

Safeguarding Policy

Good Practice Guide & Recruitment Procedure - abridged version

This document is the abridged version of the REInspired Safeguarding Policy. It is for prospective and current volunteers. A full policy can be seen in the REInspired office, on the website or requested by emailing: office@reinspired.org.uk.

The Trustees of REInspired recognise the importance of its work with children and young people and its responsibility to protect and safeguard their welfare and to provide a safe and caring environment. They also acknowledge that children and young people can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. The Trustees have therefore adopted the procedures & guidelines set out in this document. The document contains the following information:

Safeguarding Policy

- Procedure following allegations of abuse
- Definitions of abuse
- Recognising possible signs of abuse
- How to respond to a child wanting to talk about abuse

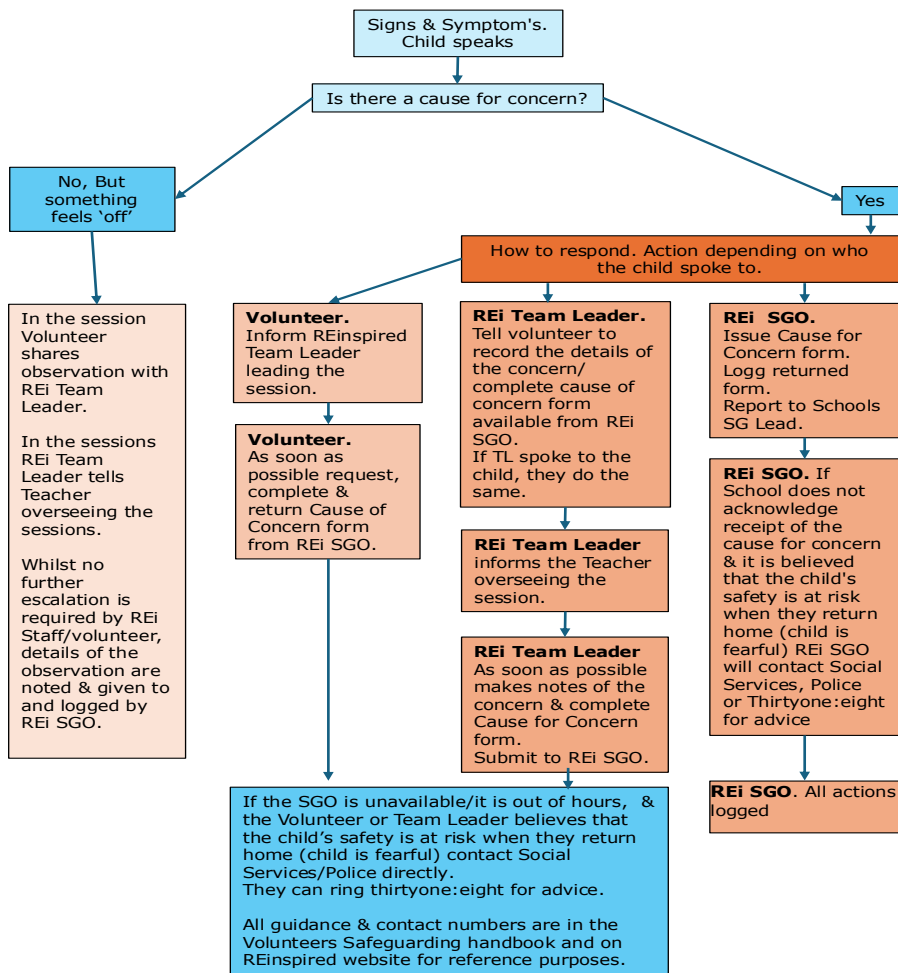
Good Practice & Safer Recruitment Procedures

- Recruitment procedures for all volunteers
- Role description for an REInspired volunteer
- Good practice in REInspired sessions
- Guidelines for discipline

The policy and attached good practice guidelines are based on a model published by Thirtyone:eight. The Trustees undertake to file a copy of the policy and practice guidelines with Thirtyone:eight and social services, and any amendments subsequently published. The Trustees agree not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations. The Trustees also undertake to follow the principles found within the Abuse of Trust guidance issued by the Home Office.

