

# **MOUNTVIEW**

## **Child Protection Policy**

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### **Glossary:**

- **Carer** – A person who is the designated carer of a young person.
- **Child/Young Person** – A person who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday.
- **Child Protection Officer (CPO)** – Designated Safeguarding Officer with responsibility for children/young people (as defined above).
- **Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)** – Responsible for promoting a safe environment for children and young people.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** – The person appointed to take lead responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection issues.

### **Further reading, references, and key contacts:**

- [Working Together 2015 \(updated 2018\)](#)
- [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- [Southwark Safeguarding](#)
- [Children Act 1989](#)
- [Children Act 2014](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)

### **Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):**

Froniga Lambert

020 8829 1079

[fronigalambert@mountview.org.uk](mailto:fronigalambert@mountview.org.uk)

### **Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, Child Protection Officer (CPO):**

Buse Tobin

020 8826 9219

[busetobin@mountview.org.uk](mailto:busetobin@mountview.org.uk)

### **Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) (Young People):**

Vanessa Bunn

020 4576 2394

[vanessabunn@mountview.org.uk](mailto:vanessabunn@mountview.org.uk)

### **Southwark Council, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):**

Eva Simcock

020 7525 0689

[gau.safeguarding@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:gau.safeguarding@southwark.gov.uk)

### **Southwark Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**

020 7525 1921

020 7252 5000 (out of hours)

email: [mash@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:mash@southwark.gov.uk)

### **NSPCC Helpline**

0808 800 5000

Any adult can call for advice/support about any child at any time.

## Policy Statement

Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts (Mountview) takes seriously the responsibility to protect and safeguard all children and young people who engage with our activities. Child abuse is never acceptable in any circumstance. Employees and all those working on behalf of Mountview have a professional and personal responsibility to be aware of the Mountview Child Protection Policy and to uphold it.

This policy should be considered and implemented alongside Mountview's [Safeguarding Policy](#), Whistleblowing Policy, Student Bullying Harassment and Misconduct Policy and Social Media Policy. These policies are supported by a series of procedures which cover all aspects of Mountview's work with children and young people. Please note that any type of concern relating to a child or a young person under the age of 18 should be reported by via the mechanisms outlined in this policy and the procedure map at appendix 1, rather than those in any other policies.

- The wellbeing and safety of every child is our primary concern. Mountview is committed to treating all children with respect and taking their views and opinions into account.
- Mountview is committed to providing support as soon as a potential problem emerges and is recognised in a child's life.
- Mountview ensures that young people are at the centre of the development of the services we offer them and takes their wishes and feelings into account.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial heritage, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity, are treated equally and have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse.
- Mountview will work in partnership with children, parents/carers, and other agencies where appropriate, to promote the welfare, health and development of children.
- Mountview recognises that abuse can include physical, emotional or sexual abuse and/or neglect.
- No member of staff will be employed should they be deemed a risk to young people. When appropriate, Mountview will carry out Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) and other background checks and staff must cooperate with us doing so.
- All staff will be made aware of the principles of the Child Protection Policy during induction and will receive regular updates about any amendments to related policies and procedures.
- The Child Protection Officer is Buse Tobin (Participation Administrator), and the person responsible for supervising this role is Froniga Lambert (Chief Operating Officer and Designated Safeguarding Lead).

### The purpose and scope of this policy statement

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Mountview including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, freelance and sessional staff and students. The policy is also applicable to anyone who uses the Mountview premises when there are children/young people on site.

The Children Act 2004 states that all organisations and individuals who offer services to young people are responsible for safeguarding them and promoting their welfare of children. No single professional should assume that someone else will pass on information which they think may be critical to keeping a child safe. To ensure that children and families receive the right help at the right time and the best outcomes for all

young people, everyone who comes into contact with young people must recognise that they have a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

If a professional has concerns about a child's welfare and believes they are suffering or likely to suffer harm, then they should share the information with the CPO, a DSO or the DSL. If none of these are available, concerns can be raised with any member of Mountview staff, who will then share the information via the designated channels. If this is not appropriate, the relevant Local Authority or the NSPCC should be contacted.

The Children Act requires that we give due regard to the wishes of children. Children are best protected when care is child-centred, and when professionals are clear about what is required from them individually and collaboratively.

