



## South Oxford Community Association

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# Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

SOCA's Designated Safeguarding Officers are:

### Designated Safeguarding Officer

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### Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer

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## 1. General Policy

- **South Oxford Community Association (SOCA) is committed to** upholding the right for all children and vulnerable adults to be protected from harm, and fully recognises its responsibility for child and adult protection. The safety and protection of all vulnerable people that the organisation supports is paramount and has priority over all other interests, unless life is at imminent risk.
- All SOCA's employees, volunteers and contractors are required to comply with the procedures contained within this policy.
- Hirers of the Centre facilities will be made aware of this policy and are expected to abide by requirements apply to their particular activity or event
- We follow the child and adult protection guidelines and procedures development by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children's Board and our staff and regular volunteers, and Trustees are aware of contact details.
- In accordance with government legislation Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- If we know or suspect a child or adult is at risk of harm we will do something about it and ensure our work is properly recorded.
- We recognise it is not our role to carry out an investigation into abuse but it is our legal responsibility to refer to the appropriate agencies.

### There are six main elements to the policy:

- ensuring that we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers who may work directly with young people and adults
- developing and implementing robust policies and procedures
- raising awareness of child protection and vulnerable adult issues amongst all paid and regular unpaid staff.
- developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases or suspected cases of child or adult abuse
- supporting the child or adult who has been abused
- establishing a safe environment in which children and adults can develop and grow, where they are able to talk and be listened to

## PART TWO: Definitions

### 2.1 Definitions

The following definitions apply throughout this Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures:

**Child or Children** - A child is defined as a person under eighteen: even those 16/17 who may

be living independently. The only exception being if they are employed.

There are new definitions which scale back the breadth of regulated activities.

**Regulated activity relating to children covers:**

- i) Unsupervised activities: teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children, or provide advice/guidance on well-being, or drive a vehicle only for children.
- (ii) Work for a limited range of establishments ('specified places'), with opportunity for contact: for example, schools, children's homes, childcare premises. Not work by supervised volunteers. Work under (i) or (ii) is regulated activity only if done regularly.
- (iii) Relevant personal care, for example washing or dressing; or health care by or supervised by a professional.
- (iv) Registered child-minding; and foster-carers.

**Who is classed as an adult?**

An adult is a person aged 18 or over. The same adult may be considered as 'vulnerable' in some circumstances but not in others. In general, an adult is considered to be 'vulnerable' when in regulated activity as described below.

The definition of regulated activity relating to adults places the emphasis on the kind of activity carried out for any adult who requires them rather than on any specific groups of people or vulnerabilities.

**Regulated activity with adults** includes, providing health care or social work to any adult, and providing personal care, assistance with bills or shopping, or help with conducting personal affairs, or conveying (transporting to receive e.g., health/social care services and includes ambulance technicians, Patient Transport and Social Car Scheme drivers, hospital porters) to any adult who requires such support because of their age, illness or disability.

**2.2 Forms of abuse**

**a) Children** In 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2021), abuse is described as:

*'A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear, or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or extra-familial contexts by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.'*

<sup>1</sup> Regularly means carried out by the same person once a week or more often. However, an activity is classed as regulated if only done once if e.g. physical help is provided for reasons of age, illness or disability with such things as toileting, washing, dressing, eating or drinking.

**Abuse takes many forms including:**

**Physical Abuse:** A form of abuse which 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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Fabricated or induced illness:** in children is a fairly rare form of child abuse. Where there are concerns about this, it is essential professionals work together in evaluating all the evidence to reach an understanding of the reasons for the child's signs and symptoms of illness.

**Emotional Abuse:** continual emotional ill treatment causing severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development and may involve:

- conveying the message that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person;
- imposing developmentally inappropriate expectations.
- not providing opportunities for the child to express their views, deliberately silencing them, making fun of how they communicate and what they say;
- causing the child or to feel frightened or in danger – e.g., witnessing domestic abuse;
- bullying, including cyber bullying.
- exploitation and/or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in most types of ill treatment, although emotional abuse may occur alone.

**Sexual Abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts, such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Neglect:** 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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- provide suitable education

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

**Child Sexual Exploitation:** is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) 230 Serious Violence Strategy 155 in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

**Child trafficking:** Children can be trafficked/transported/harboured into, within and out of the UK. Trafficking can have a devastating and lasting impact on children.

**Domestic Abuse:** The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 statutory definition is that domestic abuse may be a single incident or a course of conduct which can encompass a wide range of abusive behaviours, including a) physical or sexual abuse; b) violent or threatening behaviour; c) controlling or coercive behaviour; d) economic abuse; and e) psychological, emotional, or other abuse.

Under the statutory definition, both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be “personally connected” (as defined in section 2 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021). The definition ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members.

**Faith Abuse:** includes belief in concepts of witchcraft and spirit possession, demons or the devil acting through children or ‘leading them astray;’ ritual or ‘muti’ murders where the killing of children is believed to bring supernatural benefits or the use of their body parts is believed to produce potent magical remedies; and use of belief in magic or witchcraft to create fear in children to make them more compliant when they are being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

**Female genital mutilation (FGM):** is seen as child abuse in the UK and a violation of the human rights of girls and women. In all circumstances where FGM is practised on a child it is a violation of the child's right to life, their right to their bodily integrity, and their right to health.

FGM includes all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. FGM is also sometimes known as ‘female genital cutting’ or ‘female circumcision’. Communities often use local names for referring to this practice e.g. ‘Sunna’.

**Forced Marriage:** One or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure and/or abuse is used. One or both of the people can be children (legally under 18) and below the age of consent (16). The abuse can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they’re bringing shame on their family – sometimes this is financial).

**Information Communication Technology:** The internet has become a significant tool in the distribution of indecent photographs of children. Internet chat rooms, discussion forums and bulletin boards are used as a means of contacting children with a view to grooming them for inappropriate and/or abusive relationships, which may include requests to make and transmit pornographic images of themselves, or to perform sexual acts live in front of a webcam. Contacts made initially in a chat room are likely to be carried on via email, instant messaging services, mobile phone or text messaging.

‘Sexting’ is the act of sending sexually explicit messages, primarily between mobile phones. CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) has seen a marked increase in the number of reports where children (particularly young teenagers) appear to have taken still or video indecent imagery of themselves which is then shared online. This can be extremely emotionally damaging for them both in the immediate and long term future. The widespread ownership of mobile phones amongst children makes this issue a growing concern.

There is also growing cause for concern about the exposure of children to inappropriate material via interactive communication technology – for example, adult pornography and/or extreme

forms of obscene material. Allowing or encouraging a child to view such material may warrant further enquiry. Children themselves can engage in text bullying and use mobile phone cameras to capture violent assaults of other children for circulation.

**b) Adults:** In line with the Care Act 2014 we have extended the range of types of abuse that an adult could be at risk from:

a) Physical: including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions

b) Domestic abuse: including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence

c) Sexual: including rape, sexual assault, sexual acts carried out without the consent of the individual or where the individual was pressured into consenting

d) Psychological: including 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

e) Financial or material: including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits

f) Modern slavery: encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour plus domestic servitude - (Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, and inhumane treatment)

g) Discriminatory abuse: based on any of the 'protected characteristics' set out in the Equality Act (e.g. racism, sexism, and ageism) and other forms of harassment, slurs, or similar treatment

h) Organisational: can include any of the above. This may range from one off incidents to ongoing ill-treatment sometimes intentional, but often unintentional and resulting from a lack of knowledge. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation

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

j) Self-neglect: covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding

In addition to the types of abuse, there are also a range of related issues that may lead to abuse or neglect of an adult. These include:

- Forced marriage
- Female genital mutilation
- Adult sexual exploitation

**Note:** A child or adult may be subjected to a combination of different kinds of abuse. It is also possible that a child or adult may show no outward signs of abuse and hide what is happening

from everyone. Children and adults who have been abused often learn to 'manage' their problems, making it hard for others to help. We may observe behaviours / physical presentations that cause concern and it is important to remember that the causes of these may not be abuse, but due to other issues such as bereavement, depression, other illnesses, etc. Staff should be cautious before assuming abuse is the cause and they must always discuss their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer for advice.

