

# EMBRACING ARTS

## SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR THE CHARITY EMBRACING ARTS, WORKING NAME CHRISTMAS FOR KIDS

### 1. Policy Statement

It is paramount to the Embracing Arts ethos that all children we work with are protected. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people to keep them safe. As we operate within the school, hospice and care environment we adhere to the medical practices of the venues and are especially alert to the needs of vulnerable individuals and their families. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their part. This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Embracing Arts, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ***Protect all children and young people who receive performances, workshops and parties from Embracing Arts.***
- ***To provide our performers and team with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding***

### 2. Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- United convention of the rights of a child 1991
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Children and Families Act 2014

- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection of Freedom Act 2012
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2022
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Education Act 2002
- The Welfare and Reform Act 2016

**We recognise that:**

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare
- All children regardless of age, gender, religious background, disability, racial heritage, sexual orientation or identity have the right to equal protection from harm or abuse.
- Some children are particularly vulnerable because of their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse.

**We seek to keep children safe by:**

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people, a deputy and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding
- adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures

- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
  
- Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Recording and storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions
- Making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- Using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- Building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

### **3. Online Safeguarding policy**

The purpose of this policy statement is to: Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount when adults, young people or children are using the internet, social media or mobile devices Provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to online safety Ensure that, as an organisation, we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use online devices. The policy statement applies to all staff, volunteers, children and young people and anyone involved in Embracing Arts activities.

#### **We recognise that:**

The online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however it can also present risks and challenges

We have a duty to ensure that all children, young people and adults involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online

We have a responsibility to help keep children and young people safe online, whether or not they are using Embracing Art's network and devices

All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse

Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare and in helping young people to be responsible in their approach to online safety.

#### **We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:**

Appointing an online safety coordinator. This is the same person as our Designated Lead.

Providing clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on how to behave online through our behaviour code for adults

Supporting and encouraging the young people using our service to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others

Supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online

Developing an online safety agreement for use with young people and their parents/carers

Developing clear and robust procedures to enable us to respond appropriately to any incidents of inappropriate online behaviour, whether by an adult or a child/young person.

Reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly

Ensuring that usernames, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively

Ensuring personal information about the adults and children who are involved in our organisation is held securely and shared only as appropriate

Ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given

Providing supervision, support and training for staff and volunteers about online safety before they are used within the organisation.

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**If online abuse occurs, we will respond to it by:**

Having clear and robust safeguarding procedures in place for responding to abuse (including online abuse).

Providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of abuse, including bullying/cyber bullying, emotional abuse, sexting, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation

Making sure our response takes the needs of the person experiencing

abuse, any bystanders and our organisation as a whole into account

Reviewing the plan developed to address online abuse at regular intervals, in order to ensure that any problems have been resolved in the long term.

Related policies and procedures This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including:

Child protection Procedures for responding to concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing  
Dealing with allegations of abuse made against a child or young person  
Managing allegations against staff and volunteers  
Code of conduct for staff and volunteers  
Photography and image sharing guidance

#### **4. PROCEDURES**

The purpose of the policy:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who receive Embracing Art's services;
- To provide company members with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be a risk of, harm;
- This policy applies to all staff including Directors and board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, students or anyone working on behalf of Embracing Arts.

#### **Suspected abuse and the child**

What to do if you suspect that abuse may have occurred;

- You must report the concerns immediately to the designated person: CLAIRE SUNDIN . The role of the designated person is to:
- Obtain information from staff, volunteers, children or parents and carers who have child protection concerns and to record this information;
- Assess the information quickly and carefully and ask for further information as appropriate;

- Check whether a common assessment has been completed; if so, add to it and contact the lead professional. Otherwise, complete a common assessment;
- Consult with a statutory child protection agency such as the local children's social services department or the NSPCC to clarify any doubts or worries;
- If concerns persist the lead professional (or designated person if concern is of a child suffering or likely to suffer significant harm) should make a referral to a statutory child protection agency or the police without delay.
- The designated person has been nominated by Embracing Arts to refer allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities.
- Suspicions will not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.

