



Safeguarding Policy & Procedures

2026/27

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POLICY STATEMENT: TREE OF STRINGS' COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING

Tree of Strings is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children and adults at risk taking part in performance or education events, projects and other activities.

We recognise that all children and adults at risk have a right to feel safe and protected from all forms of abuse and neglect.

We will ensure that all our staff are carefully selected and accept responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of children and adults at risk in their care.

We will respond quickly and appropriately to all suspicions and allegations of abuse.

We will appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead who will take specific responsibility for child protection and safeguarding. This will be the Chief Executive with the Education Lead aware of all necessary procedures in their absence as Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

We will nominate a Trustee to hold responsibility and oversight for safeguarding on an annual basis.

As Tree of Strings is a regulated activity provider, all staff engaged in providing regulated activity will be required to have enhanced DBS clearance.

We will review the effectiveness of our Safeguarding Policy on an annual basis.

INTRODUCTION

This policy has been drawn up to ensure the safety and protection of all children and adults at risk involved in Tree of Strings activities through adherence to the guidelines outlined in this document.

Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004 (included in Chapter 4 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023) places duties on organisations, agencies, and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

These organisations should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including:

- a clear line of accountability for the commissioning and/or provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

- a senior board level lead to take leadership responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements
- a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services
- arrangements which set out clearly the processes for sharing information, with other professionals and with Local Safeguarding Partners
- a designated professional lead for safeguarding. Their role is to support other professionals in their agencies to recognise the needs of children, including rescue from possible abuse or neglect
- safe recruitment practices for individuals whom the organisation will permit to work regularly with children, including policies on when to obtain a Disclosure and Barring Service check
- appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking safeguarding training
- clear policies in line with those from the Local Safeguarding Partners for dealing with allegations against people who work with children

This document sets out procedures for Tree of Strings staff to ensure that the above requirements are met due to:

- all staff being aware of their role in ensuring the protection of children and vulnerable adults engaging in activities with Tree of Strings
- safe working-practices are in place
- the risk of abuse to children and adults at risk is minimised
- procedures are in place to act on allegations or suspicion of abuse

All members of staff are given access to a copy of this policy and will be informed in writing of any changes to this policy. Any member of staff who feels that this policy needs to be added to or changed in any way should contact the Chief Executive.

TERMINOLOGY

For the purposes of this policy:

- child refers to anyone under the age of 18
- adult at risk refers to a person over the age of 18 who are or may need community care services because of age, illness, physical or learning disability, or those who are unable to take care of or protect themselves against harm or exploitation (including those for whom English is an additional language)
- responsible adults are defined as people over the age of 18 who assume responsibility for children or adults at risk (e.g. teachers, social workers, parents and group leaders). However, we recognise that some parents may be under the age of 18 and will be responsible for their own children while participating in Tree of Strings activities.
- The term staff is used to refer to paid employees, freelance musicians and music leaders, freelancers, Trustees and volunteers (except where there is a need to be specific)

Safeguarding Policy Objectives:

- To ensure that all Tree of Strings staff understand their duty of care to, and expected behaviours towards, children and adults at risk as set out in the Tree of Strings Code of Conduct
- To ensure that all Tree of Strings staff know where to go for advice and support if they have any questions relating to safeguarding
- To ensure that all Tree of Strings staff working with children and adults at risk understand their responsibilities should a disclosure be made by a participant, parent, volunteer or any others associated with our activities
- To provide clarity in relation to the roles and responsibilities of the Board and Designated Safeguarding Lead in relation to all aspects of safeguarding and the welfare of children and adults at risk engaging with Tree of Strings
- To provide clarity in Tree of String's legal obligations in relation to children as performers

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone working with, or volunteering for Tree of Strings has a shared responsibility for the safeguarding and welfare of children and adults at risk engaging with Tree of Strings, whether as a participant, audience member or performer.

The Board and Chief Executive (also Designated Safeguarding Lead) have specific responsibilities which are set out in **Appendix A**.

DBS POLICY

All staff that have regular contact with children or vulnerable adults and/or are in sole charge during activities will be required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to ensure that they are suitable and appropriate people to be working with children or adults at risk.

All staff engaged to work with children or adults at risk on a regular basis must have a DBS check that is less than 3 years old (or where they are on the update service and an update check can be completed). Tree of Strings accepts DBS checks that have been administered by other organisations if they are less than 3 years old.

Staff have a responsibility to provide Tree of Strings with a copy of their DBS check once it has been received.

Tree of Strings will inform schools and other partner organisations that their staff hold relevant DBS checks. At times, Tree of Strings staff may be expected to present their DBS certificate to schools and other partner organisations.

A database of DBS checks is held by Tree of Strings and recorded in our single central record. This is maintained by the CEO. All records are held in accordance with Tree of Strings' Privacy Policy and GDPR legislation.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is a non-departmental public body of the Home Office. The DBS enables organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to make safer recruitment decisions by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable for certain work, especially that involves children or adults at risk, and provides wider access to criminal record information through its Disclosure service for England and Wales. The entitlement for an employer to ask an individual to apply for a DBS check is set out in legislation. 'Before an organisation considers asking a person to make an application for a DBS check, they are legally responsible for ensuring that they are entitled to submit a check for the job role.'

The eligibility to check is determined by whether a role is classed as 'regulated activity'. Regulated activity is work that a barred person must not do. This would be unsupervised activities with children and work for specified establishments (orchestras are not included in that list). However, even this is dependent on the regularity of that work; i.e. anyone who carries out an activity once a week or more often or on 4 or more days in a 30 day period. The exception to this is 'supervised activity' – under reasonable day to day supervision by another person engaging in regulated activity. (From 'Regulated Activity in Relation to Children: scope – factual note by HM Government. 'This note provides information on the scope of Regulated Activity in relation to children, defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, as amended (in particular by section 64, Protection of Freedoms Act 2012)').

A person who manages or supervises someone who undertakes a regulated activity is also counted as undertaking a regulated activity. A person who manages someone who is not in regulated activity (but would be except for the fact that they are supervised) is also in regulated activity.

However, with regards to anyone working in or visiting educational premises, it is for the school to carry out a risk assessment of the individual to determine if eligibility for a check exists. *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)* states that schools may request an enhanced DBS check without a barred list check for anyone working in a school or college who is not in regulated activity.

Any third-party organisations that Tree of Strings commissions to deliver activities with children or vulnerable adults where they will be in regular contact with children or vulnerable adults and/or are in sole charge during activities are required to provide evidence that their employees have been subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check.

DBS DISCLOSURES AND CONVICTIONS

Staff are encouraged to disclose any convictions that may appear on a DBS check prior to application.

Where a DBS check includes or reveals a conviction, the staff member should discuss the nature of the conviction with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will then carry out a risk assessment to assess the suitability of the member of staff to carry out their role. The risk assessment will include the date and nature of the conviction and the relevance to the role. The outcome of the risk assessment will be clearly communicated to the staff member.

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

There will be different levels of training and frequency required for Tree of Strings staff. Training will be delivered in a variety of ways depending upon the level of responsibilities and understanding required by that individual to deliver their role in relation to the welfare and safeguarding of children and adults at risk.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will undertake annual safeguarding training at a suitable DSL level provided by an accredited provider.

All members of the Education Team will attend annual safeguarding training for practitioners.

The Tree of Strings Trustee with responsibility for safeguarding will attend annual safeguarding training for trustees.

All other training will be delivered internally by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, unless there is a specific need for external expertise in which case the Designated Safeguarding Lead will identify the appropriate trainer or agency to provide this support.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Tree of Strings has a responsibility to inform all staff of their responsibilities and appropriate behaviours when working with children and adults at risk.

The Code of Conduct (found in **Appendix B**) is issued to all staff upon appointment and re-sent with details of each engagement.

The Code of Conduct is reviewed annually by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Education Lead.

MUSICIANS WORKING IN SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

Tree of Strings works with children in school and other educational settings every year.

To ensure that these activities are delivered effectively and safely Tree of Strings has produced guidance for schools outlining the expectations and requirements from them to keep children and musicians safe, and to provide the very best outcome for activities, whether creative workshops, residency programmes, one off activities and ensemble visits.

These guidelines require schools to provide Tree of Strings with the name and contact details of the school's Safeguarding Lead for the dates on which activities are taking place at least one week prior to activity being delivered. This information will be shared with those musicians working in the school to enable them to raise any concerns they may have while in the school environment quickly and through the appropriate channels.

The Tree of Strings' School Partnership Guidelines document can be found in **Appendix D**.

MEDICATION AND FIRST AID

Staff should not give a child or vulnerable adult medication under any circumstances.

If a child or vulnerable adult requires first aid, this must be provided by a qualified first-aider, preferably a teacher or group leader where possible. Staff who are not qualified first aiders must not give access to first aid equipment to teachers, group leaders or parents unless they are qualified first aiders.

In the case of medical emergency, two adults (at least one being a responsible adult) should attend the person at risk. A responsible adult should take the decision whether or not to call a doctor or ambulance.

BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES

Teachers, group leaders and parents/carers are responsible for managing the behaviour of the children or adults at risk in their care, and for dealing with any violent or inappropriate behaviour. However, if staff are physically attacked or threatened, they may take reasonable measures to protect themselves or to remove the threat. If necessary, staff may ask responsible adults to remove children or adults at risk.

SENSITIVE CONTENT

Staff should bear in mind that children and adults at risk may have complicated or traumatic backgrounds which could make them sensitive to certain issues (e.g. discrimination, disability, health, family relationships, early childhood etc.). Any potentially sensitive content should be discussed in advance of the session with the teacher or group leader. Where this is not possible, e.g. in the case of a family or adult event, the issues should be covered with sensitivity.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AND UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

Parents/responsible adults attending a Tree of Strings event with children are responsible for their children at all times. Tree of Strings will take no responsibility for unaccompanied children or adults at risk that are left unsupervised when supervision is required.

SCHOOL PUPILS ON WORK PLACEMENTS

Tree of Strings may provide work experience placements to school pupils who are under the age of 18. These placements are arranged through the school, an external agency operating on behalf of the school or the pupil or their parents.

In all cases, contact details for teachers and/or parents are required and any relevant medical information is requested. Pupils will have an induction, including health and safety, on arrival. In most cases, they will be supervised by the Music Lead or Chief Executive. For them to experience a valuable placement, they will need to work with a variety of staff but one to one working should be avoided wherever possible as safe and sensible practice.

LOST CHILDREN

Any children or adults at risk who become separated from their responsible adult at a Tree of Strings event will be supervised by a member of staff and the Chief Executive will be informed.

Announcements will then be made at the venue and the responsible adult asked (by name if possible) to report to an appointed location. If there is any doubt about the identity of the responsible adult (e.g. if the child does not recognise them), or if the adult does not come forward, the police will be informed.

MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

Tree of Strings complies with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations. Further details can be found in Tree of Strings' Privacy Policy.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDREN OR ADULTS AT RISK

Staff must not give anyone (except for the emergency services or social services) information about children or adults at risk involved in Tree of Strings projects or events, regardless of who the person claims to be. Any request for information, including whether the child or adult at risk is at the event/project or the location of event/project (e.g. if someone wishes to hand something to them), should be dealt with by contacting the child's or adult at risk's responsible adult who should take the decision whether to provide the information.

PHOTOGRAPHY & MEDIA

Photographs or videos of children or adults at risk (individuals or in groups) where people could be recognised must not be taken without obtaining consent from the parent or responsible adult. This applies to all photographs that may be used in any form of publication or broadcast including leaflets, brochures, websites, social media sites, films etc.

In the case of school groups, parental consent will be required, and this should be requested from the school in advance of the activity. If this is not possible, written permission should be obtained on the day from the teacher in charge of the group.

The Mental Capacity Act (2005) states that in the case of adults at risk, written permission should be obtained from the adult at risk themselves in a way that is accessible to them – their responsible adult should be consulted about the best way to do this. If this is not possible because the adult at risk does not have the capacity to give this permission, then the consent of the significant people in the adult's life will need to be obtained (never just one person).

Where photographs of whole performances etc. are required and it is not feasible to obtain consent because of the number of people involved, or where people are too distant to be recognised, a notice should be prominently displayed in advance of and during the photography informing visitors that photographs will be taken in that area between specified times.

If photographs of children or adults at risk are to be used in printed materials, provided to the press or included in a digital format, any information which could be used to identify or trace the children or adult at risk should be withheld.

All digital photographs will be stored on a secure external drive or password protected shared drive. They will be kept for a maximum of five years after which they will be deleted.

A template media consent form is included in **Appendix C**.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Abuse is the term used when one individual harms another through cruelty, violence or maltreatment. This policy focuses specifically on the abuse of a child or adult at risk. An adult is most likely to be the perpetrator of abuse, but Tree of Strings is mindful of the fact that child-on-child abuse also occurs.

There are four key areas of abuse as defined in *Keeping children safe in education* (first published HM Government, Department for Education, March 2015), in addition organisations now have a responsibility to report any concerns in relation to female genital mutilation (FGM) and child sexual exploitation (CSE).

