



POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR SAFEGUARDING

REACH
Reading Schools' Christian Work Trust
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READING
RG2 7JE

This documentation is developed in conjunction with Scripture Union and 31:8 (formerly CCPAS).

Revised October 2022

REACH Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding

A. Policy Statement

REACH is a charity made up of volunteers and paid staff. We believe that all human beings are of equal worth in the sight of God and aim to follow Biblical principles in all that we do.

Therefore:

- We commit ourselves to the nurture, protection, and general welfare of all, especially children and adults at risk of harm. In so doing, we will work, in partnership, as appropriate, with parents, carers, statutory agencies and other organisations.
- It is the responsibility of each one of us to protect children and adults at risk of harm from all forms of abuse and to report any disclosures of abuse in addition to suspicions or concerns.
- In order to achieve this, we are committed to supporting and resourcing those who work with children and adults at risk of harm. We will provide appropriate supervision, recognise mutual accountability and commit to an annual review of our safeguarding policy, procedures and practices.
- In fulfilling our commitments, we will work, in partnership, as appropriate, with parents, carers, statutory agencies and other organisations.

REACH has adopted the above principles; all volunteers and staff are presented with a copy and expected to follow the procedures and guidelines as set out in this document.

B. Statutory Compliance for REACH

The standards in this policy build on and incorporate legislation and government expectations for children and adults at risk of harm. This includes HM Government 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)' and new safeguarding duties under the Care Act 2014. The guidance is for statutory agencies and voluntary organisations alike and covers all the expectations of government in relation to safeguarding children in England.

- 1) **Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children and young adults at risk of harm.**
The policy statement included in this document has been adopted following approval by the Trustees of REACH. It is reviewed annually, and is available on request for public scrutiny.
- 2) **Plan the work of the organisation so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur**
We have established and will maintain and review clear procedures to fulfil this policy. They are set out in detail in this document and are under constant review, with any updates necessary given in writing at least annually.
- 3) **Apply agreed procedures for protecting children to all paid staff and volunteers.**
We have established minimum procedures for all workers and training and comprehensive procedures for workers in direct contact with children. All workers receive a copy of the code of conduct.
- 4) **Use supervision as a means of maintaining a safeguarding culture across the organisation.**
All paid staff review their work with the person to whom they are accountable.
- 5) **Treat all would-be paid staff as job applicants for any position involving contact with children.**
We have comprehensive application and selection procedures for all workers.
- 6) **Obtain at least two references from people who have experience of the applicant's paid work or volunteering with children.**
We require a reference from at least two people (a church leader or equivalent, and one other) for each applicant, seeking information which includes character and relationship assessment.

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(We appreciate that some of our volunteers are young adults wanting to begin work with children, and therefore it may not be possible to gain references which relate to relevant experience. However, young leaders may be able to get a good character reference from a teacher etc.)

7) **Explore all applicants' experience of working or contact with children in an interview before appointment.**

All staff and volunteers are interviewed prior to appointment.

8) **Find out whether an applicant has any conviction for criminal offences against children.**

All workers are required to sign a declaration disclosing a criminal conviction or caution. This includes, subject to certain exceptions, disclosing convictions which for other purposes are 'spent', as posts involving direct work with children are exempt from the provision of section 4(ii) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions Order 1975).

9) **Make paid and voluntary appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period.**

While the short term nature of much of our volunteer work makes probationary periods inappropriate, we are aware that many volunteers will have limited experience. Appropriate support is provided for each circumstance. In practice, this may mean sharing of responsibility, rather than having unsupervised responsibility, for children.

Team leaders have the authority to ask team members to leave an event if it is in the best interest of the children.

We have a system of specific and general induction for paid staff, leading into an initial six-month work review, and an on-going review process which consists of regular contact with a mentor who is a trustee. In addition, paid staff receive an annual appraisal by trustees who are not their mentor.

