



Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy

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Policy Statement

LEAF recognises that the welfare of all children is paramount and that *all* children, regardless of ability or culture, have equal rights of protection. LEAF has a duty of care when they are in our charge and LEAF will do everything it can to provide a safe and caring environment whilst they attend LEAF activities. This policy applies to all LEAF Staff which shall include contracted staff delivering services with direct contact with or access to, children and young people (i.e. Regional Education Consultants).

Policy Aim

As LEAF has a range of educational and community programmes requiring direct contact with children and young people, LEAF aims at all times to attain best practice standards in all of its activities. LEAF will achieve this by adhering strictly to this policy and the guidance and risk assessments. When working with school groups LEAF will liaise with school staff as appropriate as to their procedures.

Child Safeguarding Lead and Deputy

The responsibility of managing the safeguarding of children can be both demanding and challenging, and therefore must be appointed at managerial level to personnel who are available when LEAF is operational.

Our designated safeguarding lead is:

- ◆ Name: Carl Edwards – LEAF Director, Education & Public Engagement

Contact details: carl.edwards@leaf.eco Tel: 02476 413911 Mobile: 07977 283806

Our deputy is:

- ◆ Name: Philip Adams – LEAF Education Programme Manager

Contact details: philip.adams@leaf.eco Tel: 02476 413911 Mobile: 07523 907404

- ◆ Named Trustee: Philip Wynn (LEAF Chairman) Tel: 02476 413911

Their role is to oversee and ensure that our safeguarding children policy is fully implemented and in line with best practice standards. This includes ensuring that all staff, where appropriate and whether permanent or contracted staff (i.e. Regional Education Consultants), receive child protection training as appropriate. The deputy should be available to support or cover for the nominated lead. They will also handle any complaints or allegations against the nominated lead if appropriate.

Safeguarding is a standing agenda item at LEAF Board Meetings.



Why does LEAF need a Safeguarding Children Policy?

The five main outcomes for children as detailed in “Every Child Matters” agenda 2003 and subsequent Children Act 2004 are:

- being healthy
- staying safe
- enjoying and achieving
- making a positive contribution
- economic well-being

Government guidance is clear that all organisations working with children, young people, families, parents and carers have responsibilities. It is important to remember that children and young people can also abuse and that such incidents fall into the remit of this policy.

As LEAF we believe organisations should:

- have senior managers committed to safeguarding
- be clear about people’s responsibilities and accountability
- have a culture of listening to children
- use safe recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers working with children & young people
- follow procedures for safeguarding children and young people
- follow procedures for dealing with allegations against, and concerns about, staff & volunteers
- make sure staff have mandatory induction and further safeguarding training, supervision, reviews and support
- have agreements about working with other organisations and agencies

“Children are individuals whose rights, needs and welfare are paramount.”

Children Act 1989

The 2 key principles of [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 \(updated December 2020\)](#) are:

- Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility; for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part, and
- A child centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based upon a clear understanding of the needs and views of children



“No child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs”

Equality Act 2010

Recognising Abuse

Physical:

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing significant harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional:

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate it. These may include interactions that are beyond the child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone, may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

Sexual:

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.



Child sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Treating Children with Respect

LEAF endeavours to treat all children with respect, regardless of ability or culture. Where required, LEAF ensures everyone adheres to safeguarding principles and codes of conduct (as outlined in this document).

Through its Staff and Health & Safety handbooks LEAF makes available to everyone our confidentiality, complaints, "whistleblowing", disciplinary, grievance, health, safety and safeguarding policies & procedures.

Celebrating Children's Achievements

LEAF positively encourages all children to succeed and celebrate their achievements. LEAF is particularly sensitive to the needs of disabled children who may achieve in smaller steps than their peers but are equally entitled to celebration.



Rigorous Recruitment

This policy should be read in conjunction with LEAF's Recruitment Policy and Procedures.

LEAF always takes up written references and insists that any appointment, where staff has direct and/or unsupervised access to children and young people, will only be confirmed subject to a satisfactory DBS check at the appropriate level.

At interview, LEAF has robust procedures and recording to ensure LEAF is satisfied and can evidence that the applicant is appropriate and suitable. At least one person on each interview panel will have undertaken the NSPCC Safer Recruitment Training.

Induction & Training

LEAF has a clear induction and training strategy detailing clear job descriptions and responsibilities and all relevant procedures. Those staff with direct contact with children, or managers, will attend child protection training within 3 months of appointment. LEAF also agrees a probationary period with clear goals and then provide ongoing management at regular intervals. Staff with direct contact with children, or managers, will be required to have a DBS check every three years in addition to updated Safeguarding Training every 3 years. Records of this will be held centrally. The DSO and deputy(ies) will be required to undergo safeguarding updates every two years.

