

# Child Safeguarding Policy

## Key facts

Teach First takes seriously its responsibility towards safeguarding all children who engage with the charity, with the focus being on their safety and welfare. The aim of this policy is to ensure that:

- Excellent child safeguarding practice is promoted at Teach First;
- All children who engage with Teach First are treated with dignity and respect;
- All employees know what to do in the event of a child safeguarding incident and make informed and confident responses to specific child safeguarding issues;
- Teach First expects high standards of behaviour and professionalism by all stakeholders who interact with children in relation to Teach First events and activities;
- All child safeguarding incidents are dealt with consistently and properly recorded.
- For emergency situations please [click here](#).

This policy is written with our commitment to equality and diversity at its heart and should be interpreted in a way that provides fair treatment for all.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended by Teach First at any time.

**Child Safeguarding** means protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and/or taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. If a child turns 18 during Teach First's engagement with them this policy will continue to apply until the activity/relationship is formally closed by Teach First.

## 1 Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies in relation to Teach First arranged activity and events. It applies to all persons who are carrying out paid or unpaid work on behalf of Teach First. This includes employees, trustees, interns, work experience students; contractors and consultants; agency workers; casual workers; and other individuals (including in Teach First programmes, ambassadors, employees of supporters and partners) when engaged in Teach First organised events and activities.

Teach First trainees and ambassadors in teaching roles are covered by the safeguarding policies of their employing schools. Trainees are DBS checked by schools and on behalf of Teach First. Both policies apply, but where there is an inconsistency, the school's policy will take precedence as the employer policy.

If you have a child safeguarding concern which does not relate to a Teach First organised activity or event (e.g. about something you come across in a partner school), you should use the specific policy or process which applies to that setting to escalate the matter (e.g. the school's own safeguarding policy).

This policy applies to all stakeholders whether or not Teach First has requested and received a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate.

On occasion, where a corporate supporter works with multiple voluntary organisations, they will ask us to follow their own safeguarding policy when organising events on their behalf or with them and their other partners (“Joint Events”).

We can follow a corporate supporter’s safeguarding policy only where:

1. The corporate supporter understands that Teach First will also escalate any disclosures made to Teach First staff at Joint Events under its own safeguarding policy;
2. The policy has been reviewed by Governance, Legal and Compliance and includes:
  - a. Acceptable statements on safe recruitment for employees and volunteers, and clear procedures for DBS checking relevant to employees and volunteers;
  - b. A clear procedure for dealing with disclosures and allegations, including guidance on how to respond to a child who is making a disclosure, a clear escalation pathway and relevant contact details;
  - c. Provisions for regular review of the policy;
  - d. Board level oversight and ownership of the policy;
  - e. Clear guidance on acceptable behaviour when interacting with children;
  - f. Clear guidance on planning events with children.

## **Section 2. Principles, Requirements and Expectations**

### **2.1 Child Safeguarding Principles**

- The welfare of the child is paramount;
- We will ensure that robust steps will be taken to protect children from abuse and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings when they engage with Teach First;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and appropriate action taken to address these swiftly and fully;
- Anyone who is bound by this policy has the responsibility to highlight concerns;
- Anyone who is bound by this policy has the right to report concerns or suspicions in confidence and free from harassment;

### **2.2 Requirements and Expectations**

In line with good practice, Teach First will ensure that arrangements are in place to reflect the importance of child safeguarding, including:

- A Trustee lead and a Deputy;
- A Child Safeguarding Officer (CSO) who is an Executive Director, and a Deputy, to take leadership responsibility for safeguarding;
- Maintaining a clear process for dealing with allegations against people who work with children;
- Developing a culture of listening to and promoting the welfare of children, where stakeholders feel supported to raise issues about safeguarding;
- Child safeguarding training as part of the mandatory online training for all employees, including familiarisation with responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child;

- Ensuring partner organisations have a robust child safeguarding policy in place, or agree to adhere to this policy, before agreeing contracts involving contact with children;
- A Child Safeguarding Group led by the CSO to review child safeguarding practice and ensure learning from incidents and continuous improvement;
- Safe recruitment practices for individuals whom Teach First will permit to work regularly with children, including policies on when to obtain a DBS check.