The four areas are:

1. **Physical abuse**, which includes FGM - is a form of abuse which is deliberately hurting a child causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, cuts and burns. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child or adults at risk.
2. **Emotional abuse**, which includes bullying and cyber-bullying - is the persistent emotional maltreatment or neglect of a child or adult at risk resulting in severe and adverse effects on the individual's emotional development and mental health. It may lead to a child or adult at risk that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued insofar as they only meet the needs of another person. It may also involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing an individual frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children or adults at risk. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment, though it may occur alone.
3. **Sexual abuse**, which includes CSE - involves forcing or enticing a child or adult at risk to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the individual is aware of what is happening. The activities do not have to involve physical contact, they may include children looking at, or being the subject of, sexual images, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child or adult at risk in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
4. **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet an individual's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of that person's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, adequate supervision; or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, an individual's basic emotional needs.

It is accepted that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse, and that some children are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any one time. These definitions do not minimise the other forms of maltreatment.

Most types of abuse can take one or several of these forms, for example bullying and domestic violence are often both physical and emotional forms of abuse.

RECOGNISING INDICATORS OF ABUSE

There are multiple signs by which the different forms of abuse could be identified, and staff should be aware of the key indicators by which abuse could be identified.

Tree of Strings recognises that within our work with children and adults at risk many of these signs will not be identifiable during our daily activities, however in extended engagements with children or adults at risk indicators may become apparent and require further investigation. It is the responsibility of staff to raise any concerns in this area to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Key indicators of the four areas of abuse are as follows:

1. **Physical abuse:** Most people will collect cuts and bruises in their daily life. These are likely to be in places where there are bony parts of their body, like elbows, knees and shins. Some children and vulnerable adults, however, will have bruising which can almost only have been caused non-accidentally. Additional signs are:
 - Unexplained bruises or injuries, or where the explanation does not fit the injury
 - Untreated or inadequately treated injuries or medical needs
 - Multiple bruises in clusters or of uniform shape - e.g. looks like a handprint
 - Cigarette burns, scalds, burns, bite marks

2. **Emotional abuse:** Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, and often children who appear well cared for may be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix/play with other children. Signs of emotional abuse can include:
 - Sudden speech disorders
 - Developmental delay in either physical or emotional progress
 - Neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking
 - Self-harm
 - Fear of parents/carers being approached regarding their behaviour
 - Fear of making mistakes

3. **Sexual abuse:** Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour which may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children who talk about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously. Signs of sexual abuse can include:
 - Pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal areas
 - Stomach pains
 - Discomfort when walking or sitting down

4. **Neglect:** Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise yet has some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children, as well as an enormous impact on adults at risk. Signs of neglect can include:
 - Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from others
 - Constantly dirty, or smelly
 - Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
 - In appropriate dress for the weather conditions
 - Changes in behaviours: All these forms of abuse can also result in changes in a child's or adult at risk's behaviour. These can include:
 - Fear of parents, guardians or carers being approached for an explanation

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, eg, becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of being left with a specific person or groups of people
- Eating disorders
- Using sexual language or demonstrating sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
- Having few friends
- Complaining of being tired all the time

It is important to be aware that many children and adults at risk will exhibit some of these indicators at some time and the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. In addition, there may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour, such as the birth of a new baby or a death in the family, relationship problems between their parents/carers etc.

RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES AND CONCERNS

RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE FROM A CHILD OR ADULT AT RISK

As well as the possible signs and indicators of abuse detailed above, abuse may come to your attention via a disclosure from the child or adult at risk concerned, via another child or adult at risk, or via a member of staff or concerned adult.

If a child or adult at risk says they want to tell you a 'secret' or they disclose information that suggests that they are at risk or, or have been abused, it is essential that you do not promise to keep a secret.

The following guidelines are intended to support staff if a child or adult at risk makes a disclosure to them. All staff will receive induction and support in this area.

- Stay Calm
- Listen carefully to what is being said
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets
- Allow the child or adult at risk to continue at their own pace
- Ask questions for clarification only, and always avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer
- Reassure the child or adult at risk that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared

- Record in writing what was said using the child or adults at risk's own words as soon as possible – note date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that you have signed and dated the written record. A template is provided by Tree of Strings for this purpose (See **Appendix E**)
- Contact the Tree of Strings Designated Safeguarding Lead at the earliest opportunity

If you feel the child is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical attention dial 999 and ask for the appropriate emergency service. Once you have made sure the child is safe inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, or within 24 hours of the incident occurring.

BARRIERS TO REPORTING CONCERNS

Tree of Strings recognises that there are several significant barriers that can prevent children and adults at risk reporting their concerns, and that staff who have a disclosure made to them may face barriers in reporting or sharing their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Tree of Strings will address this by ensuring all staff who are engaging with children and adults at risk have appropriate training and support.

