



FLISS SMITH T/A

SERENDIPITY

EQUINE ASSISTED AND OUTSIDE LEARNING

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Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide protection for the children, young people and vulnerable adults who attend Equine Assisted Learning sessions or receive services from/at Serendipity
- Provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

Scope

This policy applies to all those connected with Serendipity including senior managers, facilitators, assessors, verifiers, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers. For the purposes of this document the term 'staff' will mean anyone in any of these capacities working for Serendipity.

Serendipity is committed to maintaining procedures and practices which safeguard and promote the well-being of all its learners, by identifying and applying best practice within equine assisted learning and ensuring that the Safeguarding Policy complies with legislative requirements and government recommendations.

The overall Designated Safeguarding Officer for Serendipity is: Fliss Smith 07401 493 550

The Designated Safeguarding Officer is the first point of contact for concerns raised at Serendipity.

Definitions

In terms of this policy the following definitions apply.

Serendipity – Fliss Smith t/a Serendipity.

Learner – means learners of Serendipity who attend sessions.

Child – any learner below the age of 18.

Young Person - people aged 18+.

Vulnerable Adult – may be a person who is unable to take care of himself or herself, or unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation. It may be a person who has learning disabilities, suffers from mental illness, has physical disability, is a substance misuser, is homeless, is in an abusive relationship, becomes ill or otherwise vulnerable.

Expectations

All staff are:

- familiar with this safeguarding policy and have an opportunity to contribute to its review.
- alert to signs and indicators of possible abuse.
- able to record and report concerns as set out in this policy.
- able to deal with a disclosure of abuse from a learner.
- involved in the implementation of individual education programmes, integrated support plans, child in need plans, interagency child protection plans and safeguarding adult plans as required. In addition,
- All staff have read and understood Part 1 of the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE).
- Staff working directly with children have also read Annex A of KCSiE.
- Staff are aware of Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership and where to find information relating to the Southwest Child Protection Procedures and Effective Support for Children and Families.

Safeguarding Policy Statement

Serendipity recognises that it has a duty to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults who attend Equine Assisted and Outside Learning sessions and prevent any possible abuse and ensure the safety and security of all members of staff.

As part of our safeguarding practices, Serendipity Learning Ltd will:

- Provide a safe environment for both learners and staff
- Establish and maintain procedures and practices which minimise risks to learners and staff
- Ensure that all learners are welcomed, respected and understand the arrangements to keep them safe
- Ensure that learner complaints about safety are tackled effectively
- Ensure that all learners and staff members are aware of their own responsibilities in respect of behaviour and working practices including online safety
- Ensure that all learners and staff members understand abuse, discrimination and bullying and know what to do if it occurs.
- Provide information and educate learners about how to stay safe
- Maintain recruitment and contracting practices which check the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children and vulnerable learners
- Provide training to maintain the awareness of all staff so that they recognise and react responsibly to apparent and potential instances of abuse or neglect of learners
- Communicate and maintain procedures for identifying and reporting cases (or suspected cases) of abuse or potential for harm to learners
- Review policy and procedures in relation to safeguarding and prepare an annual report
- Liaise with external agencies to establish, maintain and coordinate procedures and arrangements for ensuring the safety of Serendipity Learning Ltd.'s learners, keeping the welfare of the learner at the centre of any action taken.

Serendipity is committed to working closely with all external agencies involved in safeguarding, with particular reference to Social Services and the Police.

Relevant Legislation

Serendipity will operate in all safeguarding matters with reference to current, relevant legislation, including:

- Working together to Safeguard Children DCFS 2018
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2012
- Education Act 2002
- Children Act 1989 (2004 and 2007 updates)
- Disclosure and Barring Service Guidance (DBS)
- Safeguarding Children & Safer Recruitment in Education DCFS 2010
- Working together to Safeguard Children DCFS 2018
- Care Quality Commission
- Mental Health Act
- Single Equality Act 2010
- Every Child Matters
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Care Act 2014
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Information Sharing – Department for Education (DfE) Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents, and carers 2018.
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Mental health and behaviour in schools (2018)
- Children Missing Education (2016) Statutory Guidance
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (2017)

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Guidelines

It is the responsibility of everyone at Serendipity to ensure the safety and well-being of learners and to understand the procedure for handling concerns about the welfare of an individual learner as appropriate.

