

Reachout with Arts in Mind

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Purpose

The management of Reachout with Arts in Mind recognises that the protection and safety of children and young people is everyone's responsibility. Reachout with Arts in Mind acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and Reachout with Arts in Mind requirements.

This policy and related procedures establish the roles and responsibilities of staff, trustees and volunteers, in relation to the protection of children and young people (defined as those who have not yet reached their eighteenth birthday), with whom their work brings them into contact.

A child may be at risk of harm in different ways – neglect and acts of omission, financial harm and or exploitation, psychological, physical or sexual harm, and discriminatory harm.

In relation to child protection, the approach Reachout with Arts in Mind will take is based on, and reflects, the principles of relevant legislation and guidance relating to the protection of children, which includes -

- The Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003
- The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Protecting Children - A Shared Responsibility, Scottish Executive, 1998
- The Criminal Justice & Court Service Act 2000
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges (2018)
- Children and Young People (Information Sharing) Bill 2017
- Protecting Children and Young People 2004
- Mental Health, Care and Treatment (Scotland) Act 2003

Scope & Aim

The management are responsible for child protection within Reachout with Arts in Mind. This includes the studio and all outreach and online programmes, however it should be noted that children under the age of 16 can only access the Reachout service through outreach projects in collaboration with local partnerships. They have designated the Executive Arts Director to oversee this on their behalf. This will include ensuring the implementation and monitoring of this policy.

In relation to child protection, the approach Reachout with Arts in Mind will take is based on, and reflects, the principles of relevant legislation and guidance relating to the protection of children -

- the welfare and safety of the child is of paramount consideration – every child has the right to be healthy, nurtured, active, achieving, respected, responsible and included
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious belief, sexual orientation and socio-economic background have a right to protection from harm or abuse whilst participating in activities at Reachout or with Reachout staff, including online activities
- all children have a positive and enjoyable experience of creative activities led by Reachout in a safe and child centred environment
- Reachout staff and volunteers will have access to appropriate training and an awareness of child protection policy, procedures and guidelines
- Employees, volunteers and directors have varying levels of contact with young people using the Reachout service, but as part of their responsibility and duty, all should be aware of the potential indicators of abuse and neglect.

In relation to recruitment and selection of staff (refer to the Recruitment policy), trustees and volunteers, this will also include ensuring that all criminal disclosures are made in line with current disclosure legislation eg type of offence, date of conviction etc and references taken which refer to candidates' suitability to work and have contact with children. PVG and disclosure checks will be carried out where appropriate, and only with the consent of the individual.

It is also the responsibility of the management of Reachout with Arts in Mind, to ensure that all staff for whom they are responsible, are aware of and understand the importance of implementing this policy and the related procedures and code of good practice.

Reachout with Arts in Mind acknowledges that some children, including disabled children and young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

As part of our child protection and safeguarding policy, Reachout with Arts in Mind will:

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people
- all studio staff and volunteers will undergo Child Protection Training
- all staff, volunteers and directors will undertake Safeguarding Training
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents or concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored (refer to the Retention policy)
- prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals
- ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation
- ensure children and parents are informed of the policy and procedures as appropriate
- all concerns, and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by trustees, staff and volunteers and responded to appropriately - this may require a referral to children's social care services, the independent Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for allegations against staff, trustees and other volunteers, and in emergencies, the police
- reference to principles, legislation and guidance that underpin the policy
- make reference to all associated policies and procedures which promote children's safety and welfare eg health and safety, anti-bullying, protection of children online, and photography
- make reference to guidelines and policies issued by partner organisations that we may be working in collaboration with. Partner protection procedures will be discussed and reviewed by Reachout staff prior to engagement

This policy and related procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in Reachout with Arts in Mind. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal or exclusion from the organisation.

Safeguarding

The protection of children covers but is not limited to safeguarding both their physical and mental wellbeing. Every effort will be made to protect children who use our services, and precautionary measures will be put in place to prevent contact, either in person or electronic, written or through a third party, that may have a detrimental impact on a child's physical or mental wellbeing. It is the responsibility of management, staff, members and third parties to notify the Executive Arts Director or a Board Director of concerns or issues and to allow for priority precautionary measures to be put in place. Precautionary measures will form the basis of a risk assessment and this will be shared with relevant parties associated with a reported concern.

