

## **Child Safeguarding Policy**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This policy applies to all Voices Foundation (VF) staff and Artist Practitioners. The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect children and young people who receive Voices Foundation's services. This includes the children of adults who use our services;
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe at all times and through everything we do. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practices, the aims of which are to protect children.

### **LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

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

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0-25 years – Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities; *HM Government 2014*
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers: *HM Government 2015*
- Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children: *HM Government 2015*

### **GENERAL SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES**

Voices Foundation recognises that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, gender identity, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- ensuring all VF staff and Artist Practitioners are recruited safely and undergo a DBS disclosure
- ensuring all members of staff have access to this policy and are asked to read it during their induction period
- valuing children and young people, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a member of VF office staff as Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for children and young people, a deputy/lead board member for safeguarding
- adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
- recording and storing information professionally and securely, and sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, their families, staff and volunteers where appropriate
- using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers 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 whistle blowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for children, young people, VF Artist Practitioners or staff, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- providing effective management for all VF staff through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures
- responding swiftly to any concerns or disclosure by a child, young person or adult
- ensuring all VF office staff and practitioners complete safeguarding training yearly, through EduCare (<https://www.educare.co.uk>)

### **Required Reading**

Staff should familiarise themselves with the following documents:

Part One of '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)'

Please pay particular attention to Annex A (at the end of Part 1) if you work directly with children.

DfE guidance on the [Prevent Duty](#)

### **REPORTING PROCEDURES**

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the steps required to report a concern or disclosure to the relevant person(s) in an educational setting. This procedure acts on a 'need to know' basis in order to limit the disclosure of information to members of staff required in the process to ensure children are protected from abuse.

**What do to if a child or young person makes a disclosure to you:**

VF recognises that a child or young person may find it difficult and/or distressing to tell an adult of abuse that either they or someone they know is experiencing. If a child does make a disclosure:

1. Stay calm
2. Listen carefully
3. Find an opportunity to let the child/young person know that the information may need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets
4. Ask clarification questions only, avoiding leading or closed questions
5. Tell them what you will do next, and with whom the information will be shared
6. Record in writing what was said, using the child's own words, and note the date, time and any names mentioned before signing the record
7. Remember that you are not being asked to decide whether or not abuse has occurred
8. Inform the DSO (sometimes called a Designated Safeguarding Lead/DSL) at the school/nursery/organisation in which VF is working with the child/young person without delay (or the Deputy DSO if they are unavailable)
9. Inform the VF DSO without delay (or the Deputy DSO if they are unavailable)

### **SCENARIO 1**

If, in a nursery or school in which you are working, you notice something that you think is not right or you suspect abuse may be being inflicted on a child by a VF Artist Practitioner, VF staff or other contact (e.g. guest at VF event), please follow the steps:

1. Record your concern on a *Cause for concern* form ([found here](#)), sign/date it, keep a copy for yourself in a safe place, and a copy for VF's Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO). If you do not have a copy of the form to hand, please record the information on a blank piece of paper.
2. Take your form and report it to the DSO (sometimes called a Designated Safeguarding Lead/DSL) of the educational setting, as soon as possible. Let them know that you will be passing on your concern to VF (see point 3), as it concerns either a VF Artist Practitioner, VF staff or other contact.
3. Contact VF's DSO in the first instance or, if it is not possible to speak to the DSO, contact the Deputy DSO. If it is possible to pass on your *Cause for concern* form in person, this is preferable. If not, please send via post. Do not send this via email.

It is now the responsibility of the school to decide whether or not to act on your concern. If a child makes a disclosure to you, please follow the steps outlined above, making sure you also follow the steps outlined in VF's Child Safeguarding Policy.

### **SCENARIO 2**

If, in a nursery or school in which you are working, you notice something that you think is not right or you suspect abuse may be being inflicted on a child by

someone unrelated to VF (e.g. teacher, family member, someone known to the child etc.), please follow the steps:

1. Record your concern on a *Cause for concern* form ([found here](#)), sign/date it, and where possible, keep a copy for yourself in a safe place. If you do not have a copy of the form to hand, please record the information on a blank piece of paper.
2. Take your form and report it to the DSO of the school. Let them know that you will be informing VF's DSO that you have passed on your concern to them but note that you will not pass on the details of the concern, or name of the child to VF's DSO.
3. Contact VF's DSO in the first instance or, if it is not possible to speak to the DSO, contact Deputy DSO, to let them know that you have reported a concern. You should not give them information about the concern or the name of the child.

It is now the responsibility of the school to decide whether or not to act on your concern. If a child makes a disclosure to you, please follow the steps outlined above.

***If there is an immediate risk of harm to a child, then directly contact social care (if the child needs protection), emergency health services (if the child is seriously injured) or the police (if a crime has been committed). If you are uncertain about what to do, speak to the DSO of the school. If they are unavailable, please contact the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000.***

***N.B. It is not our responsibility to diagnose abuse – just to recognise possible concerns and report them in a timely manner.***

## **ONLINE SAFEGUARDING**

This policy aims to:

- Protect all children and young people who receive Voices Foundation services and who make use of technology while in our care.
- Provide staff with information regarding online safety
- Ensure our organisation is operating in line with our values and within the law regarding how we behave online

Managing our online presence:

- All social media accounts will be password-protected, which will be monitored by a designated person
- A designated supervisor will remove inappropriate posts by children or staff, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected (as well as the parents of any children involved)

- Identifying details such as a child's home address, school name or telephone number will not be posted on social media platforms
- Any posts or correspondence will be consistent with our aims  
Parents will need to give permission for photographs or videos of their child to be posted on social media
- Parents will be asked to give their approval for us to communicate with their children through social media, or by any other means of communication
- All of our accounts will be appropriate and fit for purpose

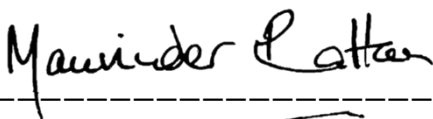
What we expect of all VF staff:

- VF will provide access to this policy and expect staff to behave in accordance with it
- Staff should seek the advice of the DSO if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media
- Staff should not 'friend' or 'follow' young people from personal accounts on social media
- Staff should make sure any content posted is accurate and appropriate, as young people may 'follow' them on social media
- Staff should not communicate with young people via personal accounts or private messages
- Any disclosures of abuse reported through social media should be dealt with in the same way as face-to-face disclosure, according to our reporting procedures

The principles in this policy apply no matter which current or future technology is used – including computers, laptops, tablets, web-enabled games consoles and smart TVs – and whether an app, programme or website is used.

We are committed to reviewing this policy and good practice annually.

This policy was agreed by the Board of Trustees of VF on 30th May 2022. It was last reviewed and updated on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022 by:

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_

Manvinder Rattan

Role: Chief Executive Officer

With approval from the Board of Trustees.

<b>VF Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)</b>	<p>Amy Buchanan</p> <p>Amy.buchanan@voices.org.uk</p> <p>02075201430</p>
<b>VF Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer</b>	<p>Chris Cashman</p> <p>chris.cashman@voices.org.uk</p> <p>07736009328</p>
<b>VF Chief Executive Officer</b>	<p>Manvinder Rattan</p> <p><a href="mailto:manvinder.rattan@voices.org.uk">manvinder.rattan@voices.org.uk</a></p> <p>07957838197</p>
<b>NSPCC contact details</b>	<p>Helpline: 0808 800 5000</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk">help@nspcc.org.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/our-services/nspcc-helpline/">https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/our-services/nspcc-helpline/</a></p>