Working Together 2018 records children's stated need for the following:

- **Vigilance:** to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- **Understanding and action:** to understand what is happening, to be heard and understood, and to have that understanding acted upon
- **Stability:** to be able to develop an on-going stable relationship of trust with those helping them
- **Respect:** to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not
- **Information and engagement:** to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans
- **Explanation:** to be informed of the outcome of assessments and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response
- **Support:** to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family
- **Advocacy:** to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views
- **Protection:** to be protected against all forms of abuse and discrimination and the right to special protection and help is a refugee

Professionals should be particularly vigilant towards a child's needs when a child:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic violence
- has returned home to their family from care
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect
- may not be able to convey their wishes and feelings as they want to (for example, due to communication difficulties or where English is not a first language)

## Recognising Abuse

All Mountview staff must be committed to the safeguarding of young people and always be vigilant in terms of the welfare of the young people in their care. This includes having an awareness of the four main categories of abuse:

- **Physical Abuse** is when someone hurts or harms a child or young person on purpose. It can cause injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts. Children who are physically abused may suffer violence such as being hit, kicked, poisoned, burned, slapped or having objects thrown at them. It can also include parents or guardians making up or causing the symptoms of illness in their child, for example giving them medicine they don't need and making the child unwell.
- **Emotional Abuse** is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It's sometimes called psychological abuse. It can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate, silence or ignore a child or conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It can also involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Sexual Abuse** - There are two types of sexual abuse – contact and non-contact abuse. And sexual abuse can happen in person or online. Contact abuse is where an abuser makes physical contact with a child or forces the child to make physical contact with someone else. Non-contact abuse is where a child is abused without being touched by the abuser. This can be in person or online and includes exposing a child to sexual acts. Signs of sexual abuse can be emotional, behavioural and/or physical and include knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age or the use of unexpected sexual language.
- **Neglect** is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and the most common form of child abuse. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision, education or health care. This can put them in danger, and it can have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing.

Whilst these are the most prevalent forms of abuse Mountview recognises that safeguarding action may also be needed to protect young people from:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Racist, ableist, homophobic or transphobic abuse
- Gender-based and domestic violence
- Radicalisation, criminal exploitation, and gangs
- Child sexual exploitation, grooming and trafficking
- Teenage relationship abuse
- Substance misuse
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Forced marriage

It is impossible to list all the ways in which abuse can be recognised but Mountview staff should remain vigilant. Some of the main signs that are seen to be indicators of abuse are:

- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
- becoming withdrawn
- seeming anxious
- becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
- lacking social skills and having few friends, if any
- poor bond or relationship with a parent
- knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age
- running away or going missing

Mountview staff should also be aware that unfortunately harm is most commonly caused to young people by someone they know such as

- a family member or person who is trusted and welcome within their family setting
- another young person
- an employee of an organisation offering a service such as education or care to young people

If a member of Mountview staff has any concerns about a young person or fellow staff member, they should be reported to the CPO, DSO or the DSL immediately. A record of these concerns will then be kept and, depending on the concerns, a referral to Southwark MASH or the LADO will be made or follow up discussions will be carried out and recorded until the matter is considered resolved.

## Responding and Reporting

Mountview staff may have to respond to concerns about the welfare of young people. This could relate to actual or alleged harm. In some cases, a young person we are working with may disclose abuse directly. Reporting concerns is an important step towards helping to keep young people safe and get them the support they need.

- Take any and all allegations, suspicions or concerns about abuse and/or a child's welfare seriously regardless of whether they have been raised by the child themselves, other young people, parents/carers or staff members.
- Report the concerns, regardless of their severity, to the CPO or relevant member of staff as a matter of urgency.
- Accept what is being said when concerns are raised without judgement (try to avoid displaying shock or disbelief).
- Don't promise confidentiality – never agree to keep secrets.
- Do not ask leading questions. Instead, ask open questions like "Is there anything else that you want to tell me?".
- Do not investigate, interrogate or decide if the child is telling the truth.
- The Child Protection concern reporting form is available at appendix 2 in this document

NSPCC advice for people listening and responding to disclosures from young people:

- **Show you care, help them open up:** Give your full attention to the child or young person and keep your body language open and encouraging. Be compassionate, be understanding and reassure them their feelings are important.
- **Take your time, slow down:** Respect pauses and don't interrupt the child – let them go at their own pace. Recognise and respond to their body language. And remember that it may take several conversations for them to share what's happened to them.
- **Show you understand, reflect back:** Make it clear you're interested in what the child is telling you. Reflect back what they've said to check your understanding – and use their language to show it's their experience.
- If a child tells you they are experiencing abuse, it's important to reassure them that they've done the right thing in telling you. Make sure they know that abuse is never their fault.
- Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the child's disclosure. This could make things a lot worse for the child.
- **Disclosures should never go unrecorded or unreported.**

It's important to keep **accurate and detailed notes** about any concerns you have about a child. You will need to share these with the CPO.

Records should include:

- the child's details (name, age, address) and the time/date
- what the child said or did or what you noticed that gave you cause for concern (if the child made a verbal disclosure, try to write down their exact words)
- any information the child has given you about an alleged abuser



Report concerns to the CPO, and DSO or the DSL as soon as possible. They will keep a record of what you have said and, if appropriate, liaise with the MASH team in confidence. It is then the responsibility of the MASH to take further action. Remember, it is not the responsibility of the CPO, or anyone at Mountview, to decide if a child is being abused or not. Our responsibility is to ensure that any relevant information about a young person is passed on to MASH in an accurate, clear and timely manner.

