, stay calm, get as clear a picture as you can.
* Use open ended questions
* Do not start to investigate or ask detailed or probing questions
* Explain that you have a duty to inform the local authority Safeguarding Team
* Reassure the child/vulnerable adult, but do not make promises of confidentiality, the child, young person or vulnerable adult needs to know you may need to share this information.

**Your responsibilities are:**

* To take action to keep the child, young person or vulnerable adult safe if possible. If an urgent police presence is required to keep someone safe-call 112.
* If the person needs urgent medical assistance such as an ambulance- call 112
* If a crime has occurred, be aware of the need to preserve evidence
* Clearly record what you have witnessed or been told, record your responses and any actions taken.

**Sharing Concerns with Parents/Carers/Guardians**

There is always a commitment to work in partnership with parents or carers where there are concerns about their children. Therefore, in most situations, it would be important to talk to parents, carers or guardians to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, there may be a reasonable explanation. He/she/they may have experienced an upset in the family such as a parental separation, divorce or bereavement.

**When it is not appropriate to share concerns with Parents/Carers/Guardians**

There are circumstances in which a child, young person or vulnerable adult might be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared (e.g. where a parent, carer or guardian may be responsible for the suspected abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately). In these situations or where concerns still exist, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Local Authority Safeguarding Board or the Gardai, who will advise on contacting parents.

* Document the concern and any actions or decisions taken
* Ensure all actions and decisions are fully recorded. It is possible that your records may be required as part of an enquiry, be as clear and accurate as you can.
* Record the reasons for your decisions and any advice given to you in making these decisions.
* Ensure that appropriate records are maintained, including details of: The nature of the safeguarding concern/allegation, the decision of the organisation to raise a concern or not.