



# Arbor Safeguarding Policy

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| Revision Number     | 2               |
| Author              | Ellie Pritchard |
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## Introduction

### The Purpose and scope of this policy statement

Arbor is a social enterprise working with communities to create social, educational and inspiring outdoor spaces, where people can meet, grow and enjoy the benefits of being outside.

We run workshops with children, young people and adults to promote healthy living, enjoying nature and sharing skills. As part of our work we are committed to keeping children safe during our workshops and in the green spaces we help maintain.

### The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect children and young people who receive Arbor's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- 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 Arbor including senior managers, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, volunteers and students.

## **Legal framework**

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from [nspcc.org.uk/childprotection](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/childprotection).

## **Supporting documents**

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents:

- role description for the designated safeguarding officer
- dealing with disclosures and concerns about a child or young person
- managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- recording concerns and information sharing
- child protection records retention and storage
- code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- behaviour codes for children and young people
- photography and sharing images guidance
- safer recruitment
- online safety
- anti-bullying
- managing complaints
- whistleblowing
- health and safety
- induction, training, supervision and support
- adult to child supervision ratios.

## **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 practice 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
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare
- 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
- extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse.

### **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 and 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
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- recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
  - recording and storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
  - 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.

### **The Designated Safeguarding Lead**

Arbor's Designated Safeguarding Lead is Ellie Pritchard

Contact details:

Name: Ellie Pritchard

Phone:07719308448

Email: [ellie@arborprojects.co.uk](mailto:ellie@arborprojects.co.uk)

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead acts as a person responsible for child protection and vulnerable adult issues reported by staff, volunteers and members of the public.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead acts as Arbor's source of support, advice and expertise on safeguarding issues, and are responsible for dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse. They attend training as appropriate and make referrals to external agencies.

In cases of suspected or alleged abuse, the DSL has additional specific responsibilities to:

- Obtain information from staff, volunteers, children, parents or carers who have concerns relating to the protection of young people and vulnerable adults, and to record this information.
- Assess information quickly and carefully and asking for further information where appropriate.
- Consult with a statutory child protection agency e.g. the local social services department, to clarify doubts or worries.
- Make referrals to statutory child protection agencies or the police as soon as is possible.

## **Procedure**

### **Procedure for all staff:**

Key points for all staff to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the young person or vulnerable adult, for example, call 999
- report your concern to the DSL by the end of the day
- if the DSL is not around, ensure the information is shared with the most senior person in the organisation or a member of the Management Committee that day, and ensure action is taken to report the concern to children's or social services
- You should consult externally with children's/social services when you are unable to consult promptly or at all with your designated internal contact for child protection
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a child protection reporting form
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

### **Suspecting a young person or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm**

- There will be occasions when you suspect that a child may be at serious risk, but you have no 'real' evidence. The child's behaviour may have

changed, their artwork could be bizarre or you may have noticed other physical but inconclusive signs. In these circumstances, you should try to give the child the opportunity to talk. The signs you have noticed may be due to a variety of factors and it is fine to ask the child if they are alright or if you can help in any way.

- If the child does begin to reveal that they are being harmed you should follow the advice in the section 'If a child discloses to you'.
- If, following your conversation, you remain concerned, you should discuss your concerns with the DSL.

### **If a young person or vulnerable adult discloses information to you**

- It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being neglected and or abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual, their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults, or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault.
- If a child talks to you about any risks to their safety or wellbeing you will need to let them know that you must pass the information on to the DSL – you are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which you do this is a matter for professional judgement. If you jump in immediately the child may think that you do not want to listen, if you leave it till the very end of the conversation, the child may feel that you have misled them into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

### **During your conversation with the young person or vulnerable adult:**

- Allow them to speak freely.
- Remain calm and do not over react – the child may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting you.
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'.
- Do not be afraid of silences – remember how hard this must be for the young person or vulnerable adult.

- Under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what does the young person or vulnerable adult's mother think about all this.
- At an appropriate time tell the young person or vulnerable adult that in order to help them you must pass the information on.
- Do not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a young person or vulnerable adult who has been abused.
- Avoid admonishing the young person or vulnerable adult for not disclosing earlier. Saying 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' or 'I can't believe what I'm hearing' may be your way of being supportive but the young person or vulnerable adult may interpret it that they have done something wrong.
- Tell the young person or vulnerable adult what will happen next. The young person or vulnerable adult may agree to go with you to see the DSL. Otherwise let them know that someone will come to see them before the end of the day.
- Report verbally to the DSL.
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible on the child protection reporting form and hand it to the designated person.
- Seek support if you feel distressed.