## **Code of Conduct for Staff, Volunteers and Trustees**

All staff, volunteers and trustees are expected to be aware of and follow Mountview's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies and related procedures.

### **Staff, volunteers, and trustees will always:**

- Treat all young people with dignity and respect
- Allow and make space for young people to talk about any concerns they have
- Treat all young people equally
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour and avoid any conduct that would lead any reasonable person to question their motives or intentions
- Take any allegations or concerns about abuse seriously and report them via the channels laid out in this document immediately

### **Staff, volunteers, and trustees will never:**

- Form a relationship with a young person that is an abuse of trust
- Engage in any inappropriate behaviour or contact of any kind (physical, verbal or sexual)
- Make suggestive remarks or threats to a young person
- Use inappropriate language
- Let any allegations, suspicions, or concerns about abuse go unreported

**No member of staff is permitted to enter into a sexual relationship with a student at Mountview. Staff who work with young people are reminded that the 'Sexual Offences Act 2003' states the age of consent is 18 years in cases where adults are employed in positions of power i.e. a teacher over young people.**

- never engage in or ignore from others abusive or discriminatory behaviour towards a young person and always remember that abuse can be physical, sexual, or emotional
- always promote equality and create an environment where young people feel safe to express themselves and empowered to share in decision-making
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback, never negative criticism
- never trivialise the feelings, concerns or beliefs expressed by a young person; this includes any concerns raised regarding abuse or discrimination
- always put the welfare of every young person in a group ahead of achieving goals
- never give personal money to a young person
- never invite a young person to an address or meeting outside of Mountview
- any meetings at Mountview campus must be agreed and recorded by a line manager
- always take registers accurately and be vigilant as to where young people are while they are under your supervision
- never share your phone number or any other personal contact details with a young person

**Registers are a useful tool in tracking behaviour. Patterns of attendance can be particularly useful in cases when abuse is alleged against another young person in a group. If an allegation of abuse is brought against a member of staff, registers can show what time a staff member has spent with a young person and who else may have been present. Internal procedures in relation to absence and lateness must be followed to ensure the usefulness of registers in safeguarding young people and to inform accurate reporting.**

## **Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff**

Any allegation or concern that a Mountview employee or volunteer has behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child must be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively and promptly, regardless of where the alleged incident took place.

In the event of an allegation being made against an employee (staff or volunteer), Mountview has a dual responsibility in respect of both the young person and employee. The same person must not have responsibility for dealing with welfare issues about a young person (CPO) and the staff employment issue (line manager).

Staff and volunteers should feel confident about challenging the behaviour of others and voicing concerns. If someone feels unable to report an incident within the organisation a report can be made to local child protection services or the police, or by contacting the NSPCC's Whistleblowing Advice Line: 0800 028 0285 / [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

**Mountview is legally required to alert the LADO to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children and young people has:**

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a young person/young people;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against a young person/young people;
- Behaved towards a young person in a way that indicates they are unsuitable for such work

The LADO will instruct Mountview on procedure and what information may be shared with the person who is the subject of an allegation. Mountview and the LADO will decide, in consultation with the Police and/or any other relevant agencies, what may be shared in situations that may possibly lead to a criminal investigation.

Subject to advice from the LADO, and to any consequent restrictions on the information that can be shared, Mountview will, as soon as possible, inform the accused person about the nature of the allegation, how enquiries will be conducted and the possible outcome.

In all instances Mountview will seek to ensure that any staff member is treated fairly and honestly and that they are supported to understand the concerns expressed and processes involved. They will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation and the implications for any disciplinary or related process.

**Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts is based in the borough of Southwark therefore Southwark Council is our local authority. The LADO in Southwark is Eva Simcock who can be contacted on 020 7525 0689 or via email at [eva.simcock@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:eva.simcock@southwark.gov.uk).** The LADO is mainly designated to liaise with organisations who work with young people.

In Southwark, the LADO role is based within the Quality Assurance Unit.

020 7525 3297 - QAU duty number

020 7525 0387 - Head of social work improvement and quality assurance

## **Making a referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**

If the CPO, a DSO or the DSL at Mountview feels any information they have regarding a young person suggests that they may be experiencing abuse or neglect, this information will be passed on to MASH, usually by the CPO. Before making a MASH referral, practitioners (via the CPO) should talk to parents/carers who hold parental responsibility about their concerns. A referral can be made without consent if telling parents/carers can increase the risk to the child.

