

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

At the Scottish Community Heritage Alliance (SCHA), we believe that children and vulnerable adults should never experience abuse of any kind and should be treated with dignity and respect. It is our policy to ensure that all participants in workshops, projects, events and other SCHA activities are protected from physical, sexual and emotional harm whilst taking part.

In order to achieve these safeguards, SCHA requires all Trustees and staff, including paid project staff and volunteers, working with children or vulnerable adults to follow the Code of Good Practice set out below.

We recognise:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995;
- All vulnerable adults have a right, and should be enabled to achieve that right, to live and receive services in an environment which is free from prejudice and safe from abuse.
- All children and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm and abuse
- Some people (both children and adults) are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare
- Working with vulnerable adults and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare

SCHA PROTECTION PROMISE

All of us at SCHA promise to make sure that children and vulnerable people have the best time possible while taking part in our activities. We all believe that everyone has the right to feel safe and comfortable while they are with us. We will do our very best to live up to the promises that we make.

We promise to:

- Create welcome environments
- Be aware of participant and staff needs
- Treat everyone fairly
- Make sure that all our staff and volunteers know what they are supposed to be doing
- Engage with partner agencies and venues also adhering to best policy practice.

- Make our activities as safe as possible

CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

SCHA will appoint a Safeguarding officer with responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy.

SCHA demands that all project staff involved in events at which children or vulnerable adults may be present hold certification as appropriate, from the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) membership scheme. This helps to ensure highest standards of care and practice.

Any other SCHA staff and trustees potentially coming into contact with vulnerable adults at project workshops and or events, are expected to do so only alongside properly trained and qualified practitioners, unless they are themselves certified for the organisation under the PVG Scheme.

Prior to offer of contract, project staff will discuss PVG status with appropriate management staff and apply to the PVG Scheme, if necessary.

Please note that potential staff not already in possession of suitable PVG certification are expected to meet their own costs of application and only in exceptional circumstances may receive assistance from SCHA.

For more information see, PVG Scheme; <https://www.mygov.scot/pvg-scheme/>

SCHA staff will:

- Treat all children and vulnerable adults with respect
- Provide a good example of acceptable behaviour
- Plan activities which involve more than one person being present, or ensure that other adults are within sight or hearing whenever possible
- Respect everyone's right to privacy
- Be available to listen to the opinions, requests and concerns of children and vulnerable people, and to refer them to other sources of help where appropriate
- Seek to ensure that actions cannot be misunderstood or cause offence
- Encourage children and vulnerable adults to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes and behaviour they do not like
- Show understanding when dealing with sensitive issues and recognise that caution is required when discussing such issues
- Be aware that even caring physical contact with a child or vulnerable adult can be misinterpreted

SCHA staff should not:

- Permit abusive behaviour e.g. bullying, taunting, racist behaviour
- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with a child or vulnerable adult

- Jump to conclusions about others without first checking the facts
- Allow themselves to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour
- Show favouritism to an individual
- Exaggerate or trivialise any issue
- Make suggestive remarks or actions, even in jest
- Place themselves or others in potentially compromising situations

What to do:

All cases of suspected or alleged abuse must be treated seriously. If anyone acting on behalf of SCHA has any reason to suspect a child or vulnerable adult in a SCHA workshop, event or other activity is being abused, a notification of concern should be made to the Social Work services as soon as a problem, suspicion or concern becomes apparent. Notification of concerns should be made to the duty team or in an emergency to the Police, stating clearly that you want to make a child protection referral/ and then follow up the concern in writing. Outside office hours referrals should be made to the out of hours Social Work services or the Police.

In addition, you should

- Urgently inform by telephone/email, the SCHA Manager or a Trustee in the absence of staff being available.
- Use the Recording Form to make a written record of all details of the facts known as soon as possible and give a copy to the SCHA Development Manager or Trustee to whom the incident has been reported

If a child or vulnerable adult tells anyone about an incident of abuse by someone else you should:

- Stay calm, and try to act normally
- Allow the individual to speak freely, without interruption, but not question them or seek themselves to investigate
- Offer support and reassurance that they will be believed
- Explain that the incident cannot be kept secret, but must be reported to a member of SCHA staff and/or Trustee
- Report the matter as detailed above

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS ONLINE

Safeguarding remains as important when online as when delivering sessions in person. Tutors or mentors should familiarise themselves with The SCHA Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy before commencing online sessions. The points below are to be used in addition to this Policy, not instead of it.

Working via Zoom or any other online audio-visual applications does raise some additional safeguarding issues to consider.

Safeguarding rules

- Get the agreement of the parents, guardians or responsible adult to tutor online in writing.
- Use parent's, guardian's or responsible adult's own account rather than a child's to deliver sessions
- Set out a clear policy in writing. Tell people that your Zoom / Skype account will be used exclusively for the purpose of interaction with SCHA and only during agreed session contacts
- **Do not record** any sessions which involves engagement with children or vulnerable adults

Safeguarding rules for the tutor:

- Use a specific TRC Zoom (or equivalent) account for online sessions. Keep it separate from any personal profile. Make sure that you select an appropriate image for your profile picture and do not share ANY **personal** information e.g. Home phone number, home email address, or any social media profiles.
 - Test your set up before going live.
 - Check that the camera/mic is working properly
 - Ensure the camera position is optimum for session
- Ensure that you are against a neutral background
- Be professional when delivering the lessons. Always present yourself as you would at regular sessions.
- The young person or vulnerable adult must take lessons in a room with an open door and a parent/guardian or responsible adult should be in the same premises whilst the session takes place.

Policy Agreed
Review Date

25th June 2021
April 2022