Confidentiality

LEAF has a clear policy about confidentiality and information sharing and these are made available on our website.

LEAF fully endorses the principle that the welfare of children overrides any obligations of confidence it may hold to others. Individual cases will only be shared or discussed on a "need to know" basis. Under "whistleblowing" anyone in our organisation may refer direct to either children's social care services or the police if they are concerned that a child is at risk of harm and this policy is not being adhered to. All media enquiries will be handled in the first instance by Carl Edwards – Director, Education and Public Engagement.



Handling Disclosures

A disclosure may be made verbally or through play or through the behaviour by a child and it is important for everyone to remember the following:

- If you are concerned about a child, it is important that this information is communicated to the lead and/ or deputy for child safeguarding.
- You may become aware of suspected or likely abuse by:
 - Your own observations and concerns;
 - Being told by another person that they have concerns about a child;
 - The child tells you;
 - The abuser tells you.

Also, remember that you may not always be working directly with the child but become concerned because of difficulties experienced by the adults e.g.

- Domestic abuse incidents
- Mental health issues
- Substance and alcohol abuse Incidents

Other safeguarding concerns may be:

- bullying including cyberbullying
- children missing education
- child missing from home or care
- child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- County Lines
- domestic violence
- drugs
- fabricated or induced illness
- faith abuse
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- forced marriage
- gangs and youth violence
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG) e.g. honour-based abuse
- hate
- mental health
- missing children and adults
- preventing radicalisation
- relationship abuse
- sexting
- trafficking



Remember:

- Do not delay.
- Do not investigate.
- Seek advice from the safeguarding lead or deputy.
- Make careful recording of anything you observe or are told.

See Appendix 1: For guidance on recording and sharing information

For further information and guidance on the Safeguarding Concerns listed above and for other concerns see pages 140 onwards of [Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2022](#) – This gives information and guidance on Specific Safeguarding Issues listed above.

Responding to Concerns

LEAF ensures and emphasises that everyone in our organisation understands and knows how to share any concerns immediately with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy. LEAF does this by staff induction. All staff working on the frontline with children are provided with a handout summarising the process, see Appendix 2 (updated February 2023): Handout for Frontline Staff. Everyone including both the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy will deal with concerns using the following approach:

IMPORTANT: If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, dial 999.

How to Handle a Disclosure / Concern

LEAF has written a clear process on how to handle a disclosure which is illustrated on the next page. Following on from the illustration is advice on how to handle the situation when a child has made a disclosure or raised a concern with you. Appendix 1 (updated February 2023) is also a guide and proforma to use when recording concerns and is touched upon in this section too.

A. During School activities and trips, the following steps should be taken:

Step 1

If you are worried a child has been abused because:

- You have seen something
- A child says they have been abused
- Somebody else has told you they are concerned
- There has been an allegation against a member of school staff (follow separate procedure below)
- There has been an allegation against a member of LEAF's staff
- There has been an anonymous allegation
- An adult has disclosed they are abusing a child
- An adult has disclosed they were abused as a child

Important:
Any consultation should not delay a referral. In an emergency dial 999

Step 2 (immediately)

- Let the school leader know **immediately** you have concerns, or a disclosure has been made
- Support the school leader by recording exactly what was said or observed (see Appendix 1). LEAF is responsible for passing the details to their DSL or deputy
- Copy or photograph the written record and email immediately to LEAF's DSL or deputy
- Telephone the DSL or deputy

Consult, Monitor &
Record
(sign, date, time)

Step 3

- The school concerned will take all the necessary steps in accordance with its safeguarding policy
- The DSL for LEAF (or deputy) will report the disclosure to Children's Services and/or the Police (in an emergency) without delay and follow up the referral in writing within 24 hours**
- The LEAF staff member receiving the disclosure will contact the DSL at the school to inform them of the disclosure

**** In cases of allegations against a person with a 'duty of care', the LADO will coordinate the next procedural steps**

B. If the concern is about a member of the school or LEAF Staff

- Do not speak to members of staff
- Record exactly what was said or observed (Appendix 1)
- Contact the school DSL
- Contact the LEAF DSL or Deputy
- The LEAF DSL or deputy will inform the LADO in the local authority where the adult resides (if known). *If it is a member of school staff, they will also follow their own procedures.*
- At any time if you still have concerns you can refer directly to the LADO, Local authority, Children's Social Care, NSPCC (0808 800 5000) or Police
- If there is the possibility that a crime has been or may be committed, then it should be referred to the Police on 999 immediately