The MASH brings together key agencies to work together to assess risk, share information and make proportionate decisions jointly about the best way to safeguard and meet the needs of vulnerable children and families.

The screening work undertaken by MASH will determine the level of support or intervention required to ensure children and families receive the right help at the right time. Professionals making referrals to MASH will receive an outcome within 5 working days.

Southwark Council advise that individuals who wish to report or discuss any concerns regarding young people should call their **MASH Team** on:

020 7525 1921 (during core hours 9am to 5pm)

020 7525 5000 (out of hours)

[MASH@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:MASH@southwark.gov.uk)

### **Concerns can also be reported in writing to:**

MASH Team

Sumner House

Sumner Road

London

SE15 5QS

If you are worried about a child and wish to seek advice and guidance before making a referral, you can contact the Southwark Duty Social Worker for a consultation on:

Tel: 0207 525 1921 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)

Tel: Out of hours 0207 525 5000

## Young People's Workshops and Projects

For people aged 6-18 years Mountview runs Generation Next and other activities and projects for young people. For the duration of related workshops, we offer a secure environment where young people can explore and develop their creativity.

- In line with the Mountview Health & Safety Policy, we ensure all studios and areas where young people will spend time are safe, clean and fit for purpose before young people arrive.
- Young people will not be permitted to attend classes without returning a parent/carer. signed enrolment form containing 1) Parent/carer contact details, 2) Alternative emergency contact details, 3) Details of medical conditions or additional needs we should be aware of.
- It is understood that any young person under the age of 12 years old will be collected and picked up from Mountview by a parent/carer known to us, unless we have been informed of alternative arrangements (like someone under 12 having written permission to leave with a named older sibling).
- Young people over the age of 12 years may make their own way to and from Mountview with written permission from a parent/carer.
- Young people under the age of 12 years will not be allowed, under any circumstances, to leave Mountview unaccompanied during class or break times. Those over the age of 12 may leave with prior parent/carer permission. However, they must sign in and out with a designated member of Mountview staff giving a time frame in which they will return.
- During break times young people will not always be directly supervised but there will always be a designated member of Mountview staff present in recreational areas to ensure the environment is safe and secure.
- If a young person is absent for more than three consecutive sessions without prior arrangement, a parent/carer will be contacted and the whereabouts of the young person during these sessions will be confirmed. Consistent lateness will also prompt contact with parents/carers.
- When planning and delivering lessons for young people Mountview staff will consider who is in the group they are working with. Material will always be exciting and stimulating for all members without being challenging in terms of any young person's personal experiences, age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.
- Young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their own decisions and choices and behave in a manner that is respectful to their peers and Mountview staff, any behaviour deemed inappropriate will be treated seriously. A parent/carer will be contacted by the CPO where a young persons' behaviour gives cause for concern. If the situation cannot be resolved then a young person may no longer be able to attend Mountview.
- We make every effort to ensure that they do not, but incidents may occur during workshops at Mountview which cause distress to a young person. In this case, and if required, parents/carers of any young person involved will be informed and invited to discuss the matter with the CPO and any other relevant member of Mountview staff.

## **Recruitment, DBS Check and Training Procedures**

Mountview recognises that the safe recruitment of staff employed to work with young people is one of the most important aspects of child protection and takes related procedures seriously.

The recruitment process for staff who will work with young people will include a face-to-face meeting. The Mountview CPO and their line manager must be satisfied that any person employed in this capacity meets the requirements of the job description and person specification and be suitable to work specifically with children and young people. Good references or a good reputation as an employee of Mountview, whilst highly valued, do not replace vigilance and awareness of key safeguarding procedures.

### **Mountview expects that someone who is suitable to work with young people will be:**

- Passionate about creating safe environments where young people can be creative
- An effective communicator and a good listener
- Calm, patient and confident
- Good at building working relationships with others and being part of a team
- Able to see and consider different perspectives
- Proactive and attentive regarding the safety of young people

### **Recruitment protocol:**

- Mountview will seek references for staff employed to work with young people, requesting specific comment on suitability to work with children.
- Mountview will take a copy of an original passport from all staff employed to work with young people as proof of identity.
- A member of staff who works regularly and is unsupervised with young people must have an enhanced DBS check that has been processed within the last three years.
- Any member of staff employed by Mountview to work with young people who does not have an enhanced DBS check will be shadowed by a member of staff who is DBS checked until a check is completed.
- If an individual has a recent DBS check from another organisation where they held a similar position and level of responsibility there is no requirement to complete a new check.
- **DBS checks must be clear of any concerning information relating suitability to work with young people.**
- There will be members of Mountview staff on site who do not have DBS checks. They will not have been employed to work unsupervised with young people or be alone with them.
- Background and enhanced DBS checks do not 100% protect young people and all employees must remain attentive and responsive to any concerning behaviour.
- Mountview is registered with uCheck, a government-approved online system for processing DBS checks. Many freelance practitioners have up-to-date enhanced DBS certificates due to being engaged in other freelance employment with responsibility for young people. Where staff engaged to work with young people do not have DBS certification, Mountview will process checks with and for them.

