

Introduction

Forward Arts Foundation does not deliver any work in person in schools or with young and vulnerable people. We enable schools by providing teaching resources and materials and by training teachers and writers who work in schools. We also spur and inspire poetry activity in libraries and community spaces. We connect poets with teachers and librarians to deliver activity jointly.

As all our engagement is via experienced facilitators and institutions, and online, and direct engagement with beneficiaries is governed by their child protection policies. However, we recognise our own third-party responsibility through designing resources and online events and training teachers and poets. We are guided by our own safeguarding policy in this respect. Forward's Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Co Executive Directors, have been trained by the NSPCC in safeguarding good practice.

Designated Safeguarding Leads: Lucy Macnab, lucy@forwardartsfoundation.org, 07779 330086; Monica Parle, monica@forwardartsfoundation.org

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SAFEGUARDING POLICY

This Safeguarding Policy (the "Policy") lays out the commitment of Forward Arts Foundation (the "Company") to safeguarding and informs associates, contracted employees, Directors and any other personnel associated with the Company (the "Personnel") of their rights and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. It applies in all instances where Personnel are engaged in work related to the Company and works in sympathy with the Company's other policies.

The policy is designed to protect people at risk from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with the Company, particularly children, at-risk adults and beneficiaries of assistance. This includes harm arising from:

- the conduct of Personnel associated with the Company and
- the design and implementation of the Company's services, programmes and activities.

A copy of the Policy is made available to all personnel within the Company. A copy of the Policy will also be made available to individuals on request and any questions about the Policy may be directed to the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

The Policy is set for annual review by the Trustees.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Company is committed to protecting everyone we come into contact with through our activities from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation, irrespective of sexual orientation, age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race (including colour, ethnic or national origins and nationality) or religion or belief (the “Protected Characteristics”).

The Company commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its activities, where relevant, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

The Company commits to working in strong partnership with all service partners with regard to safeguarding, including (but not limited to) consulting to make more robust inter-agency best practice and harmonising safeguarding prevention, reporting and response protocols with external statutory and organisational policies and practices whereby doing so serves to:

- improve the efficacy of the Policy and
- align the Policy with provisions to increase safeguarding surveillance generally and with local child and adult safeguarding procedures.

IDENTIFYING A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

Safeguarding means:

- taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm from occurring, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse, neglect and harassment;
- protecting people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and
- responding appropriately when harm does occur.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across the Company, requiring proactively identifying, preventing and guarding against all risks of harm; having mature, accountable and transparent systems for response; reporting and learning when risks materialise. Those systems must be survivor-centred and designed to protect those accused until proven guilty, putting beneficiaries and affected persons at the centre.

Internal systems of safeguarding prevention and reporting, as outlined below, require an understanding of how to identify a concern. The following glossary of terms offers the guidance required to identify the individuals and issues about which concerns can be raised:

- A *beneficiary of assistance* is someone who directly or indirectly receives goods or services from the Company. Misuse of power also applies to the wider community the Company serves, and also can include exploitation by giving the perception of being in a position of power.
- A *child* is a person below the age of 18.
- *Harm* refers to the psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual’s rights.

- *Psychological harm* refers to emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation.
- *Neglect* refers to the state of being uncared for.
- *Sexual abuse* means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.
- *Exploitation* means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, including (but not limited to) profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the psychological, sexual or otherwise physical abuse of another. This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.
- A *survivor* is a living person who has been abused or exploited.
- And *at-risk adult* - sometimes called a vulnerable adult - is a person who is or may be in need of care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or otherwise unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

PREVENTION

The Company will:

- ensure all Personnel have access to, are familiar with and know their responsibilities in relation to the Policy;
- design and undertake all of its activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with the Company, including how information about individuals is gathered and communicated;
- use trigger warnings for any published content that may cause distress;
- follow stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying Personnel, including references, previous relevant experience and, where relevant, criminal background checks;
- ensure Personnel receive safeguarding training at a level commensurate with their role in the Company; and
- follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and in accordance with due process.

ONLINE SAFETY

All Personnel should be aware of the 4 Cs when designing online content/activity.

