# Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

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| Developed by | Naomi Douglas | Head of Communications and Engagement | May 2019 |
| **Approved by:** | Chris Phillips | Safeguarding representative on Trustee Board | 4 June 2019 |
| **Sign off by:** | Robin Buxton | Chair of Trustees | 2 July 2019 |
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1. **Introduction**

All organisations share a commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. The Earth Trust engages with people from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances. This policy:

* Defines the approaches we adopt in our work with children and vulnerable adults to safeguard them from harm resulting from abuse or neglect.
* Recognises the important role we play in referring incidents, observations and disclosures on to the Locality and Community Support Service (LCSS) for children, and the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) for vulnerable adults.

1. **Purpose of the policy**

The safety of children and vulnerable adults is an over-riding priority of all staff and volunteers working with the public. The Earth Trust takes this responsibility seriously and expects all staff and volunteers representing the Trust to do likewise.

Currently, with the exception of Countryside Skills\* and Community Payback\*\*, Earth Trust does not work with the same child or vulnerable adult on a regular basis, and so may not have a full picture of a child or vulnerable adults needs and circumstances. However, we do have an important role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information with other agencies and taking prompt action.

Earth Trust delivers a range of activities with children and a large proportion of these are school visits when there is a School Safeguarding Officer to whom we can refer; however, we also deliver a variety of activities including drop-in events, birthday parties and holiday clubs in which we do not have a School Safeguarding Officer to refer to. Therefore, it is imperative that we ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of the procedure to report any incidents or disclosures.

1. **Aims of the policy**

The policy aims to:

* Keep children and vulnerable adults safe from abuse, neglect or any kind of harm or distress as a result of their contact with us.
* Ensure we have a robust procedure for logging and reporting disclosures of abuse or neglect to relevant third party organisations.
* Promote best practice to protect staff and volunteers from accusations of misconduct.
* Underpin the standards of our work with children and vulnerable adults and protect the Earth Trust as a whole and demonstrate our ethical and procedural integrity in this area.

\*Countryside Skills is our unique OCN accredited course, designed specifically for children with special educational needs and those who struggle in a classroom setting.

\*\* Community Payback – formerly known as community service.

1. **Definitions of abuse and neglect**

Abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment, or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. An individual may abuse or neglect a child/vulnerable adult directly, or by failing to protect them from harm. Forms of abuse and neglect are listed below:

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on emotional development. It may involve making someone feel that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment, though it may occur alone.

**Physical abuse** can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may be also caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health.

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child/vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the person is aware of what is happening. This can involve physical contact, or non-contact activities such as showing sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet basic physical and emotional needs. It can involve a failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, to protect from physical and emotional harm, to ensure adequate supervision or to allow access to medical treatment.

**Other forms of abuse to be considered**

* Extremism and Radicalisation (Prevent)
* Forced Marriage
* Female Genital Mutilation
* Child sexual exploitation
* Modern slavery and human trafficking

**See appendix 1 for more information about the above.**

1. **Signs of abuse and neglect**

Signs of possible abuse and neglect may include:

* Significant changes in a behaviour.
* Deterioration in a general well-being.
* Unexplained bruising or marks.
* Comments made which give cause for concern.
* Inappropriate behaviour displayed by a member of staff, or any other person. For example, inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their role, or inappropriate sharing of images.

1. **Our procedures**

Our procedures for safeguarding children will be in line with Oxfordshire Local Authority and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) Child Protection Procedures, and “Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015”.

Our policy and procedure will be annually reviewed and up-dated and a summary report of findings presented to the Board of Trustees.

