

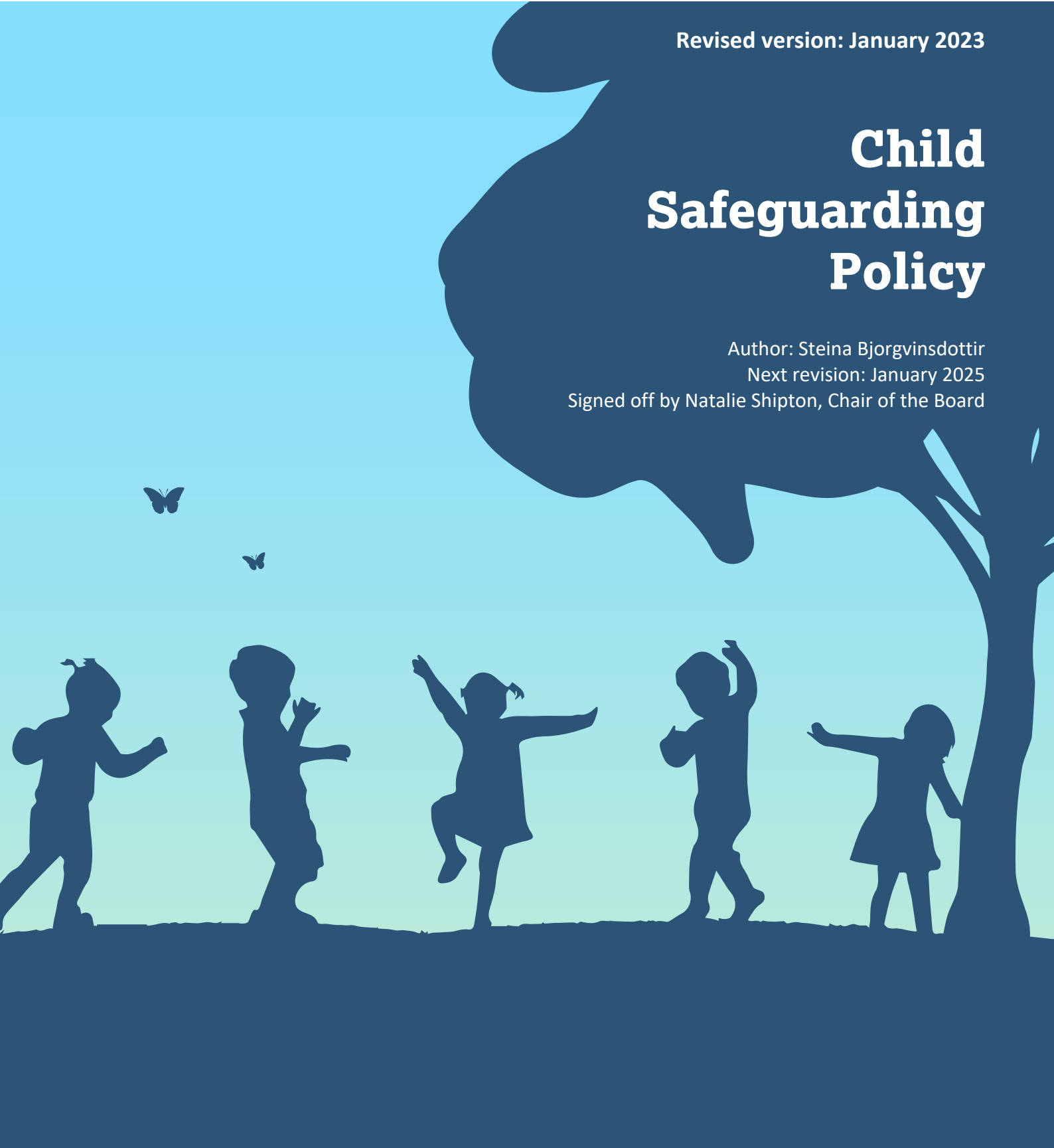
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# Child Safeguarding Policy

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Next revision: January 2025

Signed off by Natalie Shipton, Chair of the Board



# Board statement

As this document indicates, the rights, safety, and protection of children are of paramount concern to Oak Foundation and its Trustees. For over a decade, we have worked to develop and implement robust child safeguarding measures within Oak Foundation and have extended support to our grantee partners. This is, and will continue to be, a journey where we strive to do our best.

Our aim is to continue our efforts, with the goal of ensuring that Oak Foundation's child safeguarding standards are clear, comprehensive, and enforceable. In doing so, this policy builds on international child safeguarding standards and the good practices of other foundations and international groups.

This policy guides the work of our staff. It highlights their roles and responsibilities on safeguarding to uphold and respect children's rights through their work. This is a responsibility we don't take lightly.

We intend to continue to refine and strengthen this document as we learn more about what works in this important area. We strive to be leaders within the growing movement of funders that recognise the importance of safeguarding in promoting the rights and protecting the welfare of children and their families.

We are determined to put children first in all we do and to make the rights enshrined in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child a reality for all children everywhere.

## **Natalie Shipton**

Chair of the Board, Oak Foundation

*The next revision of this policy is scheduled for January 2025.*

**“We strive to be leaders within the growing movement of funders that recognise the importance of safeguarding in promoting the rights and protecting the welfare of children and their families.”**



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# 1

## Policy and pledge

Oak Foundation is family-led and reflects the vision and values of its founders. In all its work, Oak pursues rights-based approaches, gender equality, and partnership with the organisations we fund. We support civil society as a pillar of democracy and justice, and nurture innovation and visionary leadership within it. We value diversity, both within Oak and among our partners; we seek to be inclusive and flexible and engage with different points of view. We believe that the best grant-making reflects both careful due diligence and the willingness to take risks.

Although Oak Foundation staff rarely come into contact directly with children through our work, we support and fund organisations that do. Therefore, we recognise both our responsibility and duty of care to safeguard and protect children working with or in contact with our grantee partners.

### 1.1 Policy statement

This document states our expectations on how we, as a foundation, will prevent and respond to safeguarding concerns, and how we intend to hold ourselves accountable. This policy is underpinned by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, guidance, and best practice approaches. However, Oak Foundation also holds itself accountable to the Keeping Children Safe International Safeguarding Standards<sup>1</sup> and upon review of its safeguarding measures will evaluate progress based on these standards. We hold our partners accountable to the same standards, and through our grant-making we pledge to provide support for them to meet these standards.

The field of safeguarding continues to evolve, and this revised policy reflects some of the thinking and learning that has emerged since the last revision in 2020. This policy builds on the good work and feedback of multiple organisations, grantee partners, and funders that have helped us grow, learn, and improve<sup>2</sup>. For that we are grateful.

### 1.2 Vision

Oak Foundation envisages a world in which all children and adults are protected from all forms of harm, abuse, and exploitation. Violence, abuse, and exploitation of children are global phenomena, and Oak sees such acts as crimes against children that have devastating consequences on their development and on societies.

As a Foundation, Oak supports fundamental human rights, including the human rights of children. However, despite the existence of international covenants, regional treaties and domestic laws, the reality is that children are routinely unable to claim their basic rights. Oak Foundation strives to do its utmost to contribute to a world in which children have the rights, capacity, and opportunity to experience safety from harm, where their voices are heard, and they can enjoy their full and equal human rights.

### 1.3 Values and principles

As a grant-maker, we know that we are but a small part of the changes we seek. Oak Foundation's role is to support and enable others to make the world a safer, fairer, and more sustainable place to live. Our values and principles are underpinned by a firm belief in the rights, safety, and protection of children.



