



# SEAFORD ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE

Thanks to Resource Centre, Brighton for their policy template.

## **Introduction**

Safeguarding is about protecting the safety, independence and wellbeing of people at risk of abuse, and is everybody's responsibility. Children and vulnerable adults have the right to protection from abuse, and should be able to live free from the fear of abuse. SEA is committed to ensuring that disclosures of abuse and safeguarding concerns are taken seriously and acted upon appropriately.

This policy relates to all children, young people and adults who may be at risk of abuse. Assessing whether children or adults are experiencing abuse is the responsibility of professionals within the local authority. SEA's role is therefore not to assess whether abuse has taken place, but to safeguard by informing the local authority if information becomes known to us that could indicate that abuse may have taken place, or that a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk of abuse.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of SEA in respect to Safeguarding. The key objectives of this policy are to:

- Explain the responsibilities of the Trustees and nominated Safeguarding Officer in respect of the safeguarding of children and adults at risk.
- Enable trustees who receive disclosures of, witness, or suspect abuse to make informed and confident responses.
- Ensure that prompt action is taken to minimise the risk of harm occurring from any further abuse.
- Ensure that information relating to safeguarding is kept securely and only shared on a need-to-know basis.

### *Safeguarding Officer*

Trustees will delegate overall responsibility for safeguarding to a Safeguarding Officer.

The Safeguarding Officer will be responsible for:

- identifying which local authorities need to be involved in the event of a safeguarding issue and devise a clear path of action prior to any incidents

- implementing arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults at risk throughout the organisation
- dealing with all instances relating to safeguarding children or adults at risk
- responding to safeguarding concerns and make appropriate referrals to the local authority
- ensuring that trustees receive necessary reports on safeguarding issues, and may call a special meeting of trustees where a safeguarding matter requires their urgent attention.

### *DBS checks*

The roles of SEA trustees and members do not fall within the legally defined eligibility criteria for requesting Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

### *Process following disclosure*

In the event of a disclosure, members and trustees should notify the Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible. The person who made the disclosure should be kept informed about what information has been shared and with whom. A detailed written record must be made by the person who receives the information, as soon as possible, and always on the same day. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously, including those received anonymously.

In the event of a disclosure, members and trustees should:

- Reassure the person concerned
- Listen to what they are saying
- Record what they have been told/witnessed as soon as possible
- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief
- Tell them that the information will be treated seriously
- Do not start to investigate or ask detailed or probing questions. Only ask questions to clarify the basic facts of what they are already telling you.
- Do not promise to keep it a secret
- Make sure the individual is safe
- If the person is in immediate danger, the police or ambulance must be called straight away on 999/112. Ensure prompt action is taken to minimise the risk of harm from any further abuse, maltreatment or neglect. This is particularly important if:
  - the person remains in or is about to return to the place where the alleged abuse occurred
  - the alleged abuser is likely to have access to the person or others who might be at risk.
- Record the information and notify the safeguarding Officer who will notify the local authority

- The Safeguarding Officer will keep in contact with the person who made the disclosure, or person about whom there is concern, and ensure they know they can contact them.

**Remember it is not your job to investigate, but to pass on concerns if you think the child or vulnerable adult needs support or protection**

## **Safeguarding Procedures for Online Meetings - follow procedures as for in person meetings**

- Ensure there are at least two adults in each virtual meeting (and make sure the adults 'arrive' before the group does).
- You will need parental consent to include their child in any virtual meeting space. For those under 16, the link for the meeting should be sent to their parents. We also recommend that parents/guardians of under 16's are asked to supervise.
- If a young person says something that causes concern and seems like it could lead to a safeguarding disclosure, then tell them you would like to talk to them about that more later – away from the wider group. Encourage them to stay online after the main meeting and ask them to tell you more. Again, you need to make sure there are two adults present for the conversation – perhaps one asking questions and the other taking comprehensive notes. Follow safeguarding procedures as you would at any other time and contact your Safeguarding Officer and, if appropriate and safe, the parents and carers as soon as you can.
- Consider inclusivity and accessibility – how can you make sure all your group is able to fully participate? For instance, you may want to consider: Does everyone have access to a device that will enable them to take part? Do any of your young people have additional needs that might prevent them from taking part fully?
- Do not record the meeting. Most video conferencing software allows for the session host to record the goings on, but this would require separate permission for data capture and there are additional issues around storage, GDPR etc.
- In the settings for your Zoom meeting you should disable the one-to-one anonymous chat function so that participants cannot send private messages that are not seen by the wider group. You may also want to consider disabling screen share and only allowing this if needed for a particular activity.
- Use your knowledge of the young people you work with to set safe boundaries for the Zoom chat that you feel are appropriate. For instance, for some young people it may be perfectly appropriate for them to participate in the virtual meeting from their bedroom (perhaps with the door left open). However, if you have young people who have a history of struggling to set appropriate boundaries in their relationships with adults, it might be a good idea to say, as part of your ground rules for the whole group (do not single a specific young person out), that their participation in the Zoom chat should take place from a public part of the house, not their bedroom.
- Zoom collects information about its users and has its own privacy terms and conditions to which members must adhere. Please review **Zoom's privacy**

**terms and conditions** carefully before registering, and ask parents/carers to do so also.

\* **By supervision we mean:** The parent/carer holds the responsibility to log in to the Zoom meeting and agrees to not share the log in details. The parent/guardian is also responsible for logging out of the Zoom call at the end of a session and checking that privacy settings haven't been changed and their passwords are not saved. The parent/carer is to manage the Zoom account and to ensure that they are at home while the child or young person is attending the session. Where possible the child/young person should be in a communal space or in a room with the doors left open when accessing the session via their laptop, computer or other device.

***Zoom's advice around under 16s using the platform is: "Children under 16 cannot create a Zoom account. A parent or guardian may, however, permit the child to use that parent or guardian's account with their supervision."***