

The Relationships Project Safeguarding Policy

Child-friendly Safeguarding Leaflet

You can find a child-friendly leaflet about safeguarding here:

<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/global/reports/education-and-child-protection/safeguarding-children-leaflet-2018.pdf>

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

The Lookout is a project run by the Relationships Project (<https://relationshipsproject.org/>) over August-September 2021 to allow young people to reflect on their experiences, thoughts and feelings regarding the pandemic, and the Summer of Play. It is being run in association with The Summer of Play (<https://www.summerofplay.co.uk/>). As part of this project, young people will be contributing their opinions via facilitated online conversations, and via online submissions in response to our resource pack. The Relationships Project is a project working to make it easier for every organisation, service and place to put relationships at the heart of what they do - and it is hosted by charity Shift (<https://shiftdesign.org/>)

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect children and young people who engage in The Lookout from harm.
- To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection. This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of The Relationships Project, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers.

Legal framework

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

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014

- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0 to 25 years - Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disability; HM Government 2014
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers; HM Government 2015
- Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; HM Government 2018

We believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people 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, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- Where relevant, 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.

Contact details

Nominated child protection lead

Name: David Robinson

Email: david@relationshipsproject.org

Deputy child protection lead(s)

Name: Immy Robinson

Email: immy@relationshipsproject.org

Trustee/Senior lead for safeguarding and child protection

Name: Nick Stanhope

Email: nick.stanhope@shiftdesign.org

NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000

This policy was last reviewed on 12th August 2021

Role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer

The person responsible for safeguarding at The Relationships Project is David Robinson.

The named responsible person has the following responsibilities:

- Develop appropriate policies and procedures to safeguard all young people that the organisation has contact with.
- Ensure all staff, volunteers and suppliers who will have contact with young people through the project's activities are aware of the organisation's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.
- Receive and record information from anyone who has concerns.
- Assess the information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information when necessary.
- Consult initially with a statutory child protection agency, such as the local children's social care teams (previously called social services), or the NSPCC to talk about any doubts or concerns.

- Make a formal referral when required to a statutory child protection agency or the police.

Any concerns about the welfare of a young person, questions about this policy, or questions / concerns about keeping young people in The Lookout safe, should be directed to David Robinson. David will follow up with the appropriate actions, as outlined in this policy.

All members of staff at The Relationships Project have a responsibility to uphold this policy and to inform the designated officers of any concerns.

Other helpful contact details

CEOP

www.ceop.police.uk

NSPCC

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/>

Requirements for staff, volunteers and suppliers

We recognise that anyone may have the potential to harm young people in some way. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure suitable people are recruited, and that staff are provided with guidance that helps them to safeguard and protect young people who engage with the Lookout.

Behaviour code for staff and volunteers

Staff will adhere to the Save the Children Code of Conduct as outlined in the [Children First Card](#).

Procedure for acting on concerns about a young person

This procedure is to be followed by any member of staff who is concerned that a young person is at risk of abuse.

Ways that abuse may be brought to your attention:

- A young person might make a direct disclosure about themselves, or about another young person.
- A young person might offer information that is worrying but not a direct disclosure, about themselves, or about another young person.
- You might be concerned about a young person's appearance or behaviour, or about the behaviour of someone else towards them. The NSPCC website provides useful information about the signs and symptoms of abuse. See: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/>
- Concerns could arise from engagement with young people in person or from what they submit online.

If you are concerned you must:

- Record the relevant information and report it to The Relationships Project Designated Safeguarding Officer, confidentially. Do not discuss the information with anyone outside the organisation.
- If the concern arises during sessions run in association with another partner organisation (e.g. play group), you must report it to the organisation's Designated Safeguarding Officer as well as The Relationships Project Designated Safeguarding Officer. In this case, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will then consult with the partner organisation's Designated Safeguarding Officer. The Relationships Project will coordinate with other organisations to ensure consistency and clarity between Safeguarding responsibilities.
- If there is still any uncertainty about the concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Officer can discuss with the children's social care department or with the NSPCC Helpline without disclosing the identity of the young person.
- If there is still concern, the Designated Safeguarding Officer refers to the relevant local authority children's social care department and confirms in writing within 24 hours.