### **Specifically, we believe that:**

- Safeguarding children is ‘everybody’s business’.
- Children should always be treated with respect, regardless of their sex, ethnic or social origin, language, religious or other beliefs, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or other status.
- All children have the right to freedom from all forms of harm, including violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- All child abuse is an abuse of power and all violence towards children is both unacceptable and preventable.
- Although children may be resourceful and resilient, there is an inherent vulnerability in relation to abuse, given their general lack of status and power, dependence, stage of development, and reliance on adults.
- Children are most at risk from those people they know and often trust. Therefore, adults engaged in positions of trust towards children must exercise the highest levels of integrity and good practice.
- All organisations and professionals working or in contact with children have an obligation to ensure that their organisations, programmes, operations, and staff are ‘child safe’. This means that staff, volunteers, and contractors do not represent a risk to children and programmes, policies, and practices are designed and developed in ways that promote the protection of children.

## **1.4 Pledge and application**

Oak Foundation, through its grant-making, addresses a wide range of social justice issues.

### **With this policy, Oak commits to ensuring that through all its programmes, it will strive to prevent harm and promote the safety, protection, and wellbeing of children.**

We pledge to keep ourselves accountable to the standards laid out in this policy document and monitor our implementation of these on an annual basis. In so doing, Oak also seeks to enhance its reputation as a foundation of integrity, committed to putting its principles into practice. This document therefore applies to:

- all staff employed or engaged by Oak Foundation, including paid full-time, part-time, or temporary staff;
- Trustees and Advisors to the Board;
- volunteers and visitors sent by Oak, to Oak-funded programmes, who may also be in contact with children; and
- fellows and other contracted personnel, including consultants, who have been defined as ‘working with children’.

Grantee partners of the foundation are not expected to follow this policy. However, they are encouraged to develop their own safeguarding measures that are tailored to their organisation and context. For more information, see chapter 2.6.

The roles and responsibilities chapter further details levels of accountability within the foundation.

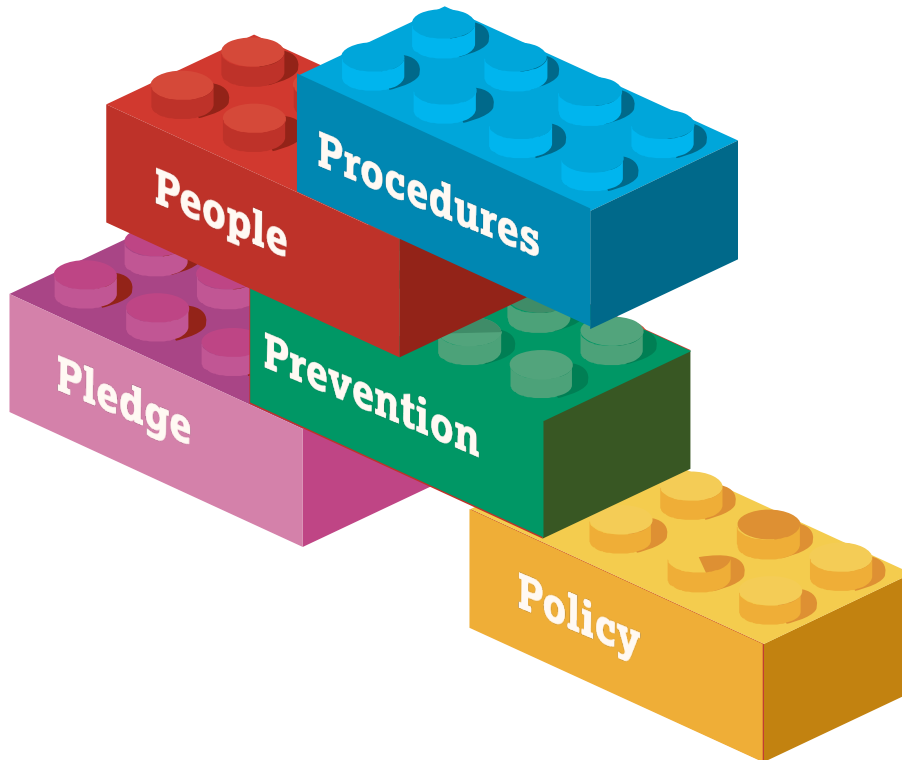
### **1.4.1 Breaches**

Oak Foundation is committed to taking all appropriate action, including disciplinary, legal, or other action in response to any breaches of this Safeguarding Policy. It is the responsibility of each individual member of staff to act if there is a cause for concern about a child or the behaviour of an adult towards a child, but it is not their responsibility to determine if harm has occurred or what action is required to protect them. Should you become aware of a safeguarding concern, please report immediately to the designated officer listed in Section 1.3.3 below. More detailed information about reporting is found in chapter 3, Procedures.

### 1.5 Safeguarding standards<sup>3</sup>

Oak Foundation holds itself accountable to the standards outlined here below, and upon review of its safeguarding measures will evaluate progress based on these standards. We hold our grantee partners accountable to the same standards, and through our grant-making, we pledge to provide support for them to meet these standards. More information about how we integrate safeguarding in our grant-making is found in chapter 2.6.

Each of the standards is interlinked, and together they create a comprehensive system that protects and safeguards children.



**Pledge:** A written commitment and stated accountability mechanisms that support the implementation of safeguarding measures is in place. These are monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure accountability, application, and effectiveness.

**Policy:** A written, comprehensive safeguarding policy that underlines commitment to prevent and respond to any safeguarding concerns, is in place. The consequences of breaking the policy are clear.

**Prevention:** There are safeguards in place for recruiting staff that include assessing their suitability to work with children. References and background checks are carried out. Regular risk assessments are carried out.

**People:** Throughout the employment cycle, all staff are trained, aware, and informed of their responsibilities and expectations as per the policy. Any sub-contracted party must meet these standards.

**Procedures:** There are clear, well-published reporting procedures in place that allow staff, children, and their families to raise concerns, confidentially, if necessary, about unacceptable behaviour or actual/suspected abuse by staff. All concerns raised are taken seriously, responded to appropriately, recorded and followed up on.

## 2

# Prevention and people

Prevention is the cornerstone of the protection and safeguarding of children. Oak Foundation commits to preventing harm to children through the following areas:

- clearly defining terms to ensure we have a joint understanding;
- setting out roles and responsibilities of our staff;
- detailing how we recruit staff with the safeguarding of children as the number one priority;
- providing a written code of conduct that highlights both the behaviour we want to encourage as well as prohibited behaviour;
- training and staff development to ensure our staff are clear on their roles and responsibilities and what to do if a safeguarding concern arises;
- outlining how we make our grant-making safer, through the work of our programme staff and the requirements we set forth for our grantee partners, including intermediary organisations that re-grant our funds; and
- ensuring our communications are child safe.

The following sections will go into more details on each of these points.

## 2.1 Definitions and terms

**Child<sup>4</sup>** means every human being under the age of 18.

**Child abuse<sup>5</sup>** or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development, or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power.

**Child protection<sup>6</sup>** is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare and refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Child safeguarding<sup>7</sup>** is the responsibility that organisations have to: make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children; donot expose children to the risk of harm and abuse. Any concerns the organisation has about children's safety within the communities in which they work are reported to the appropriate authorities.

**Child sexual abuse<sup>8</sup>** is the involvement of a child in sexual activity with an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. This may include but is not limited to:

1. the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;
2. the exploitative use of a child for commercial sexual exploitation or other unlawful sexual practices; and
3. the exploitative use of children in sexual performances and materials.

**Commercial or other exploitation of a child<sup>9</sup>** refers to use of a child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour and use of children for commercial sexual exploitation. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical and mental health, education, or spiritual, moral, or social-emotional development.

**Concern**, or safeguarding concern, is where a person has:

- a. behaved in a way that may have harmed a child or might lead to a child being harmed;
- b. possibly committed or is planning to commit a criminal offence against a child or related to a child or adults; or
- c. behaved towards a child in a way that indicates s/he is or may be unsuitable to work with children.

**Contact with children<sup>10</sup>** means working on an activity or in a position that involves or may involve any interaction with children, no matter how minimal, either under the position description or due to the nature of the work environment. This includes indirect interaction with children in the community.

**Emotional abuse**<sup>11</sup> includes the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment, including the availability of a primary attachment figure, so that the child can develop a stable and full range of emotional and social competencies commensurate with her or his personal potential and in the context of the society in which the child lives. There may also be acts towards the child that cause harm or have a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development. These acts must be reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power. Acts include restriction of movement, patterns of belittling, denigrating, scapegoating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing, or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

**Harm** to children is a complex phenomenon that isn't defined in international legal instruments and does not fit easily into set parameters. For the purposes of this policy, we define harm as intentional or unintentional, physical or emotional hurt, injury, or damage to a child.

The use of the word harm in this policy is meant to highlight that action could, and should, be taken even when incidents arise that do not reach the threshold of abuse.

If a member of staff has any general concern or suspicion that harm is being caused or is likely to be caused to a child, this must be reported in line with the reporting procedure in chapter 3.

**Neglect**<sup>12</sup> is the failure to provide for the development of the child in all spheres: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or carers and causes or has a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible.

**Oak staff:** for the sake of brevity, the term "Oak staff" in this document includes all categories of persons detailed under the scope in Section 1.5.

**Physical abuse**<sup>13</sup> of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of an interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents.

**Working with children**<sup>14</sup> means being engaged in an activity with a child where the contact would reasonably be expected as a normal part of the activity and the contact is not incidental to the activity. This includes both in person and online activities. Working includes volunteering or other unpaid work.

## 2.2 Roles and responsibilities

Whilst all Oak staff are responsible for living up to the values and standards in this policy, certain staff have responsibilities for safeguarding at a strategic and operational level, as detailed below. Establishing clear governance and accountability mechanisms is critical to successful implementation. Therefore, the policy will be 'owned' by the President's Office, and the President will bear the ultimate responsibility, as delegated by the Board, for its overall implementation.

### All staff

Each member of staff (as detailed above in Application and Commitment), agrees to familiarise themselves with this policy and comply fully with its standards and its chapter on code of conduct specifically. Staff are required to be aware of risks to children and be vigilant. Staff are also responsible to report any suspected or known concern about the safety of children as per the reporting procedure in Chapter 3 and to participate fully in any safeguarding inquiry if requested. Furthermore, staff are to participate in annual trainings on child safeguarding.

### Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees are responsible for oversight and scrutiny of strategic and operational safeguarding matters across Oak Foundation. Furthermore, the Board of Trustees is responsible for promoting a positive safeguarding culture across the foundation. To support their oversight function, the Board of Trustees receives an annual report on the progress of safeguarding within the foundation. The board will support the Senior Designated Officer (President) and Designated Officer (Head of HR) in allegations against staff matters.



### **President and Senior Designated Officer**

The President is the senior designated officer. He is assisted by the chief of staff and the director of operations as his alternates. The President is accountable for strategic and operational responsibilities across the foundation. He is responsible for promoting a positive safeguarding culture across the foundation. He reports annually to the Board of Trustees and supports the Designated Officers in their role<sup>15</sup>. Furthermore, the President briefs the Trustees of safeguarding incidents reported to the foundation as and when appropriate.

### **Leadership**

Leadership includes directors, heads of functions, and others with supervisory responsibilities. They are responsible for the promotion of good practice by championing the safeguarding of children within their programmes and ensuring staff compliance with this policy.

### **Programme staff**

Programme staff are responsible for supporting grantee partners throughout the grant cycle, providing oversight and information about their responsibilities outlined in the funding agreement as well as safeguarding responsibilities. In some instances, programme staff will attend grantee partner programmes and undertake site visits. Therefore, they must uphold the code of conduct professional standards during site visits outlined in the next chapter. *See also [Section 2.6 safeguarding in grant-making](#) for more information on programme staff roles and responsibilities.*

### **Human Resource staff**

Human Resource staff are responsible for adhering to the standards outlined in Section 2.3 on safer recruitment.

### **Designated Officers**

Oak Foundation has two designated officers (DO), the head of HR and the project manager for safeguarding, as well as an alternate, the HR officer. They are responsible for promoting a safeguarding culture as well as managing safeguarding issues at an operational level, supporting staff and reporting and escalating concerns to the senior designated officer. The DO head of HR will be the initial point of contact for all concerns and allegations relating to Oak staff. The DO PM Safeguarding will be the initial point of contact for all safeguarding issues relating to children and grantee partner issues.

The DOs are also responsible for the management of the reporting procedure. This includes regular monitoring of reporting channels and adhering to the steps of the reporting procedure as per Chapter 3. The DOs commit to responding appropriately and referring safeguarding concerns promptly to the relevant authorities as required. The DOs will participate in specific trainings to be able to fulfil their role appropriately.

## **2.3 Safer recruitment**

Oak Foundation acknowledges that creating safe environments for children starts with the recruitment and appointment of suitably qualified, skilled, and vetted staff who have the desired competencies and skills to carry out their function in an effective, efficient, and safe manner. The recruitment processes used within Oak aim to be in the best interests of children and will reflect our commitment to protect children and prevent abuse.

### **Recruitment of staff**

In addition to Oak's standard recruitment processes, the following child safeguarding measures are applied:

- All job advertisements will have a child safeguarding statement in them, making it clear to future applicants that the highest considerations for the safety and protection of children are in place (
- safeguarding questions will be asked during interviews).
- All applicants will be required to undergo relevant vetting processes (which may include police criminal background checks, subject to local jurisdictions) and, starting employment with Oak, will sign a declaration stating that there is no known reason or event that would render them unsuitable for the post, and declaring any criminal convictions or ongoing criminal prosecutions against them (see Annex II for sample).
- Applicants will also be required to submit the names of two referees, including their last employer, who will be asked to provide references, including the referee's considered view on the candidate's suitability to be in contact with children. Oak reserves the right to follow up with any previous employer.

- The successful applicant will only be offered a position subject to: (a) suitable references; (b) proof of qualifications; (c) relevant vetting/clearance procedures; and (d) positive proof of identification.

#### **Selection of consultants ‘in contact or working with children’**

All consultants or other contractors identified as coming into contact with or working with children will be required to undergo relevant vetting processes (which may include police criminal background checks, subject to local jurisdictions).

Prior to deployment, he or she will sign a declaration stating that there is no known reason or event that would render them unsuitable for the post and declaring any criminal convictions or ongoing criminal prosecutions against them.

## **2.4 Code of conduct**

All those covered by the policy commit to respecting, promoting, upholding, and protecting, at all times, the rights of the child, as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>16</sup>. The standards of behaviour set by the Code (in bullets below) are required of all those covered by this policy in respect of their conduct towards all children. This includes all staff in any capacity who may undertake visits to grantee partner venues and events. Adherence to these standards will be interpreted within the framework of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Anyone found to be in breach of the Code will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or termination of employment or other arrangement with the Foundation. Any breaches of this code of conduct shall be reported as per the reporting mechanism in chapter 3.

All staff must also be mindful that their behaviour should respect the spirit of this code in their personal life and should not behave in a way that would undermine the reputation of Oak or place a child at risk. Common sense will prevail in applying this to staff’s private lives.

### **In summary, all staff are expected:**

1. To be familiar with Oak Foundation’s child safeguarding policy.
2. Act (within the same working day) when a concern arises.
3. Report the concern immediately to the designated officer who will determine the next steps to take.
4. To record concerns and actions taken in the form in Annex I.



### **Do**

Always treat children with respect regardless of their sex, ethnic or social origin, language, religious or other beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other status.

Use language or behaviour towards children that is always appropriate and in no way harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, or demeaning.

Behave in a calm, positive, supportive, and encouraging way with children.

Immediately report any concerns, suspicions, incidents, or allegations of actual or potential safeguarding concerns, or any breaches of this policy in accordance with appropriate procedures and to the designated officer (see below), charged with receiving such concerns. The person who makes a report in good faith will not be subjected to retaliation.

Challenge unacceptable behaviour in accordance with this code of conduct.