**Historical Abuse:** The term 'historical abuse' is commonly used to refer to disclosures of abuse that were perpetrated in the past. It is normally used when the victim is no longer in circumstances where they consider themselves at risk of the perpetrator and more commonly used when adults disclose abuse experienced during childhood.

Allegations of child abuse are sometimes made by adults and children many years after the abuse has occurred. There are many reasons for an allegation not being made at the time including fear of reprisals, the degree of control exercised by the abuser, shame or fear that the allegation may not be believed. The person becoming aware that the abuser is being investigated for a similar matter or their suspicions that the abuse is continuing against other children may trigger the allegation.

Cases may be complex as the alleged victims may no longer be living in the situations where the incidents occurred or where the alleged perpetrators are also no longer linked to the setting or employment role. Such cases should be responded to in the same way as any other concerns. It is important to ascertain as a matter of urgency if the alleged perpetrator is still working with, or caring for children or adults.

In these instances, all disclosures made will be referred to the designated Safeguarding Officer who will immediately refer the disclosures to the appropriate agencies.

### **2.3 Status of Policy**

- This policy applies to all employees, trustees and volunteers and contractors
- Its purpose is to protect the personal safety of all children, young people and vulnerable adults using the facilities, resources and activities provided by SOCA at the South Oxford Community Centre.
- SOCA will actively promoting awareness, good practice and sound procedures.
- The Trustees will review this policy regularly and as informed by risk assessments relating to all activities of SOCA.
- SOCA will make member organisations using the premises and working with vulnerable groups aware of the policy.

## **PART THREE: Procedures**

### **3.1 Personnel/Recruitment**

- All employees, trustees and volunteers are required to provide references that SOCA deems appropriate. References are always verified.
- All paid and unpaid staff involved in regulated or intensive contact with vulnerable people as part of their work for SOCA will be subject to the Disclosure and Barring procedures of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- If the job or role is eligible then a DBS 'Standard', 'Enhanced' or 'Enhanced check with list checks' as appropriate check will be carried out.
- No new employees, trustees or volunteers should start employment/volunteer work until

references have been verified and where one is required DBS checks received. If this is not possible: then new employees, trustees and volunteers must not be involved with regulated activities as set out in section 2 until references and DBS checks are completed. Details of the checks to be carried out are set out in Part 5.

- All employees, trustees and volunteers will receive, and will be required to read this Safeguarding Policy. All employees, trustees and volunteers will receive regular support in their work with children and vulnerable adults and further Safeguarding training will be sought if such work is undertaken by SOCA.

### **3.2 Responsibilities**

- All employees, trustees and volunteers working on behalf of SOCA have a responsibility for the welfare of the children and vulnerable adults that they work with, in relation to their employment.
- All employees, trustees and volunteers have a duty to ensure that any suspected incident, allegation or other manifestation relating to child and vulnerable adult protection is reported using the reporting procedures detailed in this policy.
- SOCA has a Designated (named) Safeguarding Officer and a nominated deputy. The Manager, or their deputy in his or her absence, or if there isn't a paid worker post, the Chair of the Management Committee must also be informed of issues which arise under this policy.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer and Deputy Safeguarding Officer are responsible for child and vulnerable adults protection and the implementation of this policy. It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Officer to take appropriate action following any expression of concern and make referrals to the appropriate agencies.

#### **3.2.1 Designated Safeguarding Officers**

**The Designated Safeguarding Officers will attend training as appropriate and make referrals to external agencies. Other aspects of their role include:**

- obtaining information from staff, volunteers, children, parents or carers who have concerns relating to the protection of children or vulnerable adults and to record this information
- assessing information quickly and carefully and asking for further information where appropriate
- consulting with statutory child and vulnerable protection agencies e.g., the local social services department, LCSS or MASH team, and police, to clarify doubts or worries
- making referrals to Social Services, the DBS or the police, without delay.
- All employees will be made aware of the named Designated Safeguarding Officers and how to contact them.
- Contact details also appear at the top of this policy.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officers have contact telephone numbers for the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board (OSCB) and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) and other statutory agencies.
- Contact numbers and a safeguarding statement is displayed at the Centre in a public area

### **3.3 Reporting Procedures: What to do if you suspect someone is being abused**

- All staff, volunteers and others working in direct or indirect contact with children and vulnerable adults as part of the organisation's activities or as part of the environment where the activities take place, must be alert to the signs of abuse.
- Anyone who suspects that abuse is taking place in this environment or to whom a child or vulnerable adult discloses issues relating to safeguarding should contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately.
- Any suspicion or allegation must be reported as soon as possible on the day of the

occurrence to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in a number of ways including a comment made by a child or adult, physical evidence such as bruising, a change in behaviour, or inappropriate behaviour or knowledge.

- It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Officer to liaise with other relevant agencies where necessary and seek clarification from the Safeguarding and Protection Unit of the local Constabulary if there is any concern about the validity of any allegation.
- Any suspicion or allegation of abuse must be recorded by the observer/s on the appropriate incident reporting form. This form must be kept strictly confidential and stored securely following the Data Protection Procedures. All employees and volunteers are instructed to report the disclosure or discovery of abuse or alleged abuse directly to their Line Manager who will inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- All trustees will report such incidents directly to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- All stages of the reporting procedure must be documented, marked CONFIDENTIAL and stored securely following the procedures laid out in the Data Protection Policy.

### **3.4 Allegations against employees, trustees or volunteers**

When any form of complaint is made against an employee or volunteer, it must be taken seriously and the complaint should initially be dealt with by senior employee, or the most senior staff member on site at the time the complaint is made. The senior staff member must report the complaint to the designated Safeguarding Officer immediately, giving details of the circumstances. If the designated Safeguarding Officer is unavailable (or is the person against whom a complaint has been made) the Chair or in their absence Vice Chair of the Management Committee must be informed immediately and they will deal with the complaint and ensure that the designated Safeguarding Officer is informed

If any of the above (Chair, Vice Chair, designated Safeguarding Officer) is the person against whom a complaint has been made they will be excluded from the processing of the complaint.

The Chair/Vice Chair will attend the site of the allegation to gain an initial account of what has occurred from all relevant parties, including the person against whom the allegation has been made. If this is not possible, contact will be made by telephone.

The Chair/Vice Chair will have the right to suspend from duty and/or the premises, any person who is a party to the allegation until a full investigation has been made in line with SOCA's Disciplinary Procedures or the Code of Conduct.

This action does not prejudice the outcome of the investigation of **the complaint** or imply in any way that the person suspended is responsible for, or is to blame for, any action leading up to the complaint. The purpose of any such suspension is to enable a full and proper investigation to be carried out in a totally professional and objective manner.

The Safeguarding Officer will decide on the course of action as laid down by the local Safeguarding Board. They may also need to follow their legal obligation to report/provide relevant information to the DBS. as to whether to inform Social Services, NHS Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) (See 7 below).

SOCA will cooperate fully with the Police, Social Services, the NHS and all other parties involved.

The Senior staff member or his/her nominated deputy will ensure that the Chair of SOCA, or in his/her absence the Vice-Chair, Secretary or Treasurer, is fully briefed. An agreed statement will be prepared for the purpose of accurate communication with external sources and for the protection of the legal position of all parties involved.

The Senior staff member or his/her nominated deputy will make a full written report of the incident and the actions taken. This report will be stored securely following the procedures detailed in the Data Protection Policy.

#### 3.4.1 Resignation

If, during the course of an investigation relating to safeguarding, an employee tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide their services, SOCA is not prevented from following up an allegation in accordance with these procedures.