### Training considerations:

- Mountview understands that to safeguard effectively it is essential that all staff who work with young people are well informed and trained where appropriate in child protection.
- The CPO at Mountview is responsible for ensuring that their knowledge of current legislation and best practice in child protection is up-to-date. They are supported in their role by DSOs and the DSL. Regular training sessions with external organisations, usually the NSPCC, and knowledge of updated or new legislation relating to safeguarding released by the Government and other recognised institutions form part of these roles.
- The CPO and/or Participation Manager at Mountview will deliver regular Child Protection Policy update sessions for all staff that work with young people.
- As part of their induction each member of staff that will work with young people must confirm receipt and awareness of the short version of our Child Protection Policy. This document outlines the most important and relevant aspects of child protection at Mountview.
- **The CPO, DSOs and DSL will be familiar with all aspects of the short and long policies and will be available for questions and clarification should any member of staff wish to develop their understanding further. All staff members working with young people are urged to read the full Mountview Child Protection Policy and ask questions about the policy and related procedures at any time.**
- The Participation Department will seek regular opportunities for group training sessions and sharing of best practice between full-time and freelance staff working with young people.
- If an event at Mountview or in the wider community occurs which indicates that staff should be updated on a safeguarding issue immediately, training sessions can be called at any time.
- At every training and update session staff are reminded to discuss any concerns about young people with the CPO as soon possible.

**Once a concern is raised by a member of staff, Mountview is committed to ensuring the concern is discussed regularly and the situation monitored until the issue is considered resolved or no longer relevant by both the staff member who raised it, and the CPO. A full record of the original report and the ongoing discussions will be kept.**

## **Activities outside Mountview**

Ordinarily, Mountview activities for young people are based at Mountview, 120 Peckham Hill Street, London SE15 5JT. Occasionally, Mountview will deliver projects or training offsite and take young people to external venues. Before such events a risk assessment will be completed in line with the Mountview Health & Safety Policy. Once it has been deemed that the offsite project poses no unreasonable risk it can proceed.

In instances where training or projects are delivered outside of Mountview, we will endeavour to follow the procedures and policies of the organisation or venue we are delivering at. If an instance occurs where there is a conflict between our policies and the policies of an external organisation, the practitioner involved should make a decision about which policy to follow and make a record of the situation that led them to make their decision regarding which policy to follow.

### **In instances where Mountview takes groups of our young participants off campus:**

- An email and consent form will be sent to a young person's parent/carer. Return of the signed consent form will indicate that the parent/carer is happy for the young person to attend the trip and that they have received and understood a letter containing the following information:
  - The reason for the trip
  - Content e.g. show details for theatre trips
  - Event location and timings
  - Information about travel to and from the location
  - The name of the trip chaperone who will be responsible for all child protection and health and safety considerations, and how to contact them
- The named chaperone will be responsible for the safeguarding and wellbeing of all students on the trip including registering their arrival and departure. The chaperone will be supported by other members of Mountview staff where group numbers require.
- The named chaperone will securely hold the following information about each young person in the group:
  - Any relevant medical information
  - Contact details for parents/carers
  - Emergency/alternative contact information
  - Where appropriate, the young persons' contact details in case of lateness
- After a trip is complete and all young people have been signed out, the chaperone will inform Mountview's CPO by email (in instances where they are not this person) that the trip is complete.
- If any concerning incidents occur during a trip, the chaperone will let the CPO know immediately and record them in writing as soon as is possible.
- The chaperone will return any securely held information about young people to secure storage at Mountview as soon as possible.



## Record Keeping

Mountview understands that well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. The below procedure outlines how Mountview obtains necessary information about the young people we work with and how we store this information in a safe and effective manner.

Mountview asks that all students complete application and enrolment forms before they attend classes with us. These forms ask for details, such as a student's own and their parent/carers contact details and any medical or other conditions we should be aware of. We will occasionally ask for additional forms to be completed, giving specific consent for special instances such as taking students offsite.

**When recording and storing any information regarding young people Mountview is committed to the following procedures:**

- All information will be kept in a locked drawer and/or password protected computer. These will only be accessible by the CPO, their supervisor and the Mountview Executive team.
- Information will be kept confidential and only shared if specific permission is granted. Information that might be shared includes:
  - **Email addresses:** Primarily, email addresses provided will only be used by the CPO. A designated workshop leader may be granted specific permission from the CPO or Participation Manager to make appropriate and required contact with parents/carers.
  - **Medical conditions and specific needs:** Parents/carers are made aware that if a young person's experience at Mountview can be improved or made safer by informing staff who work with a young person about conditions or specific needs, they will be disclosed. Disclosures will be made in discussion between the staff member and the CPO, a note will be added to the relevant class register.