Ensure any relationship with a child (including their family) that you have met through work remains professional. The aim should never be to develop the relationship into a friendship or intimate relationship.

Familiarise yourself with the grantee partner's safeguarding policies ahead of site visits. Follow the grantee partner's safeguarding policies, and/or refer this code of conduct during site visits.

Ensure that another adult is present, wherever possible, when working in the proximity of children.



### **Do not**

Use physical punishment or discipline or use of inappropriate physical force of any kind towards children.

Engage in sexual activity of any form with children. This is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defence<sup>17</sup>. This includes paying for sexual services, i.e., exchange of money, employment, goods, or services, and exchange of assistance that is due to them.

Agree to keep information relating to a harm or potential harm of a child or information regarding concerns about an adult confidential. These must be reported.

Investigate any allegation of abuse yourself. Use the appropriate reporting channels.

Rely on your reputation, position, or Oak to protect you.

Let any allegations of abuse or poor practice go unchallenged or unreported.

Contact a child through any form of social media or hand out your business card to children.

Photograph or film children for which no prior consent has been sought. Please refer to annex IV: guidelines for using images of children for additional guidance.

Use computers, mobile phones, video/digital cameras, or other electronic devices inappropriately. This includes accessing, viewing, creating, downloading, or distributing, online sex abuse material of children.

Use children for domestic or other labour. This is prohibited when it: is inappropriate for the child's age or developmental capacity; interferes with the time available for education and recreational activities; or places them at significant risk of injury, exploitation, or abuse.

## 2.5 Training & staff development

### Awareness raising and training

Oak understands that, for the policy to be well understood and effectively implemented, it is essential that there are high levels of awareness and knowledge regarding the policy and that staff and others are clear, confident, and competent in putting the policy into practice. Therefore, Oak commits to:

- Disseminate and promote the policy in a range of ways (e.g., website, animation video, hard copies, and verbally). Copies of the policy will be made available and accessible to all stakeholders, electronically.
- Oak will adapt the reporting procedure for countries where Oak has an office to ensure that any breach of the policy will be dealt with in an appropriate manner and as per the national legal frameworks.
- Regular briefings and trainings will be provided as part of the roll-out of the policy and these, or elements of these, will be incorporated into standard induction processes for all staff. Training on the policy will be compulsory and will be carried out annually. Newly recruited staff will receive induction sessions and will participate in the next available training.
- Oak will ensure access to regular training updates and refresher courses to ensure that the policy continues to be embedded and that staff are made aware of changes and developments to the policy and its implementation.
- In addition, Oak will ensure further training is provided for staff with specific responsibilities under this policy. These groups include programme staff and the designated officers. Training provided to managers and staff designated to receive and respond to complaints and protection incidents will support those staff in making effective and appropriate responses.
- Oak will provide staff with access to materials and resources that support understanding and implementation of the policy and will also encourage sharing of experiences and examples of good practice in implementing the policy across the foundation.

## 2.6 Safeguarding in grant-making

Oak Foundation recognises its responsibility in ensuring children impacted by its grant-making are protected. Oak Foundation is committed to taking all appropriate steps to ensure that the organisations we fund have adequate safeguarding arrangements in place to prevent harm and respond effectively, should safeguarding concerns arise.

In our grant-making, we pledge to:

- build the capacity of our programme staff to assess safeguarding as a part of the overall due diligence process;
- maintain an open dialogue on safeguarding throughout the grant cycle, including in progress reports and during site visits;
- include grant conditions on safeguarding where we feel that improvements are needed;
- allow grantee partners to include a budget line for safeguarding within their applications; and
- signpost to resources, experts, and peer organisations that can help grantee partners work on their safeguarding arrangements.

We expect grantee partners working with or in contact with children, to adhere to the Oak child safeguarding standards (see Section 1.4 above) and have appropriate safeguards in place. For those grantee partners who need assistance, Oak provides guidance and support to enable the grantee partner to meet the safeguarding standards.

By signing an Oak grant letter, a grantee partner confirms its understanding and commitment to Oak Foundation's child safeguarding standards during the lifetime of the grant. Grantee partner safeguarding arrangements are monitored throughout the grant cycle. Grantee partners are offered support to improve their safeguarding measures if needed.

### 2.6.1 Intermediary organisations

Within several of our programmes, Oak Foundation issues grants to intermediary organisations who are responsible for re-granting those funds to smaller organisations. This approach allows us to grant to a larger number of organisations, each making an important impact in their fields and communities. As a re-granter of Oak Foundation, intermediaries are required to: have their own safeguarding arrangements in place; and monitor the safeguarding of their grantee partners. In granting funds to an intermediary organisation, we pledge to:

- engage in an open dialogue about safeguarding with the intermediary and clearly present our safeguarding requirements;
- ensure the intermediary organisation has adequate safeguarding arrangements in place, including support to their grantee partners;
- ensure that any safeguarding expectations are included in the grant-agreement with the intermediary; and
- agree on a clear procedure for the reporting of any safeguarding concerns.

More detailed guidance for programme staff can be found on [OakHub](#).

### 2.7 Safeguarding in communication

The public use of images and stories of children can pose potential protection-related risks to them. Therefore, it is important to have the child's best interests at heart when using their images and stories. This entails respecting their dignity and rights, including the right to privacy and their right to be heard.

Informed consent should always be gained before taking images of children. Oak staff should ensure that:

- the storage and removal of images adheres to the GDPR;
- any images taken are approved by the grantee partner organisation and that they in turn have gained;
- the written or verbal consent of children and their caregivers, including their consent to share the image with Oak;

- images or stories do not reveal the identity or location of the child;
- care is taken to preserve the identity of vulnerable children<sup>18</sup>; and
- images depicting children that are taken during site visits are not used on Oak staff's personal social media accounts.

More detailed guidelines on the use of images and stories of children are found in Annex IV.

# 3

## Procedures

For a quick reference guide on what to do if you are concerned about a child, refer to the flowcharts on pages 18 and 25. Please note that depending on the country in which the safeguarding incident happened, how the reporting to external parties is done will vary. However, the internal reporting within Oak Foundation remains the same.

Oak Foundation is committed to responding to all reports or indications, including rumours, that suggest a child may be harmed or at risk of harm. The safety of child(ren) must be of paramount concern at all times.

The two sections below detail how staff should report concerns about **1. children** and **2. staff members and other adults**.

### 3.1 Responding and reporting safeguarding concerns about a child

*For a quick reference guide on what to do if you are concerned about a child, refer to the flowchart in this section (page 18).*

Oak staff do not work directly with children and would only come into contact with children through:

- attending a grantee partner event;
- site visits; and
- other staff members' children who may be present at Oak offices.

However, staff still need to be aware of what to do if they become aware of a safeguarding concern or witness this directly. A concern about the safety of a child might arise because of:

- programme officer site visits;
- email/phone reports;
- 'Report a concern mechanism';
- media;
- the behaviour of an adult working in a grantee partner organisation towards a child gives cause for concern or is reported to you; and
- someone tells you that a child has been harmed.

**There are 5 R's which underpin what to do if a safeguarding concern about a child arises:**

#### RECOGNISE

concerns that a child is being harmed or might be at risk of harm.

#### RESPOND APPROPRIATELY

to a child who is telling you what is happening to them, or if you have observed them being harmed, or if you have received information that they are being harmed.

#### REFER

the concerns to the DO (PM Safeguarding) or if in an emergency, to children's social care or the police.

#### RECORD

the concerns appropriately and any subsequent action taken; ensure there is no delay in passing on concerns. Timescales are in place to ensure that matters are resolved in a timely way, but these are the maximum allowed and nothing should prevent a speedier response if this is required.

#### REVIEW

the actions that were taken, and to consider any lessons learned for future improvement. This process should include both the designated officers (head of HR and PM Safeguarding) and the SDO (President), as well as other staff with safeguarding responsibilities.