All facilitators and centre staff should be aware of the contents of both this Policy and accompanying procedures.

Serendipity will:

- operate a Safer Recruitment policy and ensure that all staff are trained in relation to the protection of children and adults at risk
- operate a fair and transparent Admissions and Referral Policy with clear procedures for identifying and working with applicants who potentially may pose a risk to others (i.e., disclosed criminal convictions) or be considered vulnerable by the nature of any specific needs or individual circumstances
- operate an effective Health and Safety policy which ensures, through monitoring and reporting, a safe learning and working environment
- welcome learners at induction with clear messages about how to keep themselves safe whilst a learner at the centre
- continue to promote messages about keeping safe and how to access support, throughout a learner's journey
- provide opportunities where learners can discuss concerns
- offer opportunities which further develop the learners understanding of how to keep themselves safe in specific situations; in particular in the case of bullying, abuse and online safety take all safeguarding concerns voiced by staff and learners seriously by encouraging referrals to be made to the safeguarding team and ensuring that appropriate and effective action is taken to see that learners are kept safe wherever possible
- ensure that there are consistent processes for recording and monitoring safeguarding concerns
- take a holistic multi-agency partnership approach when considering a learner's support and protection needs.

Definitions of abuse/neglect/harm

Serendipity recognises the following definitions with regard to abuse, neglect and harm. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Physical Abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to someone they are looking after.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child or vulnerable adult which could cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the person's emotional development. It may involve conveying to the individual that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or only valued for what they can do for the abuser. Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or vulnerable adults, causing the individual to frequently feel frightened, or the exploitation or corruption of children or vulnerable adults will also constitute emotional abuse.

Sexual Abuse

Involving, forcing or enticing a child, young person or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities whether or not the individual is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact including penetration or non-penetrative acts. For example, it may also include involving the child, young person or vulnerable adult in looking at or being involved in the production of pornographic material, watching sexual activities or encouraging the child or vulnerable adult to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development, such as failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, their basic emotional needs.

Psychological Abuse

This includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Financial or Material Abuse

This includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, enduring power of attorney, or inheritance or financial transactions, or the inappropriate use, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Neglect and Acts of Omission

This includes ignoring or withholding medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition, clothing and heating

Discriminatory Abuse

This includes racist, sexist, or other forms that are based on a person's disability and other forms of harassment, or similar treatment.

Self-Neglect

This is not a direct form of abuse but staff need to be aware of it in the general context of risk assessment/ risk management and to be aware that staff may owe a duty of care to a vulnerable individual who places him/herself at risk in this way.

Forced Marriage

The difference between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage is important to understand. The tradition of arranged marriages has operated successfully within many communities and many countries for a very long time. A clear distinction must be made between a forced and an arranged marriage. In arranged marriages, the families of both spouses take a leading role in choosing the marriage partner but the choice whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the young people. In forced marriage, one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage or consent is extracted under duress. Duress includes both physical and emotional pressure. Forced marriage is illegal and there are clear Government guidelines on what to do if this is suspected.

Signs and Symptoms of possible child sexual exploitation (NSPCC guidance)

The following list of indicators is not exhaustive or definitive but it does highlight common signs which can assist professionals in identifying children or young people who may be victims of sexual exploitation.