If you have any concerns for a child or in relation to any child protection matter then speak to: **Julia Jones**, Safeguarding officer & Project Director on 0118 966 3929 email julia.jones@reinspired.org.uk or **Safeguarding Trustee** on 0118 966 3929 or email safeguarding@reinspired.org.uk

A flow chart for action



Procedure following allegations of abuse

Under no circumstances should a volunteer or project employee carry out their own investigation into the allegation or suspicion of abuse. **If a worker receives an allegation or suspicion in a session with pupils during school time that worker will report those concerns to the Safeguarding Officer of that school and the school's protection policy must be followed.** Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone. A written record of the concerns should be made and kept in a secure place.

A worker in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse outside of REinspired activities should either follow their own churches protection policy or contact one of the following for advice:

Reading Borough Council Social Services

0118 937 3641 (9am-5pm) 01344 786543 (Out of hours) or 999

Wokingham District Council Social Services

0118 908 8002 (9am-5pm) 01344 786543 (Out of hours) or 999

Thames Valley Police

101

Thirtyone:eight. Independent Christian Safeguarding charity (previously CCPAS)

01322 517817 (9am-5pm) EMERGENCY—0303 003 1111

Definitions of abuse

The following definitions of child abuse are here for your information. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult/adults, child or children.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This is commonly described using terms such as 'factitious illness by proxy' or 'Munchausen's Syndrome by proxy'.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and continuous adverse effects on the

child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing, causing or inciting a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet) men, women and children can commit sexual abuse, this is not something solely perpetrated by adult males. Nb Children under 13 yrs can never legally consent to sexual activity.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical & emotional harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Further definitions of Abuse including Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy, Significant Harm, Spiritual Abuse, Domestic Violence, Organised Abuse & Child Prostitution can be found in the full Child Protection Policy.

Emerging issues (Facing the unthinkable, thirtyone@eight / previously CCPAS)

Online crimes & abuse.

We now live in the digital age and how we interact with each other in the 21st century has changed. Children are particularly vulnerable to abuse online, as are some adults. Safeguarding risks associated with AI are rapidly evolving. KCSIE 2026 highlights AI generate content – deepfakes, images, videos and the growing prevalence of misogynistic content in facilitating abuse, exploitation and harmful behaviour.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Any child under 18yrs is persuaded coerced or forced into sexual activity in exchange for money, drugs, alcohol, gifts, affection or status. Consent is irrelevant.

Domestic abuse

Including coercion and control is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents or controlling, coercive or 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. This can encompass but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse.

Controlling behaviour

Is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape, regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour

Is an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim. Whilst not a legal definition, this includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. Victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

Spiritual abuse

Is a form of psychological & emotional abuse that takes place within a faith context. Individuals being controlled, coerced and pressurised within Churches and places of worship. Individual experiences of spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional personal attack. May include manipulation, exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision making, requirements for secrecy & silence, pressure to conform, misuse of scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour,

requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation from others especially those external to the abusive context.

Radicalisation

Is the process by which a person usually comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups, but not exclusively. It is sometimes associated with fundamentalist teaching within faith groups. Department of Education guidance for school and childcare providers 'Protecting our children from radicalisation' can be viewed & downloaded from www.gov.uk

Abuse linked to faith or belief

Ritualistic practice and theology whereby in some churches it is commonplace to believe that some children and certain adults are demon possessed. In such cases children (& some adults) who behave differently to the expected norm can become victims of this type of abuse.

Recognising possible signs of abuse

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

Physical Signs of Abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Injuries that have not received medical attention.
- Neglect - under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation*
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse*

Indicators of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults

- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia*

Emotional Signs of Abuse

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging. Also, depression/aggression, extreme anxiety
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

Race, Culture & Religion

Awareness and sensitivity to racial, cultural and religious aspects are important in assessing a situation. Remember that differences exist not only between ethnic groups but also within the same ethnic group and between different neighbourhoods and social classes. While different practices must be taken into account, it is also important to remember that all children have basic human rights. Differences in child-rearing do not justify child abuse.