### Responding to a child safeguarding emergency

In an emergency where a child has been seriously hurt or is in imminent danger of being harmed, **staff must:**

1. **Call** local emergency services (see below). **Inform** the DO (PM Safeguarding) immediately. If the DO (PM Safeguarding) is not present, **inform** the other DO (head of HR) or the SDO (President).
2. **Complete** the Safeguarding Concern Form in annex 1 with as much information as you can.

### Historical or non-recent abuse

Any disclosure or concerns that breach this policy and relate to abuse that happened more than a year ago, involving anyone working at Oak, or with a grantee partner organisation, must still be taken seriously and acted upon in line with the procedures outlined in this section or Section 3.4. Often victims of abuse take many years to come forward due to shame and a fear of not being believed; however, the alleged perpetrator may remain a risk to others and therefore all non-recent historic allegations must be examined. Oak will report such cases and concerns to the local authorities and/or the police, as appropriate.

### Responding to a non-emergency safeguarding concern

If you identify a safeguarding concern which is not immediately life-threatening or there is no risk of serious harm, follow the steps below:

1. Consult immediately with the DO (PM safeguarding)
2. Make a careful record of what was said and done using the safeguarding concern form in this section and pass this on to the DO (PM safeguarding) within 24 hours.
3. The DO (PM safeguarding) will determine what action is needed. Whatever decision is taken, the DO (PM safeguarding) must record it on the safeguarding concern form in annex I with a rationale (even if no further action is to be taken), as well as a record of any actions on the safeguarding action record form in annex II.

Additionally:

- The DO (PM safeguarding) may consult with the SDO (President) or one of the statutory services in the country where the concern was raised.
- Any referrals to statutory services must be made by the DO (PM safeguarding) unless it is an emergency or the DO (PM safeguarding) considers it better for the member of staff to make the referral and report back.
- Any referrals to statutory services must be followed up in writing within 48 hours and feedback received/sought within three working days of having made the referral to check what action is being taken. It is the responsibility of the DO (PM safeguarding) to do this and record this on safeguarding concerns form in annex I.

A decision to take no further action or defer a decision is as serious as a decision to make a referral. Each local authority has a process for receiving referrals. Oak must use the relevant process in its area.

### 3.2 Reporting framework for Oak staff<sup>19</sup>

- Did you witness a safeguarding incident?
- Do you suspect someone of having breached this policy?
- Has someone alleged a safeguarding breach?
- Has someone disclosed a safeguarding concern about a child to you?

If you answered **Yes** to any of the above, **please follow the reporting framework on the next page.**

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### Local emergency service numbers



**Geneva: 112**

**Chapel Hill: 911**

**London: 999**

## Flowchart 1 – Reporting Frameworks for Oak staff in case of concerns about child **Concern about child**

### Step 1

- **Immediately inform** designated officer (project manager for safeguarding)
- Complete **Appendix 1** Safeguarding Concern Form

### Step 2

**Designated officer (project manager for safeguarding) informs the senior designated officer (President)**  
Together determine an appropriate response and ensure **Appendix 1** Safeguarding Concern Form is completed.

### Step 3

**Is the concern allayed, uncertain, or does it remain.** Please follow the appropriate guidance below.

Concern allayed	Uncertain	Concerns remain
<p><b>No action needed</b> The concern does not constitute a safeguarding concern (consider monitoring and review).</p> <p>Record decision on Appendix 2 Safeguarding Action Log.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. DO to consult with local authority in the country where the concern was raised.</li><li>2. Record action decision on Appendix 2 Safeguarding Action Log.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. DO to refer to Children’s Social Care and/or the police where the incident happened within 24 hours.</li><li>2. Put in writing within 48 hours.</li><li>3. Record action and decision on Appendix 2 Safeguarding Action Log.</li></ol>
		<p> <b>If no feedback</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. DO to follow up after 3 working days.</li><li>2. Record update in Appendix 2 Safeguarding Action Log</li></ol>



### 3.3 Managing allegations about a staff member

*For a quick reference guide on what to do if you have a concern about an adult's behaviour towards a child, refer to the flowchart in this section (page 25).*

#### Managing allegations against a staff member

The procedures in this section must be followed consistently in all instances, regardless of how the safeguarding allegation arises or from whom, or whether it is shared with Oak by email, face-to-face contact, social networking, telephone, or letter.

The aims of these procedures are to ensure that:

- Children and staff are protected and supported following an allegation that they may have been abused by an adult working for or on behalf of Oak.
- There is a fair, consistent, and robust response to any safeguarding allegation made, including those that are historical.
- An appropriate level of investigation into concerns or allegations, whether they are said to have taken place recently or not, and whether the person in question has been employed or contracted by Oak.
- Oak continues to fulfil its responsibilities towards members of staff who may be subjected to such investigations.

#### Definition of a safeguarding allegation

This is where a person has:

- a. behaved in a way that has harmed a child or might lead to a child being harmed;
- b. possibly committed or planning to commit a criminal offence against a child or related to a child; and
- c. behaved towards a child in a way that indicates s/he is or would be unsuitable to work with children.

The allegation may:

- Involve a child/ren, or adults(s) or both.
- Not directly have a 'known child' victim as such. For example, if a member of staff is accessing abusive images of children online or using the internet to groom children with the intent to harm in future.
- Be about any type of abuse.
- Concern a breach of the Oak safeguarding code of conduct.
- Relate to a staff member who has left Oak, for behaviour during employment (known as a 'historical non-recent allegation').
- Concern the child of a staff member.

A safeguarding allegation may arise when:

- A child or parent/carer makes a direct allegation against a member of staff.
- Someone directly observes behaviour that is cause for concern.
- Oak receives a safeguarding allegation from any individual in the course of another internal procedure, for example a disciplinary procedure or a complaint.
- The police or local authority informs Oak that an individual is the subject of a child or adult protection and/or criminal investigation.
- A member of staff informs Oak that they have been the subject of allegations, have harmed a child, committed an offence against or related to a child.

#### ***If a member of staff is concerned about the behaviour of another member of staff,***

***they should not worry about the confidentiality of this information. Even if it turns out to be mistaken, it is better to discuss it and enable a proper investigation and assessment to happen than not report it at all.***

Do not:

- ignore concerns;
- confront the person; or
- discuss the matter with others apart from those identified in this procedure.

## What to do if a safeguarding allegation is made?

Refer to flowchart in the section 'Managing allegations against adults' (page 25).

## Initial considerations about managing a safeguarding allegation

There may be up to four strands in the consideration of any safeguarding allegation:

1. An initial risk assessment, considering the wellbeing of any children harmed.
2. Enquiries and assessment by social care about whether a child is in need of protection and/or services.
3. A police investigation if a criminal offence may have been committed.
4. An internal investigation and consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.
5. Referral for 'consideration to bar' a person from working with children (i.e. referral to a professional registration body for professional misconduct, where feasible and relevant).
6. A review of the case handling and a subsequent risk assessment to prevent further incidents.

The SDO (President) will oversee the management of all allegations together with the DO (head of HR) and hold accountability for them.

The SDO (President) and DO (Head of HR) are responsible for agreeing an initial plan of how to proceed with managing the allegation. They need to agree that the information before them is a safeguarding allegation. The safeguarding allegation may be in respect of the person's employment or behaviour towards any other children.

The DO (head of HR) will inform the SDO (President) within 24 hours, and they will consult and consider if the allegation is a breach of the safeguarding policy and requires action. If the SDO (President) is on leave or not available, the DO (head of HR) will need to contact the Director of Operations as the alternate SDO.

If, after the initial consideration, the SDO (President) and DO (head of HR) do not consider the matter to constitute a criminal offence, they must decide if an internal investigation is required to determine if the behaviour/incident was a breach of the code of conduct, related to poor practice or misconduct. The disciplinary process must then be followed.

