



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Our Commitment to Safeguarding Vulnerable Children and Young People

We, at Fields of Dreams, are committed to practice which safeguards vulnerable children and young people from harm. We are committed to protecting all children in our care and feel that every child should feel safe, secure and happy. Staff and volunteers in our organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to protect children and to be aware of signs that may raise concerns in terms of student disclosure or suspected abuse including (but not limited to) physical, emotional and neglect. Our policy applies to all staff, volunteers and others working at the Fields of Dreams. For the purpose of this policy, we define child abuse as:

*when a child is intentionally harmed by an adult or another child – it can be over a period of time but can also be a one-off action. It can be **physical, sexual or emotional** and it can happen **in person or online**. It can also be a lack of love, care and attention – this is **neglect**.*

(NSPCC website)

Go to <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1188/definitions-signs-child-abuse.pdf> for the NSPCC Document 'Definitions and Signs of child Abuse' which helps professionals know the different types of abuse and what signs to look out for). This document is sent to all new staff at the Fields of Dreams.

We take guidance from and adhere to the Local Safeguarding Children Board, Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children. We define safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's social, emotional, mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best possible outcomes.

We recognise that the children who attend the Fields of Dreams have additional needs (SEND/SEMH) and are vulnerable. We recognise that all children who attend are unique with their own needs so to keep them safe, happy and secure we will adhere to the below approaches.

- Liaise with other agencies, parents, and carers to work collaboratively to be able to provide the best environment for individuals.
- Build strong and mutually respectable relationships with the students. Follow the Equal Opportunities Policy at all times.
- Follow the behaviour policy to apply deescalation techniques to minimise incidents including meltdowns before they occur.
- Ensure that children are safe from harm at all times on site by following our Health & Safety Policy.
- Education children on correct use of the internet (See our E-Safety Policy)
- Make good use of the outdoor provision to offer the students space to calm and breathe when needed with supervision that does not encroach on their personal space and right to feel free.
- Be aware of students triggers so we can preempt any possible issues that may occur.
- Consistently assess student's behaviour through observation and adapt activities where identified including providing 1-1 support where needed.
- Supervise students at all times to ensure their safety and follow the Supervision of Children and Young People Policy to adhere to required staff to student ratios and be aware of procedures for emergencies.
- Ensure that children are aware of the rules on the farm including animal education so they do not put themselves into a situation that may cause harm to themselves, others and/or animals.
- Ensure that all students are aware of and have signed the Student Expectations form and that these are always followed. Students are reminded of these expectations daily to ensure the safeguarding of all.

Our Commitment to Staff/Volunteer Safeguarding Awareness, Training & Support

At the Fields of Dreams, we take the safeguarding of children very seriously and follow these additional points to ensure the health and safety of all:

- Ensure we check the suitability of prospective staff and volunteers prior to them being able to carry out any work at the Fields of Dreams Farm.
 - DBS checks will be requested and kept on file.
 - The Code of Conduct (See Appendix A), Safeguarding Policy and other relevant documents and policies must be read, agreed and signed by all staff and volunteers.

- We provide new staff with initial training and support to ensure they understand the importance and expectations of their role.
 - All staff start on a probationary period in which they will be observed and assessed when working with the students to ensure that they are suitable to work with vulnerable children.
- Provide Level 2 Safeguarding training to all staff including access to Level 3 for Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies. This is updated and refreshed every two years.
 - Ensure that Designated Safeguarding Officers (including deputies) are fully aware of their role and responsibilities and the valuable position they hold. (See Appendix B) We will ensure that they are suitably trained and supported in their role.
 - Raise awareness of protection/safeguarding issues through communication and up to date training. Ensuring staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to any signs of abuse.
 - Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of the procedures for reporting any concerns and who the Designated Safeguarding Officers are. (See Appendix C)
 - Identify and provide support or training to staff where needed should an issue arise, whilst following procedures for any allegations made against staff.
 - Provide effective management of staff and volunteers through relevant training, support and supervision.

