

Safeguarding Policy 2025



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Nov - 2020	Jenny Kadodia/ Imran
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Safeguarding Statement

The Friendship Café and St James' City Farm and Riding School (referred to throughout this statement and policy as The FC) works with children and families as part of its activities. The FC provides youth and community-based activities, focusing mainly but not exclusively on young people, children and families in the inner city and surrounding areas of Gloucester.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children, young people and adults who use The FC's services.
- to provide parents, staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection and protecting vulnerable adults.

This policy statement applies to anyone working on behalf of The FC including the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and students.

We believe that:

- no one should experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- all children, young people and adults have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, vulnerable adults, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting everyone's welfare.

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

- valuing, listening and respecting them
- appointing a designated safeguarding lead, a deputy designated safeguarding lead and a lead trustee for safeguarding
- developing child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families, vulnerable adults 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 may arise developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures

- sharing information about child protection and safeguarding best practice with children, their families, staff and volunteers via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures implementing a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, adult services users, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- recording and storing information professionally and securely.

This policy statement should be read alongside The FC's organisational policies and procedures, including:

- The FC safeguarding Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Statement
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Photography and filming guidance
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Lone working guidance
- Health and safety Policy

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for The Friendship Café is Saleha Moolla

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is Aysha Randera

The Trustee for Safeguarding is Reyaz Limalia

Organisational Contact details: Fouzia Qureshi – Fouzia@thefriendshipcafe.com

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

If a child or adult is in immediate danger or risk of harm please dial 999.

Abbreviations	
The FC	The Friendship Cafe
SJCF	St James City Farm
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
DDSL	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
GSCE	Glos Safeguarding Children Executive
CSC	Children's Social Care

Procedures

The FC procedures will be reviewed every year and updated in accordance with legislation.

When staff join the FC, they will be informed of the safeguarding policy and arrangements in place. They will be given a copy of this policy, advised who the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is and who acts in their absence. Induction of all staff and volunteers will include safeguarding awareness in advance of mandatory safeguarding training. The induction programme will include basic safeguarding information, how to manage a disclosure, when and how to record a concern, to whom to report concerns, and the management of allegations against staff.

Staff induction must be completed within 6 weeks of their start date.

‘Staff’ includes all paid staff. It also includes volunteers who are working in a leadership role.

Responsibilities

The Trustees will be responsible for safeguarding and will liaise with the DSL in matters relating to safeguarding. It will ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place, are available to users of the FC, parents, carers and partner agencies and that they are reviewed every year. All policies will be made visible for anyone attending the FC.

The Trustees will ensure that the safeguarding policies and procedures are fully implemented and followed by all staff and that sufficient resources are allocated to enable the DSL and other staff to discharge their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding. Storage of confidential information will be available and will be stored professionally and securely. The Trustees will ensure that Safer Recruitment processes are followed for staff and volunteers, where appropriate. The Trustees will acknowledge and support issues that arise with radicalisation and Prevent and will use the established safeguarding or duty of care procedures to escalate concerns to the appropriate leads. The hire agreement form for non-FC related activities should be completed by anyone who is hiring the FC and will confirm that safeguarding children and vulnerable adults at their event is their responsibility, as is the health and safety of their attendees. This does not abrogate The FC's responsibility for the building. Long term rentals for activities that include children and young people will require that the individual/organisation making the booking is fully affiliated to a governing body which takes responsibility for safeguarding, or that the individual/organisation follow The FC's safeguarding policy and that its leaders attend safeguarding training at their own expense.

Mandatory safeguarding training will be available for all staff and volunteers who are in leadership roles within 12 weeks of starting the role. Safeguarding training will be refreshed for all staff and volunteers every 3 years. All trustees will have safeguarding training provided, refreshed every 3 years.

The Trustees have a responsibility to ensure that structured and informal supervision for main staff will be made available for safeguarding issues to be discussed.

Every FC run activity, group or event will have a nominated 'main leader' who has overall responsibility for safeguarding as well as health and safety for that group.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will coordinate action on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children, young people and vulnerable adults within the FC, ensuring that all staff know who the DSL is, who acts in their absence, and what their responsibility is regarding reporting and recording concerns.

The **FC DSL** will make decisions as to the most appropriate and proportionate course of action when safeguarding concerns are reported to them. They will keep a record of the decision-making process and what decision was made. They will work in partnership with **Gloucestershire Children's Social Care (CSC)**, **Gloucestershire Police** and the **NSPCC** and make referrals when necessary and without delay. They will follow the advice provided by the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Executive and Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board.

Awareness

The FC will ensure that all staff, volunteers and trustees receive mandatory safeguarding training where their role requires it.