If the safeguarding allegation is confirmed, the SDO (President) and DO (head of HR) must agree to an initial plan **within 72 hours** and consider the following steps:

1. If it is considered that a child is subject to life-threatening concerns or risk of immediate harm or needs emergency medical attention, the emergency services must be contacted, and the parents/carers of the child be told that immediate steps are being taken to get help. See flowchart on page 25.
2. The person who reports the concern or has the concern reported to them must make a note on the safeguarding concern form (annex I) to include:
  - the name of the individual who the allegation is about and any other identifying information, including location;
  - the name of any child involved (if known);
  - the date and time of the allegation occurring;
  - the name and contact details of the person making the allegation; and
  - key information about the nature of the safeguarding allegation, to be detailed on next page →

**Key information to be noted:**

1. The immediate safety of any relevant child/ren involved, for example those that are the subjects of the safeguarding allegation or other children that the individual has contact with through work or family.
2. What information to share with the individual who is the subject of the safeguarding allegation and with any other known employer of the individual, and when to do so. The subject of an investigation has the right to know that they are being investigated and what the allegation is.
3. Whether any immediate decision is to be taken to suspend the individual subjected to allegation, pending further enquiries and/or investigation.
4. Delegation of particular tasks to nominated safeguarding representatives.
5. Any records that need to be secured or 'locked down, or any equipment removed from the individual who is the subject of the concern.
6. Whether the criteria are met for referral to the local authority and/or the police.
7. If it is agreed that the safeguarding allegation meets one or more of the criteria above, then the DO (head of HR) or SDO (President) must make a referral within one working day to:
  - the local authority (normally where the child lives) if the allegation is about behaviour towards a specific child; and
  - the Police where the member of staff lives if the allegation is about behaviour but with no identifiable victim.
8. Any further information that may be required for clarification.
9. Anyone else who is aware of the safeguarding allegation and who has been spoken to should be identified.
10. Whether any advice should be sought from the relevant local authority or helpline.
11. Arrangements to support the person who is the subject of the safeguarding allegation, the person who raised the allegation and the alleged victim should be made.

In addition, information will need to be managed, such as:

- Who needs to know and what information can be shared?
- When can information be shared with the individual who is the subject of the concern?
- How can speculation, leaks and gossip be managed?
- What, if any, information can reasonably be given to reduce speculation?
- How can media interest be managed, if, and when, it might arise?

**Action required of the DO and SDO following initial consideration**

Where the allegation meets the criteria in this section under definition of a safeguarding allegation, the DO (head of HR) and/or SDO (President) will make the referral to the relevant local authority to discuss and agree the next steps, including informing parents/carers of the child at risk (if applicable) about the allegation if they are not already aware of it.

The local authority will discuss:

- the allegation and obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made; and
- whether there is evidence/information that establishes the allegation as false or unfounded.

In addition, if there is reason to suspect that a criminal offence may have been committed, the police will be involved in making enquiries. Oak will cooperate fully with the police and any child protection investigation.

**In the event** that a safeguarding allegation is made against:

- The DO (PM safeguarding): the SDO (President) and DO (head of HR) will manage the allegation process.
- The DO (head of HR): the SDO (President) and DO (PM safeguarding) will manage the allegation process.
- The SDO (President): the DO (head of HR) and the chair of the board will manage the allegation.
- Board member: SDO (President) and advisors to the Board will manage the allegation.

Some safeguarding allegations are clearly serious enough to require immediate referral to the police. Other allegations that appear to meet the criteria may seem less serious; however, it is important that they are followed up and examined objectively by the external authorities who may hold other relevant information about the individual that is unknown to Oak.

*All decisions and the information upon which they are based must be recorded.*

### **Suspension**

In certain cases, Oak will be required to suspend the member of staff who is the subject of the allegation, or cease to use their services.

The act of suspension does not indicate a person's guilt. An individual must not be suspended automatically when there has been an allegation or without careful thought. Suspension should be considered in any case where:

- there is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm;
- the allegation warrants investigation by the police;
- the allegation is serious enough to be grounds for dismissal; or
- there are concerns that the person about whom the allegations are made may put pressure on or interfere with potential witnesses.

The power to suspend the accused member of staff or dispense with the services of a supplier is vested in the employer alone. However, in making these decisions, the SDO (President) in consultation with the DO (head of HR) will need to take into

consideration the views of the police and the local authority if the allegation has been referred externally.

The SDO (President) and DO (head of HR) will be responsible for deciding how and when to feed back to the person who made or received the allegation, and what information shall be given to others who may know the accused individual concerned.

The SDO (President) will decide on a case-by-case basis if, and when, it is necessary to advise the nominated safeguarding champion on the Board of Trustees about the allegation and its management. This will depend on the seriousness of the allegation, reputational risks, liability, and potential media interest. Outcomes and lessons learned from case handling will be presented to the Board annually. See the flowchart on page 25.

### **Action following the conclusion of the investigative process**

At the conclusion of any internal or external investigations by police or social services, the SDO (President) in conjunction with the DO (head of HR) and the relevant authority for external investigations, will formally review the outcome and determine any further action required. The range of options open will depend on the circumstances of the case and will need to take into account the result of any police investigation or trial, any investigations in respect of the child safety, as well as the different standard of proof required in disciplinary and criminal proceedings. Options include:

- reintegrating staff member;
- invoking the disciplinary process;
- alerting other known employers of the individual concerned (advice may need to be sought from either the local authority, police or helpline on this point); or
- referring case to a professional regulatory body for consideration to bar the person from ever working with children (if relevant).

The following definitions should be used when recording the outcome of allegation:

Definition	Explanation
Substantiated	there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.
False	there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
Malicious	there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and that there has been a deliberate act to deceive.
Unsubstantiated	there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation.

Every effort should be made to reach a conclusion in all cases, even if:

- the individual refuses to cooperate, although s/he should be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations;
- it is difficult to reach a conclusion;
- the member of staff has resigned, or the supplier has withdrawn his/her services; or
- the person is deceased.

Oak never agrees to the use of a 'settlement agreement' with a member of staff where a safeguarding allegation has been substantiated. This is where the member of staff subjected to the allegation agrees to resign, the employer agrees not to pursue disciplinary action, and both parties agree to a form of words to be used in future references. Nor can it be used to override Oak's duty to make a referral to a relevant professional regulatory body where they meet the criteria for consideration to bar them from working with children.

The SDO (President) and DO (Head of HR) must determine who needs feedback (in writing, in person), following the conclusion of any investigation, and the nature of that feedback in accordance with the principles of data protection and confidentiality. This might include feedback to the child's parents/carers, and/or the person who raised the concern initially and the line manager of the member of staff.

If an allegation is determined to be false or malicious, the SDO (President) with the DO (Head of HR), where relevant, must consider if any further action is required. This includes:

- If the safeguarding allegation was made by a child, is there a need to consider if a referral to children's social care is required to determine if that child needs services, or may have been abused by someone else.
- If the safeguarding allegation was deliberately invented maliciously by another adult, this should be discussed with the police and advice sought.
- Whether disciplinary action is required using disciplinary or relevant procedures.
- The support needs of the person that was the subject of the safeguarding allegation.
- The support needs of an adult survivor of historical abuse.

At the end of the process of managing an allegation and its conclusions, the SDO (President) and DO (head of HR) is responsible for the identification of any lessons learned from the operation of this procedure, as well as actions taken, and the support offered. This learning should feed into policy and procedural revisions and any plans for safeguarding training.

The SDO (President) must provide feedback in writing to the person who is subjected to the investigation, clarifying the outcome and any implications for their employment. This must be provided within **five working days** of the conclusion of the investigation.

Templates for written feedback can be found [here](#).

### **3.4 Poor practice and low-level concerns**

There may be circumstances where allegations are about poor practice rather than child or adults at risk of abuse, for example, the member of staff has not adhered to elements of the code of conduct within this policy. Where there is any doubt, the manager should consult with the DO (head of HR and/or SDO (President)). If the investigation shows that the allegation is clearly about poor practice, Oak will determine how best to remedy this e.g., as part of the disciplinary procedure, depending on the nature and seriousness of the practice.

