



John Simonds Trust Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

Everyone who participates in The John Simonds Trust is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. The John Simonds Trust have a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for children, staff and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

The John Simonds Trust is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone within the John Simonds Trust accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of The John Simonds Trust and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989)

This policy links with the Pan Berkshire child protection procedures. These procedures can be found by clicking on the link below.

http://berks.proceduresonline.com/west_berk/index.html

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England.

[Keeping children safe in education](#) (DfE, 2023)

[Working together to safeguard children](#) (DfE, 2018)

[Education Act 2002](#)

Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children and young people who receive services from John Simonds Trust from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- to provide trustees, staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of John Simonds Trust, including trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers and students.

The John Simonds Trust is committed to ensuring the following:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate at the John Simonds Trust in a fun and safe environment

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by

- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and respecting their rights, wishes and feelings
- ensuring that all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- when recruiting any employees or volunteers to work with children checking as to their suitability for that responsibility, and providing them with guidance and/or training in good practice and child protection procedures
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies, which is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people and a lead trustee for safeguarding
- recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- **Creating a culture within which staff feel comfortable to discuss safeguarding matters**

This policy statement should be read alongside our procedures below.

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Contact details

Nominated child protection lead: Jane Patrick 0118 9744547 jst@rushallfarm.org.uk

Deputy child protection lead: Lindsay Bishop 0118 9744547 lindsay@rushallfarm.org.uk

Trustee lead for safeguarding and child protection: Dave Wraight 07886681239 dave@wraight.net

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): Fiona Goussard 01635 503190 LADO@westberks.gov.uk

Contact, Advice & Assessment Service (CAAS): 01635 503190 (Out of hours 01344 351999)
child@westberks.gov.uk

NSPCC helpline: 0808 800 5000

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

This policy statement and accompanying procedures were last reviewed on 15th August 2023

Signed:John Bishop..... Date 30/08/23

Managing Trustee

Procedures

1 Promoting Good Practice

1.1 Introduction

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities at The John Simonds Trust, everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees or participants at The John Simonds Trust to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child, as explained in section 2.

This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

1.2 Good Practice

All employees and volunteers should adhere to the following principles and action:

- always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- never find yourself alone with a child and out of sight of other staff
- disciplining the children is the responsibility of staff from the schools
- make the experience of The John Simonds Trust enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- treat all children equally and with respect and dignity
- always put the welfare of the child first
- maintain a safe and appropriate distance with children
- avoid unnecessary physical contact with children. Always ask for permission from child before helping them with equipment such as waders.
- restraint of any sort should only be used if the child is in danger, or a danger to others
- be an excellent role model
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- recognise the developmental needs and capacity of the child
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given
- be aware that the toilets at Oaklands may be perceived by children as an escape area

1.3 Poor or unacceptable Practice

The following are regarded as poor or unacceptable practice and should be avoided by all employees and volunteers:

- unnecessarily spending time alone with children away from others
- taking children alone in a car on journeys, however short
- taking children to your home where they will be alone with you
- engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any form
- allowing children to use inappropriate language unchallenged

- making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- reducing a child to tears as a form of control
- allowing allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- do things of a personal nature that the child can do for themselves

2 Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

2.1 Introduction

It is not the responsibility of anyone working at The John Simonds Trust in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the child. This applies **BOTH** to allegations/suspicions of abuse occurring within The John Simonds Trust and to allegations/suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

This section explains how to respond to allegations/suspicions.

2.2 Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in the appendix of this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the child affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a child says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- **stay calm** so as not to frighten the child
- **reassure** the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- **listen** to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously
- **keep questions to a minimum** so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify
- **inform** the child that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- **safety of the child** is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue
- **record** all information
- **report** the incident to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

2.3 Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include the following:

- the child's name, age and date of birth
- the child's home address and telephone number
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's

- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- details of witnesses to the incidents
- the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred
- have the parents been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail

2.4 Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations MUST be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

The John Simonds Trust expects its staff and volunteers to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with the person in charge and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken. **All staff should feel comfortable to do this.**

If the DSL is not available you should take responsibility and seek advice from the lead safeguarding trustee, the NSPCC helpline, the LADO at your local children's services department or the police. Telephone numbers can be found above.

Where there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation.

- **Criminal** in which case the police are immediately involved
- **Child protection** in which case children's services (and possibly) the police will be involved
- **Disciplinary or misconduct** in which case The John Simonds Trust will be involved

As mentioned previously in this document The John Simonds Trust are not child protection experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection.

