SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

November 2026

Our Statement

The Ernest Cook Trust ("the Trust") acknowledges its duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. We are committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice; in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children requirements.

This Policy Statement outlines the key areas of our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, how the Trust promotes a culture of safeguarding, manages incidents, and ensures the safety of children, young people, and adults at risk. All those working for or on behalf of the Trust must read the full Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The Safeguarding Policy is endorsed by both the Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees. Responsibility for its implementation lies with the management structure, employees and others working on behalf of The Ernest Cook Trust (See list for identified key contacts).

pp Mary Reall

Zainab Kabba

Lead Trustee for Safeguarding

The Purpose of this Policy Statement

The Purpose of this policy statement is to set out how The Ernest Cook Trust promotes an organisational culture that prioritises safeguarding and manages reported incidents or concerns, sensitively and properly. It demonstrates how safeguarding concerns and incidents are prevented, identified, and handled. It explains the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees to ensure that risks are managed appropriately, with clear routes of escalation.

We recognise that safeguarding and protecting people from harm goes beyond simply implementing policies and processes. Safeguarding and protecting people must go to the heart of the Trust's culture and is a fundamental responsibility for Trustees.

The Trust aims to provide a safe, trusted environment for all employees, volunteers and beneficiaries and to respond promptly and appropriately to reports of anyone who is actually or potentially at risk. This is done by:

- Safeguarding the welfare of all beneficiaries, employees and volunteers by embedding the necessary principles in all activities carried out by the Trust
- Protecting children and young people who receive the Trust's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services
- Raising awareness of safeguarding children and adults to ensure that everyone can play their part in preventing, identifying, and responding to abuse and neglect
- Prevent harm and reduce risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs
- Promotes the positive wellbeing of children and adults at risk
- Safeguarding adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live
- Providing information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do to raise a concern about the safety or wellbeing of children and adults at risk.
- Providing training to all employees, Trustees and volunteers to ensure they understand and follow the requirements of this policy at induction, with annual update training
- Ensuring the Designated Safeguarding Leads have the appropriate status and authority to take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, this will be explicit in their job description
- Providing all employees with access to a trained Designated Safeguarding Lead who will have the details of the appropriate local agencies to whom they can seek advice and report concerns
- Having procedures to ensure that concerns of abuse or neglect are dealt with appropriately and that action is taken promptly
- Having procedures to ensure that allegations and low-level concerns around the inappropriate behaviour of adults, are dealt with appropriately and that action is taken promptly
- Having the appropriate recruitment, selection and training procedures for employees and volunteers
- Requiring all external agencies who work with the Trust to comply with the safeguarding requirements of the Trust

- Requiring organisations receiving funding from the Trust to comply with our safeguarding requirements
- Ensuring fundraising activities are carried out in accordance with the Trust's values and ethical standards
- Conducting a programme of Disclosure and Barring Service Checks (DBS) on employees

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of the Trust, including senior leaders and the board of trustees, volunteers, students, and trainees.

Key Responsibilities

Board of Trustees: Ensure risks are managed and promote a safeguarding culture. Trustees have accountability to ensure the safeguarding of children and young people, and adults at risk and aim to protect, from harm, anyone that interacts the Trust.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Main contact and leads on safeguarding concerns, ensuring staff training, and report and recording cases to authorities.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL): Trained to the same level as the DSL, supporting and acting in their absence.

Staff and Volunteers: Adhere to safeguarding policies, procedures, report concerns, and participate in training.

Legal Framework

This Policy has been drawn up based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and adults at risk in England.

Definitions

'Safeguarding' is a term which is broader than 'child protection' or 'adult protection' as it also includes prevention.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Safeguarding adults is defined as:

Protecting and adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect *The Care Act*

Keeping Children Safe in Education defines anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday as a 'child'.

The definition of an 'adult at risk' is any person aged 18 years and over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental health issues, learning or physical disability, sensory impairment, age or illness and who is, or may be, unable to take care of themself or unable to protect themself against significant harm or serious exploitation.

The Trust has a wider definition of whom we consider to be adults at risk. This includes people encountering domestic abuse, exploitation, people who are experiencing homelessness, people suffering from alcohol and substance misuse, those at risk of radicalisation, honour-based abuse, modern slavery, forced labour, domestic servitude, young offenders, engagement with gangs, in care or leaving care, and people who are refugees or asylum seekers.

Definitions of Abuse

Physical Abuse: Hitting, shaking, poisoning, burning, or otherwise causing physical harm.

Emotional Abuse: Persistent maltreatment affecting emotional development.

Sexual Abuse: Forcing or enticing a child into sexual activities.

Neglect: Failure to meet a child's basic needs.

Child Exploitation: Coercing a child into criminal or sexual activities.

Financial, Discriminatory, Institutional, and Domestic Abuse: Forms of harm and exploitation.

The Ernest Cook Trust believes that:

- Children and adults at risk should never experience abuse of any kind
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and adults at risk to keep them safe and to practice in a way that protects them

The Ernest Cook Trust recognises that:

- The welfare of the child or adult at risk is paramount in all decisions we take
- All children and adults at risk, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children and adults at risk are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children and adults at risk, their parents, carers and other agencies as appropriate is essential to promoting welfare.

The Ernest Cook Trust will seek to keep children and adults at risk safe by:

- Valuing, listening to, and respecting them
- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Lead and a Lead Trustee for safeguarding
- Actively developing safeguarding policy, procedures, and guidance notes which reflect best practice
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, parents, families, and carers appropriately
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- Developing and implementing effective online safeguarding procedures
- Sharing information about child protection and safeguarding best practice with staff and volunteers via training, posters, team meetings, and supervision. Ensuring staff have clear procedures establishing accountability, responsibility, and processes for reporting safeguarding concerns
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary DBS checks are made
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training, and quality assurance measures
- Implementing a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against a trustee, employee, or volunteer appropriately
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistle blowing measures in place
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, adults at risk, staff, and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Safeguarding Procedures

- **Reporting:** Immediate reporting of all concerns to DSL or DDSL.
- **Training:** Regular training for staff on recognising and responding to abuse.
- **Recruitment:** Safer recruitment practices, including DBS and suitability checks.

Safeguarding in Practice

- **Creating a Safe Environment:** Ensuring activities are safe and supervised in which children can learn.
- **Partnerships:** Ensuring external partners comply with safeguarding requirements.
- **Grant Applicants:** Assessing safeguarding policies of organisations receiving funding.
- **Information Sharing:** Sharing information with other agencies as needed to protect individuals.
- **Support for Tenants:** While the Trust does not have a statutory safeguarding responsibility for tenants, staff are trained to recognise abuse and report all concerns to the DSL.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The policy is monitored and evaluated at least annually to ensure it is effective and up to date.

Related policies and procedures

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Safeguarding reporting procedure
- Staff Handbook
- Online Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy / Mobile Phone Policy
- GDPR policy and procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Whistleblowing policy

Key Contact details

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Name: Vicki McDermott

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Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Name: Sarah White

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Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Name: Stevie Edge-McKee

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General safeguarding contact
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Lead Trustee for Safeguarding

Name: Zainab Kabba

NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 500 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Childline If you work with children, you can also signpost them to Childline.

https://childline.org.uk 0800 1111