It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is NOT responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional agencies following a referral to them (from the Designated Safeguarding Lead) of concern about a child or adult at risk.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD OR ADULT AT RISK

It is essential that whatever your concern is you must share it.

Any concerns staff may have about a child should be reported as soon as possible, and within 24 hours, to Elinor Shields, Tree of Strings' Designated Safeguarding Lead on 07492 817682.

In the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead concerns should be reported to Ellen Marsden, Tree of Strings' Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Should the concerns involve both the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Safeguarding Lead, the report should be made directly to Anthony Palmer, Tree of Strings' Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding.

RECORDING CONCERNS OR DISCLOSURES

Every concern must be recorded in writing, whether this is observational or a child has made a verbal disclosure, within 24 hours. This written report should include details of reasons for concern if observational. If the report is being written following a disclosure from a child or adult at risk the report needs to be a true and accurate report of what was said, by whom, when and where. All reports need to be signed and dated along with the name and job title of the staff member writing the report. A template is provided by Tree of Strings for this purpose (See **Appendix E**).

It is essential that the report contains only fact, if stating an opinion this needs to be clearly indicated e.g. *'There were burns on the child's arms which, in my opinion, could have been caused by a cigarette'*.

Practice issues to consider when recording concerns:

- Be specific - what is the exact nature of the concern and which category of abuse does it suggest in your opinion
- Show the evidence - what did you see, hear? Who said what, when, how?
- Be precise with time words - what does always, frequent, never mean?

Suspicious must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. This written record will be updated through any resulting investigation, with a detailed chronology of events and the contact details for the lead person in the relevant agencies (social care, police etc.)

Tree of Strings' Board will support the Designated Safeguarding Lead in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to the relevant Social Services Department and/or police. It is Social Services and/or the Police's role to investigate the matter.

INFORMATION SHARING - THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD'S RESPONSIBILITY

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- always explain to children, adults at risk and families at the outset, openly and honestly, what and how information will, or could be shared and why, and seek their agreement. The exception to this is where doing so would put that child, or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or if it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a series crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

- always consider the safety and welfare of a child or adults at risk when making decisions on whether to share information about them. Where there is concern that the child or adults at risk may be suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, the child or adults at risk's safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration.
- where possible, respect the wishes of children, adults at risk or families who do not consent to share confidential information, however, may still share information if, in their judgement on the facts of the case, there is sufficient need to override that lack of consent.
- always seek advice when in doubt, especially when the doubt relates to a concern about possible significant harm to a child, adults at risk or serious harm to others.
- ensure that the information shared is accurate and up to date, necessary for the purpose for which they are sharing it, shared only with those people who need to see it, and shared securely
- always record the reasons for their decision – whether it is to share information or not.
A full description of the Designated Safeguarding Officer's Roles and Responsibilities can be found in **Appendix A**.

REFERRING THE CONCERNS TO THE RELEVANT AGENCIES

The Designated Safeguarding Lead making the referral to Children's Social Care or the relevant Safeguarding Adults Board will:

- Clearly identify themselves, their agency and give details of where they can be contacted
- Provide as much basic information as possible including the name of the child or adults at risk, the age and date of birth if a child, ethnicity, any specific communication needs, any disability issues, the parents/carers names, the child or adults at risk's current address and any known previous addresses
- State what has prompted the concerns, including details of any specific incidents or disclosure by the child or adults at risk
- State any physical, behavioural or indirect signs which support the concern and suggest that the child or adults at risk is at risk of, or suffering significant harm
- Give details of any conversations with the child or adults at risk relating to the concern
- Give details of any contact and conversations with the child's parents/carers or adults at risk's family/carers relating to the concern
- Give details of any contact and conversations with the alleged abuser
- Give details of any other agencies or individuals consulted in relation to the concern

- Ensure that an accurate and detailed record is made of the concern and the referral using the Tree of Strings Safeguarding Report Form (See **Appendix E**)
- Follow up the referral in writing to the Children’s Social Care Unit or relevant Safeguarding Adults Board within 48 hours
- Maintain the record of the concern with information on the development of the investigation and ultimate outcome.

See **Appendix F** for contact details of relevant agencies to which allegations and disclosures should be reported.

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE OF A CHILD OR ADULT AT RISK AGAINST STAFF

This includes anyone working with children or adults at risk in a paid or voluntary capacity on behalf of Tree of Strings. Abuse can and does occur outside the family setting. Although it is a sensitive and difficult issue, abuse of children and adults at risk has occurred within institutions and may occur within other settings. Recent inquiries indicate that abuse that takes place within a public setting is rarely a one-off event. It is crucial that those involved in Tree of Strings activities are aware of this possibility and that all allegations are taken seriously and appropriate action is taken. It is important that any concerns for the welfare of the child or adults at risk arising from abuse or harassment by a member of staff is reported immediately.

