



# Safeguarding policy & procedures

## Overview

Sussex Green Living (SGL) endeavours to encourage vigilance and awareness of the issues surrounding the protection and safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults, within which suspicions or allegations can be made in good faith without fear of reprisal.

We are committed to the welfare and safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults and we will regularly review this policy taking into account emerging legislation and evolving best practice. Appropriate risk management processes will be applied to contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Within SGL the overall management responsibility for safeguarding is retained within the Chief Executive's remit. Safeguarding work is overseen by the senior management team and the Chief Executive will report to the Trustees regularly on implementing the safeguarding policy and the operation of the safeguarding procedures.

The Trustees are responsible for approving the safeguarding policy and receiving reports on safeguarding.

## Code of conduct

It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers and Trustees to ensure that when working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, a healthy, positive and safe environment is maintained. The modelling of appropriate behaviour is an important element of this. This code of conduct is intended to identify the types of behaviour expected when working with children and vulnerable adults. It is also meant to keep you safe by minimising the likelihood of allegations against you.

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect
- Minimise the time spent alone with an individual child, young person or vulnerable adult especially in an enclosed, isolated or private space
- Respect personal boundaries. Avoid initiating physical contact with children or vulnerable adults. However you may need to restrain a student who is endangering themselves or others
- Always put the welfare of each person first, before achieving delivery outputs
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback, rather than negative criticism
- Please escalate or refer any concerns
- Avoid unacceptable situations within a relationship of trust and remember your intentions may be misinterpreted
- Avoid requiring individuals to take part in activities inappropriate to their age or ability

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- Do not photograph or video or publish their pictures, without the knowledge and consent of their parents, teachers or carers
- Do not publish information, in print or on a website or social media that might enable someone to contact them
- Do not engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, or any inappropriate touching of any form.
- Do not allow or use inappropriate language or, sexually suggestive comments, or offer inappropriate personal experiences.
- Do not keep contact details or other information about children or vulnerable adults, except that needed for work purposes, or on personal computers, phones etc.

### **Staff and volunteers**

Staff and volunteers will be carefully selected and vetted to try and ensure they do not pose a safeguarding risk. Safeguarding procedures are included in the induction process for new starters. We will ensure that staff and volunteers are properly informed, supported, managed and trained.

Task leaders should recognise that young volunteers can be less physically strong, less experienced, have a lower awareness of risk and be less inclined to ask questions for fear of looking "stupid." Leaders should take this into account when supervising the work party. There are no "rules" on this: common sense and good communication to the group and to adults accompanying children will reduce risk.

### **Recognising and responding to abuse and disclosures**

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult describes abuse being suffered by themselves or another individual (disclosure);

If a member of staff, volunteer or Trustee sees or hears something that concerns them about the possibility of abuse;

If a third party tells us something about suspected abuse;

We as individuals have a duty to ensure that all concerns and disclosures are followed up.

In the case of a disclosure do:

- Take it seriously
- Listen and reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling someone
- Write down what they have said as soon as possible, and use their exact words – do not try and correct anything
- Ask only open questions - "when did this happen?"
- Get support for the child and yourself
- Let them know you will have to tell someone else in order to keep them safe

Positive things to say:

- I am glad you told me
- I am sorry this has happened
- It is not your fault

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- We are going to do something about this together

Do not:

- Assume someone else will act or already knows
- Promise to keep it a secret as the disclosure must be acted upon. However you should not tell the parents / carers at this stage
- Interrupt or ask leading questions (e.g. "did your dad do that to you?")
- Express disbelief in what you are being told
- Seem to tell them off ("why didn't you tell me before?")
- Discuss the incident with other staff or volunteers not directly involved in the incident, except those responsible for safeguarding

In the case of having concerns about possible abuse contact one of the safeguarding leads immediately and complete a Record of concern form as soon as possible.

There is a remote possibility that a child / vulnerable adult may suddenly announce that they do not want to go home because they are frightened of abuse. We cannot legally prevent a child / vulnerable adult from going home with his or her responsible parent / carer / guardian. However, you can insist on calling the police and staying with the child, if you suspect that an offence may be about to be committed (for example, if the parent is drunk).

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

### **Recognising Abuse**

There are four main categories of abuse

#### Physical abuse

Physical abuse includes hitting, kicking, punching, burning, shaking and deliberately hurting. You might see bruises, unusual injuries, burn marks, hand or bite marks. These injuries are often in areas of the body where we would not expect to see such injuries e.g. torso, groin, neck, buttocks and other fleshy parts of the body. (See non-accidental injuries diagram). Also consider female genital mutilation.

You might notice certain behaviour such as discomfort, flinching or unusual aggressiveness.

#### Emotional Abuse

Includes parents or caregivers not showing love or affection, threats, telling the victim they are worthless or unloved.

You might see low self-esteem, tearfulness, poor relationships with other children and/or adults, behavioural problems such as attention seeking or children who are over-eager to please.

#### Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child, young person, or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the victim is aware of what is happening. It could include inappropriate touching, making the victim watch pornographic films or direct sexual contact. Includes child sexual exploitation

You might see disturbed behaviour including self-harming, eating disorders, inappropriate sexual behaviour towards others, depression or loss of self-esteem.

#### Neglect

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This is when basic needs such as food, warmth, medical care, hygiene, stimulation and education are not met.