In situations where this policy applies stakeholders must:

- Treat all children with dignity and respect;
- Where it has been identified that a role requires it, submit a joint application with Teach First for a basic or enhanced (Teach First will advise the level) Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) certificate and submit the supporting evidence as required;
- Inform Teach First of any relevant police record, disciplinary action or other factor, or any change in your circumstances, which may impact your suitability to work with children.
- Recognise that any role that interacts with children places you in a position of trust, and undertake to uphold that trust at all times.
- If face-to-face contact is necessary, only meet children in an appropriate public place, for example a library, a gallery or a classroom, where other adults are regularly present. Depending on your role (for example as a mentor), it may be appropriate to have a meeting in a confidential space, but this still needs to be an appropriate public space, such as a classroom with an open door, a coffee shop or a public area within your office.
- With regard to communication, comply with the following:
  - **All interactions:** Skype meetings may be used, but must follow the same parameters of a face-to-face meeting, with both parties using Skype in an open and public space. Wherever possible, only communicate with children via a professional email address. Where further contact channels are required, parental consent must be gained.
  - **Volunteers:** Must only communicate by professional email or Skype as outlined above. There must be no contact via personal phone, personal email, any other messaging service or social media, including but not limited to WhatsApp, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. If you feel that an alternative method of communication is required, please speak to the programme organiser at Teach First in the first instance.
- Maintain the confidentiality of any information relating to other Teach First stakeholders made available in the course of any engagement with children, as long as this does not conflict with this policy or the whistleblowing policy.
- Remember that interactions between you and children must be such that no reasonable person observing that interaction could construe its nature as abusive.
- Report any suspected infatuations.
- Use appropriate language when conversing with children.
- Inappropriate behaviour can sometimes be an indicator of abuse or neglect. Where a child is displaying inappropriate behaviour, end the interaction and make a record of the behaviour before notifying the CSO at Teach First (see Appendix 3 for contact details).
- Use the Events Checklist in Appendix 3 when organising Teach First events involving children.
- Use Teach First's whistleblowing procedures where an allegation or complaint arises about the behaviour of another volunteer or member of staff where you believe your concern has not been taken seriously.
- Seek parental consent for any photography.

Stakeholders must not:

- Invite children to their home or visit children in their own homes.
- Allow their personal beliefs to exploit a child's vulnerability or incite them to break the law.
- Offer a child a lift in a car.
- Behave in any way, physically or verbally, that could be offensive to a child.
- Make any kind of physical contact with a child that would not be considered appropriate within a school or business environment, and report any inadvertent contact that could be misconstrued.
- Request or receive monetary or high value gifts from young people; and ensure they are not open to (or perceived to be open to) improper influence or conduct through the acceptance of such gifts. The acceptance of low value gifts given in appreciation of support provided is not problematic.
- Smoke or drink alcohol when supervising children and not supply them with these substances
- If you are a volunteer, introduce (virtually or otherwise) the mentee to a colleague/friend for advice and guidance (due to DBS requirements). You may however invite mentees to attend a supervised meeting in a public place at which you (the mentor) are present for the duration.

### **Section 3. Principles, Requirements and Expectations**

All stakeholders have a responsibility to be aware of child safeguarding issues. It is not your responsibility to decide whether or not the potential child safeguarding incident requires investigation or further action, but each stakeholder has a responsibility to act on any concerns by escalating the matter.

#### **Stage 1: Potential incident identified**

The following is a non-exhaustive list of child safeguarding issues which require escalation in accordance with this policy:

- Failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger;
- Failure to ensure adequate supervision of a child;
- Failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment;
- Failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing;
- Sudden changes in a child's behaviour or performance;
- Any physical, emotional or sexual abuse;
- Any other breach of the expectations of this policy

If you are in doubt whether your concern is relevant, err on the side of caution and report it as outlined in stage 2.

#### **Stage 2: Escalation**

Child safeguarding concerns in relation to Teach First activity and events are considered to be a trigger incident as per Teach First's serious incident management process. The Child Safeguarding Officer and core Serious Incident Management (SIM) team must be notified.

**In all circumstances** steps should be taken to ensure the needs of the child take priority, and the disclosure of information is dealt with appropriately:

- Ask if the child would like someone else to be present – another adult or a friend. If they decline, proceed with the interview, taking extra care with your behaviour and body language and ensuring you are in a public place/office with open door.
- Allow them to speak without interruption and accept what they say.
- Be understanding and reassuring but do not give your opinion.
- Assure them that you will offer support but that you must pass any information to another professional who may take appropriate action if their safety, welfare or wellbeing might be at risk.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Keep calm and listen – do not have physical contact at any time.
- Focusing on the facts disclosed and using the actual words said by the child wherever possible, take a detailed record of the conversation.
- Do not attempt to investigate the allegation. Ask questions only for clarification of the facts.