**Registers must always be kept up to date and secure. Staff must keep registers with them while teaching workshops in case of an evacuation, but they must make sure that the registers are not accessed by young people. Amendments to registers should only be made by the CPO or a designated project leader with administration responsibilities.**

- Any forms relating to consent to make photographic and recorded images of young people will be kept for as long as the images are stored and used by Mountview.
- Once the time has come to destroy information it will be deleted anywhere it is kept (in both digital and hard copy). Registration and consent forms and photographs will be shredded and destroyed using a professional document disposal system.

## Information Sharing

Mountview has a responsibility to keep records of any concerning information or incidents that occur involving young people. If social services decide to investigate allegations of harm or abuse relating to a young person that has attended Mountview, they may require these records.

Personal information held about young people is subject to a duty of confidence and should normally not be disclosed without their consent. However, the law permits the disclosure of confidential information where it is necessary to safeguard a young person.

**Concerning information is anything considered unusual or out of character for a young person or anything that suggests that they may be experiencing or be at risk of experiencing harm or significant harm.**

**Recording concerning information does not automatically mean a referral is made, however clear records showing a path that leads to a referral are vital if one is made.**

- Any concerning information must be recorded following the below guidelines:
  - write reports as soon as possible
  - use clear language that can be understood by anyone who reads it
  - be as concise and as accurate as possible
  - do not show any opinion or bias
  - Records of concerning information must be kept for 75 years.

**Most allegations of abuse do not occur until many years after the abuse took place. In these instances, records kept regarding a young person could prove vital.**

Occasional requests to share information or records held about a young person or staff member who has or currently attends classes or works with us require consideration of what data should be shared in line with General Data Protection Regulation and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Neither General Data Protection Regulation nor the Human Rights Act 1998 are barriers to sharing information. Both acts balance the rights of the information subject and the need to share information to ensure safety. Fears about information sharing must not obstruct the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people at risk of abuse or neglect.

### **Mountview's procedure when sharing any personal or sensitive information held:**

When a request for information is received Mountview will ask for the following information from the requestor in writing:

- Their identity
  - What information is specifically required
  - A clear and legitimate reason for the request
  - An explanation of how the information will help in safeguarding
  - Details about how the information will be used and stored if shared
- Once this is provided and Mountview is satisfied that we have the information requested, we will consider if the records we hold are likely to safeguard and protect the person they are about. We will do this by ensuring our records are:

- Necessary and proportionate
- Relevant
- Adequate and of good quality
- Accurate and up to date (if historical explain why)
- Secure (if they will be kept secure after they have been passed on)
- Mountview may seek the advice of a third party, such as Southwark MASH the LADO or the NSPCC, about whether the information requested should be shared.
- Mountview will then make an informed decision and will endeavour to do this in a timely manner so as not to impede any investigation.
- If Mountview decides to disclose records we will ensure they are shared securely and, while consent is not needed to share information, if appropriate we will contact the person we are sharing information about to let them know what is happening.
- Whatever the outcome, Mountview will keep clear records of information requests, final decisions and how information is shared, if it is.

## **Photography and Recorded Images**

Mountview will, with permission from parents/carers, take photographs and recorded images that include the young people we work with, as valuable evaluation, promotional and recording tools.

Alongside this, Mountview does not wish to prevent parents/carers or other invited spectators being able to take legitimate photographs or recorded images.

Mountview is committed to providing a safe environment for all young people and understands that there are child protection considerations related to the use of images of children and young people. The procedures below will be followed to protect young people from inappropriate or uninformed use of their images.

- Enrolment forms for Mountview projects, completed by parents/carers, will record optional consent for images of their child to be taken by Mountview.
- Where children perform for an invited audience (normally consisting of friends and family of other performers) audience members will be reminded that any images recorded are for personal use only and should not be shared on publicly accessible social media unless everyone in the images and their parents/carers have consented to this.
- Care will be taken to ensure that any images taken by Mountview are not sexual or exploitative in nature or open to obvious misinterpretation and misuse.
- Any concerns relating to the misuse of images of young people will be acted upon swiftly in accordance with our reporting procedures outlined in our Child Protection Policy.

***Any images taken by an audience must be used privately and the following procedure points relate only to images taken by Mountview.***

- If consent to take images of a child is not given by a parent/carer, Mountview will take every precaution to ensure that images of that child are not taken and if they are, that these images are destroyed immediately.
- Images will not be published with any identifying information beyond the young person's first name and the project they were involved in.
- Anyone employed to take images of young people who is not a member of Mountview staff will always be supervised by a member of Mountview staff designated to work with young people and will be reminded that Mountview will hold the copyright to any images taken. They must confirm having read the Mountview's Child Protection Policy before commencing a project.