To enable proper Safeguarding measures to be implemented and maintained it may result in restrictions to the use of the service by individuals, multiple parties or disciplinary procedures invoked for staff or members. We take our responsibilities very seriously on such matters and will have a zero tolerance on unacceptable behaviour which is proven to have a detrimental impact on another individual.

All staff should be aware of the Lone Worker Policy, and avoid being in a situation where they are working alone in the studio, in outreach locations or online with members, vulnerable adults or children. Management will take all necessary steps to provide additional staffing or support to protect staff in this manner.

Procedure

Whilst management recognises that Reachout with Arts in Mind is not a child protection agency, if children are to be protected it is essential that everyone working with children is involved in the support of those children. The procedures that follow recognise and are consistent with that objective and have been designed to complement local Child Protection Committee procedures (refer to Clacks Council Child Wellbeing and Protection Guidance).

As a responsible body, we cannot and should not restrict our sense of duty to those children and young people we identify as our service users. Staff, through their work, may come into contact with a number of children each and every day. By being vigilant and acting where concerns exist, we can play an important part in their protection.

In operating this policy, staff must also be aware that within the field of child protection there is no confidentiality, as would normally be expected. Concerns relating to the abuse of children and young people must be reported as outlined in the following procedures.

- Information will only be shared on a need to know basis
- Information will only be shared when it is in the best interests of the service users
- Confidentiality must not be confused with secrecy

Guidance has also been developed to provide staff with procedures which will not only protect children, but will also help to identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse. Staff should familiarise themselves with this and if it is necessary to carry out practices contrary to it, only do so after discussion with, and the approval of, the management. Staff are also required to complete Wellbeing & Engagement evaluations after working with local schools, in conjunction with school staff, to identify any areas of concern and define wellbeing from Extremely Low to Extremely High.

Remember, in child protection, non-action is never an option. All employees, volunteers and directors have a responsibility to take action if they suspect any form of abuse.

Monitoring

This policy and its procedures and practices only remain effective if they are regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure that they are still applicable and relevant. Over time there will be changes, whether internally within Reachout's structure or externally with legislation or agreed best practice, and these changes will need to be reflected in Reachout's policy. It is also possible that once the

policy is implemented it is identified that there are issues or circumstances that had not been considered but should be included.

To address these concerns this policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and endorsed by the board of directors of Reachout with Arts in Mind, or more frequently based on -

- changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- as a result of any other significant change or event

All staff will familiarise themselves with this policy and any updates thereafter, as well as those policies adopted by partner organisations.

The review should involve those individuals with responsibility for carrying out or overseeing the actions described in this policy and be led by the Finance & Governance Manager.

Child protection and safeguarding procedures for groups in Scotland (1)

PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IF YOU THINK A CHILD MAY BE AT RISK OF ABUSE, IS BEING, OR HAS BEEN, ABUSED EITHER BY:

- a member of staff
- a member of their family
- any other person, including another child

The management of Reachout with Arts in Mind are responsible for ensuring that all staff, for whom they are responsible, are aware of and understand the importance of implementing these procedures.

It is recognised that some children may, through the nature of their experiences, demonstrate behaviours that might be indicators of child abuse often as a result of the combination, frequency and duration of these indicators. These may include, but are not limited to –

- physical bruising, bite marks, suspicious burns
- inappropriate language or subject matter
- physical contact with others
- sallow or sickly appearance
- untreated medical conditions
- secretive, demanding or disruptive behaviour

Many factors associated with disadvantage can also result in a child's behaviour being affected, thereby making the identification of abuse even more difficult. Staff are not expected to show expertise in the protection of children nor diagnose or investigate any potential abuse. Staff are, however, expected to comply with the following procedures if there is evidence of out-of-character behaviour -

Staff, who for any reason become concerned that a child may be at risk of abuse, is being, or has been, abused must immediately report that concern to management.

- Management will discuss the concerns raised by the staff member to clarify their cause and obtain all the known relevant information. This will then be forwarded to the appropriate local Social Work Department stating that it concerns child protection. Refer to 'Reporting Child Protection Concerns' in Clackmannanshire:
[Reporting Child Protection Concerns \(clacks.gov.uk\)](https://www.clacks.gov.uk)
- In the absence of management, concerns should be reported to a Board director and to the local Social Work Department and management informed as soon as possible thereafter. Should the concern relate to the management of Reachout, it should be raised with a Board director and the Social Work Department directly. In emergency situations the police should be contacted.