All allegations of abuse of children by those who work with children must be taken seriously. The following procedures will be applied in the instance of an allegation or concern that an individual 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;
- Behaved towards a child or children that indicates that they may pose a risk of harm to children.

If concerns arise about the person's behaviour to their own children, the police and/or children's social care must consider informing the employer / organisation to assess whether there may be implications for children with whom the person has contact at work / in the organisation, in which case this procedure will apply.

Allegations of historical abuse should be responded to in the same way as contemporary concerns. In such cases, it is important to find out whether the person against whom the allegation is made is still working with children and if so, to inform the person's current employer or voluntary organisation or refer their family for assessment.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES FOLLOWING AN ALLEGATION

Tree of Strings' Designated Safeguarding Lead has overall responsibility for:

- Ensuring that the organisation deals with allegations in accordance with this policy
- Making decisions in complex cases about whether any allegation or suspicion relating to a person in a position of trust requires referral to children's social care or the police
- Liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on the subject

Local Authorities have assigned a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to:

- Receive reports about allegations and to be involved in the management and oversight of individual cases
- Provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations
- Liaise with the police and other agencies
- Monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible consistent with a thorough and fair process
- Provide advice and guidance to employers in relation to making referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and regulatory bodies such as Ofsted, the GMC etc. and
- Chair strategy meetings where there is concern about a person in a position of trust

Contact details for the LADO in local authorities within the areas in which Tree of Strings regularly works are detailed in **Appendix F** of this document.

PERSONS TO BE NOTIFIED

Tree of Strings must inform the LADO team within one working day when an allegation is made and prior to any further investigation taking place.

The LADO team will advise Tree of Strings whether informing the parents of the child/ren involved will impede the disciplinary or investigative processes. Acting on this advice, if it is agreed that the information can be fully or partially shared, Tree of Strings will inform the parent/s. In some circumstances, however, the parent/s may need to be told straight away (e.g. if a child is injured and requires medical treatment).

The parent/s and the child should be helped to understand the processes involved and be kept informed about the progress of the case and of the outcome where there is no criminal prosecution. This will include the outcome of any disciplinary process, but not the deliberations of, or the information used in, a hearing.

Tree of Strings will seek advice from the LADO team, the police and / or children's social care about how much information should be disclosed to the suspected person.

Subject to restrictions on the information that can be shared, Tree of Strings should, as soon as possible, inform the suspected person about the nature of any allegation, how enquiries will be conducted and the possible outcome (e.g. disciplinary action, or referral to the DBS and/or a regulatory body).

The suspected member of staff will:

- Be treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed and processes involved
- Be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation and the implications for any disciplinary or related process
- If suspended, be kept up to date about events in the workplace

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. Apart from keeping the child, parents and suspected person (where this would not place the child at further risk) up to date with progress of the case, information will be restricted to those who have a need to know to protect children, facilitate enquiries, manage related disciplinary or suitability processes.

SUPPORT

Tree of Strings together with children's social care and / or police, where they are involved, should consider the impact on the child concerned and provide support as appropriate. Liaison between the agencies should take place to ensure that the child's needs are addressed.

As soon as possible after an allegation has been received, the suspected member of staff will be advised to contact their union or professional association. Human resources support will be sought at the earliest opportunity in order that appropriate support can be provided via the organisation's employee welfare arrangements.

SUSPENSION

Suspension is a neutral act and it should not be automatic. It should be considered in any case where:

- There is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm; or

- The allegation warrants investigation by the police; or
- The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.
- The possible risk of harm to children should be evaluated and managed in respect of the child/ren involved and any other children in the accused's home, work or community life.

If a strategy meeting / discussion is to be held or if children's social care or the police are to make enquiries, the LADO team should canvass their views on suspension and inform Tree of Strings. Only Tree of Strings, however, has the power to suspend an accused employee and they cannot be required to do so by a local authority or police.

If the suspension is lifted and the person is to return to work, Tree of Strings will consider what help and support might be appropriate (e.g. a phased return to work and/or provision of a mentor), and also how best to manage the member of staff's contact with the child concerned, if still in the workplace.

TIMESCALES

It is in everyone's interest for cases to be dealt with expeditiously, fairly and thoroughly and for unnecessary delays to be avoided. However, some cases will take longer because of their specific nature or complexity.