**'Images' relates to still photography and film including sound.**

## Telephone and Text Message Contact Procedure

Telephone conversations (via mobile phone and landline) and text messages (via mobile phone) are one of the ways for Mountview to contact young people and their parents/carers. The following procedure outlines how telephone conversations and text messages may be used to contact young people.

- When registering for any of our projects for young people, parents/carers will be asked to sign an enrolment form giving permission for Mountview to contact the young person via a telephone number provided, where appropriate. Parents/carers will decide whether this is their own or their child's direct number.

Where a number given is the young person's own direct number:

- Only telephone numbers provided by parents/carers are used to contact young people.
- Any telephone conversation should only take place through a Mountview on campus landline number (usually 020 8826 9219) or other Mountview designated phone numbers.
- Telephone contact should only be made by the Mountview CPO, a DSO or a designated Chaperone in the event of an offsite project, and under no circumstances should any other member of staff make telephone contact with young people.
- Brief factual text message conversations may also take place between young people and the CPO, a DSO or a designated Chaperone in the event of an offsite project. These conversations should only take place via a Mountview designated mobile phone number.
- All contact with young people should be about Mountview-related activities and no personal conversations should take place.
- No aggressive or sexual language or images, or abbreviations that could be misunderstood (e.g. LOL and emojis) should be used.
- Mountview will only contact young people by telephone between 9am and 10pm. Contact will only be made after 7pm in the context of an evening workshop or external trip.
- If a young person discloses concerning information via a telephone or text message this must be reported to the CPO who will act accordingly in line with the Mountview Child Protection Policy.

## **Email Contact Procedure**

Due to the nature of our work with young people Mountview may sometimes need to contact young people about workshops or projects to improve their experiences. Such emails may include preparatory information, feedback forms or similar.

Mountview is fully aware that guidelines must be followed to ensure that young people are contacted in a responsible and regulated manner.

The following procedure must be adhered to when making contact with young people via email:

- When registering for any of Mountview's projects for young people, parents/carers will be asked to sign an enrolment form giving permission for Mountview to contact the young person via a given email address. Parents/carers will decide whether this is their own or their child's direct email address. The following procedure relates to instances when the address given belongs to the young person directly.
- Only email addresses provided by parents/carers are used to contact young people.
- Staff members must only use Mountview email accounts to contact young people. These email accounts can be accessed at any time by the CPO, a DSO or the DSL.
- All email correspondence with young people must be saved and kept (both incoming and outgoing) and can be accessed at any time by the CPO, a DSO or the DSL.
- All contact with young people should be related to Mountview and no personal or 'spam' emails should be sent.
- No aggressive or sexual language or images, or abbreviations that could be misunderstood (e.g. LOL and emojis) should be used.
- Mountview will only contact young people by email between 9am and 7pm.
- If a young person discloses concerning information via an email to Mountview this must be reported to the CPO who will act accordingly in line with the Mountview Child Protection Policy.

## **Protecting Young People from Harm Online**

Mountview does not actively encourage young people to use the internet or social networking sites while engaged in activities at Mountview. While it is recognised that the internet can be beneficial for young people, in terms of learning, communication, development and exploration, it can also put young people in harmful situations and expose them to experiences that they find upsetting. Adults working with young people should be mindful of the risks young people face when online.

Some harmful content is illegal, like child sexual abuse images or content promoting terrorism. Other material might not be illegal but can still cause children harm, such as content promoting eating disorders. Content might be harmful to children and young people because it isn't age or stage appropriate. It may be overly influential, causing children to develop unrealistic expectations for themselves or others. Harmful content may be user-generated or created using Artificial Intelligence (AI).