**These signs may indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming, mostly by cutting, burning, self-poisoning. Approximately 13,000-13,500 children & young people are predicted to be treated in hospital casualty for self-harming in England in 2026, this is considered by NHS and Public Health England to be under reported due to a change in the reporting methodology, acknowledging that it is possibly 2-3 times higher.*

How to respond to a child wanting to talk about abuse

General Points

- Above everything else listen, listen, listen
- Show acceptance of what the child says, however unlikely the story may sound
- Keep calm
- Look at the child directly

- Be honest
- Tell the child you will need to let someone else know - don't promise confidentiality
- Even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell
- Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen
- As soon as possible write down what has been shared

Helpful Responses

- "You have done the right thing in telling"
- "That must have been really hard"
- "I am glad you have told me"
- "It's not your fault"
- "I will help you"

Don't Say

- "Why didn't you tell anyone before?"
- "I can't believe it!"
- "Are you sure this is true?"
- "Why?" "How?" "When?" "Who?" "Where?"
- Never make false promises
- Never make statements such as "I am shocked" or "don't tell anyone else"

Concluding

Again, reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance. Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (you might have to consider referring to Social Services or the Police to prevent a child or young person returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse). Contact the person in the school responsible for co-ordinating child protection concerns or contact an agency such as thirtyone:eight (previously CCPAS) for advice or go directly to Social Services / Police. Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed.

Making Notes

Make notes as soon as possible, preferably within one hour of the child talking to you. Write down exactly what the child said and

when s/he said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity). Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept for an indefinite period in a secure place.

Lines of accountability

To the Team Leader, and through him/her to the Project Director and through him/her to the Trustees of REinspired.

Support given

The **Team Leader** will ensure that all volunteers are provided with the necessary information, materials, equipment and facilities to deliver the session, and will encourage and enable them to form good working relationships with other team members.

The **Project Director** will ensure that volunteers are offered suitable training and support and that they are aware of the project's Good Practice Guidelines, Safeguarding and Health and safety policies. Each volunteer will be invited to review their role within the project on an annual basis.

Good practice in R.E. sessions

It is important to always remember that the schoolteachers are ultimately responsible for the safety, discipline and wellbeing of their pupils. To enable them to have confidence that the children are safe in the RE sessions it is important to abide by the following guidelines. Treat the children with dignity and respect in attitude, language and actions at all times.

- Never be alone with a child, or a group of children, in a separate room.
- Teachers or other school staff are the only adults who take children to the toilet.
- Although there are always other adults around when small groups take place, it is good practice, where possible, to have at least two volunteers for each small group.
- Never arrange to meet a child at another time or place without the consent of a member of school staff.
- Never take photographs/videos of children during a session.
- Mobile phones should be turned off.

Guidelines for discipline

In an R.E. session the teachers are ultimately responsible for the discipline of the children, however using these guidelines during a session or a small group discussion will help with the 'little niggles' that occur with children.

- Pray with the other workers before the session, ask God for wisdom, discernment and understanding for the children in your care
- Work on each individual child's positives, do not compare a child with another, but encourage and affirm them, giving them responsibility for simple tasks
- Build healthy relationships with children and be a good role model by setting an example. You can't expect children to observe the ground rules if you break them yourself
- Take care to give quieter and well-behaved children attention and resist allowing demanding children to take all your time and energy
- Be consistent in what you say and ensure that other team members know what you have said. This avoids manipulation
- If children are bored, they could misbehave, so review the activity
- NEVER smack or hit a child and don't shout. Change voice tone if necessary
- Discipline out of love, NEVER in anger. (Call on support from other leaders or teachers if you feel so angry you may deal with the situation unwisely or incorrectly or you feel you can't cope)
- Lay down ground rules e.g. no swearing, racism or calling each other names, respect for property, and make sure the children understand what action will be taken if not kept
- Every child is unique and will respond in different ways to different forms of discipline. It follows therefore; each child should be dealt with on an individual basis
- Some children have a tendency to be disruptive in a group. Give them a chance, warn them and only separate if they are disruptive as a last resort
- Have a disruptive child sit right in front of/next to you or get a helper to sit next to them
- Be pro-active and encourage helpers to be pro-active rather than waiting to be told to deal with a situation.
- Take a disruptive child to one side and engage with them, challenging them to change, whilst encouraging their strengths
- Remedial action can be taken against a constantly disruptive child. They can be warned that you may speak to their teachers about their behaviour and finally they may be sent to their teacher/teacher will extract them

- Take time to share any 'issues' in the debrief after the session

Code of conduct. Breaching this Policy

If you have behaved inappropriately, you will be subject to disciplinary procedures (particularly in the case of paid staff where the line manager will consult the safeguarding officer as appropriate).

Depending on the seriousness of the situation, you may be asked to leave REinspired.

We may also make a referral to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority children's or adult's social care departments or DBS.

If you become aware of a breach of this code, you should escalate your concerns to the safeguarding officer or line manager (in the case of a paid staff member).