**Disclosures from individuals aged 18 or over:** This policy covers Teach First mentee relationships past a mentee's 18th birthday, but the following applies to anyone over the age of 18, by law.

- Always encourage the individual to disclose the issue themselves, but if they would prefer not to, explain that you will only be able to pass on the information with their written consent.
- If they do not agree to you passing on their information, you must not do so, unless there is an overriding public interest or public duty of care, i.e. if a criminal matter has been alleged, including domestic abuse.
- If they give written consent to allow you to pass on information, or the matter is one of public duty as outlined above, make a detailed record of the conversation as per the below.

#### **Once the child safeguarding concern has been raised:**

- If there is an immediate risk of significant harm, contact the police and notify the CSO or Deputy as soon as possible.

In non-emergency situations, email the required details to the child safeguarding inbox or call the CSO or Deputy.

The SIM team (including CSO or Deputy) will decide on any immediate steps to be taken, including whether an investigation is required and whether social services and/or the police should be informed.

- If the child safeguarding concern relates to an employee of Teach First, the incident may be investigated in line with Teach First's Disciplinary Policy or any other applicable Teach First policy, at the discretion of the CSO or Deputy.

### **Stage 3: Updates**

When the stakeholder has passed on the child safeguarding concern, the stakeholder's involvement ceases unless told otherwise. The stakeholder's responsibilities are now to:

- Keep the matter strictly confidential – it must not be discussed with any other person (apart from the CSO or Deputy) to ensure all individuals involved (especially the child) are appropriately protected. It

is not the stakeholder's responsibility to seek out any further information regarding the incident. However, should the stakeholder become aware of any updates, they must notify the CSO or Deputy.

- Continue to comply with any other applicable Teach First policies.

## Section 4. Further Information

### 4.1 Useful Links

For more information on child safeguarding, types of abuse and the responsibility of organisations, you can refer directly to the following pieces of guidance.

[Working together to safeguard children](#)

[Keeping children safe in education](#)

The NSPCC website also provides extensive information and resources on their [Safeguarding Children](#) page.

For more information on the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks, please refer to the [Gov.uk website](#).

### 4.2 Non Teach First related concerns

If a stakeholder has non-immediate concerns which are unrelated to a Teach First event or activity, they should contact the NSPCC National 24 Hour Help Line on 0808 800 5000 for advice about safeguarding children.

### 4.3 Review of Child Safeguarding Policy

This policy will be reviewed by the CSO on an ongoing basis, but at least once a year, and amendments will be made as required.

## Section 5. Appendices

### Appendix 1: Contact Details

**In an emergency situation:** If there is an immediate risk of harm, contact the police and notify the CSO (or Deputy).

**Shelley Gonsalves, Lead Child Safeguarding Officer**

078258 80789 (leave a voicemail if unanswered).

**Carol Gormley, Deputy Child Safeguarding Officer**

07808 141042 (leave a voicemail if unanswered).

Or email [childsafeguarding@teachfirst.org.uk](mailto:childsafeguarding@teachfirst.org.uk) and **write “SIM” in the subject line.**

**In non-emergency situations:** Email your concerns to [childsafeguarding@teachfirst.org.uk](mailto:childsafeguarding@teachfirst.org.uk), with **‘Non-emergency issue’ in the subject line.**

The Child Safeguarding SIM team are:

Department	Lead	Deputy
Programme Delivery	<b>Shelley Gonsalves</b>	<b>Carol Gormley</b>
Governance, Legal and Compliance	<b>Gillian Budd</b>	<b>Eleanor Trunkfield</b>
Marketing and Communications	<b>Kelly Loftus</b>	<b>Jonathan Dando</b>

**Please note**

- If you are alerting the team to a serious incident then please put “SIM” in the subject line and it will be forwarded to the SIM team members immediately.
- Voicemails left on both the CSO and Deputy’s landlines will be captured and sent to them via email.
- Emails sent to the child safeguarding inbox will be automatically forwarded to both the CSO and Deputy.

**Appendix 2: Safeguarding Concerns Email**

Any concerns a stakeholder may have for any child’s welfare and safety in relation to a Teach First activity or event should immediately be sent by email to the Child Safeguarding Team. The contents of this email will be highly confidential and if allegations are serious, criminal proceedings may result. Please be aware of that in anything you state in the email, and particularly do not give names of children and possible abusers.

In your email, include

- Your name and contact details.
- Date and time of child safeguarding concern.
- Details of the Teach First event or activity.
- Child’s age.
- Child’s school if known.
- Nature of the concern and description of the facts.
- Who is aware (including parents/ guardians).