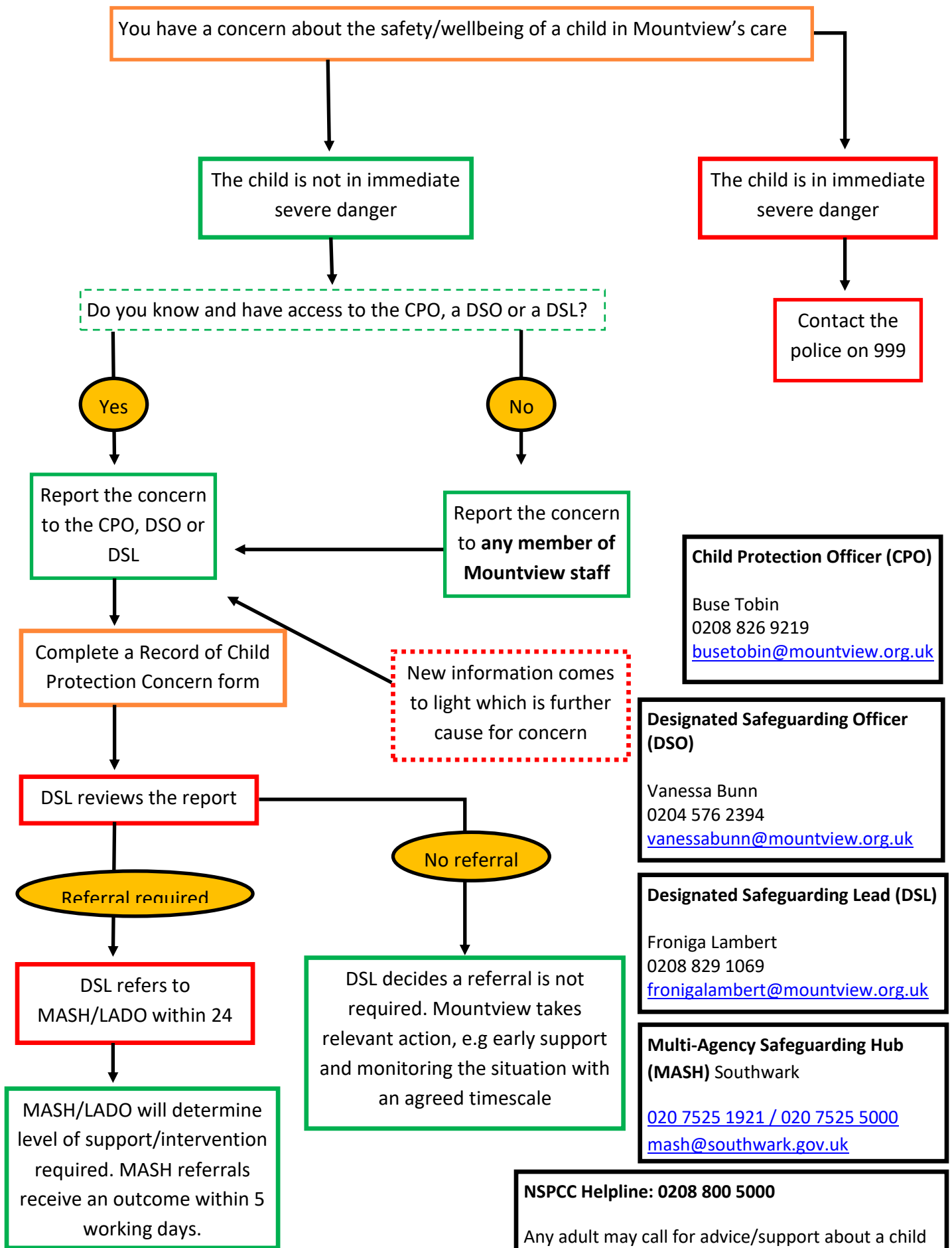
**Mountview staff, or anyone engaged by Mountview should not connect with young people on social media platforms or use social networks to communicate with young people under any circumstances.**

If a young person who is a member of Mountview discloses that they are receiving abusive, threatening or inappropriate messages online we will offer the below advice:

- Do not respond to any abusive messages or engage with the person sending them.
- Print and save abusive messages. Most cases of online abuse are now illegal in the UK. If a decision is made to prosecute the perpetrator, copies of the messages will be vital.
- Look at site privacy and safety settings for instructions on how to block a user or account who is sending abusive messages.
- Remove any personal information from the site in question e.g. addresses/contact details. Mountview will always, where appropriate, tell a young person's parent/carer about any disclosure of online abuse and support where possible any decisions made about escalating the matter.

The [Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre \(CEPO\)](#) and NSPCC provide useful advice for young people and their parents/carers on how to stay safe online and the next steps to take if someone has experienced online abuse.

## Appendix 1—Child Protection concerns—Procedure map





**APPENDIX 2 – Record of Child Protection Concern**

<b>Your details (person completing form)</b>	
Your name:	
Your role:	
Date/time report completed:	
<b>Young person's details</b>	
Young person's name:	
Young person's address:	
Young person's date of birth:	
<b>Incident/Disclosure details</b>	
Date/time of incident or disclosure and names of those present:	
Information about the nature of incident or disclosure (location/relationship to young person/method of disclosure i.e. verbal/written):	
Concise account of what was said by the young person, using <u>as many of their own words as possible</u> : <b>OR</b> Concise account of concern, including name of whoever has reported it (in the case that it's not the young person directly).	<i>(please use additional pages where necessary)</i>
Action taken:  <i>Should include referral to CPO, DSO or DSL</i>	
<b>External agencies contacted (for CPO, DSO or DSL to complete)</b>	
MASH/LADO - (details of name of contact and advice received):	
Police - (details of name of contact and advice received):	
Other - (details of name of contact and advice received):	