Information you should record if you are concerned a child is at risk of abuse:

If you are concerned, you should record this information as soon as possible:

- Name of child.
- Age of child.
- Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of someone else? Give details.
- Brief description of what has prompted the concerns. Include dates and times of any specific incidents, and any physical or behavioural signs, or indirect signs.
- Have you spoken to the young person? If so, what was said? Use their own words.
- Have you spoken to or consulted anyone else? Give details.
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? If so, give details.
- Your name and role.
- To whom you will report this, and date of reporting.

What to do if a young person tells you that he or she is being abused:

- Remain calm and in control but don't delay acting.
- Reassure the young person that telling someone about it was the right thing to do.
- Tell them that you have to do what you can to keep them, or the young person who you are concerned about, safe.
- Let the young person know what you are going to do next - that you are going to tell the Relationships Project's Safeguarding Officer.
- Let the young person tell their whole story. Don't try to investigate or quiz them, but make sure that you are clear about what they are saying.
- Ask the young person what they would like to happen as a result of what they have said, but do not make any promises that you can't keep.
- If you can, give the ChildLine phone number: 0800 1111.
- Notify The Relationships Project Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately following the conversation. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities.

- As soon as possible, make a note of what was said, using the young person's own words. See the checklist above for the details you should write down.
- Don't tell the young person that you promise to keep it a secret - the first opportunity should be taken to say that this information will have to be shared with others. Make it clear that only people who need to know will be told.

Procedure for managing allegations against staff and volunteers

This procedure outlines what The Relationships Project would do if a child protection allegation is made against a member of staff, volunteer or supplier.

If such an allegation is made, the individual accused will immediately be suspended from working for The Relationships Project pending further investigations. The temporary suspension of the individual in no way implies guilt or innocence.

The Relationships Project's Designated Safeguarding Officer will seek guidance from the relevant Local Authority designated Officer and inform a relevant trustee at The Relationships Project.

The individual against whom an accusation has been made will be summoned to an interview with relevant and appropriate members of The Relationships Project's staff and board of Trustees. The accused person is entitled to be accompanied to this interview. Minutes will be taken of the interview. The aim of the meeting is for The Relationships Project's staff and Trustees to decide whether or not the accused individual should be allowed to continue to work with young people. At all times the welfare and safety of young people will be paramount.

The Relationships Project's staff and Trustees may take advice from the relevant authorities or organisations as appropriate, such as the children's social care department or the NSPCC Helpline.

The Relationships Project's Designated Safeguarding Officer will report the allegation to the relevant local authority designated officer or team within 1 working day, if the alleged behaviour suggests that the person in question:

- may have behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a young person
- has possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- has behaved towards a child in a way that suggests that he or she may be unsuitable to work with children.

This should also happen if the individual has volunteered the information themselves.

If there is an allegation against the Designated Safeguarding Officer, contact the Local Authority designated Officer directly to seek advice.

Rights and confidentiality

If a complaint or allegation is made against a member of The Relationships Project's staff or volunteers, the individual should be made aware of their rights under both employment law and internal disciplinary procedures. This is the responsibility of the Trustees of The Relationships Project. Both the alleged abuser and the person who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998. In criminal law,

the Crown or other prosecuting authority has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Storing records

Clear and comprehensive records of any allegations made against staff working or volunteering with children will be kept. This includes:

- What the allegations were
- How the allegations were followed up
- How things were resolved
- Any action taken
- Decision reached about the person's suitability to work with children.
- Records relating to concerns about an adult's behaviour will be kept in the person's confidential file and a copy will be given to the individual. The Relationships Project will keep the records until they reach normal retirement age or for 10 years- whichever is longer.

Whistleblowing policy

Whistleblowing encourages and enables employees to raise serious concerns within the organisation rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside. Employees are often the first to realise that there is something seriously wrong within the organisation. However, they may not express their concerns as they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the organisation.

The Relationships Project is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect staff, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the organisation's work to come forward and voice those concerns.

This policy applies to all members of staff, volunteers and suppliers of The Relationships Project.

Policy aims:

- Provide avenues for you to raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken.
- Ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied.
- Assure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made a disclosure in good faith.