- NB If the concerns raised are a result of something staff have become aware of while in a school or other outreach environment, or through a school related activity, the school's Child Protection 'Designated Teacher' should be contacted.
- In cases where a child is suspected of being in imminent or immediate harm or a crime has been committed, the emergency services should be called immediately
- All staff should be aware of the following contact details - [Child Care Services \(clacks.gov.uk\)](https://www.clacks.gov.uk)

Child protection and safeguarding procedures for groups in Scotland (2)

PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IF A CHILD TELLS YOU THAT THEY ARE BEING, OR HAVE BEEN, ABUSED:

Children will occasionally disclose abuse to an adult they have come to feel they can trust. This happens for many reasons but they are usually doing so in the hope that action will be taken to stop it happening, even if they have spoken in confidence.

Children may feel as if they are betraying someone they are close to and whom they love. It is not unusual for a child to love the abuser but want the abuse to stop, especially when that person is a parent or carer. Equally, it may be someone they fear eg, an adult whom they perceive to be able to influence decisions concerning their future. Either way, it takes great courage for a child to talk to an adult about abuse and action must therefore be taken.

It can be more difficult for some children to confide in someone than for others. Children who have experienced prejudice and discrimination through racism may believe that people from other ethnic groups or backgrounds do not care about them. They may have little reason to trust those they see as being in positions of authority.

Children with a disability will have to overcome barriers before disclosing abuse. They may rely on the abuser for their daily care and have no knowledge of alternative sources.

If a child discloses abuse to you in the course of your work it is important to react appropriately.

Do:

- Remain calm and receptive
- Listen without interrupting
- Only ask questions of clarification if you are unclear what the child is saying
- Make it clear you take them seriously
- Acknowledge their courage in telling you
- Tell them they are not responsible for the abuse
- Let them know you will do what you can to help them and that you will have to tell someone.

Do NOT:

- Allow your shock or distaste to show
- Show disbelief
- Probe for more information/ask other questions
- Make assumptions or speculate
- Make negative comments about the abuser
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Agree to keep the information secret
- Say Yes or agree to anything without checking with management first

It is, therefore, essential that everything possible is done to protect the children who place their trust in the staff at Reachout. If a child reports abuse, the following action must be taken -

- make an immediate written record of what the child has said, using their own words
- follow the instructions for reporting to your line manager, as set out in procedure Part 1
- tell them that you will have to inform management and that the childcare authorities will also have to be informed.

Child protection and safeguarding code of good practice

This Code has been developed to provide staff and volunteers with advice that not only will help to protect children, but will also help staff identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse.

While it is not intended that this code should restrict staff from normal working practices eg, comforting a distressed child through providing a hug, there is much they can do to avoid situations that may give rise to misinterpretation, which will also work to protect children. If in doubt, consider how an action or activity may be perceived as opposed to how it is intended.

Wherever possible, you should be guided by the following advice (refer to the Lone Worker Policy). If it is necessary to carry out practices contrary to it, you should only do so after discussion with, and the approval of management.

Child protection and safeguarding code of good practice

- avoid unobserved situations of one-to-one contact with a child. If it is unavoidable, always keep a door open and ensure you are within the hearing of other adults
- never invite a child to your home without the knowledge and consent of the parents/carers and management
- never offer to or take a child alone in your own vehicle without the knowledge and consent of the parents/carers and management
- if it is necessary to do things of a 'personal' nature for a child, e g, nappy changing or toileting if they are very young or disabled, ensure these are carried out with the full knowledge of the parents/carers and management
- develop a culture in which staff feel comfortable enough to point out inappropriate attitudes and behaviours to each other
- don't engage in or allow any sexually provocative games involving or observed by children, whether based on talking or touching
- never make suggestive remarks or discriminatory comments to a child
- don't engage in or tolerate any bullying of a child, either by adults or other children
- don't engage in or tolerate inappropriate physical activity involving children
- never enter a room where a child may be changing their clothes or not be fully dressed, without first clearly getting their consent to enter
- respect all children, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, disability or sexual identity

- avoid 'favouritism' and singling-out 'troublemakers'
- never trivialise child abuse
- never let allegations by a child go unreported, including any made against you

This policy will be reviewed annually, and updated in line with local and national government policies and guidelines.