Signs include:

- underage sexual activity
- inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour
- sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex
- repeat sexually transmitted infections
- in girls, repeat pregnancy, abortions, miscarriage
- receiving unexplained gifts or gifts from unknown sources
- having multiple mobile phones and worrying about losing contact via mobile
- having unaffordable new things (clothes, mobile) or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs)
- changes in the way they dress
- going to hotels or other unusual locations to meet friends
- seen at known places of concern
- moving around the country, appearing in new towns or cities, not knowing where they are
- getting in/out of different cars driven by unknown adults
- having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- contact with known perpetrators
- involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations
- hanging out with groups of older people, or anti-social groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
- recruiting other young people to exploitative situations

- truancy, exclusion, disengagement with school, opting out of education altogether
- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual)
- mood swings, volatile behaviour, emotional distress
- self-harming, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, overdosing, eating disorders
- drug or alcohol misuse
- getting involved in crime
- police involvement, police records
- involved in gangs, gang fights, gang membership
- injuries from physical assault, physical restraint, sexual assault.

These signs have been drawn from a range of research (Barnardo's, 2011; CEOP, 2011; Berelowitz et al, 2012) and from our experience working with sexually exploited children and young people through the NSPCC's Protect and Respect service. It is not the case that a set number of signs mean definitively that a child or young person is a victim of sexual exploitation. The more signs, however, the greater the risk of sexual exploitation.

The Prevent Agenda

Serendipity understands its responsibilities in relation to the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, known as the Prevent duty.

We will

- Assess risk of pupils being radicalised and drawn into terrorism
- Know what to do to support those assessed as being at risk by referring any concerns to Somerset Direct or for immediate response call the Anti Terror hotline on 0800 789321
- Work in partnership with other agencies
- Engage with parents/the family as they are in a key position to spot signs of radicalisation. Assist and advise families who raise concerns and signpost to support. Discuss any concerns with parents unless this is thought to put the child at risk.
- Include Prevent in staff training to raise awareness
- Supervise access to IT to ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet onsite
- Publicise the Educate against hate website to staff and parents <http://educateagainsthate.com/>

Safeguarding learners

Learners will be advised about procedures in relation to safeguarding as part of their induction process. Learners will be advised about health and safety procedures to ensure that they know how to stay safe whilst participating in sessions with Serendipity. Learners will be advised about keeping themselves safe online.

Our learners access a broad and balanced programme that promotes their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development, and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

We provide opportunities for learners to develop skills, concepts, attitudes and knowledge that promote their safety and well-being. We work with learners to specifically include the following:

- Developing learner self-esteem and communication skills
- Developing strategies for self-protection including online safety
- Developing a sense of the boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in adults and within peer relationships (positive relationships and consent)

Safeguarding staff

Serendipity will ensure that staff are trained to understand their responsibilities regarding the welfare and protection of all learners.

All staff will be trained appropriately with regards to safeguarding and renew this training at least every three years.

All new staff will be made aware of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. This will be done through:

- Facilitator Training Course for new facilitators
- Induction procedure for all staff
- Centre Handbook
- Specific training events.

Visitors

- Scheduled visitors in a professional role (eg fire officer) are asked to provide evidence of their role and employment details (usually an identity badge) upon arrival at a/the setting. If the visit is unscheduled and the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will contact the relevant organisation to verify the individual's identity, if necessary. Records of visits will be kept in visitor book.

Safeguarding Training and Continuing Professional Development

Induction

The welfare of all our learners is of paramount importance. All staff are informed of our safeguarding policy and procedures including online safety, at induction.

Our induction for staff also includes:

- Plan of support for individuals appropriate to the role for which they have been hired
- Confirmation of the conduct expected of staff within the organisation – our Staff Behaviour Policy
- Opportunities for a new member of staff to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities
- Confirmation of the line management/mentor process whereby any general concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability will be addressed.

Safeguarding training

Training is provided for all staff and is updated every 3 years as a minimum to ensure staff understand their role in safeguarding.

In addition, all staff members receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins, staff meetings) as necessary and at least annually. All staff also receive training in online safety and this is updated as necessary.

Advanced training

The DSL has additional multi agency training which is updated every two years as a minimum. The DSL also attend multi-agency courses relevant to the organisation's needs. Their knowledge and skills are refreshed at least annually e.g., via e-bulletins or safeguarding networking events with other D/DSLs.