If you observe or hear that an abuse has taken or is likely to take place:

Firstly, how to respond to the child:

- **Stay calm.** Ensure the child is safe and reassured. Avoid emotional reactions, despite what you might be feeling or thinking inside.
- **Listen** carefully to what is actually said, appear relaxed and actively listen to the child, e.g. repeat back to the child exactly what they have said.
- **Don't promise to keep secrets**, explain information needs to be shared, reassure it's to keep everyone safe. You cannot keep secrets and you will have to pass on what the child has said to someone who can help.
- **Talk at the child's pace.** Do not pressure the child by asking questions other than for clarification (e.g. can you repeat that? Did you say xxx? etc). Make sure you do not ask leading questions e.g. 'Did your dad do it?'. It is the responsibility of trained professionals to gather more information not yours.
- **Reassure the child.** The child might be concerned that their abuser might find out, that you will tell other people such as their friends, what is going to happen to them now, that they are to blame etc. Therefore you must support and reassure the child with statements such as: 'I am glad you told me.', 'You are not to blame for what has happened.', 'This is so important I need to tell someone who can help.'
- **What will happen next.** The child might be scared about what is now going to happen. Your role is to reassure, tell them that what they have done is very brave and they have done the right thing. Your role is to listen, report and record details of the disclosure. You might need to seek further advice but ensure them that someone from their family or a friend will be there to support them once they leave you.

Secondly, recording the child's response and raising the concern:

- **Record what is actually said.** (It may be required in court) – See Appendix 1 (updated February 2023)
- **Share** your concerns directly with LEAF's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy with details of anything that has been said or done. Give your notes to the DSL. Don't speak to others as it may compromise the child's safety.
- **Process for a school visit/session:**
 - Inform the teacher/visit lead on site
 - Ring the school and ask to talk to the DSL directly, regardless of the visit lead's instructions
 - Complete LEAF's Reporting Proforma



- Send proforma to LEAF's DSL (currently Carl Edwards, Director Education and Public Engagement)
- **Concerns about another provider that you are working with:**
 - Think: Does this provider need to be removed from working with the children directly immediately? If so, do so.
 - Report to the Local Authority (details below)
 - If you are unsure contact the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000
 - If in doubt dial, 999
- **If your concern is for the welfare of a child**, contact the local authority children's social care.
- **If there is an allegation against a member of the children's workforce** contact the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer).

You can find contact details for your area LADO via the link here:

<https://www.safecic.co.uk/your-scb-acpc/55-free-downloads-and-safeguarding-links/61safeguarding-children-board-links%20>

Code of Conduct

LEAF is clear on what behaviour is and is not acceptable when working with children. This is to ensure that children we work with are protected from harm and reduce the likelihood of any allegations made against LEAF staff. It will also ensure that LEAF staff understand and maintain professional boundaries.

Key Principles of our Code of Conduction:

- Always put the child first
- Never have sole responsibility for them and ensure if possible that there is more than one adult present
- Only provide personal or intimate care in an emergency (otherwise this does not form a part of your professional role)
- Never give children your personal details and avoid personal social networking
- Always behave appropriately and professionally
- Listen and respect children, avoid favouritism and respect diversity
- Remember that you are in a position of trust and should act in a professional manner at all times
- Always report any concerns about a child or the behaviour of a colleague or other individual whom you might be working with



Handling Allegations / Dealing with Complaints / Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures

LEAF has clear policies about handling allegations, dealing with complaints and our own disciplinary and grievance procedures and these details will be made available to all as necessary.

LEAF is mindful that the three procedures may confuse the next appropriate steps to take. LEAF is clear that, in any case where a complaint has been made with regards to any inappropriate or poor practice, there will be immediate interim suspension whilst LEAF carries out a full investigation. LEAF will contact the school concerned first (if appropriate) and local authority children's social care before making an open decision about the best way forward.

It is the responsibility of the safeguarding lead and/or deputy to ensure that these procedures are rigorously adhered to. In the case that the safeguarding lead is implicated, the deputy should be informed. In the exceptional circumstances that both are involved, it is the duty of the person concerned to contact the school or social care services direct.

Children's social care services will manage any investigations with the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), overseen by the LADO in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures. These are available on the LSCB website.