Conduct: children may be at risk because of their own behaviour, for example, by sharing too much information

Content: age-inappropriate or unreliable content can be available to children

Contact: children can be contacted by bullies or people who groom or seek to abuse them

Commercialism: young people can be unaware of hidden costs and advertising in apps, games and websites

We will

1. assess and manage safety aspects – including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for staff and children when using websites, social media including Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter or Snapchat, apps and video conferencing platforms including Zoom or Skype
2. be aware of how staff in our organisation and the children they work with use social media both inside and outside of our setting
3. ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines when using social media or video conferencing platforms (Further information and guidance available on the CPSU website – thecpsu.org.uk)
4. Provide training for the staff responsible for managing our organisation’s online presence
5. regularly review existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that online safeguarding issues are fully integrated

Managing our online presence

Our online presence through our website or social media platforms will adhere to the following guidelines:

1. all social media accounts will be password-protected, and at least 2 members of staff will have access to each account and password
2. the account will be monitored by at least two designated members of staff in order to provide transparency
3. the designated staff managing our online presence will seek advice from our designated safeguarding lead to advise on safeguarding requirements
4. designated staff will remove inappropriate posts by children or staff, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected (as well as the parents of any children involved)
5. we’ll make sure children are aware of who manages our social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about something that’s happened online
6. identifying details such as a child’s home address, school name or telephone number shouldn’t be posted on social media platforms
7. any posts or correspondence will be consistent with our aims and tone as an organisation
8. parents will be asked to give their approval for us to communicate with their children through social media, via video conferencing platforms or by any other means of communication
9. parents will need to give permission for photographs or videos of their child to be posted on social media
10. video conferencing sessions will be password protected in order to maintain children’s privacy and prevent exposure to inappropriate or harmful content by third parties

What we expect of our staff

1. staff should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it
2. staff should seek the advice of the designated safeguarding lead if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media
3. staff should communicate any messages they wish to send out to children to the designated staff responsible for the organisation’s online presence
4. staff should not communicate with children via personal accounts
5. staff should not ‘friend’ or ‘follow’ children from personal accounts on social media and maintain the same professional boundaries online as they would in person when using organisation accounts

6. staff should make sure any content posted on public personal accounts is accurate and appropriate, as children may 'follow' them on social media
7. rather than communicating with parents through personal social media accounts, staff should choose a more formal means of communication, such as face-to-face, in an email or in writing, or use an organisational account or website
8. staff should avoid communicating with children via email or organisational social media outside of normal office hours
9. emails or messages should maintain the organization's tone and be written in a professional manner, e.g. in the same way you would communicate with fellow professionals, avoiding kisses (X's) or using slang or inappropriate language
10. staff should not delete any messages or communications sent to or from organization accounts staff should undertake all online safety training offered and gain a basic knowledge of the platforms children use and how to report or remove inappropriate content online
11. any concerns reported through social media should be dealt with in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure
12. according to our reporting procedures at least one parent must be present during the delivery of any activities via video conferencing platforms at home
13. any delivery of activities to children via video conferencing platforms will be supported by an additional member of staff (even if they're not actively delivering) to ensure transparency
14. staff and children must not engage in 'sexting'⁴ or send pictures to anyone that are obscene

ENABLING REPORTS

The Company will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are available to all personnel and its contractual and community partners.

Personnel who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding are obliged to report it immediately to their line manager. If they do not feel comfortable reporting it to their line manager, for instance if they do not feel their line manager will take it seriously or their line manager is implicated in the concern, they are then obliged to report it to another colleague.

All safeguarding complaints or concerns should be directed to the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

To ensure clear avenues of reporting, the Company supports and is committed to facilitating the disclosure by personnel of any wrongdoing that is in the public interest, particularly if it is a legal offence. A whistleblower can raise any safeguarding concern at any time about an incident that has happened, is happening or they believe will happen in the near future, a right that is wholly protected by the law and which they are obligated to exercise.

RESPONSE

The Company will:

- follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure as well as all legal and statutory obligations;
- apply appropriate disciplinary measures to Personnel found in breach of policy; and
- offer support to survivors of harm caused by personnel and regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out, with decisions regarding support being led by the survivor.

The Company endeavours to ensure confidentiality is maintained when responding to safeguarding concerns, with information relating to any given concern and subsequent case management being shared on a strictly need-to-know basis.