



## **Safeguarding Policy**

<b>Owned by</b>	Designated Safeguarding Lead
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## **STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The Tree Council believes that it is unacceptable for a child, young person or vulnerable adult to experience abuse of any kind. The Tree Council recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of employees, direct volunteers, freelancers (ambassadors), all children and vulnerable adults regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. The charity will strive to ensure that all employees, volunteers, freelancers (ambassadors) and children are able to both participate in and enjoy school programmes, community events and learning opportunities in a happy, safe and secure environment.

At The Tree Council, the safeguarding team consists of a Trustee, a Safeguarding Sponsor (CEO), Designated Safeguarding Lead (Director of Programmes, Comms & Partnerships) and Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Head of the National Schools Programme). The Tree Council recognises that schools, local authorities and other members and partner organisations will most likely have their own safeguarding policy, however, there is a requirement for this Tree Council policy to be followed and adhered to at any Tree Council-led school programme or community event either off or online. As such it may be appropriate for the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead at The Tree Council to liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the school, youth facility local authority (social services, police) or partner organisation.

## **THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is:

- To outline the procedures in place to protect children and vulnerable adults
- To provide employees, direct volunteers, freelancers (ambassadors) and programme leaders guidance on the procedures they must adopt to protect themselves, children and vulnerable adults
- To provide employees, volunteers, freelancers (ambassadors) and programme leaders guidance on the procedures they should adopt in the event they suspect an employee, direct volunteer, freelancers (ambassador), child or vulnerable adult may be experiencing or be at risk of harm
- To provide schools, local authorities, Tree Warden Coordinators, contractors or any other external organisation with information on the procedures that the charity will implement to ensure the safety and well-being of all children and vulnerable adults

## **WHO DOES THIS POLICY APPLY TO?**

This policy applies to all employees, board of trustees, direct volunteers, freelancers (ambassadors), agency staff and students representing The Tree Council.

## **THE CHARITY'S COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & VULNERABLE ADULTS**

The Tree Council is committed to safeguarding both children and vulnerable adults by implementing the following policies and procedures:

1. The charity will deliver a consistent recruitment process for all positions. This will include the following procedures:

- Applying the Equal Opportunities Policy throughout all stages
- CV screening to ensure all candidates are suitable and capable
- Ensuring at least two employees are involved in the interview(s) and/or assessment
- Requesting two employment references

- Checking right to work in the UK
- Where appropriate, conducting enhanced DBS checks with barred list on employees and direct volunteers of The Tree Council

2. The charity will ensure employees, direct volunteers and freelancers (ambassadors) of The Tree Council will receive training, as appropriate, linked to safeguarding:

- Health & Safety Training
- Physical Contact Policy
- Safeguarding Training
- Enhanced Safeguarding Training for the Designated Safeguarding Leads and Senior Management Team
- Accessibility & Inclusion Training

3. The appointment of a Designated Safeguarding Lead who will have the following responsibilities:

- Provide support, supervision and advice for any person with a safeguarding or child protection concern
- Have a thorough understanding of The Tree Council's safeguarding policy and procedures
- Act as the main point of contact with appropriate agencies or local authorities (social services, police) in relation any safeguarding issues or concerns
- Liaise with the Senior Management Team and all employees of the charity to ensure policies and procedures relating to safeguarding are compliant with the latest regulations and fully implemented
- Ensure own safeguarding training is up to date and that all employees and direct volunteers are trained
- Liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead at schools, local authorities and partner groups and organisations if there is a disclosure or safeguarding concern
- Actively record, log, manage and review all incidences, holding data in compliance with the latest data protection regulations and requirements
- Monitor and authorise safeguarding risk assessments (required for every public event)
- Uphold code of best practise, ensuring hazard codes, control measures are applied and adhered to, and that appropriate levels of responsibility are in place to minimise risk.

4. Ensure programmes and events are only organised in a safe environment and area.

5. Ensure photos and videos of children and vulnerable adults are not shared or posted on social media sites, unless parental permission is provided. Any schools, local authorities, Tree Warden network or partner organisations should refer to their own social media policy regarding photos and videos.

6. In the event of an emergency, employees, direct volunteers and freelancers (ambassadors) of The Tree Council will endeavour not to be alone with a child or vulnerable adult. If it is necessary, it will be time limited and a senior member of the team must be informed of the situation immediately.

7. All employees and direct volunteers to adhere to lone working buddy system. Freelance ambassadors will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times.

8. Working with schools

- Check the school has an up-to-date safeguarding policy and clearly defined procedures.
- Request a safeguarding risk assessment if working directly with a school to deliver a workshop in school.

## **Online Safeguarding**

- All TTC employees are aware of the importance of online safety rules and expectations.
- Online safeguarding policy and procedures will be regularly reviewed and updated to align with latest national and international standards of online safety.
- Safeguarding Team responsibilities for online safeguarding:
  - o Administer staff training where required as part of Tree Council overall training requirements
  - o Keep up to date with the latest developments in technology and online safety
  - o Ensure all staff are aware of existing online policy and procedures
  - o Regular review of monitoring provisions
  - o Regular review as part of the charity's annual risk assessments
- Clearly documented and accessible procedures in place for responding to different online risks e.g. sexting, upskirting, online bullying and online grooming
- All employees are aware of sources of support for online safety issues, such as the Professionals Online Safety Helpline, Reporting Harmful Content, CEOP and Internet Watch Foundation

## **Working with schools online**

Check the school has an up-to-date online safeguarding policy and clearly defined procedures.

## **Delivering online workshops using Zoom or other platforms**

All partners that deliver online workshops will also comply with our agreed protocols. We have set up protocols when using Zoom or other platforms to ensure this environment is safe and secure for all participants during workshops.

## **WHAT IS DEFINED AS ABUSE?**

A basic definition of abuse is that it is abuse of power by a person who is developmentally and/or stronger than another, resulting in some distress, harm or neglect of the victim.

Child abuse is a term which describes all the ways in which a child's development and health are damaged by the actions or in-actions of others, usually adults. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or an institutional or community setting by those known to them or by a stranger. Although different terms are used to describe particular types of abuse, these often overlap, and many children suffer effects of a range of destructive forms of behaviour.

The following definitions are based on those from Working Together to Safeguard Children (Department of Health, Home Office, Department of Education and Employment, 2010). Below the definitions are listed signs and symptoms which may indicate abuse, however, there may be other explanations.

Physical Abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child or vulnerable adult whom they are looking after. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention, they get through having a sick child or looking after a vulnerable adult. Physical abuse, as well as being the result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

Signs of physical abuse may include:

- Unexplained or hidden injuries, lack of medical attention
- Finger marks, broken bones, cigarette burns, cuts and grazes
- Afraid of physical contact
- Violent behaviour during role play
- Unwillingness to change clothes
- Aggressive language and use of threats
- Bruising in unusual areas
- Changing explanation of injuries
- Cowering
- Not wanting to go home with a parent or carer

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment which may cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the individual's emotional development or state of mind. It may involve making a person feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing the victim to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment, although it may occur alone.

Signs of emotional abuse may include:

- Reverting to younger behaviour
- Bad behaviour and/or erratic behaviour
- Nervousness
- Sudden underachievement
- Stealing and/or lying
- Crying
- Withdrawn
- Cringing
- Aggression
- Bribery by parent or carer
- Lack of confidence
- Isolation from peers and unable to communicate
- Afraid of authoritative figures
- Rocking
- Not wanting to socialise
- Self-infliction
- Attention seeking
- Clingy

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, oral sex, or non-penetrative acts such as fondling. Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children at or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.

Signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Exposure to sexual matters in words, play and drawings
- Being sexually provocative with adults
- Disturbed sleep
- Nightmares/bed wetting
- Secretive relationships with adults and children
- Stomach pains with no apparent cause
- Inappropriate behaviour
- Change in behaviour
- Rejecting physical contact or demanding attention
- Physical evidence such as marks of bruising
- Withdrawn

Neglect is when there is a persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the person's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect the child or vulnerable adult from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs of neglect may include:

- Looking ill-cared for and unhappy
- Withdrawn
- Aggressive
- Lingering injuries or health problems
- Lack of appropriate clothing
- Complaining of cold and hunger
- Not wanting to communicate
- Attention seeking
- Use of bad language
- Lack of confidence and low self-esteem
- Jealousy
- Dirty
- Body sores
- Significantly underweight
- Behaviour problems/often in trouble

Bullying is not always easy to define as it can take many forms and is usually repeated over a period of time.

There are three types of bullying:

1. Physical – for example: hitting, kicking and theft
2. Verbal – for example: racism or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling
3. Emotional – for example: isolating an individual from activities

Bullying will include:

- Deliberate hostility and aggression towards a victim
- A victim who is weaker and less powerful than the bully or bullies
- An outcome which is always painful and distressing for the victim

Bullying may include:

- Other forms of violence
- Sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing
- Tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation
- Radical taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Unwanted physical contact or abusive or offensive comments of a sexual nature

Emotional and verbal bullying is more common than physical violence and it can also be difficult to cope with or prove.

Bullying can result in children or vulnerable adults becoming vulnerable and isolated. These particular children or vulnerable adults could then become an easy target for adult abusers. Concerns about bullying should be dealt with in the same way as concerns about child abuse.

## Online abuse

Sexting: Sexting is sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photographs or videos, primarily between mobile phones, of oneself to others. It may also include the use of a computer or any digital device.

Upskirting is a colloquial term referring to the action of placing equipment such as a camera or mobile phone beneath a person's clothing to take a voyeuristic photograph without their permission.