INITIAL ACTION BY PERSON RECEIVING OR IDENTIFYING AN ALLEGATION OR CONCERN

The person to whom an allegation or concern is first reported should treat the matter seriously and keep an open mind.

They should not:

- Investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations
- Promise confidentiality, but give assurance that the information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis

They should:

- Make a written record of the information (where possible in the child / adult's own words), including the time, date and place of incident/s, persons present and what was said
- Sign and date the written record
- Immediately discuss the issue with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or where the Designated Safeguarding Lead is absent or is the subject of the allegation, with the deputy or other appropriate senior manager.

INITIAL ACTION BY THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

Discussion with the Tree of Strings Designated Safeguarding Lead should lead to one or more of the following outcomes:

- Outcome: Referral to children's social care - person in position of trust referral. There are grounds to suspect that the person in a position of trust may have abused that position putting one or more children at risk of significant harm. In all such cases an immediate referral must be made to the LADO Team
- Outcome: Referral to children's social care of a child who may be at risk of significant harm. There are grounds to suspect that the child has been abused but there is no reason to suspect that this is because of the actions of a person in a position of trust. In all such cases an immediate referral must be made to children's social care. Children's social care will carry out an assessment and decide whether to initiate enquiries
- Outcome: Inform the regulatory body relevant to the role of the person in a position of trust. For example Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission
- Outcome: Review of Internal policy & procedures. The person in a position of trust has acted inappropriately but it is not a child protection issue: the action lay within the bounds of agency policy and procedures and there is therefore a need to review these policies and procedures. The decision that this outcome is, or is not, appropriate may depend on the level of knowledge and experience of the person in a position of trust
- Outcome: No further action. The person in a position of trust acted appropriately and therefore no further action is to be taken under these procedures
- Outcome: Disciplinary/training. The person in a position of trust has acted inappropriately but it is not a child protection issue; the action taken was in breach of accepted agency policies and procedures and disciplinary action and/or training may be needed
- Outcome: False allegation. The person in a position of trust is the subject of an unfounded allegation
- Outcome: Requires LADO advice. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead has any doubt about whether the matter should be referred on, they should discuss the issues with the LADO team
- Outcome: Inform but not refer. In some cases the Designated Safeguarding Lead may decide that a referral to children's social care is not required, but that it is likely that another person will report the matter to one of the statutory agencies. In this situation it is best practice for the Designated Safeguarding Lead to contact children's social care and the police and inform them of the circumstances.

The Tree of Strings Designated Safeguarding Lead will record discussions about the child and/or member of staff, any decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions.

If the Tree of Strings Designated Safeguarding Lead concludes that a professional may have put a child at risk of significant harm, they must report the allegation to the relevant LADO team (See Appendix F for

contact details) and discuss the decision in relation to the agreed threshold criteria in within one working day.

Referrals should not be delayed to gather information and a failure to report an allegation or concern in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter.

If an allegation requires immediate attention, but is received outside normal office hours, the Tree of Strings Designated Safeguarding Lead should consult the relevant children's social care emergency duty team (See Appendix F for contact details) or local police and inform the LADO team as soon as possible.

INITIAL CONSIDERATION BY THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER AND THE LADO TEAM

There are up to three strands in the consideration of an allegation:

1. A police investigation of a possible criminal offence
2. Children's social care enquiries and/or assessment about whether a child needs protection or services
3. Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action.

A principal officer in the LADO team and the Designated Safeguarding Lead should consider first whether further details are needed and whether there is evidence or information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded. Care should be taken to ensure that the child is not confused as to dates, times, locations or identity of the member of staff.

If the allegation is not demonstrably false and there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the LADO team should refer to children's social care and ask them to convene an immediate strategy meeting / discussion.

If a child is not believed to have suffered, or to be likely to suffer Significant Harm but a police investigation will continue, the principal officer should conduct this discussion with the police, the designated safeguarding officer and any other agencies involved to evaluate the allegation and decide how it should be dealt with.

This Evaluation discussion should take place within one working day and must consider how to take matters forward in a criminal process parallel with a disciplinary process or whether any disciplinary action will need to await the completion of the police enquiries and/or prosecution. The progress should be reviewed by the police no later than four weeks after the initial evaluation meeting and thereafter at fortnightly or monthly intervals.

The strategy meeting / discussion should take in to account the following definitions when determining the outcome of allegation investigations:

- Substantiated: there is sufficient identifiable evidence to prove the allegation;
- False: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;

- Malicious: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive;
- Unsubstantiated: this is not the same as a false allegation. It means that there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation; the term therefore does not imply guilt or innocence.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF IN THEIR PERSONAL LIVES

If an allegation or concern arises about a member of staff, outside of their work with children, and this may present a risk of harm to child/ren for whom the member of staff works with or is responsible, the general principles outlined in these procedures will still apply.