Our Commitment to Identifying and Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Through training and support staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect. Additionally, the NSPCC Document 'Definitions and Signs of child Abuse' is sent to all new staff. Should staff have any concerns then these are passed onto the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputies and the procedures followed as at Appendix C. No matter the outcome of the report, records are kept securely according to the Data Protection Act 2018. We understand the importance of keeping such records to be able to build a picture and contribute to evidence should further concerns develop.

We are committed to communicating with other agencies including schools, social services, and the police as a multi-agency approach to identifying and protecting vulnerable children in need. We are not alone in helping to safeguard children from harm and the sharing of information is imperative as something that may seem minor on its own may not be so when merged with other information, observations from other agencies. Working collaboratively is our best chance of safeguarding all children.

Our main collective safeguarding aims are as follows:

- Maintain a safe and secure environment for students at all times by following health and safety procedures, safeguarding and behaviour policy and the Code of Conduct.
- We understand that, due to our regular contact with vulnerable children, we are well-placed to observe and identify any signs of abuse. We will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, advice of government departments and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- Develop strong links and working relationships with relevant agencies to contribute to the safeguarding of vulnerable children.
- Store securely and confidentially written records of concerns regarding children in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Our Commitment to Dealing with Safeguarding Allegations

We will Investigate any allegations made against a member of staff or volunteer according to our Code of Conduct and in line with Local Safeguarding Board procedures. (See Appendix D for the procedures that we follow). We will deal with this professionally and efficiently with a view to resolving the issue and ensuring safeguarding is maintained. Our main priority is, and always will be, the welfare of the child involved in the allegation. The staff member may be asked not to come in to work whilst the allegation is investigated, and an outcome decided. We will provide support to the staff member/volunteer in an unbiased and professional capacity. This applies to any allegation made against staff whether this is by a parent, visitor or other staff member.

When investigating allegations, we will use the following definitions, as stipulated in the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance (220):

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive.
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.
- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads and Directors of and within the Fields of Dreams will investigate the allegation and gather evidence from both parties if relevant. Both parties will receive a written response of the outcome. Should the severity of the allegation and evidence provided be sufficient we will involve the police and social services. We will provide support to all parties involved including offering further support once the outcome is decided where relevant.

In situations where staff need to report colleagues as they believe are doing something wrong or illegal, or who are neglecting their duties we have a separate Whistleblowing Policy. Staff have the freedom to speak up to be able to safeguard and promote children's welfare as reflected in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2015) Chapter 2, paragraph 4:

'organisations should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including:

'clear whistleblowing procedures, which reflect the principles in Sir Robert Francis's Freedom to Speak Up review and are suitably referenced in staff training and codes of conduct, and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed.

Additionally, our Reporting Grievances Policy outlines procedures to take when staff raise concerns about others.

We are committed to reviewing this policy annually to keep updated and ensure that our practice and procedures are in alignment with expectations and requirements.

Kerry Fisher (Education, Training & Creative Manager)
Fields of Dreams Farm
June 2021

APPENDIX A: Copy of Fields of Dreams Code of Conduct

As we work with children and animals, we are in a position of responsibility to ensure that their wellbeing is always our primary concern. Never underestimate the crucial position you are in to be able to inspire, motivate and be positive role models for the unique souls that come to us. This document is in addition to existing safeguarding and associated policies.

All staff have a duty to keep students safe and protect them from physical or emotional harm.

Any safeguarding issues must be passed on to the designated Safeguarding Officer as stipulated in the Safeguarding Policy.

