



## Updated November 2016

### Safeguarding Policy

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Act 1989, the Education Act 2002 and the Children Act 2004 and in line with government publications and local guidance.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the position within Arts Bridge Charity on safeguarding children and young people (i.e. anyone under the age of 18) who are participants in activities developed by Arts Bridge Charity thereby providing an environment where each child or young person is encouraged to fulfil their potential, in a safe, enjoyable and positive manner. The company facilitates a number of participatory arts activities which involve tutors / artists working with a range of groups including children, young people and individuals with a range of disabilities, both mental and physical. Projects and workshops can take place in either a formal or informal, educational and non-educational setting.

Child protection awareness should commence at the onset of any activity involving children. We need to ensure by taking risk assessments for all activities, that all aspects of the site and workshop physical operating environment are safe and that the backgrounds of staff working with those children are suitable. We need to do this in order to be able to respond to any concerns raised by or about children and young people using the facility by any parent, teacher or registered body.

People working with children and young people have the responsibility to safeguard children and young people, as well as themselves. As an organisation, we need to understand fully what we are asking our employees, paid and voluntary, to undertake from a child protection perspective, to protect young children, young people, vulnerable adults and employees.

The first step is for the organisation to accept ownership of the issue of child protection which incorporates the belief that Arts Bridge Charity needs a Child Protection Policy, and that this Policy can only be effective through its being properly communicated to, and understood by, those working directly with children, young people and vulnerable adults who use the facility. It is also crucial that participating individuals, children, their carers and people acting as points of liaison external to Arts Bridge Charity are confident that Arts Bridge Charity is aware of issues that might potentially come to the fore in relation to working with children and other vulnerable groups. To ensure that this occurs, this Child Protection Policy has been written.

We believe that:

- The welfare of the child, young person and vulnerable adult is paramount.

- All children, young adults and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Staff (paid and unpaid) should be clear on how to respond appropriately.
- A protective culture puts children's interests first. Children must feel confident that if they have concerns someone will listen and take them seriously.

### Safeguarding – Adopting a Policy

A child protection policy should cover:

- 1) Recruitment, Training and Induction
- 2) Suitability of Workers, paid and voluntary
- 3) The needs of especially vulnerable adults, children and young people
- 4) Suitability and nature of physical play environment
- 5) Mechanisms for Reporting Concerns
- 6) How Children's Concerns and Expressions of Need Are Perceived and Responded To.
- 7) The definitions and signs of abuse
- 8) Working with third party organisations
- 9) Child Protection Act 2004
- 10) Safeguarding officer

We would recommend that our Child Protection Policy is reviewed every year by a cross departmental management team that has responsibility for any activity for which a child could attend.

#### 1) Recruitment & Selection & 2) Suitability of Workers

The impression given to applicants for paid and voluntary positions which afford substantial access to children concerning child protection awareness and practices is crucial. We believe that we need to ensure from the start of the recruitment process onwards the importance of acting within our Child Protection Policy by signposting clearly the steps to be taken where an employee dealing with children has a concern about a child, young person or vulnerable adult or where a child says or does something which might be a form of disclosure.

Therefore we should ask the member of staff or volunteer being recruited to complete and sign an application form confirming:

1) that the position involves contact with children and is exempt from the provisions of Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, so details of any convictions for criminal offences against children (including 'spent' convictions) must be given.

2) that permission is granted for a DBS check to be carried out.

3) a signed commitment to recognise and act upon with immediate effect any possible instances of abuse of children, young persons or vulnerable adults.

The recruitment and selection process for staff and volunteers who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults will include:

a) An interview to explore the applicant's experience of working or contact with children with an interviewer that has experience of working with children.

b) Backing up the standard criminal background checks we operate as an organisation by asking for some form of additional identification such as a birth certificate or passport or other suitable document to firmly identify the applicant. I would also advocate two medical / former employer personal references from someone who has experience of the employee working with children, young adults and/or vulnerable adults.

An enhanced DBS certificate must be re-applied for every 2 years.

We should note the child ratios per adult for teaching purposes in law as

Adult: Child ratios outside formal education are 1:8 for groups of children aged 3 to 7 years and 1:10 for older children. Children under 8 must be supervised at all times.

A code of behaviour to outline good practice when working with children would advise that bullying, shouting, racism or sexism is not acceptable and all children / young adults / vulnerable adults should be treated equally, with respect and dignity. The welfare of each participant should always be put first, before the achievement of goals. It would state that balanced relationships should be built on mutual trust, which empowers children / young people / vulnerable adults to share in the decision-making process. Enthusiastic and constructive feedback, rather than negative criticism should be given. The session/project/ workshop should display equality.

Good practice in physical contact means both the maintenance of a safe and appropriate distance from participants and seeking the agreement of participants prior to any physical contact with touching of any participants being kept to a minimum in relation to the activity.

Any circumstances that may lead a tutor/artist or volunteer to have concerns in relation to child protection, should result in that tutor/ artist/ volunteer relaying those to the appropriate adult associated with the individual or group. The Director / Personnel Manager will contact the appropriate agency or local authority department for further guidance if necessary.

### 3) Suitability and Nature of Physical Play Environment

In considering the operation of an activity, the layout of the room needs to be considered in terms of children's safety, including from a child protection viewpoint. Therefore, not only should a risk assessment include consideration of any physical risks, but also a child protection audit - that is, the site, buildings, disposition of rooms should be looked at in terms of child protection concerns. For example, how many rooms, how large, what

activities are proposed, what will be the disposition of workers, how will they be supervised, are there characteristics of the site which could afford inappropriate opportunity? This might affect the staffing ratio.

#### 4) Reporting Concerns

The one thing we need to avoid as an organisation is the situation where we are criticised because, although employees had concerns, there were no clear and identified channels through which these could be raised. There will be times when anyone working with children and young people and vulnerable adults may be told things by them, overhear conversations between children, observe behaviour or changes of behaviour, perceive what appears to be inappropriate behaviour (with an eye to age etc), or have concerns raised in other ways. We need to be sure that our employees know to whom and how they must relate their concerns. Often this will be a senior staff member, a Head of Unit or their Director. That person will need to have a clear mandate as to when to relate concerns onwards from the project e.g. to social services, the police etc. We need to include a clear structure that reports issues via the HoD and Director onto the Personnel Manager as the designated person responsible for the coordination, monitoring and implementation of the policy.

It is very important that adequate records of concerns, incidents and accidents are kept, including for child protection reasons. Again signposting to such mechanisms is crucial.

Any complaints of suspected or actual abuse, or of children/ young people/ vulnerable adults being put at risk, must be taken seriously and acted upon immediately.

Remember if a complaint or allegation is made against a member of staff he or she should be made aware of his/her rights under both employment law and internal disciplinary procedures. No matter how you feel about the accusation, 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.

Images and information that are produced as a result of participatory arts projects will be handled sensitively in terms of public relations, publicity and archive material and take into account current legislation such as the Data Protection Act (1998).

Any individual, who has been officially identified (i.e. by the police or local authority) as a potential 'risk' to children / young people / vulnerable adults, will not be allowed to work/ volunteer on events where children/ young people/ vulnerable adults are involved.

#### 5) How children's concerns and expressions of need are perceived and responded to

Disclosures by children about strangers are rare so the likelihood of a child complaining about someone within a project is rare, especially where there is a sound and well-observed child protection policy in being. More commonly, children may reveal issues giving cause for concern that all is not right in family terms.

Young people attend other facilities, often sporting, and there is the possibility that they may talk about what happens there. Employees working with children may find themselves the recipients of confidences simply because they operate in ways which engender children's confidence.

The workshop practitioner needs to appreciate that children communicate their worries, concerns in a multitude of ways - direct verbal expression is less likely than behaviour changes or activity giving cause for concern, perhaps a piece of art work which gives rise

to some thought, "inappropriate" activity or knowledge beyond a child's years, flinching when a hand or arm is raised innocently as if scared of being struck, unusual depression, unexplained bruising, burns, cuts, injuries etc.

Above all, children and young people who are in need or trouble always deserve and need someone who will listen without making judgement, who will not make false promises about keeping a secret when this is not possible, and who will not reject what they are saying as untrue. A troubled child or young person will need to be reassured that their needs are being put first, not being put second fiddle to other concerns. The employee working with children is in a unique position in terms of sympathetic environment and of trust.

If the alleged abuse took place at a project based in a school, community or youth group we would expect the head teacher or centre director to follow standard procedures and notify social services who can investigate the matter further. Social services will liaise with the relevant departments on a 'need-to-know' basis and will, if appropriate, inform the police. It is the responsibility of the authorities to determine whether abuse has occurred.

#### If someone confides in you:

It is possible that a child, young person or vulnerable adult who is or has suffered abuse will confide in you. The following action should be taken if there are concerns of abuse:

- listen carefully to what is said. Allow the person to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification.
- don't promise to 'keep it a secret'. Use the first opportunity you have to say that you will need to share the information with others. Make it clear that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help
- reassure the child, young person or vulnerable adult that 'they did the right thing' in telling someone
- tell the child, young person or vulnerable adult what you are going to do next
- speak immediately to the person in the school/educational establishment, who has designated responsibility for the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually social services as soon as possible after disclosing the conversation, make a note of what was said, using the individuals own words. Note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned, who gave you the information to you.

Also refer to the following document 'Sharing Guidance for Practitioners and managers': [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/417696/Archived-information\\_sharing\\_guidance\\_for\\_practitioners\\_and\\_managers.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417696/Archived-information_sharing_guidance_for_practitioners_and_managers.pdf)

#### 6) Disclosing and Barring Service Checks (formerly CRB)

I would insist upon Disclosing and Barring Service Checks on anyone wishing to work in situations of substantial access to children and young people under 16. The current situation is that:

Those statutory, voluntary and commercial organisations running child-care activities where under-8s are present in sessions which last more than 2 hours a day and for more than 5 days in a year, must be registered by Ofsted (through its Child Care Registration units), which will mean they will be subject to Disclosing and Barring Service Checks, Social Services checks and other forms of vetting.

Those working in the statutory youth service will be checked by their local authority employers.