Every effort will be made to reach a conclusion, including in cases where the person concerned refuses to co-operate with the process.

See also:

PART SEVEN: Reporting cases to the Independent Safeguarding Authority, and South Oxford Community Association's (SOCA):

- i) Disciplinary Procedure
- ii) Code of Conduct
- iii) Complaints Procedure

### **PART FOUR Confidentiality**

#### **4. Confidentiality**

All employees and volunteers must work under the principle that confidentiality is extremely important and plays a large part in much of the work carried out with children and vulnerable adults. However, under no circumstances will any individual in the employment of SOCA, or acting as a volunteer, keep confidential any information that raises concerns about the safety and welfare of a child or vulnerable adult. This statement relating to confidentiality is made known to all who access any provision of SOCA.

### **PART FIVE Recruitment**

#### **5. Safe recruitment of staff**

- SOCA undertakes to ensure that paid and unpaid staff are suitable to work in an environment where they will encounter children and vulnerable adults as part of the Organisation's work.
- SOCA provides all new employees with a clear job description and new volunteers with a clear role description
- It also reserves the right to refuse to employ staff or volunteers whom it has a reasonable belief may pose a risk to children and vulnerable adults.
- SOCA has systems in place to prevent unsuitable people from working with children or vulnerable adults and to promote safe practice. These systems apply to all new staff and volunteers and require the following checks to be made on appointment:
- A minimum of two references, satisfactory to SOCA, one of which should be from a previous employer;
- Documentary evidence checks of identity, nationality, residency and "right to work" status;
- DBS Check at the level relevant for the job/role;
- Documentary evidence of qualifications;
- Satisfactory completion of the probationary period.

#### **6. Vetting and Barring**

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 places a duty on SOCA to undertake an Enhanced check with list checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for all staff and volunteers supervising or carrying out regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults.

SOCA carries out appropriate DBS checks on all staff whose jobs or roles are eligible for one.

#### **7. Reporting cases to the Disclosure and Barring Service**

SOCA has a statutory duty to make reports and provide relevant information to the DBS where there are grounds for believing, following an investigation, that an individual is unsuitable to work with children or adults in certain regulated activities, or may have committed misconduct. The responsibility for reporting cases to the DBS lies with the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

The DBS make barring decisions for Section 142 of the Education Act (formally known as List 99), The Protection of Children Act List (PoCA) and the Protection of Vulnerable Adults List (PoVA) and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. This has now been combined as part of the Vetting and Barring Procedures of the DBS.

## **PART EIGHT Supporting Staff**

### **8. Support for Staff**

8.1 All staff and workers who come into direct contact with children and vulnerable adults must undertake training on the subject of safeguarding. This Policy will be issued to all new staff as part of their induction.

SOCA is aware that safeguarding cases can be distressing and that both paid and unpaid staff who have been involved may find it helpful to talk about their experiences, in confidence, with the Designated Safeguarding Officer or with a trained counsellor. Staff wishing to be referred for counselling should contact their line manager or the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

### **8.2 Whistleblowing**

- Any member of staff who raises an issue where they believe the employer, a fellow employee or any volunteer is acting in a way which is unlawful or falls below proper standards or contrary to this policy are protected by the Public Disclosure Act 1998, provided they comply with statutory procedures.
- Any employee looking at whistleblowing can do so by using the grievance procedure and in the first instance should discuss it with their Line Manager, the Chair of the Management Committee or the Safeguarding Officer.
- Any volunteer with such concerns must raise it with the person responsible for their management or the Chair of the Management Committee. Anyone involved in whistleblowing will be supported and the Association will ensure that proper procedures are followed.

## **PART NINE: Equal Opportunities**

### **9. Equality of Opportunities**

As part of the community served by SOCA, all children and vulnerable adults have the right to be safeguarded from harm and exploitation whatever their race, religion, gender, sexuality, age or disability. This policy relates to the Organisation's legal obligation to protect children and vulnerable adults who are suffering forms of abuse as defined in the Children Act 1989 and Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and is therefore in line with SOCA's equality and diversity policies.