* 1. **Appropriate checks in place for staff and volunteers**

**6.1.1 Safer recruitment for staff and volunteers**

To highlight the organisation’s commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Including:

* Ensure the job description/volunteer role makes reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
* The person specification includes specific reference to suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults (if applicable).
* Obtain and scrutinise comprehensive information from applicants, and taking up and satisfactorily resolving any discrepancies or anomalies.
* Obtain independent professional and character references that answer specific questions to help assess an applicant’s suitability to work with children and/or vulnerable adults following up any concerns.
* A face-to-face interview that explores the candidate’s suitability to work with children/and or vulnerable adults as well as their suitability for the post.
* Verify the successful applicant’s identity prior to their post commences.
* Verify that the successful applicant has any academic or vocational qualifications claimed.
* Check their previous employment history and experience.
* Any staff or volunteers who come into direct or regular contact with children/and or vulnerable adults whilst on site or at events will be required to attend relevant safeguarding training by Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children or Adults Board (OSCB or OSAB).
* Any staff or volunteer working with people under eighteen and/or a vulnerable adult, in a situation where they may ever be alone with a child or group of children, will need to have a Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS).
* Regular is defined as four days per month or more.
* Direct is defined as any events which involve teaching children without their parents present (for example, Clumps Club).

**6.1.2 Induction process**

All staff and volunteers new to Earth Trust will be made aware of this policy and the procedure, and have these explained, as part of their induction.

All staff members will receive safeguarding updates via general staff meetings (at least annually) and in the interim via their Senior Management Team (SMT) who will be guided by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

At induction staff and volunteers will be made aware of this policy and the following:

* + - The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
    - The [early help](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf) process, and understand their role in this. This includes staff being able to identify emerging problems, liaising with our Designated Safeguarding Lead, so that we can share information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment.
    - Our process for making referrals to social care via the Designated Safeguarding Lead and statutory assessments that may follow.
    - What to do if a child or vulnerable adult tells them he/she is being abused or neglected.
    - Staff and volunteers will be advised on how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality, whilst at the same time understand the requirement around sharing information appropriately with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
    - Given guidance, for example, they should never promise to keep an allegation/disclosure a secret *(see appendix 2 for guidance).*
    - The process for how we manage allegations about staff or volunteers.
    - Advice on whistleblowing.

**6.1.2 Regular training**

All members of staff and volunteers (if applicable) working directly with children and vulnerable adults will complete the OSCB Generalist Safeguarding training which is valid for three years.

They will be provided with opportunities every two years to update their training in order to develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse, and how to respond to a child/vulnerable adult who discloses abuse.

The Designated Lead will undertake “Designated Lead Training” every two years.

* 1. **Earth Trust is a multi-user site**

As a multi-use site, a weekly review of our programme of events and activities will address operational factors that need to be considered, for example, providing allocated toilets to different groups to avoid unsupervised contact between children, members of the public and vulnerable adults.

All activities where children are involved as participants should take into account safe operation procedures, including: adequate training, supervision, first aid, and the need for risk-assessment procedures.

An outline of different activities involving children and vulnerable adults is below.

**6.2.1 School visits and Countryside Skills courses**

* + - All school visits are subject to the guidelines set in the *School Visits Code of Conduct.*
    - Schools will be asked on the booking form to provide the name and contact details of their Designated Safeguarding Officer.
    - All schools will have a Designated Safeguarding Officer and disclosures, observations of incidents should be reported to this person at the school.
    - If the disclosure involves a teacher then also refer this information the School Designated Safeguarding Officer
    - Earth Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform school that it is our responsibility to refer incident to LCSS if they will not do so.
    - The Earth Trust Designated Safeguarding lead will follow up referral to school within one week to ensure that the referral has been made.
    - If the school do not act on our information then it is our responsibility to refer this to LCSS or the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) if there is an immediate concern for child.

**6.2.2 Public events**

Events and activities open to the public should:

* + - Clearly be advertised in advance as a family event where parents or guardians are expected to remain with their children (eg festivals) OR
    - An event for children/young people (under eighteen) where all safety procedures must be in place e.g. signing-in and going-home procedures (ie Clumps Club) OR
    - An event at which under-eighteens are allowed only by prior agreement of the DBS authorised staff members leading the activity and their parents/guardians. This allows young adults to attend training courses (eg Countryside Skills).
    - All staff and volunteers are briefed prior to our festivals on the procedure for reporting any disclosures, incidents or observations (along with Lost Child Procedure). This information will be sent to volunteers in advance with details of the festival and their role and responsibility. On the day of the festival the key points will be reiterated in the morning briefing and volunteers will sign in and confirm that they have read the procedures.

**6.2.3 Other activities**

* Invited non-school groups (home educational groups) are covered by the same code of conduct as school groups.
* Holiday clubs (Clumps Club), birthday parties and drop-in sessions are only run by members of staff with the necessary DBS checks and safeguarding training.
* At Clumps Club the full details of the child, their guardian’s details and the School that they attend will be provided on the booking sheet in order that we can report any disclosures, incidents or observations to the School’s Designated Safeguarding Officer. If the person is no longer in a school setting (for example Year 6 leavers) then we will refer to LCSS or MASH (see section12 for contact details).
* For drop-in events and birthday parties we will not have access to the above details. Please see section 8 for how to record the incident with the Earth Trust DSL.
* Young people on work experience (either for short periods, or extended placements) have to be supervised by a vetted and authorised person at all times and the young person’s work plan agreed in advance by the school as acceptable.

1. **Recording a disclosure, incident or observation and record keeping** 
   1. **The role of the Earth Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

The DSL has a higher level of Safeguarding Training and will be the first point of call for staff and volunteers to refer to. They will ensure the Policy is being adhered to, make referrals and will ensure that records are accurate and kept securely.

Incidents, observation or disclosures will always be logged on an Incident Record Form in a secure cabinet located by the DSL’s desk. The staff member or volunteer will record:

* + - Date and time of the disclosure or observation of the incident.
    - Name and birth date (if possible) or the name of the school of the child.
    - A factual report of what was said using the child’s own words.
    - Name, signature and job title of the person making the record.

The Earth Trust Designated Lead will make a decision on whether to refer the incident or whether to get some “no names” advice first from LCSS.

If it is decided that a referral will made then the DSL will contact LCSS or MASH (regarding children) or OSAB (regarding a vulnerable adult) verbally in first instance. This must be followed up in writing within 24 hours by the Earth Trust DSL. A Local Authority Social Worker should then make a decision about the type of response that is required and acknowledge receipt.

Earth Trust will keep a record of this correspondence. All logs will be kept secure in a locked cabinet and remain confidential. Details should be:

* + Legible
  + Permanent
  + Make it clear which statements are based on fact and which are based on opinion or speculation
  1. **What to do if you have a concern**

If a member of staff or volunteer is concerned about a child or vulnerable adult they must report the disclosure, incident or observation to the Earth Trust DSL (see section 11 for details).

If an incident, disclosure or observation takes place within a school visit then inform the Earth Trust DSL and complete an incident record form. The DSL will refer to the School Safeguarding Officer.

If a disclosure, incident or observation happens at any other occasion (other than a school visit or Clumps Club) it is advised that the staff member follows the guidance in **Appendix 2** at the end of this policy.Encourage the child to:

* Give you their name, age and school.
* Inform the Earth Trust DSL and complete an incident record form.
* Refer the information on to their School’s Designated Safeguarding Officer if we are able to ascertain the child’s school from our discussion with them.
  1. **What do to if a child/vulnerable adult is in immediate danger**

If someone is at immediate risk of harm, a verbal referral can be made directly to MASH or OSAB by the staff member or volunteer. Or if the child/vulnerable adult is at risk immediately then the police should be called straightaway (for example, if a parent or carer is collecting a child from Clumps Club but is clearly inebriated).

Anyone can make an initial referral.

Where referrals are not made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the staff member should inform the DSL asap that they have made a referral. An Incident Record Form will be completed and kept securely. The DSL must then follow this verbal referral up in writing to LCSS or OSAB within 24 hours.

* 1. **What to do if a third party expresses concern**

If a third party expresses concern that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused or neglected, encourage them to contact LCSS, MASH or OSAB directly. If the third party will not report this to you or the DSL then we explain that Earth Trust is obliged to report it and the incident will be logged in the same way as above.

**8. Allegations against staff or volunteers**

If anyone makes an allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer:

* The allegation will be recorded on an **Incident Record** form, blank ones will be stored on the S drive in the Admin folder. Any witnesses to the incident should sign and date the entry to confirm it.
* The completed Incident Record Form will be given to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in a sealed envelope.
* The completed form will be kept in a locked cabinet with limited key access.
* The allegation must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), details at end of this policy. The LADO will advise if other agencies (eg police) should be informed, and Earth Trust DSL will act upon their advice.
* Any telephone reports to the LADO will be followed up in writing within 48 hours.
* Following advice from the LADO, it may be necessary to suspend the member of staff pending full investigation of the allegation.
* If appropriate Earth Trust will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

1. **What staff or volunteers should do if they have concerns about safeguarding practices within Earth Trust**

* All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in our safeguarding regime and that such concerns will be taken seriously by the SMT.
* All staff and volunteers should be aware via their Induction of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues and seek appropriate advice.
* In the first instance please refer any concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If this does not resolve your concern contact the Safety Officer who leads the Health and Safety Committee. Concerns will then we raised with the Safeguarding representative on the Trustee Board (details in section 11).
* Appropriate whistleblowing procedures, which are suitably reflected in staff training and staff behaviour policies, are in place for such concerns to be raised with SMT.
* Where a staff member or volunteer feels unable to raise an issue with their employer or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them. See section 12 for details.

1. **Confidentiality**

* We have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
* We recognise that all matters relating to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults are confidential.
* The Designated Safeguarding Lead will disclose personal information to other members of staff on a “need to know” basis only.
* Staff and volunteers cannot promise a child/vulnerable adult to keep their secrets which might compromise their well-being or that of another.
* We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to MASH/or adult to OSAB with their parents/carers, unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with LCSS or OSAB.
* We will take “no names consultations” with LCSS or OSAB team to discuss concerns we may have, but we understand that if they then ask for a name we will disclose those details and it will become a referral.

1. **Key personnel at Earth Trust:**

The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** is: Naomi Douglas

E: [naomi.douglas@earthtrust.org.uk](mailto:naomi.douglas@earthtrust.org.uk)

T: 01865 409425

M: 07961 717776

**The deputy safeguarding lead** is: Emmeline Smith

E: [emmeline.smith@earthtrust.org.uk](mailto:emmeline.smith@earthtrust.org.uk)

**Safety Officer (H&S committee) is:** Rob Thomas

E: [rob.thomas@earthtrust.org.uk](mailto:rob.thomas@earthtrust.org.uk)

**Nominated safeguarding Trustee** is: Chris Phillips

E: [chris.c.phillips@btopenworld.com](mailto:chris.c.phillips@btopenworld.com)

The **Chief Executive Officer** is: Jayne Manley

E: [Jayne.manley@earthtrust.org.uk](mailto:Jayne.manley@earthtrust.org.uk)

T: 01865 409417

1. **Contact numbers to make a referral or for advice**

**To make a referral of an incident or disclosure regarding a Child:**

Locality & Community Support Service (LCSS)

LCSS South 0345 241 2608

[lcss.south@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:lcss.south@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Contact this team if you:

* Have emerging concerns for a child that does not require an immediate response
* Wish to complete a **no names consultation**

**Immediate concerns**

MASH (multi agency safeguarding hub) - different agencies involved in safeguarding

working together in the same room. 0345 050 7666

[mash-childrens@oxfordshire.gcsx.giv.uk](mailto:mash-childrens@oxfordshire.gcsx.giv.uk)

[Online Enquiry Form](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/referring-child-childrens-social-care)

NB a no names consultation will NOT be made with this team.

**To make a referral of an incident or disclosure regarding an Adult:**

OSAB (Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board) 0345 050 666

[OSAB@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:OSAB@Oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Local Safeguarding Children Boards were established by the Children Act 2004.

**To report concerns about a professional or person in a position of trust:**

LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children Board) 01865 810603

[lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer): Alison Beasley: 01865 323457

Out of hours emergency contact: **0800 833408**

**Police:** 101 or 999 (emergency)

**Other useful Numbers:**

Kingfisher Team (Child Sexual Exploitation team) 01865 309196

[kingfisherteam@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:kingfisherteam@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Anti-terrorist hotline 0800 789 321

Whistleblowing advice: 0800 028 0285 (8:00am to 8:00pm Mon-Fri)

General guidance can be found at [Advice on whistleblowing](https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing/what-is-a-whistleblower)

NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available if you do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

**Appendix 1: Important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues.**

**Child sexual exploitation (CSE)**

The sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people, (or a third person or persons) receive something, (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affections, gifts, money) as a result of them performing and/or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidations are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child’s or young person’s limited availability of choice, resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.   
*(Department for Children, Schools and Families: Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation 2009).*

**Key Facts about CSE**

* Sexual exploitation often starts around the age of 10 years old. Girls are usually targeted from age 10 and boys from age 8.
* It affects both girls and boys and can happen in all communities.
* Any person can be targeted but there are some particularly vulnerable groups: Looked after Children, Children Leaving Care and Children with Disabilities.
* Victims of CSE may also be trafficked (locally, nationally and internationally).
* Over 70% of adults involved in prostitution were sexually exploited as children or teenagers.

Sexual violence or abuse against children represents a major public health and social welfare problem within UK society, affecting 16% of children under 16. That is approximately 2 million children.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls, and therefore should be dealt with as part of existing child safeguarding/protection structures, policies and procedures. FGM is illegal in the UK. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.

Other than in the excepted circumstances, it is an offence for any person (regardless of their nationality or residence status) to:

* Perform FGM in England, Wales or Northern Ireland (section 1 of the Act);
* Assist a girl to carry out FGM on herself in England, Wales or Northern Ireland (section 2 of the Act); and
* Assist (from England, Wales or Northern Ireland) a non-UK person to carry out FGM outside the UK on a **UK national or permanent UK resident** (section 3 of the Act).

**Forced marriages (FM)**

FM is now a specific offence under s121 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 that came into force on 16 June 2014. A FM is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties, and when someone faces physical pressure to marry (e.g. threats, physical violence or sexual violence) or emotional and psychological pressure (e.g. if someone is made to feel like they’re bringing shame on their family). This is very different to an arranged marriage where both parties give consent.

FM is illegal in England and Wales. This includes:

* Taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place).
* Marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they’re pressured to or not).

**Prevent – Extremism**

The Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015

The Act places a Prevent duty on specified schools to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. The education and childcare specified authorities in Schedule 6 to the Act are as follows:

* The proprietors of maintained schools, non-maintained special schools, maintained nursery schools, independent schools (including academies and free schools) and alternative provision academies, PRUs, registered early years providers, registered late years providers and some holiday schemes.
* Signs could be:
  + Young person withdrawing from social activity.
  + Accessing extremist literature/websites.
  + Expressing “them and us” thinking.
  + Expressing feelings of anger, grievance or injustice.

**Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking**

Modern slavery can take many forms including the trafficking of people, forced labour, servitude and slavery. Victims can be adults or children and come from all walks of life and backgrounds. A quarter of all victims are children. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 places a duty on specified public authorities to report details of suspected cases of modern slavery to the **National Crime Agency**.

**Appendix 2: Guidance for Staff: Dealing with disclosures, incidents, observations**

**Receive**

* Always stop and listen straight away to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse. Listen quietly and actively, giving your undivided attention. Allow silences when needed. Do not show shock or disbelieve but take what is said seriously.

**Reassure**

* Stay calm, no judgements, empathise. Never make a promise that you can keep what a child has said a secret. Give reassurance that only those who need to know will be told. Reassure the young person that they were right to tell you.

**React**

* React to the child or vulnerable adult only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but don’t interrogate for full details.
* Don’t ask leading questions – keep the open questions e.g. ’is there anything else you want to say?’.
* Do not criticise the perpetrator; the student may have affection for him/her.
* Explain what you will do next.

**Record**

* If possible make brief notes about what they are actually telling you at the time. Keep these notes, however rough they are. If you are unable to make notes at the time write down what was said as soon as you can.
* Record what you have been told in the child’s own words as far as practically possible.
* Record the date, time, place and any noticeable nonverbal behaviour.
* Inform the child that you must pass on to other people if the child or other children are at risk of harm.
* Clarify to the child/vulnerable adult what is being said and establish a suspicion of harm.

**Inform**

* Inform the Earth Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead (Naomi Douglas).
* A record will be logged in the Incident record form and kept securely and confidentially.

**Do not:**

* Take photographs of any injuries/marks.
* Examine the child/vulnerable adult.
* Remove any item of clothing to look at injuries/marks.
* Conduct a full interview or start a detailed investigation.
* Have any contact with child/vulnerable adult outside of teaching setting, this includes any contact via social media.