Staff have a duty of care to themselves (Health & Safety at Work Act 1974)

IMPORTANT:

All staff must read this Code of Conduct, complete and pass the multiple-choice quiz and complete the declaration form at the end of their induction training to confirm that they have read and understood all its content. Should you have any queries regarding this document then please feel free to contact Kerry, Education, Training & Creative Director, on kerry@fieldsofdreamsfarm.org

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Keep all information about a student private, unless it is in a professional capacity on a need-to-know basis.
- Avoid making promises of confidentiality to students, especially if they choose to disclose something to you. We may need to share information if the nature of the disclosure involves or could involve the student and/or others being harmed in any way.
- Do not share photos or information about children and Fields of Dreams on social media. See Social Media Policy for guidelines on confidentiality.
- Ensure that all data is handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act. PRIVACY
- Avoid giving out your personal details to students or parents.
- Avoid adding students on social media platforms. (See Social Media Policy)
- Any unwelcome communications from students or parents must be raised immediately.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

- Avoid invading students' space, using any kind of physical intimidation or force to manage behaviour.
- Do Not from using any sarcastic, demeaning or insensitive comments.
- ALWAYS remain calm and aim to diffuse situations before they escalate. Model calm and gentle behaviour to avoid escalating the situation.
- Do not physically prevent a student from walking out/away unless it is done for theirs and/or others safety.
- Always report any incidents involving a student being physical/causing harm in the incident book.

TRUST

- Your position of power should never be used to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine students.
- Do Not from paying special attention to a particular student.
- ALWAYS consider how your actions may be viewed by others.
- When in a 1-1 situation with a student, ensure you are not in a secluded area and that there is visual access/door open/other staff around.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Do not behave in a manner that would lead someone to question your suitability to work with children and animals.
- Never make any sexual remarks, innuendos or in any way that could be interpreted as sexually suggestive.
- We have zero tolerance for any hate speech (public speech that expresses hate or encourages violence towards a person or group based on something such as race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation).
- We have zero tolerance of any bullying in the workplace.
- Dress decently, safely and appropriately for working with children and animals.
- Keep all mobile phones on silent during session times unless otherwise agreed with the Senior Leadership Team for extenuating reasons.

PROFESSIONALISM

- Never make any remarks about a student unless it's positive.
- Never discuss any student in front of other students to maintain confidentiality.
- Do Not from using inappropriate language in front of children.
- Due to the uniqueness of the children that we work with, always be sensitive to their emotions and how they might perceive something you say. A joke or flippant remark may not be made with any intended malice but could be taken literally or have a negative impact on self-esteem so THINK before you speak: T–Is it true? H– Is it helpful? I–Is it inspiring? N–Is it necessary? K–Is it kind?

HEALTH & SAFETY

- Always ensure that children are supervised at all times and not able to wander around the site as they wish.
- Ensure that ALL areas are kept clean and tidy to avoid injury to animals and children.
- Ensure that ALL equipment is put safely away.
- Ensure child's safety at all times ensuring that they are reminded on how to handle and care for animals.
- Ensure children are aware of the possible dangers on the farm and remind them how the rules are there to protect them.

PHOTOGRAPHIC & VIDEO

- Under no circumstances should photos and videos be taken of the students without prior consent and for an identified need.
- Photos of the students should not be kept on your personal mobile telephone.
- No photos/ videos of sessions/activities should be taken by parents/carers/visitors without permission from Senior Leadership Team.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

We reserve the right to suspend your employment whilst we investigate any incidents or reports that you have breached this Code of Conduct. This includes collecting information from yourself and is no means confirming that what has been alleged has happened as all parties involved need to have input.

Once a full investigation has taken place, we will then inform you, in writing, of the outcome. The full procedure is detailed below:

1. Allegation made/incident occurs
2. Staff member to stay off site until further notice.
3. Written report of allegation to be sent to staff member to detail what happened.
4. If necessary, meetings may take place between senior leadership and staff member to resolve issue.
5. Written outcome will be communicated with all parties after a full investigation.