Those who work with children aged 8 and over in child care settings where there are no under 8s present will be liable to have to produce a Certificate of Suitability issued by Ofsted. This Certificate will involve a Disclosing and Barring Service Check.

At Arts Bridge Charity, staff working with children in non-child care settings (sports, junior clubs, arts and drama groups, and many others) must have an enhanced DBS issued within two years in order to work on our projects. Staff can gain access to Disclosing and Barring Service Checks either by registering with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) or, as in the case of many not able or willing to do this, by submitting requests for such checks via a CRB Umbrella Body. This process also ensures checks are made against the Protection of Children Act List (POCAL) which is a legal requirement if employing a childcare worker and is also open to others employing people working with children and young people.

It is also important that where volunteers and staff are working with children, they should be checked against Social Services records for details of previous involvement with children and young people (including child-minding, childcare activities, fostering and children taken into care).

## 7) The Definitions and Signs of Abuse

### Definitions of abuse

There are four recognised types of abuse. It is important to know what they are and how to recognise them. Your procedures should contain this information. Most types of child abuse can take one or several of these forms, for example bullying and domestic violence are often both physical and emotional forms of abuse.

### Physical Abuse

This is when a child is hurt or injured by a child or an adult. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It also includes giving a child harmful drugs or alcohol. Female genital mutilation is a form of physical abuse which is illegal in the UK. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child they are looking after. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick child.

### Emotional Abuse

This is when adults deny children love or affection, or constantly threaten or humiliate them. Sarcasm, degrading punishments and ignoring a child are also forms of emotional abuse and undermine a child's confidence and sense of self-worth. 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 serious 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.

## Sexual Abuse

This is when a child is used sexually by an adult or young person. Sexual abuse can include kissing, touching the child's genitals or breasts, vaginal or anal intercourse and oral sex. Encouraging a child to look at pornographic magazines or videos is also sexual abuse. Bullying, racism and other types of discrimination are forms of child abuse. Like other kinds of abuse they can harm a child physically and emotionally. Sexual abuse includes sexual exploitation, such as forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people.

## 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 it may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers) or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## Possible signs of abuse

### Physical signs of abuse:

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them,
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls or games,
- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body,
- Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching),
- Cigarette burns,
- Bite marks,
- Broken bones,
- Scalds,
- Injuries which have not received medical attention,
- Neglect-under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care,
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains.

### Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation,
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts,
- Flinching when approached or touched,
- Reluctance to get changed, for example, wearing long sleeves in hot weather,
- Depression,
- Withdrawn behaviour,
- Running away from home.

## Emotional signs of abuse

The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- A failure to thrive or grow particularly if a child puts on weight in other circumstances: e.g. in hospital or away from their parents' care,
- Sudden speech disorders,
- Persistent tiredness,
- Development delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- Obsessions or phobias,
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration,
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults,
- Being unable to play,
- Attention seeking behaviour,
- Fear of making mistakes,
- Self-harm,
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour.

#### Sexual Abuse

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital/anal area,
- Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas,
- Sexually transmitted disease,
- Vaginal discharge or infection,
- Stomach pains,
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down,
- Pregnancy.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming withdrawn or aggressive,
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people,
- Having nightmares,
- Running away from home,
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level,
- Sexual drawings or language,
- Bedwetting,
- Eating problems such as over-eating or anorexia,
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts,
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about,
- Substance or drug abuse,
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money or expensive gifts,
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence),
- Acting in an inappropriate sexually explicit way with adults.

#### Neglect

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children,
- Constantly dirty or smelly,
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight,
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time,
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments,
- Having few friends,
- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised.

#### 8) Working with third party organisations

Where a third party organisation is responsible for running the services there will be clear lines of accountability and written agreements setting out responsibility for carrying out the recruitment and vetting checks of staff and volunteers.

#### 9) Child Protection Act 2004

<http://www.fairplayforchildren.org/pdf/1218209683.pdf>

#### 10) Designated Safeguarding Officer

ABC Designated Safeguarding Officer is Amanda Wright. Key aspects of the role include:

- Making sure all staff are aware how to raise safeguarding concerns
- Ensuring all staff understand the symptoms of child abuse and neglect
- Referring any concerns to social care
- Monitoring children who are the subject of child protection plans
- Maintaining accurate and secure child protection records
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Contact Amanda Wright as follows:

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#### Arts Bridge Charity Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy Statement

As an organisation Arts Bridge Charity is committed to protecting children from harm. Our staff accepts and recognises their responsibilities in developing awareness of the issues which cause children harm. All staff in direct contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults are required to read, understand, complete and sign the Child Protection Policy.

As an organisation we endeavour to safeguard children by:

- adopting and regularly reviewing child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for employees;
- making staff, parents, children and all connected bodies aware that we take child protection seriously and respond to concerns about the welfare of children;
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately;
- following carefully the procedures for staff recruitment and selection;
- providing effective management for staff by ensuring access to supervision, support and training.

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice at regular intervals.

Date policy adopted: November 2016

Date due for review: November 2018

Amanda Wright  
Director, Arts Bridge Charity

November 2016