It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies. If for any reason you believe that the nominated persons have not responded appropriately to your concerns, then it is up to you to contact the child protection agencies directly.

### **Allegations of physical injury or neglect**

If a child has a symptom of physical injury or neglect the designated person(s) will:

1. Contact Social Services for advice in cases of deliberate injury or concerns about the safety of the child. The parents should not be informed by the organisation in these circumstances.
2. Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The designated person will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
3. In other circumstances speak with the parent/carer/guardian and suggest that medical help/attention is sought for the child. The doctor will then initiate further action if necessary.

4. If appropriate the parent/carer will be encouraged to seek help from Social Services. If the parent/carer/guardian fails to act the designated person should, in case of real concern, contact social services for advice.
5. Where the designated person is unsure whether to refer a case to Social Services then advice from the Local Area Children's Safeguarding Board or NSPCC will be sought.

### **Allegations of sexual abuse**

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse the designated person(s) will:

1. Contact the Social Service duty social worker for children and families directly. The designated person will not speak to the parent (or anyone else).
2. If the designated person is unsure whether or not to follow the above guidance, then advice from the Local Area Children's Safeguarding Board or NSPCC will be sought.
3. Under no circumstances should the designated person attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of the designated person is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to Social Services whose task it is to investigate the matter under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
4. Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse should normally be reported to the designated person, their absence should not delay referral to Social Services.

### **What to do after a child has talked to you about abuse**

1. Make notes as soon as possible (ideally within 1 hour of being told). You should write down exactly what the child has said, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately before being told (i.e. the activity being delivered). You should record the dates, times and when you made the record. All hand written notes should be kept securely.
2. You should report your discussion to the designated person as soon as possible. If they are unavailable report to Social Services.



3. You should under no circumstances discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated above.
4. After a child has disclosed abuse the designated persons should carefully consider whether or not it is safe for a child to return home to potentially abusive situation. On these rare occasions it may be necessary to take immediate action to contact Social Services to discuss putting safety measures into effect. If a child is at immediate risk of harm, or if you believe a crime has been committed, contact the police on 999 or 101.

### **Staff members – allegations & concerns Allegations against a member of staff**

We will assure all staff/volunteers that we will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child. Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation,
- A child protection investigation,
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

### **Procedure for reporting concerns or allegations**

Any concerns should, in the first instance, be reported to the designated person for child protection, an Embracing Arts Facilitator. If the allegation has been handled inadequately and concerns remain or if the allegation is about the poor practice of the designated person, it should be reported to Claire Sundin. They will then decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not the organisation should initiate disciplinary proceedings.

### **Action if there are concerns**

1. Concerns about poor practice: If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; this will be dealt with as a misconduct issue.

2. Concerns about suspected abuse: Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the designated person, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

The designated person will refer the allegation to the social services department, who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.

The designated person will refer to the DBS information about employees who (may) have harmed children while working with Embracing Arts stated in The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.

If the designated person is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Agency Liaison or Head of Community Theatre who will refer the allegation to Social Services.

### 3. Internal Enquiries and Suspension

The designated person will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries. Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries, the organisation will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the organisation must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that, on a balance of probability it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

### **Preventative measures and good practice for Embracing Art's workshops and activities**

- We will aim to protect children from abuse, and our team members from false allegations, by adopting the following guidelines:

- We will keep records of all company members (both paid staff members and volunteers).
- All Staff, seasonal workers and volunteers will adhere to the Embracing Arts code of conduct.

**Online safety co-ordinator**

Name: Claire Sundin 07967380969 [claire@embracingarts.org.uk](mailto:claire@embracingarts.org.uk)

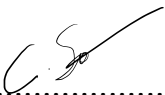
Senior lead for safeguarding and child protection Name: As above

NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.


This policy was last reviewed on: .....18<sup>th</sup> April 2024

By Claire Sundin Designated Safeguarding Lead and Artistic Director of Embracing Arts

Signed: ..........

Date: .....18.04.2024.....

Counter Signed by (PRINT NAME).....

Signed..........

Samson Ajewole

Role: Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer and Board Member.

Date.....22nd April 2024.....