Created by Kerry Fisher (Education, Learning & Creative Director) Date:
19th April 2021

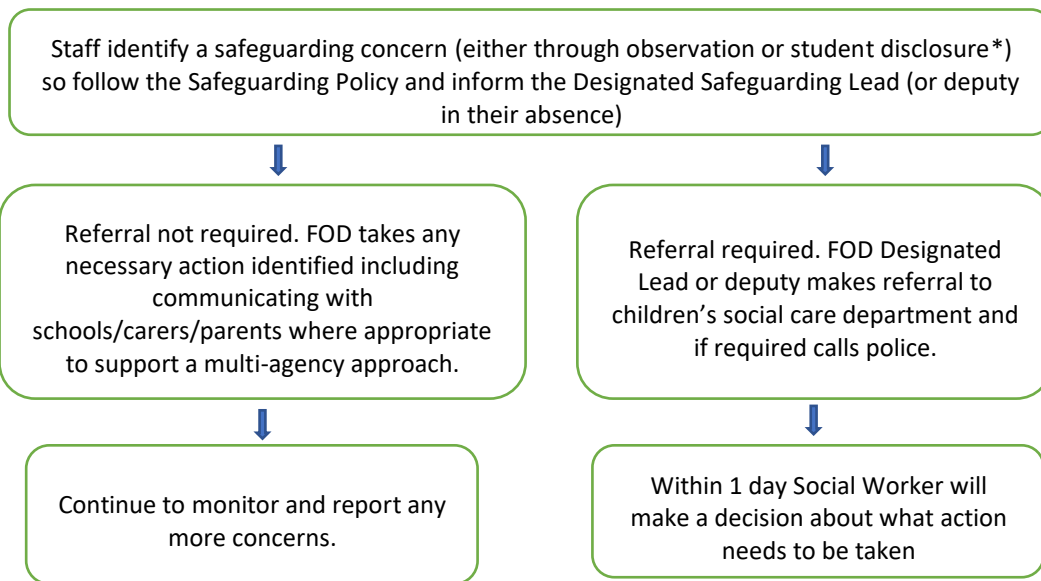
APPENDIX B: Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) & Deputies Role & Responsibilities.

The designated person within Fields of Dreams who has primary responsibility for managing and reporting concerns about children and for putting into place safeguarding procedures.

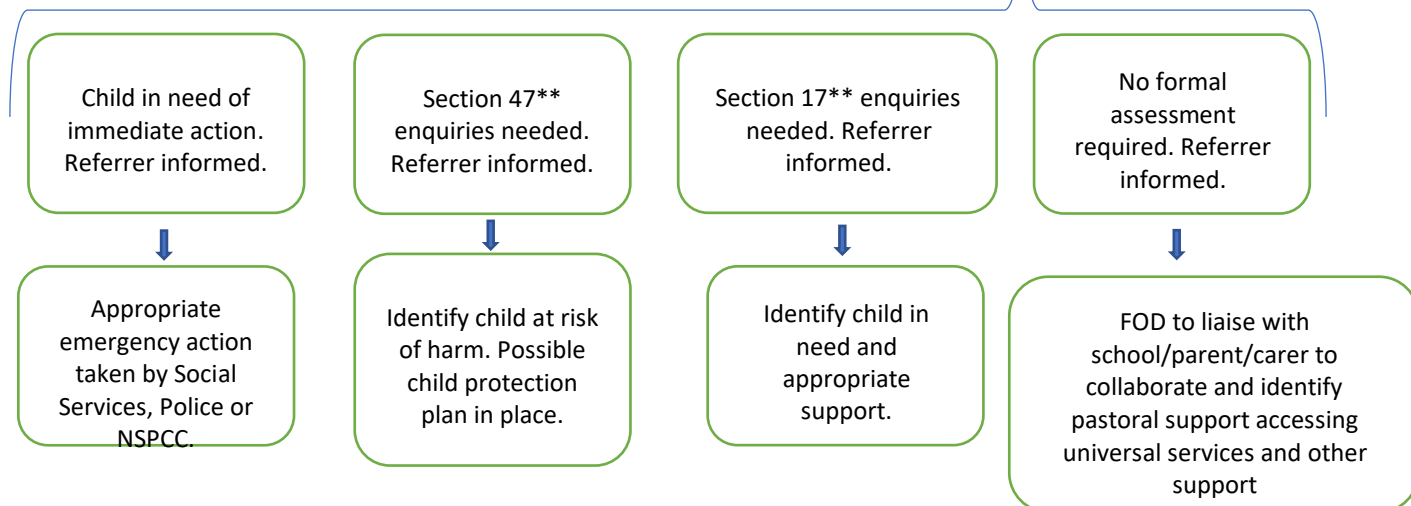
- Working with others to create a positive, child-centred environment in which children feel safe, happy and secure.