Children's services have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by an employee or a volunteer should be reported to The John Simonds Trust who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- The John Simonds Trust will refer the matter to children's services department
- the parent/carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the children's services department
- the chair of trustees of the John Simonds Trust should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings

- Any safeguarding concerns over a visiting member of school staff will be reported to the school concerned, but may also be reported to the children's services
- If allegations are received relating to an incident that happened when an individual or organisation was using the premises for the purposes of running activities for children (for example community groups, sports associations, or service providers that run extra-curricular activities), the same policies and procedures will be followed, as for any other safeguarding incident, including informing the LADO.

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to children's services. This is because other children may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children.

2.5 Low Level Concerns Policy

The safety & wellbeing of children is dependent on the vigilance of all staff and their prompt communication to the DSL of any concerns, no matter how small, about any conduct by an adult which causes you to doubt that adult's suitability to work with or have access to children.

2.6 Confidentiality

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. This includes the following people:

- The parents of the child
- The person making the allegation
- Children's Services/police
- The John Simonds Trust DSL (Jane Patrick)
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

Seek children's services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

2.7 Internal Inquiries and Suspension

- The John Simonds Trust will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be suspended pending further police and children's services inquiries
- Irrespective of the findings of the children's services or police inquiries, The John Simonds Trust trustees will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases the trustees must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

3 Recruiting and Selecting Personnel to Work with Children

3.1 Introduction

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, both full and part time. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children the following steps should be taken when recruiting.

3.2 Controlling Access to Children

- All staff and volunteers should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about the applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from the applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- Two confidential references should be obtained. These references **MUST** be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo)

3.3 Interview and Induction

All employees and volunteers will be required to undertake an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full, including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures
- Their qualifications should be substantiated
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified
- Child Protection Procedures are explained and training needs identified e.g. basic child protection awareness

3.4 Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child
- Work safely and effectively with children

The John Simonds Trust requires:

- All staff and volunteers who have access to children to undergo a DBS check

- All employees and volunteers to undertake relevant child protection training or undertake a form of home study, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of positive culture towards good practice and child protection
- All staff and volunteers to receive advisory information outlining good/bad practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a child

Appendix

Defining Child Abuse

Introduction

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a child regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

There are four main types of abuse: **physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect**. The abuser may be a family member, someone the child encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a child directly or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the child.

The Trust recognises that children may abuse other children. This is referred to as peer on peer abuse.

Abuse in all its forms can affect a child at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated they may follow the individual into adulthood

Children with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

Types of Abuse

- **Physical Abuse:** where adults physically hurt or injure a child e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning. Giving children alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse.
Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- **Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a child they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of children that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a child to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child frightened or withdrawn.

Ill treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

- **Bullying** may come from another child or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying.

It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

- **Neglect** occurs when an adult fails to meet the child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.
- **Sexual Abuse** occurs when adults (male and female) use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing children pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- the child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- another child or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a child
- unexplained changes in a child's behaviour e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- inappropriate sexual awareness
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- difficulty in making friends
- being prevented from socialising with others
- displaying variations in eating patterns including over-eating or loss of appetite
- losing weight for no apparent reason
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt

Signs of bullying include:

- behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go to training or competitions
- an unexplained drop off in performance
- physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes
- a shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is **NOT** the responsibility of those working at The John Simonds Trust to decide that child abuse is occurring. It **IS** their responsibility to act on any concerns.

Further Information on specific safeguarding topics.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, children are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point. Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual exploitation:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Children who associate with other children involved in exploitation;
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant;
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) mandatory reporting duty

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

Preventing Radicalisation

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of our wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include making a referral to Children's Services who will refer on to the Channel Panel.

Peer on Peer Abuse

Peer on Peer abuse occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and/or harmed by their peers who are the same or similar age; everyone directly involved in peer on peer abuse is under the age of 18.

Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual safeguarding relates to risks outside the home

Low-level concern

A low-level concern is any concern about an adult's behaviour towards a child that does not meet the allegation threshold or is not otherwise serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult may have acted in a manner which:

- is not consistent with an organisation's Code of Conduct,⁹ and/or
- relates to their conduct outside of work which, even if not linked to a particular act or omission, has caused a sense of unease about that adult's suitability to work with children.

Declaration

On behalf of The John Simonds Trust I, the undersigned, agree that I've read and understood the Safeguarding Policy and will take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to

Signed:

Name:

Position within The John Simonds Trust:

Part-time Educational Officer

Date:
