



## **Policy and Procedure for Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk**

52 Lives has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in its organisation from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. 52 Lives will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved the organization through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by 52 Lives. A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Acts 1989 and 2004).

Whilst individuals from 52 Lives mainly have direct contact with children through the School of Kindness work, there will be times where adults at risk are involved in the 52 Lives project. Therefore this policy also applies to adults at risk, defined as any person aged over 18 'Who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is or may be unable to take care of or is unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'

The policy applies to all staff and to those whose work with 52 Lives brings them into contact with children or adults at risk e.g.

- contractors
- volunteers
- any other person working with 52 Lives or who a member of the public might reasonably assume was a 52 Lives volunteer.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- adopt the highest possible standards,
- take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of the individuals with whom we come into contact in relation to our work and
- provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk

Child abuse, or abuse of an adult at risk, can occur within many situations including the home, school and a youth club. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people/adults at risk in order to harm them. All suspicious cases of abuse should be reported following the procedure in this document.

When a child gets involved with 52 Lives having been subjected to child abuse outside the 52 Lives environment, the 52 Lives activities can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances 52 Lives will work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

52 Lives strives to offer good practice such as:

- Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication.
- Treating all young people/adults at risk equally with respect and dignity.

- Always putting the welfare of each young person/adult at risk first.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children/adults at risk to share in decision making.
- Making activities fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly. If it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child/adult at risk is constantly moving, the individual should always be consulted and their agreement gained. The views of parents/carers/guardians should always be carefully considered.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance.
- Involving parents/carers/guardians wherever possible
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people/adults at risk.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and adults at risk

Spending time alone with someone under this policy should be avoided where possible however if unavoidable, it should be with the documented/witnessed consent of the parent/carer or guardian. Any incidents which occur i.e. an accident, should be documented and shared with the Designated Safeguarding Officer

***The following should never take place or be allowed:***

- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a room with a child/adult at risk.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child/adult at risk, even in fun.
- Reduce a child/adult at risk to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a child/adult at risk to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or adults at risk that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children/adults at risk to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

There is evidence that some people have used activities/ events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people and adults at risk in vulnerable positions. All 52 Lives officials should be vigilant, and any concerns should to be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Anyone who works for 52 Lives (including volunteers) will go through relevant checks (e.g. Disclosure and Barring) with references sought and must adhere to all policies relating to the Safeguarding of Children and Adults at risk. Training can be provided.

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for 52 Lives to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. 52 Lives will assure all staff and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child or an adult at risk either currently or historically.

**Procedure**

- Concerns may be raised about 52 Lives staff/volunteers or someone outside of 52 Lives. It may relate to physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse including bullying.

- Any concerns should be raised initially with the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will then take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the person in question and any other who may be at risk.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer will refer the allegation to the local Safeguarding team which may involve the police or go directly to the police if out-of-hours. In the instance of bullying within schools as part of the School of Kindness work, the Designated Safeguarding Officer (or a delegated officer) may refer to the school if it does not constitute abuse.
- The parents or carers of the child/adult at risk will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Safeguarding team/police.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer should also notify the Chairperson and the school (on advice from the local Safeguarding Team, and if as part of the School of Kindness work).
- If the Designated Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer or Chair of Trustees of 52 Lives.
- If there is a potential conflict of interest between the Designated Safeguarding Officer and the person who is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer or Chair or Trustees of 52 Lives.

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned which includes:

- the person making the allegation and the person who is alleged to have been abused (if they are not the same person)
- the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- social services/police
- 52 Lives Designated Safeguarding Officer
- the alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only and 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). All allegations, follow up activity and relevant supporting information should be documented. The person who is alleged to have been abused should not be pushed for information however if they are able to share details, examples of helpful information to record are;

- The name, age, date of birth, home address and telephone number of the person who is alleged to have been abused.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child/adult at risk account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
- If the child/adult at risk was not the person who reported the incident, have they been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

If the alleged abuser is still linked with 52 Lives, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will make an immediate decision about suspension with the support of the trustees. If the alleged abuser is the Designated Safeguarding Officer, delegation rests with the CEO and trustees.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a colleague, you can contact local safeguarding teams or the police direct, or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111.

### **Online safety**

52 Lives operates through sharing people's stories online and we will always check the individual is happy with the story before it's published. Some of our Lives may be sensitive i.e. in cases of abuse and we will always give the option of anonymising, using stock pictures where requested. We will remove any image or story on request of the person the story is about/their parent/carer or guardian. It is our policy to seek consent from all individuals working with 52 Lives, including children/young people and adults at risk where appropriate.

On occasion, someone may offer a service as part of a request for support i.e. a decorator. In some rare circumstances, we may share contact details of the person making the offer with the individual we're helping/their parent/guardian agrees. It is then the responsibility of both parties to take sufficient safety precautions and we would always recommend checks are completed prior to any personal details being shared. We do not guarantee the service is offered by a 'professional' and would expect the individual receiving the help to satisfy themselves in regards to any insurance or safety concerns.

This policy will next be reviewed on the 4 July 2020