10) **Train paid staff.**

We give regular training for the safe care of children, including increasing understanding of the prevalence of abuse, along with the signs, symptoms and indicators of abuse

C. Safer Recruitment

- All those who seek employment with REACH as paid staff or volunteers and whose work is likely to involve regulated activity with children are required to apply for an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- Potential Trustees of REACH are required to apply for an Enhanced Disclosure before their appointment is confirmed. On appointment Trustees' DBS checks will be carried out every three years thereafter.
- Those with criminal convictions, cautions, cases pending, reprimands or bind-overs are not necessarily unable to take up positions with REACH, which abides by its policy on 'Employing People with a Criminal Record'.
- Scripture Union(SU) acts on behalf of REACH, one of its mission partners, for all DBS checks.
- REACH process all DBS checks through the online system provided by the contracted Registered Body for SU (currently Atlantic Data).
- Job applicants are advised of the need for an Enhanced Disclosure before an application is submitted.
- A specifically assigned staff member and a trustee of REACH carry out verification of identity of prospective staff and volunteers and the processing of staff applications for Enhanced Disclosures.
- One trustee has overall responsibility for child protection on behalf of Learn4Life and as such is responsible for verification of the identity and the online processing of DBS checks for paid staff and volunteers.
- Applicants from overseas or those living in England and Wales for a short time may not be eligible for a Disclosure from the DBS. Every effort will be made to take whatever measures are available according to the comparative methods in their own country, but where there is any doubt as to the availability of a thorough check the application will be refused.

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- All volunteers who are expected to undertake regulated activity with children are required to show a current DBS certificate with Enhanced Disclosure alongside identification documents on appointment and every three years thereafter. If they don't have one, we will carry out their DBS check.

Update Service

- Where an individual has registered a disclosure certificate with the DBS update service, REACH will accept registered disclosure certificates that comply with the following criteria:
 - The disclosure is for the 'Child Workforce' category and
 - It is an 'Enhanced Disclosure'.
- Where the online disclosure check contains information about cautions, convictions, reprimands or warnings or other relevant information the procedure below on handling disclosure information will be followed.

Handling Disclosure Information

- If a Disclosure contains information about cautions, convictions, reprimands or warnings or other relevant information, advice on how to proceed is sought by the REACH lead on safeguarding from the SU contact.
- Information recorded on the Disclosure may be shared by the lead on safeguarding only with those directly involved in the particular employment decision, and only if it is likely to affect the employment decision, which is then made in accordance with REACH's policy on Employing People with a Criminal Record.
- If additional information is received from a police force, action follows the procedure outlined in the letter and is not shared with the applicant and only with as few people as possible people provided the police letter received does not forbid it.
- The date and disclosure number of all checks are recorded in Scripture Union's DBS system.
- In extreme circumstances, when a disclosure check has not been successfully completed prior to the start of an event, and the individual is not registered with the update service, a risk assessment must be completed to determine what role, if any, that individual may take in the event. That risk assessment must be agreed by the trustees' lead for safeguarding.

Renewal of Disclosures

- Disclosures are normally renewed on a rolling three-year basis.
- For disclosures that are registered with the update service these will also be checked on a rolling three-year basis.

D. Code of Conduct

- All those working with children and adults at risk of harm on behalf of REACH will treat them with respect and dignity, which should be reflected in attitude, behaviour and speech.
- REACH accepts a duty of care for a child or adult at risk of harm involved in a REACH activity.
- Teams on mixed events will include male and female members, and organisation of activities within the events will reflect this balance wherever possible.
- A group meeting in a school will be led by more than one person.
- Teams will aim to work in groups and in public areas so that contact between participants and team is in sight of others.
- Teams will avoid forming exclusive relationships or those which could be seen as showing favouritism to individual participants.
- Wherever a team member finds themselves involved in a potentially lengthy counselling situation, they should seek to involve another member of the team at an early stage. Promises of confidentiality will be avoided and items of concern will be shared with appropriate school staff, leaders or adults with relevant experience.
- It is normally inappropriate for adults to initiate physical contact with participants, and team members should be cautious of contact initiated by participants, except in exceptional circumstances such as the need for medical attention or to prevent harm.

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- The use of any corporal punishment is strictly prohibited i.e. any form of physical discipline is not acceptable
- Any physical contact with children in the area of discipline will be purely in terms of an intervention which prevents the one exercising violent, or other inappropriate, behaviour from hurting themselves or others. Minimal force will be used, for the minimum time necessary, and witnessed by another team member. A record of such intervention must be made.
- If it is necessary to send a child, young person or vulnerable adult at risk of harm home from an event early, they will either be collected by a parent/guardian/carer or accompanied home so that the responsibility for their welfare is clearly transferred, unless other arrangements are agreed with the child's parents/carers ideally in writing e.g. email.
- Team leaders and members are in a 'relationship of trust' with participants and must take care that an abuse of that trust does not occur. Any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop between a person in a position of trust and the individual(s) in their care must be avoided.
- This relationship of trust must be borne in mind outside the actual event in any communication between team and participants, whether in person, by letter, email, telephone or WhatsApp. No contact with students will be allowed on any other platform such as social media. Any communication or direct contact with a child will therefore be characterised by transparency and integrity and must operate within REACH's policy on safeguarding children and should have two staff members copied into the conversation stream for the sake of transparency.
- Team members will not normally be expected to communicate outside of the event with participants other than those for whom they have been given particular responsibility.
- No photographs should be taken of children in schools. At a REACH event outside of a school, a staff member may decide to take photos for publicity purposes if they have parental consent.

E. Reporting concerns

Whilst working at REACH events, team members may be told about various personal situations which the participants they work with have experienced. Team members also may be told matters which give concern about the mental health or general wellbeing of a participant. In the majority of situations, being prepared to give the time to listen and care without being judgmental will be of great value and assistance. In some cases, it may be possible and appropriate to offer advice and prayer.

It is possible that the nature of our work may increase the likelihood of participants disclosing an issue which puts them 'at risk' or suggest that they have been or are being abused. Such disclosures may cover a range of potentially harmful situations including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, spiritual abuse, bullying and peer-to-peer abuse. Definitions of these terms are covered in Appendix C.

Whether the matter raised is a concern of disclosure of potential or actual abuse the following procedure must be followed by the team member:

- Give the person time to talk freely but without fear of being overheard. Make sure a team member knows where you are and that you can still be seen. Treat the person with respect and acceptance. Always accept what is being said at this stage. Do not ask questions other than to clarify what is being said. Never put words into the person's mouth and be careful with your tone of voice so as not to appear shocked or angry or to show disbelief.
- Do not promise to keep the disclosure 'secret'. Explain that you must share this information with the leader of the event who may in turn call upon other people who will be able to help.
- Stay with the person until you feel they have said all they want to say. Try to avoid leaving them in a distressed state.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead of the school or the REACH Ministry Director (Sarah Horne) of the disclosure as soon as possible.

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- Make a written report of what happened on the safeguarding concern form provided as soon as possible (not in the participant's presence). Do not interpret, only record what was said as verbatim as possible.
- Designated Safeguarding Leads and overall event leaders will be aware that members of the team involved in handling these situations may also need appropriate help throughout the process and afterwards. Counselling support may be appropriate; the Scripture Union national office should be contacted regarding this (see Appendix A)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead must follow the process laid out in Appendix A and report the concern or a disclosure of abuse. It is not their role (or that of any team member) to determine if a threshold of abuse has been reached nor to make a decision about the disclosure based on their assessment of other information held. That is a matter which will be considered by our contracted safeguarding advisors (currently Thirtyone:eight). Our safeguarding advisors will consider concerns about a child's welfare consistently and proportionately.