**See also SOCA's:**

- Equal Opportunities Policy**
- Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy**
- Employment and Recruitment Policy**

## **PART TEN: Operational Practices Policy**

### **10.1 The use of cameras or film**

SOCA may take photographs of children and young people participating in activities and events. At all times written permission from parents/guardians/carers will be obtained before

photographs are taken.

SOCA reserves the right to prohibit the use of cameras, videos and mobile telephones with picture taking capacity on its land and within any of its properties or at events it promotes.

### **10.2 Employee Ratios**

The ratio of employees/volunteers to children will be one to eight for those aged 8 years and under and one to ten for those aged 9 years or over as laid down by guidance issued under the Children Act (1989). SOCA recommends these minimum guidelines to those hiring SOCA premises to work with children and young people.

Where a Governing Body or Government guidelines require a higher ratio of employees/volunteers to the number of children and vulnerable adults then that ratio will override the minimum ratios set above.

Outdoor adventure activities will always have a minimum of 2 appropriately trained adults, one of which must be an employee of SOCA who will hold a First Aid at Work qualification.

In all but exceptional circumstances there will be two employees present when transporting children and vulnerable adults in a minibus or other forms of public and private transport.

### **10.3 Signing in and out**

- All children aged 18 and under and vulnerable adults attending a SOCA organised activity with a duration of less than one hour will be checked against a register.
- All children and vulnerable adults attending a SOCA organised activity that lasts longer than one hour must be signed in/out by a parent/guardian.
- This applies to all SOCA organised activities, regardless of their location.

### **10.4 Outside Organisations**

- Any club, society, organisation or individual undertaking activities on SOCA's behalf involving children aged under 18 and vulnerable adults will be required to either adopt SOCA's Safeguarding Policy or show proof that they have their own robust policies.
- Any club, society, organisation or individual undertaking any activity that has been sanctioned by SOCA which involves children aged under 18 on SOCA's land or in its premises will be required to adopt SOCA's signing in and signing out procedures.
- Any club, society, organisation or individual working with children and vulnerable adults who refuse to adopt SOCA's policies, signing in and signing out procedures or refuse to adopt their own policies and procedures will not be permitted to use SOCA's facilities. SOCA expects those running activities for children, young people and vulnerable adults on the SOCA premises to have a proven procedure for accounting for those in their care and have a method of registration: and to be able to describe such procedure if challenged.
- Any club, society, organisation or individual working with children and vulnerable adults will be subject to random spot checks periodically by SOCA's employees to ensure policies and procedures are in place and being implemented.

All paid and unpaid staff who are not the Designated Safeguarding Officer, but who are approached with concerns about a child or vulnerable adult, must bring the concerns raised to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Officer, his/her deputy or their line manager immediately.

All staff to whom a vulnerable person discloses issues that may be related to safeguarding must keep written notes of concerns. The staff member must also complete an Incident Form immediately after the issues have been noted by them or reported to them.

## **13. Review and Maintenance of Policy**

- This policy will be reviewed annually, by the Safeguarding Leads and referred to the

Management Committee for approval. The views of all employees and volunteers shall be sought where necessary and reflected in the review process.

- Any new legislation or developments in existing legislation will be considered as and when required and the policy will be updated to reflect these developments.
- All employees and volunteers will receive training in child and vulnerable adult protection procedures and the training will be reviewed as and when required.
- Those required to hold a DBS check and have direct responsibility for children or vulnerable adults as defined under Regulated Activity shall undertake face to face training as recommended by the local safeguarding board.

**This policy was approved and agreed by the Management Committee on Wednesday 7 May 2014; reviewed on: 10<sup>th</sup> August 2016; 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2017 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018, 19 May 2021, 1 Feb 2025**



**Signed:**

**Position: Treasurer**

**Date: 1 Feb 2025**

**Date for next review: Spring 2026**

**Policy document based on Template from: Advising Communities, Safeguarding Children and Adults, Community Matters, with reference to the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board template policy**