Cyberbullying, or cyberharassment is a form of bullying or harassment using electronic means.

Online grooming is when someone builds an online relationship and emotional connection with a young person or child and tricks or pressures them into doing something sexual online, for example holding a sexual conversation, sharing naked images/videos of themselves or through a live webcam.

## **WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF SOMEONE REPORTS ANY FORM OF ABUSE TO YOU?**

Disclosure – here is a basic guideline of what actions you should follow should anyone disclose to you that they are being subject to any form of abuse:

DO – here is what you should do:

- Do treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the child or vulnerable adult as if you are believing what they are saying
- Do tell the child or vulnerable adult they are right to tell you
- Do reassure them that they are not to blame
- Do be honest about your own position, who you have to tell and why
- Do tell the child or vulnerable adult what you are doing and when and keep them up to date with what is happening
- Do take further action – you may be the only person in a position to prevent further abuse – tell your Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately
- Do write down everything which has been said and what was done

DON'T – here is what you should not do:

- Don't make promises you can't keep
- Don't interrogate the child or vulnerable adult – it is not your job to carry out the investigation – this will be up to the police, social services and local authorities, who have experience in this
- Don't cast doubt on what child or vulnerable adult has told you
- Don't interrupt or change the subject
- Don't say anything that makes the child or vulnerable adult feel responsible for the abuse
- Don't do nothing – make sure you tell your Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately - they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be understood by all those working with children and vulnerable adults, particularly in the context of child protection. The charity recognises that the only purpose of confidentiality is to benefit the child or vulnerable adult. We recognise that all matters relating to abuse and child protection are confidential.

## **WHISTLEBLOWING**

Employees will usually be the first to know when someone inside or connected with the charity is doing something illegal or improper, however, they often feel apprehensive about voicing their concerns. This may be because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or the charity itself. Or it may be because they do not think that their concerns will be taken seriously,

perhaps because they are afraid that they will be bullied or dismissed. The charity, however, does not believe that it is in anyone's interests for employees with knowledge of wrongdoing to remain silent.

The charity will take all malpractice very seriously, whomever it is committed by. Reports can be submitted orally or in writing and will always be treated in the strictest of confidence. If appropriate, the charity will follow the statutory grievance procedure. For further details, see The Tree Council's Whistleblowing Policy.

Any concerns or issues can be reported to the:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- CEO
- Board of Trustees
- Senior Management Team

If any person does not feel comfortable reporting any concerns or issues internally, they can contact:

- Protect – a Whistleblowing Charity: 0203 117 2520  
<https://protect-advice.org.uk/pcawchangesnametoprotect/>
- London Safeguarding Children Board  
<https://www.londonscb.gov.uk/contacts/safeguarding-contacts/>
- The Local Police
- NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0800 800 5000
- Action on Elder Abuse: 0808 808 8141  
<http://www.elderabuse.org.uk>
- Victim Support: 0808 168 9111  
<http://www.victimsupport.org.uk>

## **WHAT ARE THE REPORTING PROCEDURES FOR THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD?**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will report any disclosure or received information immediately to the local Safeguarding Children Board and/or local police and/or NSPCC Child Protection depending on the details and/or the nature of the disclosure.

The information needs to include as much of the following as possible:

- Name of child or vulnerable adult
- Address
- Telephone number
- Parent/Carer details
- What is said to have happened or what was seen
- When and where did it occur
- Who else, if anyone, was involved and how?
- What was said by those involved, including any questions and answers
- Where there are any obvious signs – for example: bruising, bleeding, changed behaviour
- Was the child or vulnerable adult able to say what happened, if so, how did they describe it?
- Who has been told about it and when?
- Do the parents or carer(s) know?
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also document who they spoke with along with any pertinent details of the call or meeting



## **Delivering online workshops using Zoom or other platforms**

1. The lead contact will receive a registration link to forward using organisation approved channels for participants to pre-register.
2. Each participant is then required to pre-register and names will be checked against the list provided by the booking organisation.
3. Once approved, each participant will receive a unique registration link and password to enter their assigned workshop.
4. Before a workshop, each participant will be in a waiting room and checked against the list of approved and registered names before being admitted.
5. Only registered and approved students with parent/guardian/teacher consent (obtained by the booking organisation) will be allowed to enter the online workshop.
6. Participants that have not checked the box to say they will be seen on camera are still welcome to join – though workshops are best with cameras on. We will inform the host in advance if a participant prefers to remain off camera.
7. Participants will be muted upon entry and screen sharing will be disabled throughout the workshop.
8. Once all registered participants have been checked and admitted, the room will be locked so that no one else will be able to enter the workshop. The Trainer will mute or remove participants if there is inappropriate behaviour. Every workshop will be recorded and viewed by The Tree Council team to ensure that standards of behaviour are always being met. These recordings will be deleted after viewing.