- Play a lead role in developing and establishing the organisation's approach to safeguarding children and young people.
- Manage cases of poor practice and abuse reported to the organisation – including records system.
- Manage referrals to children's social-care services and the police.
- Central point of contact for internal and external individuals and agencies.
- Represent the organisation at external meetings related to safeguarding.
- Coordinate the dissemination of policy, procedures and resources throughout the organisation.
- Provide advice and support to staff and volunteers.
- Advise on the organisation's training needs and provide training where appropriate.
- Play a lead role in maintaining and reviewing the organisation's implementation plan for safeguarding and protecting children.
- Ensure safeguarding standards are met and maintained.
- Keep own knowledge and skills up-to-date.

APPENDIX C: Procedures to follow when raising a safeguarding concern



POSSIBLE OUTCOMES



FOD staff should adopt a multi-agency approach and work with other professionals, including the Social Worker to keep the child safe.

Child should continue to be under review and staff should report any further concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputies (if DSL is absent/unavailable). Rereferral should be made as above.

By working together with other agencies, we can ensure the best outcome for the child. The child's health, safety and wellbeing are a priority and everyone's responsibility.

*As per our Code of Conduct, staff should not promise to keep student's communications confidential as a disclosure must be passed onto the Designated Safeguarding Leads and other agencies where relevant in order to protect the child.

**Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, it has a duty to make enquiries to decide whether to take action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.

Full details are in Chapter one of **Working Together to Safeguard Children**.

APPENDIX D: Procedures to Follow When Making an Allegation or an Allegation is Made

A visitor/parent/teacher/child makes an allegation against FOD staff member

A staff member or volunteer makes an allegation about another FOD staff member/volunteer

This is reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or deputy and Director. (Either Miss Daley or Miss Fisher)

Staff member is informed of the allegation in writing and asked not to come into work whilst it is investigated.

Both staff member and person making the allegation write an account of what happened if there are discrepancies.

Miss Fisher & Miss Daley, in their capacity as Designated Safeguarding Officers and Directors of and within Fields of Dreams, will investigate the allegation which may include collecting evidence from CCTV and witnesses.

A decision will be made on the course of action to be taken dependent upon the severity of the misconduct as below

Any proved incident of child abuse including physical, sexual, emotional, control, bullying or neglect

INSTANT DISMISSAL ON GROUNDS OF GROSS MISCONDUCT

Putting child at risk of harm through poor practice.

Instant suspension, investigation and written warning. Extra training and support.

Repeated misconduct

INSTANT DISMISSAL ON GROUNDS OF GROSS MISCONDUCT

Inappropriate behaviour including swearing, using offensive language, making sexual/racist/homophobic or other offensive references

Instant suspension, investigation and verbal warning. Extra training and support.

Repeated misconduct = written warning

Repeated misconduct

INSTANT DISMISSAL ON GROUNDS OF GROSS MISCONDUCT

Charged for a crime/or any inappropriate conduct that occurred outside of work that affects suitability to work with children.

INSTANT DISMISSAL ON GROUNDS OF GROSS MISCONDUCT

Please note: Directors reserve the right to escalate the course of action depending on the severity and impact of the misconduct. each case will be dealt with using this process as a guideline.