If contact with the person making the disclosure continues during the event, try to ensure that this is as 'normal' as possible, and avoid drawing attention to the situation or repeatedly referring to it unless the person initiates further discussion.

Although REACH is committed to safer recruitment and to the upholding of the Code of Conduct and the procedures described in this document, it remains possible that there may be individuals within our employed or volunteer workforce who may be a risk to children, young people and adults.

- If an allegation is made against any member of the event team or its leader or a worker has concerns about a fellow worker, the same process must be followed as detailed above and our contracted safeguarding advisors must be contacted consistent with Appendix A. In these specific circumstances, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must ask the advisor if the team member or leader must leave the event immediately in order to safeguard children. If the subject of concern is the event's designated safeguarding lead, the concern should be raised with Chair of Trustees.
- Any team member who is concerned about the way an allegation or disclosure has been handled will contact the trustee lead on safeguarding.
- At every stage, procedures will show respect for people and will involve careful consultation, not hasty reaction.

F. Processing of personal data

Information and personal data relating to safeguarding matters will be gathered, recorded and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act, 2018, and Scripture Union's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice: <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/privacy-notice-and-cookies>. This will be done in compliance with the requirements of IICSA (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse)

G. Responsibilities

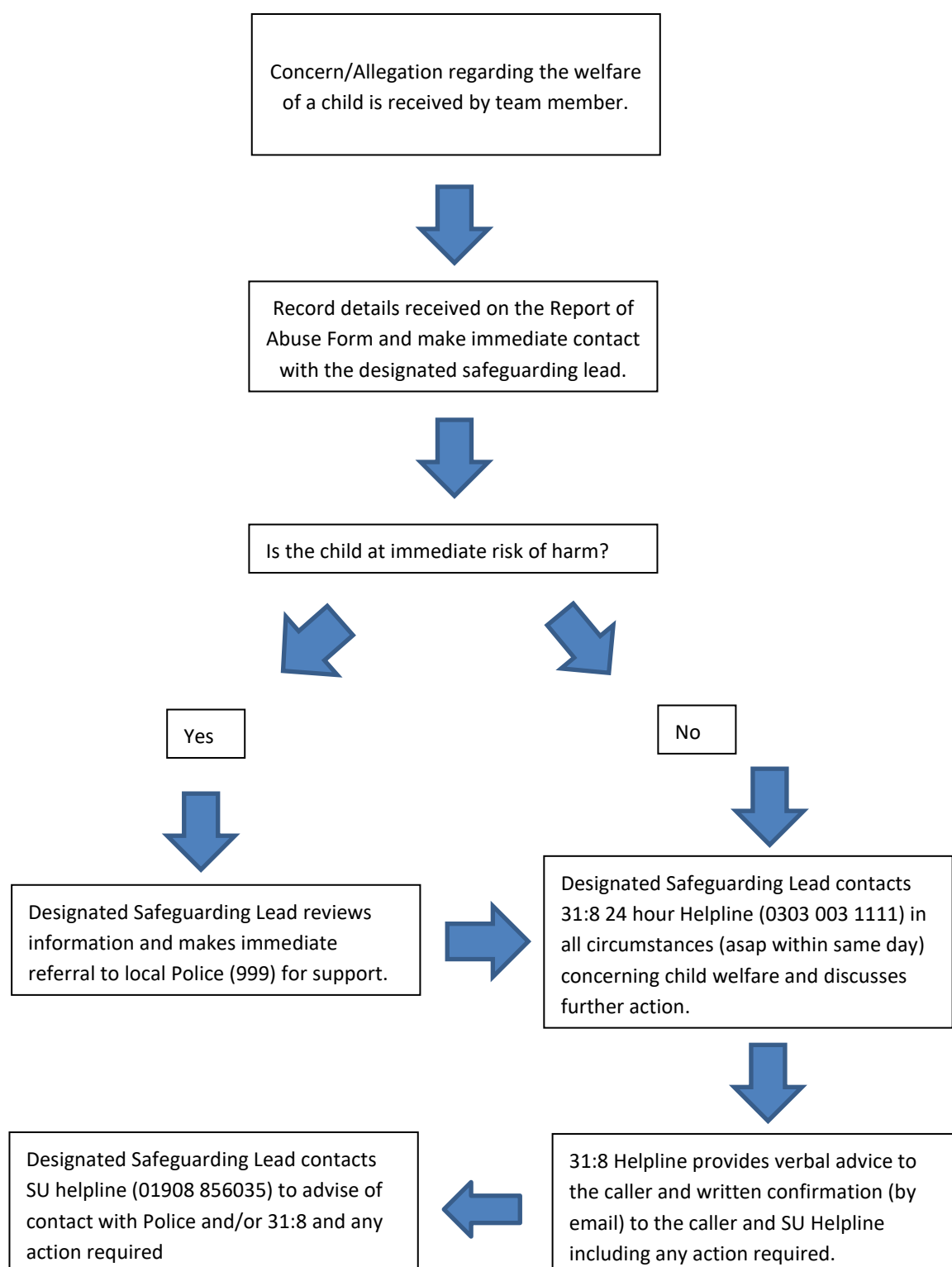
The Board of Trustees is responsible for the approval of REACH's safeguarding policy. A named trustee (currently Beth Munday) is the designated trustee for safeguarding.

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APPENDIX A: Reporting Information Concerning the Welfare and Protection of a Child

FLOWCHART FOR REPORTING INFORMATION CONCERNING THE WELFARE AND PROTECTION OF A CHILD

Note: This may relate to a welfare concern occurring at an event, including the actions of children or adults or a concern regarding the welfare of a child outside of an event



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APPENDIX B: Glossary

Adult at risk of harm	A person who is aged 18 or over and who has care and support needs as defined by the Care Act 2014
Child	Anyone under the age of 18
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service (formerly CRB – Criminal Records Bureau)
Designated Safeguarding Lead	The appropriately trained person who is the designated lead for safeguarding on an event.
Event	Any event where REACH takes responsibility for participants who are under the age of 18 years.
First Aider	Person with current, appropriate qualification to administer first aid.
Junior Team	Those younger than 18 who may assist on an event but who will not have unsupervised responsibility for, or undertake regulated activity with, anyone under the age of 18 years.
Leaders	People who have been given overall responsibility for an event through an appointment procedure.
Participants	Those who attend an event.
Regulated Activity	‘Regulated Activity’ (as defined by the Protection of Freedoms Act, 2012) involving a substantial degree of contact with children including unsupervised activities such as teaching, supervising, training or providing advice/guidance on well-being (this applies to most people working with, or responsible for, children in a school situation).
Team	Paid workers and volunteers.
Team members	Those who are involved in the event.
Workers	Anyone engaged in REACH’s ministries, either as employees or volunteers.

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APPENDIX C: Definitions of abuse - Children

Abuse and neglect: The four definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)'.

ENGLAND

What is abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical 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 abuse

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 may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. 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 cyberbullying), 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

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child 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.

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.

APPENDIX D: USEFUL CONTACTS

National Office

Trinity House, Opal Court, Opal Drive, Milton Keynes MK15 0DF

Tel: 01908 856000

Fax: 01908 856111

Emergency number: 0845 2733060 or 01908 856035

Leadership Team safeguarding lead: 01908 856029

REACH contact Sarah Horne (Ministry Director)
Tel: 077900 68724

31:8 helpline: Tel: 0845 1204550 option 2 or 01322 517817
E:mail: info@318.co.uk

Non-Emergency NHS Tel: 111

Police Child Protection Team: Tel: 101

Social Services Reading: Tel: 0118 937 3641 or Emergency out-of-hours: 01344 786 543

Social Services Wokingham Borough: 0118 908 8002

Social Services West Berkshire: 01635 503090