Safer Recruitment

At least one person on any appointment panel has undertaken Safer Recruitment Training. This training is updated every five years as a minimum.

Preventing Radicalisation

All staff undertake Prevent awareness training.

Staff support

Due to the demanding, often distressing nature of child protection work, we support staff by providing an opportunity to talk through the challenges of this aspect of their role with a senior leader and to seek further support as appropriate.

Governance

As well as the organisation's safeguarding induction programme, all staff are expected to have completed safeguarding training within 3 months of their appointment.

Training will be updated at least every three years using online e-learning and face to face courses.

Supervision is an on-going requirement for facilitators and provides an opportunity for support and guidance on safeguarding matters.

Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

Serendipity is committed to positive academic, social and emotional outcomes for our learners underpinned by a strong safeguarding ethos. We are equally committed to the protection and welfare of our staff, who are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professional behaviour. The Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers sets out staff behaviours that should be avoided, as well as those that constitute safe practice, and supports our commitment to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The Code of Conduct expressly prohibits sexual relations between staff and learners, no matter what the age of the learner. Any breach of this will be treated as gross misconduct and reported to the Disclosure and Barring Service. In the context of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, sexual relationships between a learner and any facilitator/director/staff member who has the responsibility of care for a learner attending sessions at which they work are illegal if the student is under 18 years of age. Any such relationship between a student who is under 18 and any member of staff who provides supervision, care, teaching, learning support or instruction to learners or is otherwise in sole charge of learners will constitute gross misconduct by that member of staff which can result in dismissal. This may also be the case if a member of staff fails to disclose a relationship which has started either prior to their employment with Serendipity or prior to the learner's enrolment.

Where a member of staff ceases to work for Serendipity and there are grounds for believing they may be unsuitable to work with children or may have committed misconduct, such cases will be reported to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Safer Recruitment

Serendipity has a separate Safer Recruitment Policy which includes Serendipity will ensure that all those wishing to work as facilitators or volunteers at centres or for those who have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults. undergo an Enhanced DBS check before their appointment is confirmed. All job offers are made subject to satisfactory DBS checks, references and review of employment history.

Serendipity also:

- Requires documentary evidence of academic/vocational qualifications and the person's right to work in the UK
- Reviews any gaps in employment history
- Takes up references for all newly appointed staff.
- All staff are subject to safer recruitment processes and checks and we follow the guidance set out in Part 3 of KCSiE.
- At Serendipity, we scrutinise all applications for paid or voluntary posts. We undertake interviews and make appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). We maintain a single central record (SCR) of the essential checks as set out in KCSiE, that have been carried out and certificates obtained. The SCR applies to all staff and volunteers who work at the organisation.
- See also Training.

Staff Responsibility for Safeguarding

Responsibilities include:

- Promoting positive safeguarding procedures and practice
- Raising awareness of safeguarding issues among their staff and learners
- Providing advice and support to other staff on issues relating to safeguarding and child and vulnerable adult protection
- Keep all staff and volunteers informed of good practice and developments
- Ensuring that parents of children, young people and vulnerable adults within the centre can view the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Ensuring that all staff receive basic training in child and vulnerable adult protection and are aware of child and vulnerable adult protection procedures.
- Maintaining a proper record of any child protection referral, complaint or concern (even where that concern does not lead to a referral)
- Maintaining robust records of safeguarding incidents
- Ensuring that they have a robust system for monitoring vulnerable students
- Overseeing the referral of cases of suspected abuse on to Social Services and the Police
- Liaising with the Local Authority, SSCP and other appropriate agencies.
- report any child or vulnerable adult concerns as and when they arise.
- know how to make an appropriate referral
- be available to provide advice and support to other staff on concerns relating to child and vulnerable adult protection
- be available to listen to the concerns of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- make referrals, attend case conferences and review meetings as appropriate.
- undertake training in child and vulnerable adult protection issues
- ensure that all staff are aware of the local Safeguarding for children and adults and how to report concerns.