### **3.5 Support**

Oak will fully support and protect any member of staff who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child. If an allegation is made that is found to be malicious or fraudulent, Oak retains the right to take appropriate action against the individual responsible for making the claim.

As an employer, Oak will strive to be fair and respectful of its staff and will therefore act to manage and minimise the stress inherent in the allegations process. In managing any allegation, the SDO (President) and DO (head of HR) need to consider the support needs of individuals involved. The support they require depends on the circumstances of the case and will have to be negotiated and agreed on a case-by-case basis.

Support may include external counselling, responding to the impacts of shock, anger or being a suicide risk, for example. It may include support for the:

- person who raised the concern at the outset;
- person who is the subject of the allegation; and
- child/parents/carers, if applicable, where harm was alleged against a particular child.

The SDO (President) and DO (head of HR) are responsible for ensuring that the member of staff and all those named in this document who are subject of the allegation are:

- informed of the allegation against them (once agreed by the local authority/police), notified of the processes that will follow and signposted to independent support should they require it;
- kept updated on any progress in relation to their case;

- kept updated about what is happening in the workplace in cases where the member of staff has been suspended or if Oak has ceased to use their services. This is to enable their reintegration, should they return to work; and
- sent correspondence confirming all the above, including the arrangements for support.

### **3.6 Referral to a professional regulatory body**

If an allegation is substantiated, the SDO (President) in conjunction with the DO (head of HR) must consider referring the information to the relevant professional regulatory body and the disclosure and barring service in the country in which the staff member works. This is subject to the laws of the country.

The actions outlined in the preceding paragraph must be considered, even if the person has resigned or the volunteering activity has ceased, or the person is deceased. A record of all decisions and actions must also be recorded.

### **3.7 Recording, retention and destruction of files**

Oak keeps clear and comprehensive records of any safeguarding concern or allegation, including details of how they were followed up and resolved, and details of the decisions reached, and any action taken. It is the responsibility of the designated officers to keep records.

The purpose of the record is to prevent unnecessary re-investigation, should an allegation resurface after time, and to enable Oak to review and improve policies, procedures and practice based on learning and feedback.

Additional records e.g., email, and hard copy documents, must be appended and stored with the original record. All original hard copy documents should be immediately destroyed (post scanning) using a shredder.

### **Records of safeguarding allegations**

Records of safeguarding allegations and any subsequent processes against members of staff must be retained by Oak, including for people who leave the organisation, at least until the person reaches 65 years, or for 10 years if that is longer. The records must be stored securely in a password-protected folder on the shared drive and with restricted access only for those with designated responsibilities. Details of allegations that are found to be malicious should be removed from personnel records.

### **Retention**

Oak follows the GDPR with regards to record retention. Once the requisite retention period has been reached, all records should be destroyed using shredding and confidential waste or be electronically purged in accordance with the GDPR. It is the responsibility of the designated officers to check when records are due for destruction and arrange to do this.

**Flowchart 2 – Reporting Frameworks for Oak staff in case of concerns about child**

**Step 1**

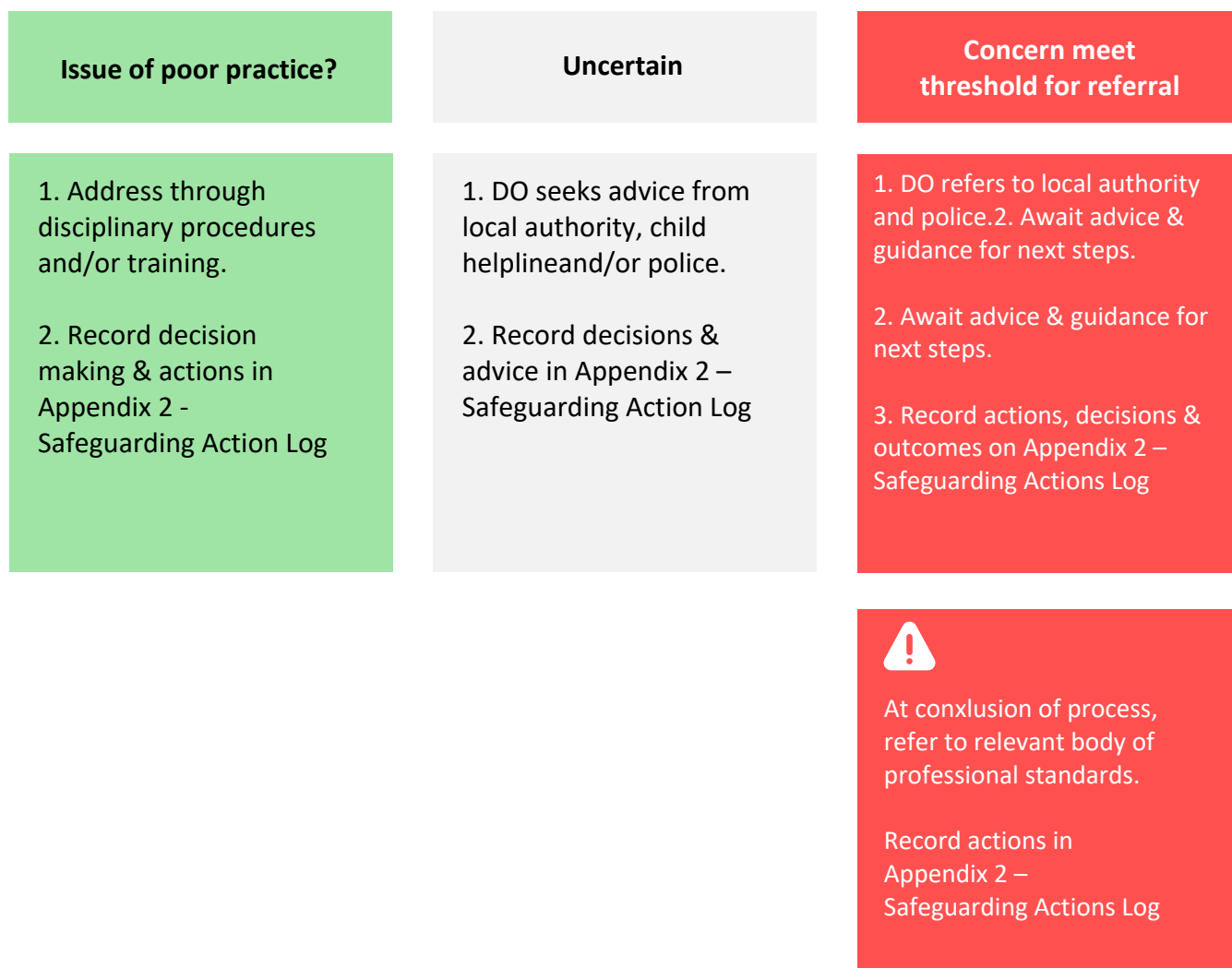
Allegation made against staff member OR concerns raise about staff member’s behaviors

**Step 2**

- On the same working day: inform DO (head of HR)  
 Complete Appendix 1 Safeguarding Concern Form

**Step 3**

DO consult SDO (President) to determine how to manage the concern







## 4

# Annexes

**Annex I:**

Child Safeguarding Policy reporting and recording format

**Annex II:**

Safeguarding action log

**Annex III:**

Declaration for Staff and Consultants of Oak Foundation

**Annex IV:**

Guidelines for using photographs of children

**Annex I: Child Safeguarding Policy reporting and recording format**  
**Safeguarding concern form sample**

*Complete as much detail as you are able. Don't delay making a referral if there is information missing.*

<b>Part 1 Details of the child you are concerned about if known</b>		
Name of Child		
Gender:	Age:	Date of Birth:
Religion	Ethnicity	Any additional needs (e.g. disability, language spoken, interpreter required)
Parent's/Carer's name(s):		
Contact details:		
<b>Part 2 Details of a safeguarding allegation against staff and all others named in this document</b>		
Name, role and organisation (if not Oak staff)		
Age and/or Date of Birth		
Home address		
<b>Part 3 Your Details:</b>		
Your Name:	Your Position:	Your contact details
<b>Part 4 Report:</b>		
Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Reporting my own concerns  <input type="checkbox"/> Responding to concerns raised by someone else	If responding to concerns raised by someone else, please provide their name, role and contact details (if known):	

Please provide details of the concerns including times, dates or other relevant information. Please make it clear whether you are giving a fact, expressing opinion or an opinion of someone else.