With regards to disciplinary and grievance procedures, LEAF is very clear that should an allegation be made about one of its members of staff there will be an immediate interim suspension put in place, it will take no further steps until it has fully discussed and agreed a strategy with the Local Authority Designated Officer, local authority children's social care and/or the police. Any investigation will override the need to implement any such procedures. Our management are responsible for making referrals to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS), and the relevant professional bodies of an individual who works or volunteers with us and does, or may, pose a danger to children and young people; this is LEAF's responsibility and even after a Police Investigation where the claim may be unfounded it is at LEAF's discretion to contact DBS. Other organisations including a school LEAF works with, will liaise with their LADO and MASH if such a referral needs to be made.

Record Keeping

All records will be securely kept in a locked cabinet at Head Office. Only the child safeguarding lead and/or deputy will have access and records will only be kept as long as necessary (usually no longer than 25 years).

Normally these records will be passed to local authority children's social care as soon as possible. All records will be handwritten (and if recorded electronically, kept in a secure area) by the person with the concern within 24 hours, on headed paper or incident sheets and will be factual, non-judgmental. All such records will have a front page listing the papers in chronological order.

It is helpful to record any known details of the child/children or young people involved e.g. name, address,



date of birth etc. All records should be factual. It is equally important to record the reasons for making the decision not to refer to children's social care services as when the decision is taken to refer. Always sign, clearly detail name and job role of the person making the record. Date and time these records.

Remember the key principles of recording:

- Record all actions and decisions
- Be clear, concise, accurate and up-to-date
- Separate fact from fiction
- Record the exact words used
- Record consent to share information
- Share information on a need-to-know basis
- Remember that your record may be used as evidence and to determine outcomes



Policy and Review Date

This policy was reviewed, updated, agreed and disseminated on Monday 4th January 2021 and will be reviewed annually or when there are substantial organisational changes or a significant occurrence or breach of safeguarding.

Policy First Created: 25th January 2018

Last Reviewed: 06th February 2023

Next Review Date: 06th February 2024

Signed by:

Lead for child safeguarding:

Carl Edwards
Director, Education & Public Engagement

Deputy for child safeguarding:

Philip Adams
LEAF Education Programme Manager

Approved by:

For the Chief Executive:

Stephen Jones
Chief Operating Officer

LEAF Chairman:

Philip Wynn

Appendix 1: Guidance on Recording and Sharing Concerns

(This form should be completed **ONLY** with information already known.
Be careful not to investigate / question the child or young person)

Record of Concerns Form			
Child's Name:			
Child's Age:	Child's Gender:	Child's Ethnicity:	
School Name (if relevant):			
Recording Adult's Details	Name:		
	Contact details:		
Person to whom you have reported the disclosure	Name:		
	Contact details:		
Where and when?	Visit location:	Date:	Time of Disclosure:
<p>What was actually said by the child and / or observed by the adult that caused the concern?</p> <p><i>Remember to write down exactly what was said – the exact words used by the child. If drawings were shared keep these and attach.</i></p>			

How did the child appear? <i>Upset/scared/angry? etc</i>			
Any information provided about the abuser? <i>Name, address, description etc</i>			
Background context – i.e. what stimulated the verbal disclosure 1:1 discussion or in a group?			
Next Steps <i>What have you told the child you will do next?</i>			
Signed		Date	Time
Job Role			

NB: Do not use initials/abbreviations in this document without a key.

If you have given any opinions then this must be clearly stated on the form.

Appendix 2: Handout for frontline staff



Safeguarding Policy:

If you have a concern or disclosure



Report to school/group leader and ring the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)



Record the information immediately and report to LEAF's DSL or Deputy DSL

Any consultation should not delay a referral. In an emergency dial 999

Remember: "No child has died from sharing information, but so many have from not sharing information."

Advice for staff	
Do	Don't
Be accessible and receptive Listen carefully Take it seriously Reassure them that they are right to tell Say what will happen next Consult immediately with DSL Make a careful record of what was said	React strongly e.g. that's terrible! Jump to conclusions especially about the abuser Speculate or accuse anybody Tell them that you will keep this a secret Ask leading questions Make promises you cannot keep Stop them from speaking freely Tell them to stop talking so you can go and fetch/tell the DSL

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy is:

- Name: Carl Edwards – LEAF Director, Education & Public Engagement (DSL)

Contact details: carl.edwards@leaf.eco Tel: 02476 413911 Mobile: 07977 283806

- Name: Philip Adams – LEAF Education Programme Manager (Deputy DSL)

Contact details: Philip.adams@leaf.eco Tel: 02476 413911 Mobile: 07523 907404