### **Allegations of Physical Injury or Neglect – DSL Procedure**

If the young person or vulnerable adult has a physical injury or symptom of neglect, it is the responsibility of the DSL to:

- Contact social services for advice in cases of deliberate injury or where there are concerns about the young person or vulnerable adult's safety. The parents should not be informed by the DSL in circumstances where a parent/carer or close family member is suspected.
- Seek medical assistance where medical attention is necessary. The DSL will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
- Speak with the parent/carer and suggest medical help or attention is sought for the young person or vulnerable adult. The doctor or health visitor will then initiate further action, if deemed necessary.

- Encourage the parent/carer to seek help from the social services, if appropriate. Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help and fails to act, the DSL should, in case of real concern, contact Social Services for advice.
- Follow up any referral made to social services in order that best practice can be maintained with any on-going work with that young person or vulnerable adult. Any staff or volunteers working alongside that child will only be given the information that they need to ensure the physical and emotional wellbeing of young person or vulnerable adult is being met.

### **Allegations of Sexual Abuse – DSL Procedure**

In the event of allegations or suspicions of current sexual abuse, it is the responsibility of the DSL to:

- Contact social services duty social worker or police child protection team directly. The DSL will not speak to the parent or carer or anyone else about the suspicion. The DSL may inform their line manager of events to ensure best practice is met.
- Follow up any referral made to the social services, so best practice can be maintained with any on-going work with that young person or vulnerable adult. Any workers working alongside that young person or vulnerable adult will only be given the information that they need to ensure the physical and emotional wellbeing of the young person or vulnerable adult is being met.
- Under no circumstances will the DSL try and carry out an investigation into the allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse.
- While allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse will normally be reported to the DSL, the absence of the DSL should in no way delay the referral to Social Services.

### **Safe recruitment of staff and Volunteers**

Arbor undertakes to ensure that its staff are fit to work with young people and vulnerable adults. It also reserves the right to refuse to employ staff or recruit volunteers whom it has a reasonable belief may pose a risk to its learners.

Arbor has systems in place to prevent unsuitable people from working with young people and vulnerable adults and to promote safe practice. These



systems apply to all new staff and volunteers. For new staff Arbor requires the following checks to be made on appointment:

- A minimum of two references, satisfactory to the organisation, one of which should be from a previous employer
- Documentary evidence checks of identify, nationality, residency and "right to work" status
- Standard or enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate
- A barred list check for child and/or vulnerable adults depending on role
- Documentary evidence of qualifications
- Satisfactory completion of the probationary period

In the case of a staff member starting work before an enhanced DBS check is in place, all previous employment references are thoroughly checked and written records kept. Staff for whom an enhanced DBS has not yet been received will not be permitted to work unsupervised with children or young people until the enhanced DBS check has been received.

N.B. Enhanced DBS Certificates contain details of an individual's convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings recorded on police central records and includes both 'spent' and 'unspent' convictions together with any information held locally by police forces that it is reasonably considered might be relevant to the post applied for. These are shown on a criminal records certificate.

For new volunteers, depending on the work carried out, Arbor will require:

- Standard or enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate
- A references, satisfactory to the organisation, one of which should be from a previous employer, or voluntary organisation

### **Staff Development and Training**

All staff who come into direct contact with young people or vulnerable adults must undertake training on the subject of safeguarding procedures. Arbor's safeguarding policy, procedure and accompanying guidance will be issued to all new staff as part of their induction

## **Reporting cases to the Disclosure and Barring Service**

Arbor will make reports, provide relevant information to the Disclosure and Barring Service where there are grounds for believing, following an investigation, that an individual is unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults, or may have committed misconduct. The responsibility for reporting cases to the Disclosure and Barring Service lies with the Executive Team.

The Independent Safeguarding Authority make barring decisions for The Children's List Section and The Vulnerable Adults List.

## **Allegations against staff**

Allegations of abuse, or concerns raised against members of Arbor staff or volunteers will always be treated seriously. The allegation must always be referred to one of the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will follow the safeguarding procedure in the same way as for other safeguarding allegations. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take the appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the young person or vulnerable adult, and any others who may be at risk.

If the allegation or concern is against the Designated Safeguarding Lead, it should be reported to the Nominated Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may also be criminal (police) investigations and/or a child/vulnerable adults protection investigation, carried out by social services.