If you are reporting on concerns about a safeguarding allegation against a member of staff, partner or third party please provide full details here.

The child's account of what happened (e.g. of any incident, injury, disclosure, behaviour):

Please provide details of the person alleged to have caused the incident/injury if known (e.g. names(s) /address/ incident address /relationship to child

Please provide details (name, role contact details if known) of any witnesses to the incident/concerns:

<b>Part 5: Actions Taken</b>	
State any risk of immediate danger:	
Identify any action taken already e.g. contact with police, manager, children or adults social care services etc.	
Is the child/adult at risk or family/carer or accused person aware that a report has been made:	
Any further information or comments:	

**Date and time of report being submitted** \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 6: Immediate action and decisions by SO**

**Annex II: Safeguarding action log**

Use a copy of this form to append to the reporting and recording format for the incident concerned

<b>Date &amp; time</b>	<b>Name of person recording actions</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Action or further follow up</b>	<b>By whom</b>

**Annex III: Declaration for staff and consultants of Oak Foundation<sup>20</sup>**

*To be appended to contract of employment or consultancy*

- I confirm that I have read Oak Foundation’s Child Safeguarding Policy and agree to abide by it.
- I confirm that I have read and understood my duties, obligations, and responsibilities as they pertain to this policy.
- I confirm that I am aware that if I have questions related to my duties, obligations or responsibilities set out in this policy, I will ask my supervisor, the designated officers or the President for support.
- I also declare that I have disclosed to Oak Foundation any issue which could give rise to any child protection concern — real or perceived — regarding my suitability for employment or consultancy.
- I confirm that I have no criminal prosecutions pending, nor have I been previously convicted of any offence involving inappropriate conduct with children.

By my signature below, I certify that the above statements are true and correct.

Name and signature

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Annex IV: Guidelines for using images of children Risks**

The public use of images and stories of children poses potential protection-related risks<sup>21</sup>:

- Images containing personal information can be used as a means of identifying children, making contact with them at a distance or even tracing them to where they live.
- Images may be altered or adapted for inappropriate use.
- Displaying and using inappropriate images, stories etc., or images and stories, for which consent, and permission have not been obtained, is unethical and may lead to increased organisational risks, such as reputational damage.

Personal information about a child (such as full name and date of birth or full names of family members) and information that could be used to identify his/her specific location within a country (such as village or community names, school, parish, etc.), should not be used, especially where this is linked to an image. The maximum information given about a child should be first name and name of the district in which they live.

Children that have experienced violence, exploitation, have been otherwise abused or are in some way particularly vulnerable or at risk if identified, should not have their faces displayed or in any other way be represented in a way that may lead to their identification. In addition, their real names should be changed, and this change be indicated. Other identifying details should also be changed.

Images of children in states of undress should not present them in poses that could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or in ways that impact negatively on their dignity or privacy. All images and stories, along with accompanying details of individuals, should be used and kept according to relevant data and privacy laws. It is recommended that:

- images are stored securely (e.g., lockable safe/cabinet, electronic files password;
- protected, and given limited access etc.; and
- destroyed two years after the date on the consent form unless further consent is agreed.

## **Consent**

The informed, oral or ideally written consent of the child and parent/guardian should always be obtained before a photograph or image of a child is taken and used, and its intended and/or possible use(s) explained. The implications of using images, including risks and possible negative consequences, especially where images used on websites should also be fully explained. Child-friendly consent forms should be used for obtaining informed consent from children and, where possible, the child and family should be shown the image before it is published.

Group photographs: as with individual photographs, it should be explained to the group what the photographs will be used for, and informed consent should be sought from individuals in the group. Any individuals who wish to opt out should be allowed to do so.

General photographs: when using images of children in crowd scenes where it may be difficult or impossible to get consents, the following should be taken into consideration:

- Would the children attending the event expect photographs to be taken?
- Would children in the photograph probably consider themselves to be in a public place, with no expectation of privacy?
- Is it unlikely that anyone would object to the photograph being taken? (An individual could be in a public place but may not want any images of them being used.)

Where photographs are being taken at a planned event, as far as possible, individuals should be told in advance that cameras will be used, and how the photos will be used, in order that they can opt out of the event or notify organisers that they do not wish to be featured in any photographs.

## **Guidelines for use of photographers/ writers contracted by Oak**

Independent photographers and writers commissioned by Oak are considered as contractors / consultants and as such are subject to the policy.

## **Reporting concerns**

Concerns regarding inappropriate use of the images of children should be reported to the designated officer, as detailed in chapter 3 of this policy.

## References

1. <https://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk/how-we-keep-children-safe/accountability/accountability>
2. We are grateful for feedback provided by the Funder Safeguarding Collaborative. Resources used include: Funder Safeguarding Collaborative, Keeping Children Safe, Human Dignity Foundation, UNICEF, Terre des Hommes Lausanne, NSPCC, DFAT, Comic Relief, Canadian Centre for Child Protection
3. These standards build on the international child safeguarding standards developed by Keeping Children Safe
4. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 1.
5. 'World Report on Violence and Health' (WHO 1999 & 2002)
6. Safeguarding children and child protection (NSPCC)
7. Keeping Children Safe Standards (KCS 2014)
8. 'World Report on Violence and Health' (WHO 1999 & 2002)
9. 'World Report on Violence and Health' (WHO 1999 & 2002)
10. DFAT Child Protection Policy for the Australian Government's aid program (2018)
11. World Report on Violence and Health' (WHO 1999 & 2002)
12. Ibid
13. Ibid
14. DFAT Child Protection Policy for the Australian Government's aid program (2018)
15. As of 2018 a Project Manager, Safeguarding and Organisational Development was hired to oversee and manage Oak Foundation's work on safeguarding, including the drafting of this policy.  
If or when this position is no longer in place, the President will need to designate a focal point to assist in the oversight and management.
16. Specifically, Oak Foundation recognises the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents and family members as laid down in Article 5 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which reads: "States Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by local custom, legal guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child, to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognized in the present Convention".
17. This is consistent with the standard set out in the UN Secretary General's bulletin "Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse" (ST/SGB/2003/13, section 3, para. 3.2 (5)).
18. This includes but is not limited to: child survivors of abuse, children in conflict with the law, children with a vulnerable status such as asylum-seeking or stateless children, child combatants.
19. This reporting pathway is inspired by other child safeguarding policies such as: Terre des Hommes Lausanne, UNICEF Safeguarding Toolkit for Business.
20. This declaration should be signed by all new staff. In addition, consultants, and other contractors whose role has been defined as 'working with children' should sign this declaration. Please refer to section 2.2 of the Policy for more information.
21. Based on A Child Protection Toolkit (KCS 2006) and Plan International guidelines.  
N.B. Each office must ensure that it complies with local legislation pertaining to data protection and privacy and should also follow guidance contained in this document where it sets a higher standard.



### **Our mission**

Oak Foundation commits its resources to address issues of global, social, and environmental concern, particularly those that have a major impact on the lives of the disadvantaged. With offices in Europe, India, and North America, we make grants to organisations in approximately 40 countries worldwide.

### **Our Programmes**

Environment, Housing and Homelessness, International Human Rights, Issues Affecting Women, Learning Differences, Prevent Child Sexual Abuse, Special Interest, Brazil, India, Oak Foundation Denmark, Zimbabwe

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### **Check us out on social media**

Through our social media channels, we amplify the voices of our grantee partners and support the work of our programmes. We want to inspire hope and possibility.