Concerns that are covered:

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of law.
- Disclosure related to miscarriages of justice.
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees.
- Damage to the environment.

- The unauthorised use of public funds.
- Possible fraud and corruption.
- Sexual or physical abuse of clients.
- Other unethical conduct.

Protecting whistleblowers:

The organisation recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what you are saying is true, you should have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to your employer and those for whom you provide a service. The organisation will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.

Confidentiality:

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.

This policy encourages you, however, to put your name to your concern whenever possible. Please note that you:

- must disclose the information in good faith
- must believe it to be substantially true
- must not act maliciously or make false allegations
- must not seek any personal gain.

How to raise your concern:

As a first step, you should normally raise concerns either verbally or in writing with your immediate supervisor/manager. This may depend, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issue involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if you believe that management is involved you should approach a more senior level of management, for example the Board of Trustees.

For independent advice please call:

Public Concern At Work

Website: www.pcaw.co.uk

Helpline: 020 7404 6609

Email: whistle@pcaw.co.uk

Policy for photography and sharing images of young people

We recognise the potential risks of photography and filming of young people, including:

- young people may be identifiable when a photograph is shared together with personal information direct and indirect risks to young people when photographs are shared on websites and in publications with personal information
- inappropriate photographs or recorded images of young people
- inappropriate use, adaptation or copying of images.

Our policy on videos and images featuring young people online

We choose to allow students to send videos and pictures as contributions to the Lookout, if they have parental permission. This is because:

- Allowing young people to communicate their views in different formats, including online, is an important part of our methodology to hear young people's voices on their own terms
- As we encourage young people to express their views and it is very common among young people to do this by uploading videos and images featuring themselves online, we have a responsibility to give them a safe way to do this

Our process for videos and images featuring young people

It is not expected that we will publish any photos of young people in our reports or online. Contributions to the Lookout will be reviewed by staff in order to write a reflective report.

Any variation from this policy (i.e. wanting to use an image of young people) will be subject to additional, explicit parental consent. We will not publish any images of young people without explicit parental consent.

We will never use young people's names in photograph captions. We recognise that images accompanied by personal information, such as the name of a young person and their hobby, could be used to learn more about a young person prior to grooming them for abuse.

We never store images or footage featuring young people together with the young people's real names.

We ask staff from partner organisations to take responsibility for obtaining parental permission for a young person to be photographed and videoed in relation to our programmes.

We ask staff from partner organisations to take responsibility for ensuring that no young people without parental permission are photographed or videoed in relation to our programmes.

Parental permission is compulsory for submitting content to the Lookout. Consent will be gained through an online consent form as part of the submission process.

Online safety policy for live online events and workshops

We host some live online events for young people (facilitated conversations on Zoom). We follow the NSPCC advice on remote teaching and enforce the following steps:

- Parents/ guardians must give permission for children to participate
- When run through play groups / youth groups, staff from those organisations will take responsibility for managing permissions and adjusting their camera settings accordingly

- Staff and volunteers will use work email addresses to login
- Staff and volunteers will ensure their video background is neutral
- Video conferencing platforms will be assessed for safety before use
- A password will be required for entry
- Two members of staff will be present in any live breakout or discussion 'room'
- A register of attendees will be taken
- Sessions will include directions for what to do if you are concerned by any interactions or feel overwhelmed by any activity or subject matter
- Private messaging between students or sharing of individual contact details is not allowed. Any 'chats' or group messaging during the session will be saved
- Live online events will not be recorded and photographs or screenshots will not be taken
- Any new form of online live session will be reviewed by the safeguarding officer for sign-off.
- For any sessions where a live-chat function is enabled, we will have a zero-tolerance approach to offensive language. Attendees will be removed if they do not adhere to our code of conduct.

Complaints about these policies or procedures, or their implementation, should be addressed in writing to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, with a copy addressed to the Shift Safeguarding Lead:

Designated Safeguarding Officer

David Robinson
The Relationships Project
71 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NJ

Shift Safeguarding Lead

Nick Stanhope,
Shift
71 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NJ

Review procedure

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.
This policy was last reviewed in July 2021.

Signed:

