**Spring Fling 2024 Safeguarding Policy**

Spring Fling is an opportunity for children and young people to gather for fun, dancing and socialising. The Spring Fling Committee (hereafter the Committee) is committed to creating an environment in which children and young people are, and feel, safe to enjoy that opportunity to the full. The Committee has a moral, legal, and social responsibility to provide a fun and safe environment for all those participating - both for children and young people and for those teaching and dancing alongside them.

**Important Contact Details**

* The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** (DSL) should be contacted if you are concerned that a child is at risk or if you are concerned that an adult poses a risk to a child. The DSL for the event is Saskia Frisby. She can be reached throughout the event on **+44 7443 435888**.
* Alternatively, you can calculate the **RSCDS Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer**, Katie Haigh, at cwpo@rscds.org .
* If the DSL is unavailable for any reason, you can seek advice from the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** at LADO@cambridgeshire.gov.uk . They will respond to your query within 24 hours.

**Key guidelines**

* **If you are concerned about the welfare of a child or young person or concerned about an adult’s behaviour towards a child or young person you must act.** Report your concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the RSCDS Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer, or (if they are unavailable) the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
* Do not assume that someone else will help the child or young person - safeguarding children is everyone’s responsibility.
* If you have a concern, do not allow a worry that you may have “got it wrong” to stop you from acting. A trained team including the DSL will assess your concern - you do not need to evaluate how serious it is by yourself.
* Do not worry that you cannot share identifying information because of the need to protect personal data. The Data Protection Act and the General Data Protection Regulation are not barriers to *justified* information sharing on a need-to-know basis to prevent harm to children.
* Do not assume that abuse does not take place in affluent or “quiet” groups or contexts.
* Do not worry that you will damage the reputation of the RSCDS or Spring Fling by reporting a concern.

**Scope**

This Policy is to be observed by all those present at the event. All present have a responsibility to protect children and young people from harm. This Policy applies throughout the duration of the event in all locations involved (YHA Cambridge, Hills Road Sixth Form College, St. Barnabas Church).

**Definitions**

A **child** is anyone under the age of 18 years. In England, **safeguarding** means protecting children from maltreatment and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. This differs from **child protection**, which means any activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm, or about whom there are those concerns.

**Aims and key principles**

The Spring Fling 2024 Safeguarding Policy aims to:

* Safeguard all children present at the event and to put their welfare first.
* Demonstrate best practice in safeguarding children.
* Promote a culture of safeguarding and uphold high ethical standards throughout the event.

The key principles underpinning this policy are:

* The child’s welfare is, and must always be, of paramount consideration.
* All children have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age.
* All suspicions and allegations of poor practice of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to efficiently and appropriately.
* Staff and Committee members who meet children will be good role models.
* Working in partnership with other organisations, with parents or adults responsible for children, and with children themselves, is essential.

**Disclosure**

All staff and Committee members are subject to a Basic DBS Check prior to the event and will have received appropriate safeguarding training.

**Creating a Safe Environment**

A safe environment is one where:

* Training in safeguarding and child protection awareness takes place.
* Policies and procedures are known by all and followed.
* There is support for those who report suspicions or concerns.
* Those working with children have established effective methods of communication with them. This may require additional training.
* The child and young person’s health needs are known and recorded and relevant people know how to respond. This may mean knowing how to manage a seizure or an asthma attack. It may mean ensuring that medication is kept to hand, administered correctly, and recorded.
* Parents and children are involved in the decision to administer physical care and the process of administering physical care with respect and dignity.
* Points of contact are identified and can be reached by mobile phone at all times.
* Children are given every possible opportunity to make informed choices and those choices are respected
* Strategies are in place for dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
* Children are listened to and supported.

**Good practice**

All staff and Committee members should:

* Have access to and be familiar with this Policy.
* Know who the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is and how to contact them.
* Put the welfare of children and young people first and act in their best interests.
* Ensure the safety of the individuals/group in their care.
* Ensure that any concerns or allegations relating to child or young person welfare is recorded in accordance with good record-keeping standards. The DSL can provide support with creating records.
* Maintain confidentiality about sensitive information.
* Help maintain an ethos whereby children, parents and guardians, and all participants feel able to raise concerns comfortably and safely, safe in the knowledge that effective action will be taken as appropriate.
* Adhere to the event’s Code of Conduct.
* Encourage and demonstrate consistently high standards of behaviour.
* Where any form of manual or physical support is required, provide it openly and with the consent of the child. This includes asking for consent before touching a child in order to correct their technique.
* Engage in physical contact only if it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the child or young person’s consent has been given.
* Keep a written record of any injury that occurs and details of any treatment given.
* If groups must be supervised in changing rooms, always ensure that there are two members of staff or Committee members present.

**Poor practice**

This takes place whenever staff or volunteers fail to fulfil the highest standards of care and support in their practice. Poor practice which is allowed to continue can cause harm and can become abuse. **Poor practice is unacceptable and will be treated seriously with appropriate action.** The following are regarded as poor practice and may be considered as high-risk offending factors and therefore should be avoided:

* Unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with children and/or young people away from others.
* Being alone in changing rooms, toilet facilities or showers used by children and/or young people.
* Taking children or young people alone in a car on journeys, however short.
* Taking children or young people to your home where they will be alone with you.
* Engaging in rough, physical, or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
* Allowing or engaging in sexual touching of any form.
* Allowing children or young people to make sexual comments unchallenged.
* Making sexually suggestive comments to a child or young person, even in fun.
* Reducing a child or young person to tears as a form of control.
* Allowing allegations made by a child or young person to go unrecorded or not acted upon.
* Doing things of a personal nature that the child or young person can do for themselves.
* Engage in communication with a child via social media in a manner that contravenes the Social Networking Guidance (see below).

**Forms of abuse and their indicators**

“Child abuse” is a term used to describe what happens when a person, or a group of people, intentionally harm, or fail to prevent harm of, a child under the age of 18. Children and young people may be abused in a family, institutional or community setting, by those known to them or by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children or young person. There are different types of abuse:

* **Physical abuse**: intentionally causing bodily injury. Examples include hitting, shaking, poisoning and burning. It can also involve the fabrication of a child’s illness by their parents or carers.
* **Neglect**: failure to prevent harm from happening to a child. Examples of neglect include failing to provide adequate supervision for a child or being unresponsive to a child’s basic needs.
* **Sexual abuse**: forcing or enticing a child to engage in sexual activities. The abuse may not involve violence and the child might not be aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse includes physical contact and/or noncontact acts – such as involving children in the production of sexual images.
* **Emotional abuse**: the ongoing emotional maltreatment of a child. Examples include being unable to express opinions, overprotection and serious bullying. Emotional abuse can have a hugely adverse impact on a child’s emotional and social development.

Information about subtypes of abuse and their indicators can be found at <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/> . Guidance on identifying the signs of radicalisation can be found at <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/protecting-children-from-radicalisation/> . **If you are concerned about the welfare of a child or young person or concerned about an adult’s behaviour towards a child or young person you must act. Do not assume that someone else will help the child or young person - safeguarding children is everyone’s responsibility**. Report your concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the RSCDS Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer, or (if they are unavailable) the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

**Protecting children with disabilities**

For many years children and young people with disabilities were not considered to be vulnerable to abuse. It is now known that this is not the case and that children and young people with disabilities are at an increased risk of abuse and that the greater the disability the greater the risk. There are several factors that contribute to this, and these include:

* Lack of friends and peer group to support and protect.
* Intimate or physical and or invasive medical care required. This can make it difficult for the child or young person to know what an acceptable and unacceptable ‘touch’ is.
* Lack of speech or limited communication. This makes it harder to report abuse.
* Multiple parents or people responsible for the child, which makes it harder to identify who may be abusing a child.
* History of being told what to do and not given choices.
* Being dependent on the abuser for a service or basic need.
* Having medical conditions that are used to explain injuries.
* Being less valued than their peers - poor care may be observed but tolerated by others. This might include such things as:
	+ Not speaking directly to the child or young person.
	+ Not offering choices.
	+ Not moving and handling them safely.
	+ Not respecting their privacy and dignity.
	+ Not treating them according to their age.
	+ Allowing physical restraint to occur.
	+ Using derogatory language.

There is no one way to ensure that children and young people with disabilities are fully protected but the safest environments are those that assist children and young people to protect themselves by helping them to speak out. Everyone must do their best to stop abuse from happening and take responsibility for observing, challenging, and reporting poor practice and suspected abuse. Safe environments for children and young people with disabilities are also safer for all children and young people.

**What to do if you receive a safeguarding disclosure from a child or young person**

The Spring Fling Committee will fully support anyone who, in good faith, reports their concern that a member of staff, Committee member, or participant, is or may be abusing a child. Children are likely to disclose abuse or radicalisation to those they trust. If you receive a disclosure from a child, **you must**:

* Put your own feelings aside and listen as if the information is not sensational.
* Allow the child to lead the discussion and to talk freely.
* Listen to what the child is saying. Try not to interrupt them or ask lots of questions.
* Let them tell you at their own pace. Do not worry if the child or young person stops talking for a while – silences are OK.
* Accept what the child or young person says without challenge.
* Provide reassurance that you are taking them seriously.
* Let the child or young person know that you understand how hard it is for them to tell you.
* Let them know they are doing the right thing by speaking out.
* Avoid using leading questions such as “Is there anything else you would like to tell me?” or “did the teacher hit you?”.
* Never ask questions that may make the child or young person feel guilty or inadequate.
* Never ask a child to remove or adjust their clothing to show you any marks of physical abuse.
* Tell the child or young person who you will be contacting (the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the RSCDS Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer, and/or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)) and that you will support them throughout.
* Not pursue the conversation further once you have established that they have been harmed or are at risk of harm. This is important to ensure that questions cannot be raised later about possible manipulation of the disclosure.
* Respect the confidentiality of the disclosure and do not share the information with anyone other than those who need to know. Those who need to know are those who have a role to play in protecting children and young people.

When a child or young person discloses, they may feel:

* Guilt: They may blame themselves for the abuse and often feel guilt for telling.
* Ashamed: They may feel mortified about the abuse itself.
* Confused: They may be muddled about their feelings for the alleged abuser.
* Scared: They may fear the repercussions. They may fear the alleged abuser.

Be careful about touching (e.g., hugging or cuddling) the child or young person if they have not initiated the contact. They may be upset by physical contact.

As soon as possible, once the immediate comfort and safety of the child or young person is secured, **you must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) of the disclosure.** If you would prefer to speak to someone else (including if the DSL is the alleged abuser), you can contact the RSCDS Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer. If you are concerned about the child or young person’s immediate safety and/or are having difficulty contacting the DSL or the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer, contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned - information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only. **However, you should know that the Data Protection Act and the General Data Protection Regulation are not barriers to *justified* information sharing on a need-to-know basis to prevent harm to children.**

You should make a **written record** of the disclosure as soon as possible. The DSL, Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer or LADO can help you ensure that these records conform to good record-keeping standards.

Within 8 hours the DSL should have contacted you to inform you what has happened following the report being made. If you do not receive an update you should contact the DSL.

**Safeguarding allegations against staff, Committee members or other participants**

The Committee will take concerns and allegations about members of staff and volunteers seriously and will respond in a way that places the protection and needs of children and young people first. If you think that a member of staff, Committee member or participant has:

* Behaved in a way that has, or may have, harmed a child or young person, or
* Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child or young person, or
* Behaved in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children or young people

**You must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).** If the DSL is not available or you would prefer to speak to someone else, alternative points of contact are described in the section above.

**Historical or non-recent concerns of abuse**

If you are concerned that a child might have been abused in the past, **you should still contact the DSL**, the RSCDS Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer, or (if they are unavailable) the LADO.

**Peer-on-peer abuse**

Peer-on-peer abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse, and coercive control exercised between children, and within children and young people’s relationships (both intimate and non-intimate), friendships, and wider peer associations. Peer-on-peer abuse can take various forms, including (but not limited to):

* Serious bullying (including cyberbullying).
* Relationship abuse.
* Domestic violence and abuse.
* Child sexual exploitation.
* Youth and serious youth violence.
* Harmful sexual behaviour
* Prejudice-based violence including, but not limited to, gender-based violence.
* Coercion and exploitation.
* Peer-on-peer grooming. Threatening language.
* The distribution of sexualised content.
* Harassment.

Note that many kinds of abuse can occur in an online context. If a child makes a disclosure of peer-on-peer abuse, you witness peer-on-peer abuse, or you suspect that peer-on-peer abuse is taking place, **you should contact the DSL**, the RSCDS Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer, or (if they are unavailable) the LADO.

**Use of photography and film**

Parental consent for taking photographs of children and using them for RSCDS publicity will be sought prior to the event. Additionally, the Committee will:

* Put a system in place to allow easy tracking of photographers and their equipment. For example, use a badge or sticker to identify those with permission to photograph or film.
* Ensure that children are never portrayed in a demeaning, tasteless or a provocative manner.
* Ensure that children are never shown in a state of partial undress.
* Ensure that decisions about publishing images reflect the best interest of the child and consider whether they might place the child at risk. Special care must be taken in relation to vulnerable children such as those in care, fleeing domestic violence or a child with a disability.
* Ensure that all negatives, copies of videos and digital images will be stored in a secure place.

If a child discloses to you that an indecent photo or video has been taken of them, you observe one being taken, or you suspect that one has been taken, **contact the DSL immediately. Do not ask to see or share any photos or videos, even to support your disclosure to the DSL - this is a crime.**

**Communication technology and social media**

Social media provides a great opportunity for organisations to promote their activities and communicate easily with members. It can also put children and young people at considerable risk, which is why safeguards must be put in place. The following guidelines should be met in order to safeguard all parties when communicating using texting/social media:

* All communications from staff and the Committee to children should be open and transparent.
* Messages should only be sent to communicate details of meeting points, classes, and so on.
* It should always be clear that the member of staff or member of the Committee is communicating on behalf of the event organisation team.
* Messages should never contain any offensive, abusive or hurtful language.
* Messages should not be open to misinterpretation.
* Parents should be offered the option to be copied in to any messages their child will be sent.
* The number of people with access to children and young people’s details should be kept to a practical minimum. A record should be kept of their numbers/addresses by the DSL.

**Confidentiality**

Members of staff and Committee members may have access to confidential information about children and young people in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances, they may be given highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a child or young person or their family for their own or others’ advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass children or young people. Confidential information about a child or young person should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the child and young person’s identity does not need to be disclosed, the information should be used anonymously. There are some circumstances in which a member f staff or Committee member may be expected to share information about a child, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, **individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated safeguarding responsibilities. If a member of staff, Committee member, or participant is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, they should seek guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**.

**Health and Safety**

A copy of the Risk Assessment for the event, including measures taken to mitigate risk, can be found at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vrJTY9KJeotCjfFB5o4SBII9DyPNB1t-/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=115313183256705022556&rtpof=true&sd=true> .