



Leaf Safeguarding Policy

April 2023

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect participants of Leaf's programmes from harm.
- To provide staff and volunteers, as well as participants and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Leaf, including managers, paid staff, volunteers, as well as participants on Leaf programmes.

This policy is based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation [is available here](#).

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents available on our website.

We believe that:

1. Participants should never experience abuse of any kind.
2. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of our participants, keep them safe, and practice in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

1. The welfare of our participants is paramount in all the work we do.
2. All of our participants regardless of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief or lack thereof, have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.
3. Some of our participants may be additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
4. Working in partnership with our participants, their parents and carers, and other agencies is essential in promoting our participant's welfare.

We will seek to keep our participants safe by:

1. Valuing, listening to and respecting them.
2. Appointing a nominated Safeguarding Lead for our participants, and nominating a deputy who will be onsite.
3. Adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
4. Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, and training so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently.
5. Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
6. Recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with [data protection legislation and guidance](#).
7. Making sure that our participants and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern.
8. Using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving our participants and their families appropriately.
9. Using our [harassment policy](#) procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
10. Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise.
11. Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
12. (For in-person programmes) Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our participants and instructors, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance such as creating a risk assessment.
13. Building a safeguarding culture where instructors, participants, and their families treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

Further policy details

All programmes

1. All staff are responsible for the wellbeing of the Leaf participants. The main point person for support is the Safeguarding Lead, but participants of course may talk to whichever Leaf staff they feel most comfortable with.
2. All staff should have DBS checks (UK), FBI checks (US), or international equivalents. Guest speakers may not have had these checks but should not spend time with participants without staff present.
3. Any calls between Leaf staff and participants will be recorded, for the duration of the programme, in order to make investigation of any concerns much easier.
4. Staff connecting with participants on professional social media (e.g. LinkedIn), email, and centralised Leaf platforms (e.g. a Discord channel) is permitted and encouraged. Connecting on more personal social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp) is discouraged and instances (e.g. if needed for some practical purpose if other communication channels won't work) should be reported to the Safeguarding Lead. Leaf staff who are themselves still school students aged 18 or under are exempted from this policy.
5. Staff should not meet in-person with participants for purposes unrelated to the programme. Any potential in-person meetups between staff and participants (e.g. at a conference or otherwise clearly related to the programme's aims) should always be checked with the Safeguarding Lead.
6. Romantic relationships between staff and participants are strictly forbidden, including between participants and Leaf staff who are themselves still school students aged 18 or under (further informal guidance [here](#)).
7. Harassment and bullying will not be tolerated and any person at Leaf who contravenes our policies will be subject to the disciplinary procedures in our [harassment policy](#), such as being removed from the programme.
8. Participants agree to this safeguarding policy and our harassment policy in order to participate in the programme.

Online programmes

1. If a participant feels unwell or appears to be harmed during a virtual call, Leaf staff should check that they are okay and report any concerns appropriately, e.g. to the Safeguarding Lead or directly to emergency services.
2. Leaf is not legally responsible for participants' wellbeing outside of direct contact time (e.g. a virtual call) during our programmes. Nevertheless, if Leaf staff have a

safeguarding concern, such as concern about abuse, neglect, or harassment, they should report it to the Safeguarding Lead.

Residential programmes

1. Leaf will have at least one staff member with first aid training on site per 30 participants.
2. We allow participants to explore outside the programme site (e.g. Oxford city centre) during the daytime without supervision. By default we require that, when away from the group and Leaf's facilitators, they go in groups of 3 or more, though this rule may be flexible for special circumstances. We ask participants to be especially mindful of road crossings and bicycles.
3. We will have a check-in, check-out sheet in a central location. Participants should let us know their plans and if they don't return as expected we will attempt to contact them and take action if required.
4. Participants should not leave the site between 11pm and 7am.
5. Participants may not use e-scooters, to reduce risk of injury. (There will be no need to anyway, since we will be travelling in groups.)
6. If a participant is unaccounted for we will attempt to contact them, and a member(s) of staff will check likely places they could be. If needed, a member of staff will go and help them get back. If a participant is deemed lost and we can't get in contact with them for over three hours we will notify parents and escalate to the police after 4 hours.
7. Participants are not allowed to break the law regarding drugs and alcohol. If they do so this may result in action at the organisers discretion, e.g. not being permitted to attend evening entertainment activities, or being sent home from the programme.
8. Staff and participants aged 18 or over are asked to refrain from alcohol. This is partly for safeguarding reasons, and partly to avoid fracturing the group dynamics between those who can and cannot partake.
9. It is up to parents and participants to arrange suitable transport to and from the programme. Leaf will try to provide guidance and support, but is *not* responsible for participants until they arrive at the venue during the advertised programme times.

Contact details

Safeguarding & Child Protection Lead

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Managing Director & Deputy Child Protection Lead

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Other useful contacts that are independent from Leaf


- Life-threatening emergency: please call 999
- For non-emergency urgent health help: call 111
- Child abuse: Call the NSPCC at 0800 1111 if you're under 18 or 0808 800 5000 otherwise
- Mental health: Call 116 123 to talk to Samaritans, or email: jo@samaritans.org
- Oxfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub: 0345 050 7666 or 0800 833408 at weekends or past 5pm (4pm on Fridays)
- [Directory of Local Authority Designated Officers \(LADOs\)](#). For Oxfordshire, use 01865 810603 or Lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk

A LADO covers all settings where people work with children. They should be made aware of all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice at least annually.

This policy was last reviewed: April 2023

Signed: 

Date: 11/04/2023