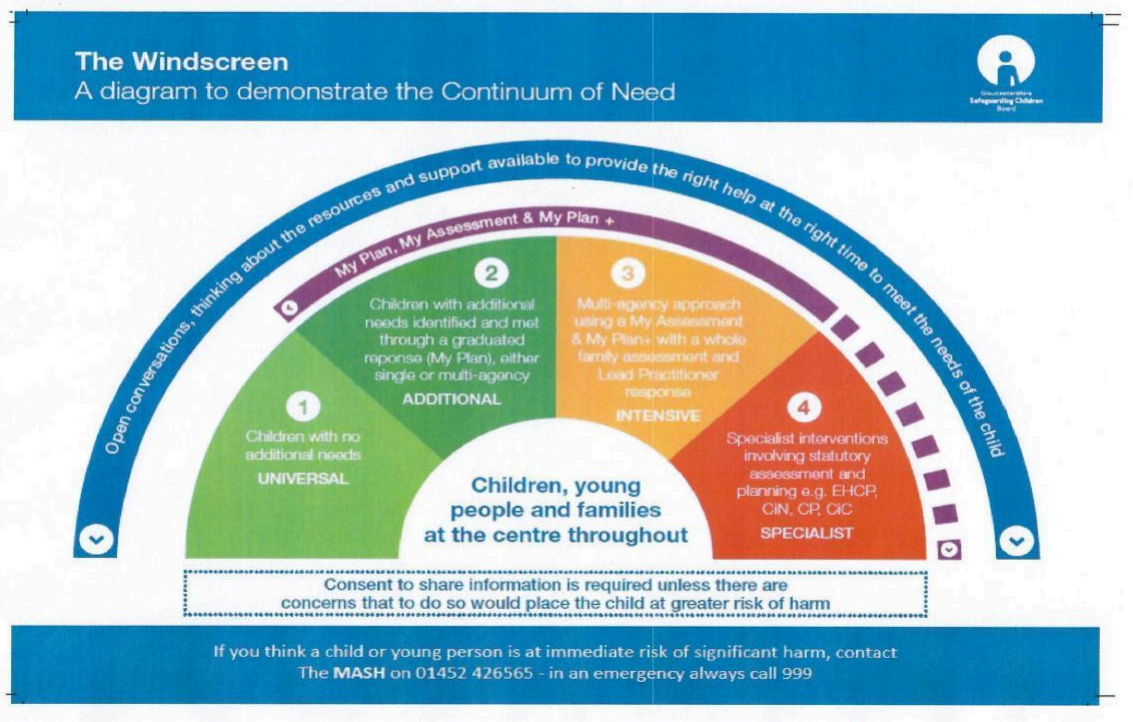
The Safeguarding Statement will be displayed on the notice board at The FC.

Reporting Concerns about children and young people

If a staff member volunteer is concerned about the welfare of someone under 18 they should discuss concerns with the DSL. They will need to discuss the factors involved and what, if any, known measures are in place. The DSL will consider if this is an emergency situation and call Gloucestershire Children's Service Helpdesk/Gloucestershire Police where necessary, if the child/vulnerable adult has a named social worker they will pass on this information, liaise with any key worker, follow the procedure for raising a concern and record appropriately. Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive's procedures and policies will be adhered to and, if appropriate, a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) will be submitted.

GSCE's 'The Window' will guide decision making.

The Windscreen – A diagram to demonstrate the Continuum of Need



In the event of a safeguarding incident, the DSL will offer a debrief to the staff member, volunteer or individual concerned whilst considering any confidentiality issues.

Reporting concerns about vulnerable adults

At any time, a situation may arise that may make any adult more vulnerable. Examples range from the impact of domestic abuse to an unexpected illness. Signposting to support organisations will often be the appropriate response, but staff/volunteers aware of the concerns should seek advice from the DSL or deputies and complete a safeguarding incident form where appropriate.

The DSL at the FC will follow the below guidance from Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board, when reporting concerns about a vulnerable adult.

An adult safeguarding concern describes the process where someone is first alerted to a concern or incident that indicates an adult with care & support needs is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, and as a result of their care & support needs, are unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect, or the risk of it, and takes action to respond, and to report the concern.

When responding to a concern, firstly ensure actions are taken to safeguard anyone at immediate risk of harm. Then:

- Wherever it is safe to do so, to speak to the adult and get their views on the concern or incident
- Report the concern to the Adult Helpdesk (01452 426868) if appropriate (and to the Police [101] where a criminal offence has occurred or may occur and is appropriate to do so)
- Report concerns to Children's helpdesk (01452 426565) if a child is identified as being at risk of harm.

REMEMBER- follow good practice under the Mental Capacity Act when speaking to the adult. Assume the adult has capacity unless proven otherwise. If the person is proven to lack capacity, speak to the person's representative/s and always act in their best interests.

REMEMBER – unless it is not safe or will increase the risk to the adult, it is always best practice to speak to the adult involved at as early a stage as possible to get their views and wishes on the concerns. This should help to guide what next steps should be taken and whether the concern should be reported as an adult safeguarding concern or should be dealt with by other means.

Capacity and Consent **Capacity** - Anyone who acts for, or on behalf of, a person who may lack capacity to make relevant decisions has a duty to understand and always work in line with the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and MCA Code of Practice.

Consent - All adults have the right to choice and control in their own lives. As a general principle, no action should be taken for, or on behalf of, an adult without obtaining their consent.

At the concern stage, the most common capacity & consent issues to consider will usually be:

- whether the adult has the mental capacity to understand & make decisions about the abuse or neglect related risks, & any immediate safety actions necessary, and;
- whether the adult consents to immediate safety actions being taken, & whether the adult consents to information being referred / shared with other agencies.

If it is felt that the adult may not have the mental capacity to understand the relevant issues and to make a decision, it should be explained to them as far as possible, given the person's communication needs. They should also be given the opportunity to express their wishes and feelings.

It is important to establish whether the adult has the mental capacity to make decisions. This may require the assistance of other professionals. In the event of the adult not having capacity, relevant decisions and/or actions must be taken in the person's best interests. The appropriate decision-maker will depend on the decision to be made.

Reporting without consent

If there is an overriding public interest, or if gaining consent would put the adult at further risk, the concern must be reported. This includes situations where:

- there is a risk or harm to the wellbeing and safety of the adult or other adults
- children could be at risk from the person causing harm it is necessary to prevent crime
- or if a crime may have been committed the person lacks capacity to consent.

The adult would normally be informed of the decision to report and the reasons for this, unless telling them would jeopardise their safety or the safety of others.

The key issues in deciding whether to report a concern without consent will be the harm or risk of harm to the adult, and risks to any other adults who may have contact with the person causing harm or with the same organisation, service or care setting.

Disclosure without consent needs to be justifiable and the reasons recorded by professionals in each case.

[Source: Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board]

For further details see information from Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/11312/adult_safeguarding_procedures_-_section_8_responding_reporting7732.pdf

Disclosure (children and vulnerable adults)

The below advice is also applicable to vulnerable adults.

Disclosure is the process by which children and young people start to share their experience of abuse with others; it is not necessarily one act or action. Children may disclose directly or indirectly and sometimes they may start sharing details of abuse before they are ready to put their thoughts and feelings in order. Not all disclosures will lead to a formal report of abuse, or a case being taken to court, but staff and volunteers at The FC will take all disclosures seriously.

It can be very hard for children and young people to speak out about abuse. Often, they fear there may be negative consequences if they tell anyone what is happening to them. Some may delay telling someone about abuse for a long time, while others never tell anyone, even if they want to. It is vital that children and young people are able to speak out and that whoever they tell takes them seriously and acts on what they have been told. Even if a child does not tell someone verbally about what has happened to them, there may be other indicators that something is wrong.

Children and young people may disclose in different ways, including:

- Directly, making specific verbal statements about what has happened to them
- Indirectly, making ambiguous verbal statements which suggest something is wrong
- Behaviourally, displaying behaviour that signals something is wrong (this may not be deliberate)
- Non-verbally, writing letters, drawing pictures or trying to communicate in other ways.

Sometimes, partial disclosures are made, and the child or young person may withhold some information. This may be because they:

- Are afraid they will get into trouble or upset their family
- Want to deflect blame in case of family difficulties as a result of the disclosure
Feel ashamed and/or guilty
- Need to protect themselves from having to relive traumatic events.

Some children and young people are reluctant to seek help because they feel they do not have anyone to turn to for support. They may have sought help in the past and had a negative experience, which makes them unlikely to do so again. They may also:

- Feel that they will not be taken seriously
- Feel too embarrassed to talk to an adult about a private or personal problem
Worry about confidentiality
- Lack trust in people around them (including parents) and in the services provided to help them
- Fear the consequences of asking for help
- Worry they will be causing trouble and making the situation worse Find formal procedures overwhelming

[Source: Mental Health Foundation and Camelot Foundation, 2006]

Not all children and young people realise they have experienced abuse, for example if they have been groomed.

Managing a disclosure (children and vulnerable adults)

The below is also applicable to vulnerable adults.

At The FC children and young people will be listened to and taken seriously. Do not question or challenge their account, and do not pass judgement. This can be facilitated by:

- Showing you care. Give your full attention to the child or young person and keep your body language open and encouraging. Be compassionate and understanding; reassure them their feelings are important
- Taking your time. Respect pauses and do not interrupt the child; let them go at their own pace. Recognise and respond to their body language. Remember that it may take several conversations for them to share what has happened to them.
- Showing you understand. Make it clear that you are interested in what they are telling you. Reflect back what they have said to check your understanding and use their language to show that it is their experience.

Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing in telling you. Make sure that they know abuse is never their fault. Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the child's disclosure. **[NSPCC]**

Do not promise confidentiality and explain what action you will be taking.

It is important to keep accurate and detailed notes on any concerns you have about a child, and complete the safeguarding reporting form (see Appendix, p35).

These include:

- The child's name, age and address
- What the child said or did that has given cause for concern (if the child made a verbal disclosure, use their exact words). Make a note of what was happening beforehand and what was said in reply
- Note any physical injury, where it was located on the body, the size of it and if it was shown to you
- Note any information the child has given you about the alleged abuser Record any/all action taken.

The notes should be timed, dated and signed by the person making them.

Do not keep a copy of the disclosure or store any typed notes on mobile devices/personal computers. Refer to Record Keeping.

These will be shared with The FC DSL at the first available opportunity.

Concerns about an adult can be sent by secure email (e.g. egress) to the DSL, Saleha Moolla at saleha.m@hotmail.co.uk, unless urgent, in which case Police or Adult Safeguarding (if appropriate) should be called immediately.

However, any difficulty in contacting this person should not delay action being taken if it is believed that the child or young person is at risk of immediate harm. For example, if a disclosure is made about a parent and the group leader/responsible person believes that it would not be safe for the child or young person to return

home, they ***must not be sent home***. In some situations, this may mean that the police are called immediately. Other situations may call for ***urgent medical assistance to be sought without delay***. Information about any allegation should not be shared with a suspected perpetrator and only shared within The FC on a need-to-know basis. All concerns will always be shared with the DSL.

Third party reports about concerns for children and young people (for example, from other children/young people, other parents, staff or volunteers) should be documented and referred to the DSL.

In the event of a safeguarding incident or accident, a debrief will be made available for staff, volunteers and individuals involved. If appropriate, the family of the individual may be contacted. A follow up/welfare check will be made by contacting the individual/parent/carer/family member.

Information sharing and confidentiality

The FC recognises that all matters relating to Adult and Child Protection are confidential. The FC will disclose any information about concerns to other members of staff/volunteers on a need-to-know basis only. All staff/volunteers must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard adults, children and young people. In the case of a serious concern for the immediate safety of the child or adult or where medical intervention is required the member of staff/volunteer should contact emergency services straight away. A concern should still be reported to the DSL (or deputy) who will coordinate adherence to this policy including external reporting where necessary. All staff/volunteers must be aware that they cannot promise confidentiality of any kind when speaking to a child/young person or adult about a safeguarding concern.

All participants have the right to be confident that information given by them will only be used for which it was disclosed and will not be shared with anyone outside The FC. Sharing of participant information with other staff/volunteers should be on a need-to-know basis, purposeful and carried out in a sensitive manner. Care should be taken to ensure discussions are not overheard. Information will be stored in accordance with GDPR legislation. When no longer working with The FC, staff and volunteers have a contractual obligation to not disclose any confidential information that has come to their attention during the course of their employment. Personal information relating to Staff, volunteers or trustees should not be disclosed without permission. Any breaches of confidentiality/inappropriate sharing of information will be regarded as a disciplinary offence and/or safeguarding concern.

Record Keeping

Any member of staff/volunteer receiving a disclosure of abuse from an adult, child or young person, or noticing signs or symptoms of possible abuse, or has concerns

about the welfare of any vulnerable person should, following the disclosure, inform the DSL to discuss the disclosure or concern. The DSL will direct the staff member/volunteer with regards to following up the conversation in writing, setting out expected timescales.

Staff/volunteers are required to make notes as soon as possible after the event, writing down exactly what was said, using the person's own words as far as possible. All notes should be timed, dated and signed, with the name printed alongside the signature.

All safeguarding records should be filed and stored in the locked cabinet at The FC office.

Staff Support

The FC recognises that staff/volunteers who have become involved in a safeguarding incident may find the situation stressful and upsetting. The FC will support staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with their line manager or the DSL and to seek further support as appropriate.

Allegations Against Staff

The FC understands that allegations may be made against staff members or volunteers, especially those in positions of authority over children, young people and vulnerable adults. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff/volunteer will immediately inform their line manager. Where the line manager is the subject of such a concern the staff member/volunteer will be expected to report directly to the DSL. The line manager will discuss the content of the allegation with the DSL immediately.

Where the allegation relates to a child, the FC DSL will consider immediate safeguarding arrangements, contact social care and/or police as appropriate and follow the Local Authority's Allegations Management procedures (see Appendix p35 for flowchart and reporting form).

Where the allegations relate to an adult, the FC DSL will consider immediate safeguarding arrangements, and contact adult social care/police as appropriate.

Concerns raised out of hours will need to be assessed and in cases where the individual is deemed to be at immediate risk of harm the police will be contacted.

Whistleblowing

All staff and volunteers should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of other staff members or volunteers from the FC.

Complaints

Any complaint against a staff member or volunteer will be listened to and acted upon in order to safeguard others. The person making the complaint (or parent/carer) will

be informed about the action the FC will take and the length of time that will be required to resolve the complaint. The FC will also endeavour to keep that person (or parent/carer) regularly informed as to the progress of their complaint.

Prevention

The FC recognises that it plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to adults, children and young people by providing them with good lines of communication with professional staff and volunteers and an ethos of protection.

The FC will establish and maintain an environment where children, young people and adults feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are always listened to. It will ensure that everyone knows that there are staff/volunteers at the FC whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty. It will also include opportunities that equip children, young people and adults with the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse and harm.

Physical intervention

This policy acknowledges that staff/volunteers must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to adults, children, young people and visitors.

The FC understands that physical intervention of a nature that causes injury or distress to an adult, child or young person may be considered a safeguarding concern, a criminal act and/or a disciplinary issue.

Abuse of trust

The FC recognises that adults working and volunteering in the charity are in a position of trust with the children, young people and adults with care and support needs in their care and acknowledge that it is a criminal offence to abuse that trust.

It is illegal for a person in a position of power to have a sexual relationship with a child under the age of 18.

No adult, staff or volunteer, should facilitate the supply of any alcohol or drugs, including tobacco to anyone under 18 years of age. This will be considered a safeguarding concern and also gross misconduct. Supplying prescription medication should only be done with the written consent of the parent/guardian/carer of the child or vulnerable adult and witnessed by another member of staff/volunteer.

Communication with children or young people under 18 should be in line with the contents of this policy. Inappropriate contact via social media sites or similar will be considered a safeguarding concern and may constitute gross misconduct.

Relationships between members of staff/volunteers and any vulnerable adult using the services of The FC must be reported to the DSL immediately. Whilst it is recognised that some members of staff/volunteers may, themselves, have vulnerabilities, the DSL, working with the trustee with HR responsibility, will determine if the relationship is deemed inappropriate and whether it constitutes gross misconduct and/or a safeguarding concern. Relationships between adult staff/volunteers and children/young people will be viewed as a safeguarding concern and appropriate action taken. Any behaviour by adult staff/volunteers towards a child/young person that calls into question their suitability to work with children/young people will be considered a misconduct. Examples include (though this list is not exhaustive):

- Grooming any child under the age of 18, even if they are not a user of The FC
- Being convicted or cautioned for an offence against a child or as a perpetrator of domestic abuse
- Supplying drugs, alcohol or tobacco to any child under the age of 18
- Having inappropriate relationships with any child under the age of 18 via social media sites or similar.

Racist Incidents and Discriminatory Abuse

The FC acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or episodes of discriminatory abuse, or a single serious incident, may also be considered a safeguarding concern in some circumstances. Also refer to The FC Bullying and Harassment Statement.

Web based communication and telecommunication with children and vulnerable adults

The Safeguarding Policy recognises that E-safety is a safeguarding matter. As such, this policy replaces the previous E-Safety Policy and Guidance for Staff and Volunteers when communicating with children and young people.

It is not appropriate to have private non-work-related contact in the form of electronic communication with the children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom we work. We recognise that there will be times when it is necessary and important to use electronic communication. However, we recognise the need for an appropriate response and always encourage face-to-face contact as opposed to a contact or reply via online methods of communication. When working with these groups, staff/volunteers should only use electronic communication for reasons relating to work and not for general socialising. Staff/volunteers should make their line manager or group leader aware when they are using electronic communication. This must be set up as part of a group communication and not individual. Individual contact should only be used when absolutely necessary and should never be used for general socialising or relationship building without another DBS checked staff/volunteer copied in. It is good practice to keep records of electronic conversations.

Emails

Emails should be sent to a group rather than an individual. Emails to individuals should be avoided but they can be sent if necessary, as long as another DBS checked staff/volunteer (who is directly linked with the group/organisation) has been visibly copied in.

Social media

Facebook groups and groups chats such as messenger or WhatsApp must include at least two different DBS checked staff/volunteers, who are linked with the group/organisation and who are active regular users of these media platforms. Non-DBS checked staff/volunteers/parents should not be part of these groups/chats. Group messages are seen by all which helps avoid the risks associated with private conversations. Non group related forwards and general chat should be avoided.

Texting and phoning

Both texting and phoning should be avoided on a 1:1 basis though this may be used if necessary, always make another member of DBS checked staff aware of this. They should be for fact sharing purposes only and not for relationship building. It is good practice to keep a record of individual text conversations & to inform your line manager.

Parental consent for using electronic forms of communication is essential and should be included in all annual consent forms

General information about web-based communication and internet use can be found in the Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers. Misuse Of technology may be viewed as a disciplinary matter and/or a safeguarding concern and appropriate procedures will be followed.

Health and Safety

The FC Health and Safety Policy will also include safeguarding considerations. Safeguarding will be considered in all risk assessments.

Safer Recruitment

The FC recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding young people and adults with care and support needs who are accessing our services. We aim to adopt a consistent and thorough process of safer recruitment to ensure that people who are unsuitable to work with children, young people and adults with care and support needs are prevented from doing so.

Safe recruitment practices will include those persons who may not have direct contact with vulnerable groups, but because of their presence and familiarity in certain settings, will still be seen as safe and trustworthy.

The principles of safer recruitment will also be included in the terms of any contract drawn up between The FC and any others who provide services for children, young people and adults with care and support needs for whom The FC is responsible. We will monitor compliance and will require that the provider does not employ any personnel who have not been part of the safer recruitment process. All new members of staff will be expected to self-declare anything which may have an impact on their employability.

The FC will:

- Ensure that all appointments to eligible posts that include working with children/young people and adults with care and support needs, will be subject to the DBS regime
- Create a rolling programme of Enhanced Disclosure on identified posts
- Ensure that when a positive disclosure is received that decisions are made appropriately and consistently
- Implement an appropriate training programme to ensure that those undertaking recruitment and selection procedures are aware of safe and robust recruitment and selection procedures and the link to the safeguarding of vulnerable groups.

Posts requiring DBS clearance

The decision as to whether or not a post necessitates DBS clearance requires consistent, effective judgement across The FC.

All job descriptions must indicate if a DBS clearance is needed and at what level.

For posts requiring a DBS, commencement of employment may be considered prior to receiving this only under certain circumstances.

All appointments will be subject to a minimum of two references covering a minimum of 5 years, with one being required from the applicant's current or most recent employer. Re-checking of existing employees: All existing staff/volunteers who transfer from a post that does not require clearance to one that does, will be subject to the relevant DBS check relating to that post. Any staff/volunteer who has been subject to an enhanced disclosure, and where a disciplinary issue or general concern has arisen that may lead to consideration about the staff/volunteer's ability to undertake the role should be rechecked for a further enhanced disclosure (provided that they remain employed within a post that has been identified as requiring clearance).

All staff in a post that requires a DBS check will be rechecked every 3 years.

Positive disclosures

The term 'positive disclosures' refers to a disclosure containing information relating to convictions, cautions etc plus 'soft intelligence' relating to non-convictions, but which police deem relevant. If a positive disclosure is received for staff/volunteers who are already in post, the individual should be immediately withdrawn pending further enquiries.

It is essential that The FC follows a consistent process for considering such disclosures and for making subsequent judgements regarding an applicant's suitability for employment.

Note 1: To determine if the offence(s) listed are sufficiently serious to cause concern, the DBS panel will consider:

- The seriousness and nature of the offence(s)
- The nature of the employment
- Length of time since the offence(s) occurred
- Number and pattern of offence(s)
- The applicant's age at the time
- Any explanation of the circumstances that may have already been given
- Concealment of offence(s) at application stage (if offences were not declared, this will be discussed by the DBS panel. At this stage, judgements will often err on the side of caution)

If the DBS panel recommends that the offence(s) is not sufficiently serious to warrant an interview, the decision to employ them will be signed off by the panel.

Note 2: If it is judged that an interview is necessary, the DBS panel will appoint an appropriate person to undertake the interview. The meeting is an essential part of the process, as it is necessary to verify that the information contained on the disclosure relates to the individual concerned. This verification must be sought prior to any judgements being made. The disclosure should be discussed with the prospective employee. The discussion will aid the decision-making process.

Based upon the findings of the interview, the interviewer will decide on the suitability of the employee and make one of the following decisions: to appoint or not to appoint. Decisions with reasons will be communicated to the DBS panel. Judgements regarding suitability are not wholly confined to the disclosure revealing offences against children or vulnerable adults. Other types of offences may render a prospective employee unsuitable. In addition to convictions or cautions, this may also include having harmed or placed children or vulnerable adults with care and support needs at risk of harm or having exhibited behaviour which leads to the belief that there may be a child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm in the future.

The interviewer should not take the decision in isolation but will be accountable for it. There should be a clear record made of the decision, bearing the judgement of the

accountable interviewer. This judgement should not contain details of the offence(s) and may be communicated via email. Any record of judgement will be stored in the personnel file.

Record keeping

The FC must keep a single, central record collating when and by whom checks on the identity, qualifications and outcomes of DBS checks on staff/volunteers were made. Information disclosed as part of a DBS check must be treated as confidential. This disclosure must be kept in secure conditions and must be destroyed by secure means as soon as it is no longer needed. It should not normally be kept for more than six months after the decision is taken. However, prior to the disclosure being destroyed, records need to be kept detailing the date the disclosure was obtained, who obtained it, the level of the disclosure and the unique reference number. The trustee responsible for HR will also record the information that was used to assess suitability, together with a record of the judgement and decision reached. All records relating to disclosures, as set out above, will be retained in electronic format for no less than 50 years.

Safer recruitment practices

Safer recruitment practices will be applied to all staff/volunteers and at all stages of the recruitment process, including:

- Advertising and information for applicants
- References
- ID checks
- Selection of candidates
- Interviewing short-listed candidates
- Offer of appointment to successful candidate
- Induction of supervision of newly appointed staff

Advertising and information for applicants

Any recruitment advertising material must contain a policy statement to highlight to potential applicants the importance placed by The FC on rigorous selection processes. The recruitment pack should stress that the identity of the candidate, if successful, will need to be checked thoroughly and that, where a DBS check is appropriate, the person will be required to complete an application for a DBS disclosure to the appropriate level.

Materials will contain the following statements:

- In line with The FC Safeguarding Policy, appointments may be subject to a DBS check (where required) and satisfactory references.
- Safeguarding is everyone's business. There is an expectation and a requirement that staff/volunteers will pass any child/vulnerable adult welfare concerns that may arise in the course of their duties to The FC Designated Safeguarding Lead.

And also contain information on:

- The qualifications and experience needed for the role
- The competencies and qualities that the applicant should be able to demonstrate
- How these will be tested and assessed during the selection process

All applicants must complete The FC application form, providing standardised information that includes:

- Full personal information, including any former names by which the person has been known
- A full history of employment, both paid and voluntary, since leaving school including any periods of further education or training. This should include start and end dates, explanations for leaving, reasons for any gaps in employment, details of relevant academic and/or vocational qualifications A declaration that the person has no convictions, cautions, or bind overs including those regarded as spent. This should also include referral to and inclusion on the DBS Children's or Adult's Barred List or regulatory body restricting or preventing them from working with children or vulnerable adults
- CVs submitted by applicants in place of an application form will not be considered

References

Candidates should supply referees that cover at least 5 years of employment history. If applicants have been employed by the same employer for more than 5 years a second reference will be asked for where appropriate. Additional references may be asked for, for example, where the applicant is not currently working with children but has done so in the past. References should be sent, wherever possible, to business addresses and not a home address. Where possible, referees should be contacted prior to the interview so that any issue of concern can be explored further and taken up with the candidate during the interview. Appointments will not be confirmed until five years of employment history has been covered by reference accompanied by a second if needed. References should contain objective, verifiable information. A reference pro-forma with questions relating to the candidate's suitability to work with children and/or vulnerable adults will be provided.

Reference requests should include:

- Length of time the person has known the applicant and in what capacity Post held with dates, salary and reasons for leaving
- Ability and suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults
- Skills, strengths and weaknesses and how these are demonstrated
- Any current disciplinary investigation and/or sanction
- Any allegations and/or disciplinary investigations relating to the safety or welfare of children or vulnerable adults and the outcome of these (including where any sanction has expired)
- Details of any criminal convictions, cautions or bind overs Sickness record
- Whether the referee would re-employ and if not, why this is Verification of the identity of the referee
- Open references or testimonials will not be accepted.

Other checks before interview

If the applicant claims to have specific qualifications or experience relevant to working with children, young people or vulnerable adults which may not be verified by a reference, the facts should be verified by making contact with the relevant body or previous employer and any discrepancy explored during the interview.

Overseas applicants

The FC will request from the embassy of any overseas candidate a Certificate of Good Character.

Selection of Candidate

The information on the application form will be used to draw up an initial short list to ensure that the best candidates are selected fairly. All applicants should be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the job description without exception or variation and candidates will be subject to an online search including, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Both in shortlisting and interview, at least two members of the panel must be safer recruitment trained. Under no circumstances should shortlisting or interviews be undertaken without at least one safer recruitment trained panel member. All staff undertaking safer recruitment must refresh their training every three years. Anyone without current safer recruitment training under this policy is deemed to be untrained.

Safer recruitment means that all applications should additionally be:

- Checked to ensure that they are fully and properly completed
- Scrutinised for any anomalies or discrepancies in the information provided
- Considered with regard to any history of gaps or repeated changes in employment or moves to supply work, without clear and verifiable reasons

Successful candidates should be instructed to supply documentary evidence of their identity, either a full birth certificate, passport or driving licence (photo card only) and additionally a document such as a utility bill or bank statement that verifies the candidate's name and address. Where appropriate, change of name documentation must also be brought to the interview.

Candidates should also be asked to bring original or certified copies of documents confirming any necessary or relevant educational and professional qualifications. If the successful candidate cannot produce original documents or certified copies, written confirmation of his/her relevant qualifications must be obtained from the awarding body.

Interviewing shortlisted candidates

The interview panel should comprise a minimum of two people, typically the line manager and at least one other relevant person. All panel members will use The FC Interview and Selection booklet to guide their questions and scoring. They will assess the candidate's:

- Technical competency
- Interpersonal competency
- Leadership skills (if appropriate)
- Motivational fit
- Organisational fit

Questions should be set which test the candidate's specific skills and abilities to carry out the job applied for. The candidate's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults should be tested to ensure that they fit the values of The FC. Any gaps and changes in employment history should be fully explored during the interview, as should any discrepancies arising from information supplied by the candidate or by the referee. All candidates should bring to interview documentary evidence as detailed in the Asylum and Immigration Act and in line with DBS requirements. For more information see:

www.ukimmigration.com/employer/uk_work_permit14.htm

www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/documents-the-applicant-must-provide

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Where relevant, change of name documentation must also be brought to the interview.

Offer of appointment to successful candidate

Any offer of appointment should be conditional upon pre-employment checks being satisfactorily completed, including:

- Where the role is considered to be working with children, either in regulated activity or in a supervised role, a DBS check appropriate to the role
- Verification of the candidate's medical fitness to perform the role
- Verification of any relevant professional status and whether any restrictions have been imposed by a regulatory body
- All checks should be confirmed in writing and retained on the candidate's personnel file, together with photocopies of documents used to verify his/her identity and qualifications and the Interview and Selection booklets from each panel member.

Induction and supervision of staff and volunteers

The induction of all newly appointed staff and volunteers will include an introduction to key FC policies as detailed in the document entitled 'Policies and Procedures' plus Health and Safety and initial safeguarding information, in advance of mandatory safeguarding training. This should include being made aware of the identity and specific responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, and deputy DSLs. Induction sessions will be led by The FC Coordinator or The FC Coordinator's assistant.

New staff/volunteers should be provided with information about safe practice and given a full explanation of their role and responsibilities and the standard of conduct and behaviour expected. They should also be made aware of the organisation's personnel procedures relating to disciplinary issues and the Whistleblowing policy.

The programme of induction will also include comprehensive safeguarding training. Managers should ensure that their staff/volunteers are adequately and appropriately supervised and that they have ready access to advice, expertise and management support in all matters relating to safeguarding. Appropriate safeguarding controls must be in place for all staff and should be reviewed on a regular basis. Supervision of those undertaking supervised activities must take place on a regular basis.

Volunteers under 18 years of age

Volunteers under the age of 18 cannot be subject to a DBS check. As such they will be under the supervision of an adult member of staff/volunteer and will never be in a position where they are providing unsupervised care to children. However, those under 18 years old will be required to provide a reference from an unrelated adult who has known them for 2 years. When a young helper reaches the age of 18 the appropriate process will be applied.

The Gym at The FC

Whilst this safeguarding policy applies to all areas of The FC, children and young people under the age of 18 are prohibited from using this facility and should not be in this area of the building.

Community Payback Team (Probation)

These individuals are supervised by the Community Payback Team Staff at all times whilst on the FC site. Toilet facilities are provided at The FC, and the team will only access areas where they have been designated to work.

St James City Farm and Riding School

Safeguarding (specific)

Whilst being part of The FC, the St James City Farm and Riding School provides an opportunity for many within the community to volunteer and also to visit. The FC has a responsibility to safeguard those who are employed at the site, those who volunteer and also those who visit. Whilst The FC Safeguarding Policy applies to SJCF, the below are specific requirements that relate only to SJCF. The Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers applies to those working at SJCF.

In this section, 'staff' refers to any individual who has been given a leadership role on the farm. This may be in the form of paid employment or as a volunteer. Because they will be in a position supervising both U18s and also vulnerable adults, Safer Recruitment (see page 19) will apply.

The farm manager and trustee with farm responsibility

The farm manager will be responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are up to date and completed, and also that the induction process is updated and complied with. Whilst they may delegate this task to another member of staff, it is their responsibility to ensure that they are completed. The trustee with farm responsibility will ensure compliance on this and all other aspects of this policy by performing quarterly checks.

Duty Manager

There must be an identified duty manager at all times. This is a senior, named, member of staff who is in charge of managing the farm and the safety of all the staff & volunteers. This level of responsibility is not open to U18s.

- The name of the duty manager should be clearly displayed for all to see and updated every time they hand over to another duty manager (even when they leave the farm briefly). Only one name should be displayed at a time.
- All duty managers must be aware of what is expected of them in that role including their safeguarding responsibilities (see Role Description)
- The duty manager will be aware of the whereabouts of all volunteers on the farm and be vigilant at all times re safeguarding concerns.

A list of all those with duty manager responsibility will be displayed on the notice board in the farm office. The appointment of duty manager will be made by the farm manager and The FC coordinator.

Children & Young People visiting

SJCF does not allow for unaccompanied U16s to be on site (see below). Any unaccompanied children will be brought to the attention of the duty manager who will determine the appropriate and safe course of action.

Children/young people/vulnerable adults volunteering at SJCF

Staff at SJCF will always know where children/young people/vulnerable adults volunteering at SJCF are at all times. Risk assessments will be completed for the

work they are undertaking. They will not be in a position where they are alone with members of the public or alone with Over 18 volunteers (non-staff).

Abuse of trust

See The FC Safeguarding Policy.

Web based communication and telecommunication with children and vulnerable adults

See The FC Safeguarding Policy.

DBS

All staff/volunteers aged 18+ will be subject to an Enhanced DBS check, with the exception of students on college-based programmes. This is due to the close contact they have with volunteers who are under 18 years old and vulnerable adults. The only exception are adult volunteers who attend with a carer who is working with them in a professional capacity. In that situation the carer must provide sight of their DBS enhanced certificate covering them to work with the individual(s) they are bringing to the farm to The FC coordinator's assistant.

Prior to being accepted as a volunteer, a person will be assessed by the farm manager. Should the person pass the assessment, they may be accepted to work on site whilst the DBS is being applied for and will be subject to a risk assessment for that period. This will include being closely supervised throughout the working day and working away from any children/vulnerable adults.

Disclosures on DBS certificates will be subject to the DBS panel decision

Staff Induction & Training

During the induction process, all staff must be aware of the safeguarding policy and must go through the SJCF specific section of the policy with their line manager, discussing scenarios if necessary, to help them understand. They must attend appropriate safeguarding training once every 3 years.

The induction process will be managed by the farm manager. Safeguarding training and refresher training for staff will be managed by The FC coordinator.

Volunteer Induction

A standardised induction must be carried out by a member of farm staff with all new volunteers when they arrive on the farm for the first time.

Staffing Ratios

One member of staff, the Duty manager, can supervise a maximum of 6 volunteers (which includes under 18s/vulnerable adults) and is responsible for them throughout the day.

A weekly roster will be restored on the Google calendar by the FC Manager and recorded daily in the farm signing in book upon arrival.

All supported placements (adults with additional needs who have a carer) have an interview and risk assessment with the FC Coordinator or Farm manager before they start.

This ratio does not apply to the separate group activities that may take place at the farm, which will have their own supervision (e.g. Stay and Play, school visits, etc).

Identification

All staff must be clearly identifiable to volunteers and visitors; name badges identifying the staff member will be worn at all times. Photographs of staff will be displayed on the SJCF noticeboard to enable volunteers and visitors to identify who has responsibilities.

Minimum Age

Farm volunteers must be aged 12+. The ONLY EXCEPTION is when a younger child is accompanied 1:1 by a carer/teacher who will be responsible for them whilst on site.

Overseas Students

SJCF only accept student volunteers who are visiting from other countries if the placement is directly organised by an agency or their school. The minimum age for overseas students is 16 years. Overseas students aged between 16-18 years must be able to provide details of an appropriate adult, locally based, who is responsible for them during their work experience at SJCF. The student must have a level and knowledge of English that will allow for them to be able to communicate any concerns clearly and understand the requirements of health and safety.

Staff Vehicles

Farm staff are NOT to give young people / vulnerable adults a lift in their own cars unless:

- specific permission by the Farm Manager has been given
- It is an emergency situation and can be justified due to the safety of that young person being at risk.

When the use of a personal vehicle has been authorised:

the situation should be mentally risk assessed in respect to the individual needs/behaviour of the volunteer passengers. whenever possible 2 members of staff should be in the vehicle. The member of staff must have appropriate business insurance, the car must have an up-to-date MOT, and any motoring convictions should be declared to the coordinator.

Use of mobile devices on the farm

Mobile phones and any other device capable of creating images must be securely stored in lockers whilst on the farm, this is with the exception

Signing in and out

All staff and volunteers must use the appropriate register to sign in/out every time they arrive or leave the farm.

Volunteer Absence

In the event of a volunteer not arriving at SJCF as per an arrangement, this will be followed up as soon as possible. If the volunteer is U18/a vulnerable adult, their school/college/parents/carers will be contacted by the duty manager.

Lone Working

Lone working between staff and U18s/vulnerable adults will be risk assessed and consideration being given to visibility wherever possible.

Supervision

Formal supervision will be provided for farm staff. Volunteers may be offered this but informal supervision (casual conversation) can be used instead to check their welfare and to provide an opportunity for any concerns to be raised.

Classroom Safety/Over 18 volunteers mixing with U18s/vulnerable adults

The duty farm manager is responsible for ensuring adult volunteers and Under 18s are not alone in the classroom, and that breaks will be staggered to ensure this does not happen. Should this happen, the adult **MUST** remove themselves from the classroom and raise this with the duty farm manager immediately.

Consent Folder

When new volunteers arrive on site for the first time, the duty manager must immediately check the consent folder. They need to be aware of any crucial medical/additional needs and make sure all other staff are aware if appropriate. If the volunteer is U18 the consent form **MUST** have a parental signature. If there is no form or no parental signature then U18s can only attend the farm that day if contact is made by farm staff with a parent/carer and consent has been gained over the phone. However, they must agree to bringing a signed form the next time. If phone contact with a parent is not possible and it is not felt appropriate/safe to send the young person away, then this should be documented with details of how contact was attempted (ie mobile phone number provided) and the notes signed by the member of staff. Staff should work closely with the U18 until permission is gained and send the young person home with a note to give their parents

Documenting safeguarding disclosures/incidents/concerns

Safeguarding forms need to be completed when there are any incidents, concerns or discussions regarding the safeguarding of staff, volunteers or visitors. This is separate to the accident/incident book which documents physical injury, disputes, serious near misses, physical violence on site. Any safeguarding incident should be brought to the attention of the duty manager who will contact the DSL as soon as possible. The FC Recording and Reporting Incident Form for Children and Young People will be completed. The DSL will act on the information appropriately, collect the completed form, and store the document as per the main policy

Vehicles

Farm Vehicles

The signed consent forms state that the person signing is 'aware that occasionally volunteers travel in farm or staff vehicles off site to carry out farm duties following a risk assessment'. This means that whilst staff can take young people and vulnerable adults in farm vehicles if necessary, this needs to be risk assessed, be agreed by the farm manager and good practice is to avoid staff being alone in a vehicle with one young person/vulnerable adult.

Staff Vehicles

Farm staff are NOT to give young people / vulnerable adults a lift in their own cars unless:

- specific permission by the FC Coordinator has been given.
- it is an emergency situation and can be justified due to the safety of that young person being at risk.

When the use of a personal vehicle has been authorised:

- the situation should be mentally risk assessed in respect to the individual needs/behaviour of the volunteer passengers. whenever possible 2 members of staff should be in the vehicle. The member of staff must have appropriate business insurance, the car must have an up-to-date MOT, and any motoring convictions should be declared to the coordinator.

Use of mobile devices on the farm

Mobile phones and any other device capable of creating images must be securely stored in lockers whilst on the farm, this is with the exception of the duty manager and staff.

Maintenance Workers

Individuals visiting the farm to carry out maintenance do not require a DBS check but must be escorted by a member of staff at all times and all staff should be vigilant when they are on site.

Community Payback Team (Probation)

These individuals are supervised by the Community Payback Team Staff at all times whilst on the farm. Toilet facilities are provided at SJCF, and the team will only access areas where they have been designated to work.