You might notice physical signs, such as the victim not developing normally, looking uncared for, constantly hungry, not properly dressed for the weather or unclean. Children may also have low confidence and self-esteem and show disturbed or unusual behaviour. They may struggle to stick to boundaries or routines

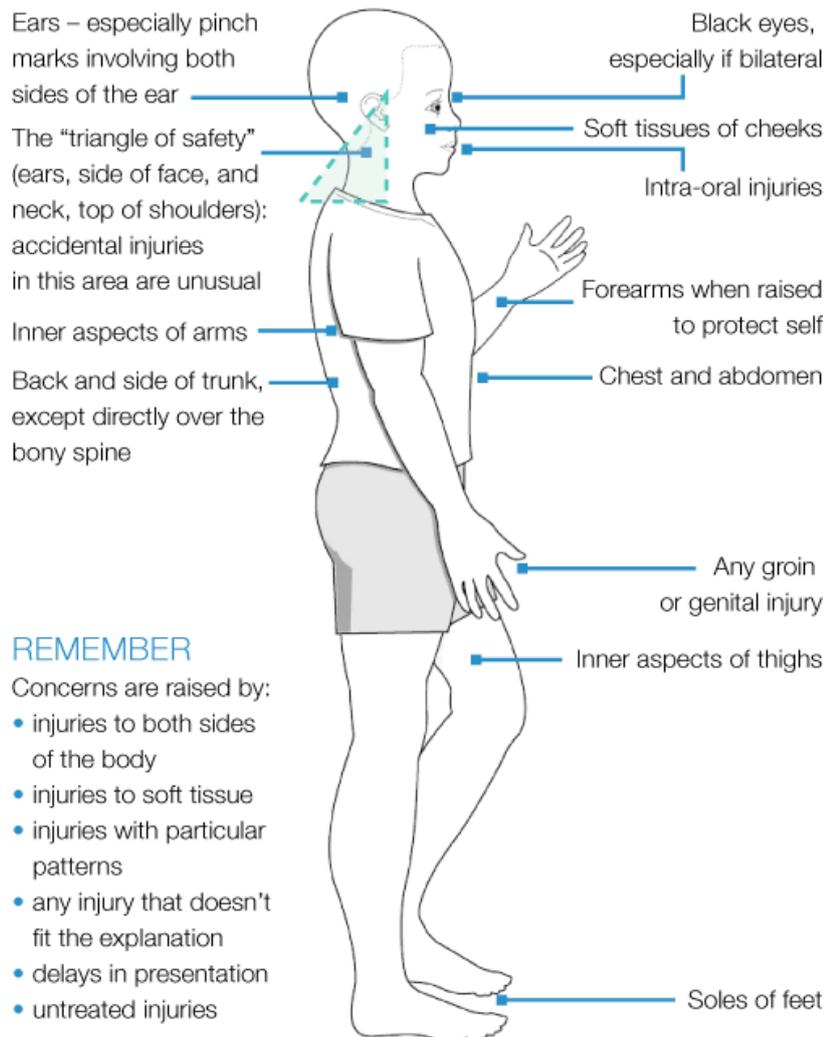
It is quite likely that more than one type of abuse will be inflicted.

There are risk factors which make some children or adults more vulnerable to abuse:

- Disability or special educational needs, looked after children, age (especially very young children)
- Parents or caregivers with a learning difficulty or mental health issues, or who those who misuse drink or drugs, a background of domestic violence or previous abuse in the family.

Note that there could be other reasons for the child / vulnerable adult's behaviour, such as moving house, family divorce or bereavement, changing school, bullying etc.

### Typical features of non-accidental injuries – which should raise concern



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## Record of Safeguarding Concern Form

Date:	Name of Employee/Volunteer:
Name of Child / Vulnerable adult & parent/supervising adult (if known)	How has this concern come to your attention? (Please tick) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Direct contact/observation</li><li>• Disclosure</li><li>• via a third party – adult or child?</li></ul>
Details of child / vulnerable adult  Age or DOB  Gender  Address of home or school          Tel no	Do you think this issue is: (please tick) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child at immediate risk of harm</li><li>• Child in need of support</li></ul>

What is your concern about this child / young person / vulnerable adult?

(Be specific, include when and where incident occurred, any evidence of what you saw or what was reported, time and dates if known)

Who else, if anyone, was involved and how?

Were there any obvious signs in the child e.g. bruising, bleeding, change in behaviour? Refer to / mark onto the Non-accidental injuries diagram

Did the child say anything? Write down exactly what is said even if it makes no sense to you, (do not correct grammar for example).

What action have you taken? Who have you spoken to and when?

Do the parents or carers know? Yes / No

Has a referral been made to the local authority safeguarding team? Yes / No

**Note: Continue on another page if there is not enough room above.**

Name and Signature of person filling in this cause for concern form

Name & Signature of Safeguarding Officer

## **Allegations procedure**

If an allegation of abuse is received from (or on behalf of) a child or vulnerable adult, that has occurred at a SGL activity, their complaint must be passed, to the Safeguarding Lead officers.

If the complaint is about one of those officers, it must be passed to the other Safeguarding Lead officer who should liaise with the Chief Executive Officer, or a Trustee, in their absence.

SGL would seek the guidance, as soon as possible, of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for the appropriate area that the allegation is alleged to have occurred.

Alternatively, SGL may be contacted by a LADO or the police, investigating a member of staff or volunteer.

The Safeguarding Leads will be the main point of contact in any investigation. SGL would follow the advice of the LADO.

SGL disciplinary policies will be followed, as appropriate.

Note of changes made	Date changes made	Date policy statement approved by the Trustees
Approved by the Trustees		30/04/2021