

Children's Safeguarding and Protection Policy

Last Reviewed March 2022

Effective until March 2023

Rural Arts believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice, which protects them.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, careers and their agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare

The purpose of the policy is:

- To provide protection for the children and young people, who receive services, including the children of adult members or users
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Rural Arts.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training



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Please see the following pages for our safeguarding policy for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Safeguarding Guidelines: Introduction

Rural Arts has a duty to ensure that **everyone** involved in its work is able to feel that they work in an **open and safe environment** where they are treated with respect and dignity and that children are protected from harm. Rural Arts takes pride in its work with children and young people.

The aim of these 'Safeguarding Guidelines' are to ensure that all staff, employees, volunteers and participants at Rural Arts are **confident** about their own good practice when working with children, young people and vulnerable adults and are aware of how to distinguish good practice in their colleagues' behaviour.

Definitions for the purposes of these Guidelines

Children / child: A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday

Young person: A young person is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday (this term takes account for teenagers who may not wish to be referred to as a 'child')

Vulnerable adult: Anyone who requires special consideration due to a disability.

Adult: At 18 a child legally becomes an adult. Note that in some projects 25 is the cut off age when organisations consider young people to have become adults. However this is not a legal definition.

Good Practice: Behaving in an appropriate manner towards all of the above.

Position of Trust: A **position of trust** is any **position** (paid or voluntary) that requires its holder to enjoy the **trust** of those around them. People in a position of trust need to carefully consider their relationships with children or vulnerable adults. It is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to have any sexual activity with a person under the age of 18 if the older person holds a position of trust as such sexual activity is an abuse of the position of trust.

What and whom these guidelines cover

This policy applies to ALL children and young people, regardless as to why they are involved in the work of Rural Arts, including:

- Audience members
- Customers
- Club or project Participants
- Online (Website/ E comms)
- Create Tour participants
- Young promoters
- Arts Award participants
- Café staff and volunteers
- Participants in any other outreach/education projects in the future

Good Practice Guidelines

ALL staff and volunteers are expected to work within these guidelines. Failure to do so could result in allegations of poor practice, which would then be dealt with as a misconduct issue.

- Treating all children and young people with **respect** and dignity
- Always working in an **open environment** (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- Putting the **welfare** of all children and young people first
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual **trust**
- Being an excellent **role model**
- Giving enthusiastic and **constructive feedback** rather than negative criticism
- Being aware of any **special needs** of any child or young person whether this is due to cultural, religious, physical, emotional or other needs, prior to working with them
- Ensuring that, if any form of **physical contact is required** due to the nature of the work (e.g. putting on aprons, practical drama session), it should be provided openly and the young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained

- Ensuring that physical contact **at any other time** is **avoided**

Practice never to be sanctioned (Poor Practice)

- **Never** engage in rough or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- **Never** share a room or a dressing room with a child
- **Never** allow or engage in any form of inappropriate **touching**
- **Never** make **sexually suggestive** comments to a child, even in fun
- **Never** reduce a child to **tears** as a form of control
- **Never** allow **allegations** made by a child to go unrecorded or not acted upon
- **Never** do things of a **personal nature** for children that they can do for themselves
- **Never** spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others

Any suspicion that a child has been abused, or is at risk of being abused, by either a **member of staff** or a volunteer should be reported **immediately** to the Director, Max May *only*, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

Internal & External Procedures

The following page details the procedures, which Rural Arts will follow in relation to the Child Protection Policy.

Action if there are concerns

1. Concerns about Good Practice (i.e. if someone is *not* following the Good Practice Guidelines):

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about a lack of Good Practice, the allegation will be reported to the Director, Max May

2. Concerns about suspected abuse (i.e. if any member of staff or adult involved in Rural Arts' work is taking part in Poor Practice):

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused, or is at risk of being abused, by either a member of staff or adult should be reported to the Director, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk



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Reporting Allegations

If an allegation is made, or concerns are raised, they should be brought to the immediate attention of the Director, whose contact details are below.

Max May, CEO, Rural Arts, 01845 526536

Please note that no staff working for Rural Arts are trained to deal with situations of abuse, or have the power to decide if abuse has occurred.

Action if a Child Discloses Information

When a child or young person discloses (says) something to you that causes concern, it is important to clearly record this information. Any concerns about a child or young person should be recorded regardless of whether or not it will be ultimately passed on to the statutory authorities.

If a child or young person talks about possible abuse, the member of staff or volunteer **should:**

- Try to react calmly
- Remember that the child is likely to be frightened or anxious
- Reassure the child but do **not** promise confidentiality. They should explain that they will have to speak to someone else who can help
- Tell the child that they were right to tell and are not to blame
- Listen carefully and take what the child says seriously
- Recognize the inherent difficulties interpreting what is said by young children
- Try and use the same words and phrases as the child e.g. for body parts etc. rather than interpreting what they think the child means
- Ask no more questions than are necessary to ensure that they are clear enough about what has happened to pass the child's concerns on. The child may also be asked to recount their story to social services or the police
- Do not prevent a child from recalling events
- Make a full written record of what had been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible. Also make an accurate record of any questions that you ask along with the date and time the record was made
- Remember that young or disabled children may not be able to express themselves verbally. Communication differences may mean that it is hard for them to complain or be understood. Sometimes abuse of disabled children has gone unrecognized because behavioral clues were interpreted as part of their disability

The member of staff or volunteer **should not**:

- Panic
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets
- Allow their shock or distaste to show
- Speculate or make assumptions about what has happened
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Approach the alleged abuser

To help you remember use **The Four Rs**:

Receive: Listen to the child / take it seriously / keep an open mind

Reassure: “You’ve done the right thing” / be honest about outcomes/ Never promise confidentiality

React: Stay calm, stay professional / Ask open questions/ don’t criticize / Explain Next Steps / Inform someone

Record: Make brief notes immediately and keep them / Record words used by the child / Record impartiality

Taking pictures or films

Unless written permission has been granted by the parent / career of children / young people / vulnerable adult, you are **not allowed to take pictures or film**. Rural Arts will need to be satisfied that you have all the relevant documentation **before** you can take pictures or film.



Safeguarding Guidelines Declaration

All staff and / or volunteers are required to sign and return the following declaration. The completed form will be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

I, (*print full name*), have read and understood Rural Arts North Yorkshire Safeguarding Guidelines.

I agree to work in line with the Safeguarding Guidelines.

I understand that I may be required to undertake an Enhanced DBS check should my role require it.

I understand that Rural Arts will fully support and protect anyone, who, in good faith, reports their concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child or vulnerable adult.

Signed:
Date:.....