Suspicious of abuse

If staff are suspicious that a learner is suffering abuse or at risk of significant harm, or staff have concern for the wellbeing of a learner but there is no disclosure by that learner, they should make their concerns known as soon as possible to the DSL. If staff are uncertain about whether the information divulged constitutes abuse and require clarification, they should discuss the case with the DSL.

The DSL will listen carefully to the details of the information as described by the member of staff, may ask questions and will make detailed notes of the conversation. They will assess whether the report constitutes a case for referral

and may seek to discuss concerns with a Social Worker before referring the case to a Social Worker or the Police. The DSL will be the contact for any further liaison between these external agencies.

Where there is a clear case for concern about a learner's well-being, but the concern does not warrant a referral to outside agencies, the DSL will work with the facilitators and other staff to help identify strategies for supporting the learner

Early help

At Serendipity Learning Ltd all our staff can identify children who may benefit from early help as a problem emerges and discuss this with the DSL.

The DSL uses:

- The Early Help Assessment as appropriate as part of a holistic assessment of a child's needs.
- Effective Support for Children and Families on the SSCP website about suitable action to take when a child has been identified as making inadequate progress or having an unmet need.
- The criteria for consideration of action under Section 42 (1) and (2) of the Care Act (2014) (adult learners)

Identifying the signs

All staff know how to recognise and are alert to the signs of neglect and abuse. Definitions of abuse set out in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - Advice for practitioners' (2015) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (new from Sept 2021) along with notes from Safeguarding training, are important reference documents for all staff. Every member of staff is provided with a copy of Part 1 of KCSiE which they are required to read, and which also includes supporting guidance about several specific safeguarding issues. Staff who work directly with children are also required to read Annex A of KCSiE (Sept 2020).

Responding to concerns/disclosures of abuse

Serendipity Learning follows the South West Child Protection Procedures on SSCP website.

Staff adhere to the organisation's safeguarding training requirements when concerned about abuse or when responding to a disclosure of abuse.

Staff understand that they must **NOT**:

- take photographs of any injuries.
- postpone or delay the opportunity for the learner to talk.
- take notes while the learner is speaking or ask the learner to write an account.
- try to investigate the allegation.
- promise confidentiality e.g., say they will keep 'the secret'.
- approach or inform the alleged abuser.
- re-question the learner or young person or vulnerable adult or request more details
- ask leading questions.

All staff record any concern about or disclosure by a learner of abuse or neglect and report this to the DSL using the standard form. It is the responsibility of each adult in the setting/s to ensure that the DSL receives the record of concern without delay. In the absence of the DSL, staff members know to speak directly to Somerset Direct. In some circumstances, the DSL or member of staff seeks advice by ringing Somerset Direct for advice.

The DSL is always available during setting hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns.

The voice of the learner is central to our safeguarding practice and learners are encouraged to express and have their views given due weight in all matters affecting them.

Missing children and children missing education

Staff report immediately to the DSL, if they know of any child who may be:

- Missing – whereabouts unknown or
- Missing education – (compulsory school age (5-16) with no registered education place and not electively home educated)

The designated facilitator for LAC and care leavers discusses any unauthorised/unexplained absence of Looked After Children with relevant contacts when required.

The DSL shares any unauthorised/unexplained absence of children who have an allocated social worker within 24 hours.

Children who do not attend education regularly can be at increased risk of abuse and neglect. Where there is unauthorised/unexplained absence, and:

- after reasonable attempts have been made to contact the family without success, the DSL follows the SSCP procedure and consults/refers to Somerset Direct as appropriate.
- there are no known welfare concerns about a child, we follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and report concerns to the child's main registered school base/Education Welfare Service.

Learners with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Learners with additional needs face an increased risk of abuse and neglect. Staff take extra care to interpret correctly apparent signs of abuse or neglect. We never assume that behaviour, mood or injury relates to the learner's additional needs without further exploration. Staff understand that additional challenges can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in learners with SEND, including communication barriers. Staff recognise that learners with SEND are also at a higher risk of peer group isolation and can be disproportionately affected by bullying. To address those additional challenges, pastoral support is provided as appropriate for learners with SEND and they are also encouraged to discuss their concerns. The DSL works with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo)/commissioner to identify learners with additional communication needs and whenever possible, these learners are given the chance to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate communication skills.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. Staff will inform the DSL immediately if they suspect a girl is at risk of FGM. We will report to the police any 'known' cases of FGM to the police as required by law.

Peer on Peer abuse

All learners have a right to attend education provision and learn in a safe environment. All peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. Staff recognise that while both boys and girls can abuse their peers, it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys instigators of such abuse. Peer on peer abuse is not tolerated, passed off as "banter" or seen as "part of growing up". It is likely to include, but not limited to:

- bullying (including cyber bullying)
- gender based violence/sexual assaults
- sexting
- 'upskirting' or any picture taken under a person's clothing without them knowing to obtain sexual gratification or cause humiliation or distress.
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Consequently, peer on peer abuse is dealt with as a safeguarding issue, recorded as such and not managed through the systems set out in the organisation's behaviour policy.

Any learner who may have been victimised and/or displayed such harmful behaviours, along with any other learner affected by peer on peer abuse, will be supported through the organisation's pastoral system and the support will be regularly reviewed.

We minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse by providing:

- a relevant curriculum, that helps learners to develop their understanding of acceptable behaviours, healthy relationships and keeping themselves safe. The curriculum is updated to reflect changes in legislation.
- established/publicised systems for learners to raise concerns with staff, knowing they will be listened to, supported and valued, and that the issues they raise will be taken seriously.

The DSL liaises with other professionals to develop robust risk assessments and appropriate specialist targeted work for learners who are identified as posing a potential risk to other children. For learners under 18 years, this is done using a Contextual Safeguarding approach to ensure assessments consider risks posed by any wider environmental factors present in a child's life.

Domestic abuse

Staff understand that domestic violence and abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional harm. When police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the DSL ensures the organisation

receives up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and will ensure key staff provide emotional and practical support to the child according to their needs.

Mental health

All staff are aware that mental health problems can be an indicator that a learner has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff understand that:

- abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences can have a lasting impact on learners' mental health, behaviour and education throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood.
- they have a duty to observe learners day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

If staff have a mental health concern about a learner that is also a safeguarding concern, they will report this concern using the agreed reporting mechanisms.

Preventing radicalisation

- Protecting learners from the risk of radicalisation is part of organisation's wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting learners from other forms of harm and abuse.
- Staff use their judgement in identifying learners who might be at risk of radicalisation and speak to the DSL if they are concerned about a learner. The DSL will always act proportionately, and this may include making a referral to the Channel programme or to Somerset Direct.
- Serious violence
- We are committed to success in learning for all our learners as one of the most powerful indicators in the prevention of youth crime.
- Our curriculum includes teaching conflict resolution skills and understanding risky situations to help our learners develop the social and emotional skills they need to thrive.
- Staff are trained to recognise both the early warning signs that learners may be at risk of getting involved in gangs as well as indicators that a learner is involved in serious violent crime. They are also aware of the associated risks and know the measures put in place to minimise such risks.

Serious violence

We are committed to success in learning for all our learners as one of the most powerful indicators in the prevention of youth crime. Our curriculum includes teaching conflict resolution skills and understanding risky situations to help our learners develop the social and emotional skills they need to thrive. Staff are trained to recognise both the early warning signs that learners may be at risk of getting involved in gangs as well as indicators that a learner is involved in serious violent crime. They are also aware of the associated risks and know the measures put in place to minimise such risks.

Confidentiality

Staff cannot make promises of confidentiality where abuse is disclosed. Learners must be made aware at the outset of their course of the limitations on confidentiality. Staff will inform learners of their obligation under the safeguarding and child and vulnerable adult protection procedures to report allegations or suspicions of abuse to others.

As a general principle all staff accept that safeguarding the learner always outweighs any right of confidentiality or data protection.

Off site visits

We carry out a risk assessment prior to any off-site visit and designate the specific roles and responsibilities of each adult, whether employed or volunteers.

Where there are safeguarding concerns or allegations that happen offsite, staff will follow the procedures described above and in the South West Child Protection Procedures.

Exceptional operating circumstances

If the organisation is required to change the way we offer our provision to children and vulnerable adults due to unforeseen circumstances e.g., during a pandemic lockdown, staff responsibilities to remain alert to the signs and risks of abuse to children and vulnerable adults will continue to apply. In such circumstances:

The DSL will:

- work closely with social care and partner agencies to support learners in these circumstances and to identify children and vulnerable adults who may be at risk for the first time and/or benefit from additional support
- use specific local and national guidance about safeguarding in such circumstances to inform practice and will ensure staff, learners, and families are provided with written:
 - amended DSL arrangements as required (names, location and contact details)
 - temporary changes to procedures for working with learners e.g., online or face-to face offsite.
 - amended procedures for reporting concerns
 - safeguarding training arrangements
 - timescales for such changes so that all learners, families and staff understand when such arrangements will end, and arrangements revert to those in place prior to the events
 - leading to the need for the temporary changes.

We will ensure the curriculum we offer during such circumstances, continues to promote learners' spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development, and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life, as they may have changed as a result of the national/ international events as they evolve.

Record keeping and information sharing

- Staff should make accurate notes at the time of any allegation or suspicion. These should not be revisited, revised or put into neat copy for others. Original rough notes carry more 'weight' if a case comes to court.
- Safeguarding concerns will be recorded and stored securely. Records will include actions taken and outcomes.
- Handwritten notes should be kept secure and stored by Centres for 10 years.

Dealing with malicious or unfounded allegations

- Staff are duty bound to take a learner's concerns seriously and comply with set procedures.

Serendipity:

- liaises with partner organisations (schools, Somerset Council, parents where private referrals have been made, adult learners/carers) to ensure any safeguarding records for learners are shared on transition:
 - by the setting/organisation previously attended by the learner.
 - by the DSL when the learner leaves our organisation.

For any learner dual-registered with another school/setting/organisation, the DSL liaises regularly with the DSL at that base to ensure information is shared in the best interests of the learner. This includes contextual safeguarding information about relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online to enable assessment and intervention to happen within these extra-familial contexts.

- keeps clear written records of all learner safeguarding and any child protection concerns using a Safeguarding Record of Concern form, including actions taken and outcomes as appropriate.
- ensures all learner safeguarding and child protection records are kept securely in a locked location.
- ensures the records incorporate the wishes and views of the learner.

The DSL acts in accordance with Information Sharing – Department for Education (DfE) (2018).

Information about learners at risk of harm is shared with members of staff in keeping with the seven golden rules to sharing information in the DfE guidance.

We are committed to work in partnership with parents and carers of children and of vulnerable adults (as appropriate). In most situations, we will discuss initial concerns with them. However, the D/DSL will not share information where there are concerns that if so doing would:

- place a learner at increased risk of significant harm
- place any adult at increased risk of serious harm
- prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime
- lead to unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm to a child, or serious harm to an adult.

When we become aware that a child is being privately fostered, we remind the carer/parent of their legal duty to notify Somerset Direct. We follow this up by contacting Somerset Direct directly.

Escalation of concerns

Effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships between colleagues and between agencies.

Staff must be confident and able to professionally disagree and challenge decision-making as an entirely legitimate activity; a part of our professional responsibility to promote the best safeguarding practice. Staff are encouraged to

press for re-consideration if they believe a decision to act/not act in response to a concern raised about a learner is wrong. In such cases the SSCP Resolving Professional Differences is used if necessary.

If we are on the receiving end of a professional challenge, we see this as an opportunity to reflect on our decision making.

Whistleblowing

All staff can raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the organisation's safeguarding regime. Our whistleblowing procedures, which are reflected in staff training and our Code of Conduct, are in place for such concerns to be raised with Fliss Smith, Director and DSL. If a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with Fliss Smith or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are open to them:

- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline

Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 from 08:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday, or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

- Somerset Direct 0300 123 2224

Managing allegations against adults

Serendipity procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns apply to all staff, whether facilitating, assessing, verifying, administrative, management or support, as well as to volunteers, contractors and agency workers. The word 'staff' is used for ease of description.

Because of the nature of equine assisted learning and the facilitator's contact with children and young people, staff may have allegations of child or vulnerable adult abuse made against them. The allegation may relate to a staff member who has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child, young person or vulnerable adult
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or vulnerable adult
- Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates that they may pose a risk of harm to children.

Serendipity recognises that an allegation of child or vulnerable adult abuse made against a member of staff may be made for a variety of reasons and that the allegation may or may not be true. It is imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind and that investigation is thorough and not subject to delay. This can be difficult as many facilitators work from their own home. The Children Act 2004 states that the welfare of the child is the paramount concern. It is also recognised that hasty or ill-informed decisions in connection with a member of staff can irreparably damage an individual's reputation, confidence and career. Therefore, those dealing with such allegations within the organisation will do so with sensitivity and will act in a careful, measured way.

Serendipity follows the procedure set out by the South West Child Protection Procedures.

Where anyone in the organisation has a concern about the behaviour of an adult who works or volunteers at the setting, including supply staff, they must immediately consult the DSL.

Any concern or allegation against the DSL will be reported to

- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline -0800 028 0285 from 08:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday, or email help@nspcc.org.uk. Or
- Somerset Direct on 0300 123 2224 without informing the DSL.

All staff must remember that the welfare of a learner is paramount and must not delay raising concerns by fear that any such reporting could jeopardise their colleague's career.

Any allegation of abuse will be dealt with in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the learner and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

All members of staff and volunteers have read and signed to confirm they have understood the organisation's Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers (for safer working practice).

Receiving an allegation by a child, young person or vulnerable adult

A member of staff who receives an allegation about another member of staff from a child, young person or vulnerable adult should follow the guidelines about care and support of the discloser but adopt the following procedure for reporting:

- The allegation should be reported immediately to the DSL; unless the DSL is the person against whom the allegation is made, in which case the report should be made to:

- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline -0800 028 0285 from 08:00 to 20:00, Monday to Friday, or email help@nspcc.org.uk. Or
- Somerset Direct on 0300 123 2224
- The staff member who received the allegation should not discuss the allegation or referral with any other staff member unless requested to as part of an investigation.
- The DSL will, within one working day of the allegation being made, inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and seek advice with regards to investigation and recommended action.

If, as a result of an investigation Serendipity removes a staff member or volunteer from their post (or would have done had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children, then a referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Associated Policies

The Safeguarding Policy needs to be read in conjunction with other policies and procedures including:

- Confidentiality Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Risk Assessments
- Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers
- Complaints procedure
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Approach to Learning Policy
- Admissions and Referral Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Contacts

If you are concerned that a child or adult may be at risk of or may be suffering significant harm you must contact Somerset Direct immediately to discuss the best way to meet those needs.

Somerset Direct 0300 123 2224

childrens@somerset.gov.uk

adults@somerset.gov.uk

In an emergency always contact the police by dialling 999

If it is not an emergency and you want to talk with the police, dial 101

Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership <https://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/>

Documents and Procedures for Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership
<https://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/working-with-children/>

Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board <https://ssab.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/>

Documents and Procedures for Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board
<https://ssab.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/information/>

We are committed to reviewing our policy and practice at least once a year.

Created	14/03/2022	Next Review By	3/11/2024
Last Review	3/11/2023	Signed	Fliss Smith