## **Whistleblowing**

Arbor has a Whistleblowing procedure for enabling staff to share, in confidence, concerns they may have about instances of suspected malpractice in the organisation.

Malpractice can include fraud and financial irregularities, criminal offences being committed, that have been committed or that are likely to be committed, endangering the health or safety of individuals, and can also include concerns around the protection of children or vulnerable

adults.

The procedure is intended to provide safeguards to enable members of staff or volunteers to raise concerns without fear of adverse repercussions. Arbor recognises that it may be difficult to express concerns about colleagues, and is fully supportive of Whistleblowing for the sake of a child or vulnerable adult, and will provide support and protect those who “blow the whistle”.

This procedure is, accordingly, intended to provide safeguards to enable members of staff to raise concerns about malpractice in connection with the organisation.

The aim is to provide a rapid mechanism under which genuine concerns can be raised internally, and, if necessary, externally without fear of adverse repercussions to the individual.

It is also intended to promote throughout the organisation a culture of openness and a shared sense of integrity by inviting all employees to act responsibly in order to uphold the reputation of the organisation and maintain public confidence. Arbor takes the safeguarding of children and young people extremely seriously. We will ensure any allegations are fully investigated.

Any suspicion or allegations should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **Support for Staff**

Arbor is aware that safeguarding cases can be distressing and that staff who have been involved may find it helpful to talk about their experiences, in confidence, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or with a trained counselor. Staff wishing to be signposted to external counseling services should contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead .

### **Equality and Diversity Issues in Safeguarding & Child Protection**

All young people or vulnerable adults, involved in Arbor's work, have the right to be safeguarded from harm and exploitation whatever their age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion or belief and sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment and marital status or civil partnerships.

Equality and diversity issues and characteristics can impact on the safety and wellbeing of young people and vulnerable adults in many way.

### **Information Sharing and Data Protection**

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the child and staff involved but also to ensure that being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSL or Management Committee (depending on whois the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with [Data Protection Act 1998](#) principles.

Information is:

- processed for limited purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- kept no longer than necessary
- processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- secure

Record of concern forms and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Every effort should be made to prevent unauthorised access and sensitive information should not be stored on laptop computers, which, by the nature

of their portability, could be lost or stolen. If it is necessary to store child protection information on portable media, such as a USB stick, these items should also be kept in locked storage.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a child or parent to see child protection records, they should refer the request to the head teacher.

The Data Protection Act does not prevent staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

- There must be minimal delay in communication once a suspicion arises. The sharing of relevant information at the earliest opportunity within an environment of strict confidentiality is essential.
- A young person or vulnerable adult's right to confidentiality is important and they should be kept informed of any sharing of information and participate at an appropriate level in decisions that directly affect them.
- Arbor will share information about concerns with relevant agencies and ensure that parents/carers young people or vulnerable are kept informed and participate in decision making as appropriate.



Signed:

### **Confirmation of reading**

I confirm that I have been made fully aware of, and understand the contents of, the safeguarding policy and procedures for Arbor

Employee Name :

Employee Signature:

Date:

## Child Protection Reporting Form

| CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Date and Time of Incident:</b>   |  |
| <b>Date and Time of Reporting:</b>  |  |
| <b>Location and Context of Incident:</b>                                      |  |
| <b>Name of Child/Young Person/<br/>Vulnerable Adult:</b>                      |  |
| <b>DOB:</b>   |  |
| <b>Address:</b>   |  |
| <b>Name of person reporting events:</b>                                       |  |
| <b>Details: (sequences of events, actual<br/>words used and observations)</b> |  |
| <b>Action taken:</b>  |  |
| <b>Name of person contacted:</b>  |  |
| <b>Date and time reported:</b>  |  |
| <b>Further notes:</b>   |  |

### Key Contacts and References

Police

In emergency call 999

Community and voluntary sector contacts

Ann Craft Trust

Tel: 0115 951 5400

A national association working with staff in the statutory, independent and voluntary sectors in the interests of people with learning disabilities who may be at risk from abuse.

Childline

Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR

Tel: 0800 1111

MIND infoline

Tel: 0845 766 0163

Information regarding mental health related issues. Help in finding out options and local services. Mon – Fri 9.15 – 5.15.

NSPCC

Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Parentline

A national Helpline for parents under pressure: 0808 800 2222

RESPOND

Tel: 020 7383 0700

Provides therapeutic intervention for people with learning disabilities who have been abused.

SANELINE

Tel: 0845 767 8000

National helpline for anyone coping with mental illness