The strategy meeting/discussion should decide whether the concern justifies:

- Approaching the member of staff's employer for further information, to assess the level of risk of harm; and/or
- Inviting the employer to a further strategy meeting/discussion about dealing with the possible risk of harm.

If the member of staff lives in a different authority area to that which covers their workplace, liaison should take place between the relevant agencies in both areas and a joint strategy meeting/discussion convened.

In some cases, an allegation of abuse against someone closely associated with a member of staff (e.g. partner, member of the family or other household member) may present a risk of harm to child/ren for whom the member of staff is responsible. In these circumstances, a strategy meeting/discussion should be convened to consider:

- The ability and/or willingness of the member of staff to adequately protect the children;
- Whether measures need to be put in place to ensure their protection;
- Whether the role of the member of staff is compromised.

DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

The LADO and the Designated Safeguarding Lead should discuss whether disciplinary action is appropriate in all cases where:

- It is clear at the outset or decided by a strategy meeting / discussion that a police investigation or LA children's social care enquiry is not necessary; or
- The employer or LADO is informed by the police or the Crown Prosecution Service that a criminal investigation and any subsequent trial is complete, or that an investigation is to be closed without charge, or a prosecution discontinued.

If disciplinary action is taken it will follow the disciplinary procedure of the person's employer.

SHARING INFORMATION FOR DISCIPLINARY PURPOSES

Wherever possible, police and children's social care should, during their investigations and enquiries, obtain the consent of the person who is the subject of the investigation to provide the employer and/or regulatory body with statements and evidence for disciplinary purposes. If consent is not given the employer should be notified quickly so that preparations can be made to obtain this information at the end of the criminal process.

If the police or CPS decide not to charge, or decide to administer a caution, or the person is acquitted, the police should pass all relevant information to the employer without delay.

If the person is convicted, the police should inform the employer and the LADO straight away so that appropriate action can be taken.

UNSUBSTANTIATED AND FALSE ACCUSATIONS

Where it is concluded that there is insufficient evidence to substantiate an allegation, the Chair of the strategy meeting / discussion or initial evaluation should prepare a separate report of the enquiry and forward this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead of Tree of Strings to enable them to consider what further action, if any, should be taken.

False allegations are rare and may be a strong indicator of abuse elsewhere which requires further exploration. If an allegation is demonstrably false, Tree of Strings, in consultation with the LADO, should refer the matter to Children's social care to determine whether the child needs services, or might have been abused by someone else.

If it is established that an allegation has been deliberately invented, the police should be asked to consider what action may be appropriate.

SUBSTANTIATED ALLEGATIONS AND REFERRAL TO THE DBS

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) was established under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and merges the functions previously carried out by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). The relevant legislation is set out in the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

If an allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or the employer ceases to use the person's service or the person resigns or otherwise ceases to provide his/her services, the LADO should discuss with the employer whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

If a referral is to be made; it should be submitted within one month of the allegation being substantiated. This referral would be made by the LADO.

LEARNING LESSONS

Tree of Strings and the LADO should review the circumstances of the case to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the organisation's procedures or practice.

CHILDREN AS PERFORMERS

Tree of Strings provides a range of performance opportunities for young people taking part in their Education projects. These activities take place across the UK.

As the young people we work with are taking part in public performances, Tree of Strings has a legal obligation to apply for a child performance or activities licence. This system is designed to provide a check that suitable and sufficient arrangements have been made to safeguard the child and children involved in activity.

WHEN LICENCES ARE REQUIRED

Child performance legislation, as stated in *The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and 1963 and the Children (Performance) (England) Regulations 2014* sets out when a licence is required. This is supplemented by advice produced by the Department for Education.

The 1963 Act states that a licence must be obtained before a child can take part in certain types of performance and activities in Great Britain, This includes:

Any performance for which a charge is made, whether for admission or otherwise;

Performances on premises licensed to sell alcohol, for example in a hotel or theatre;

Any live broadcast performance, for example a television or radio broadcast, or internet streaming;

Any performance recorded with a view to its use in a broadcast or such service or in a film intended for public exhibition.

Licensing requirements apply only to children under the upper limit of compulsory school age (as defined by section 8(3) of the Education Act 1996) (i.e as a rule up to the last Friday in June in the school year in which they have their 16th birthday).

PERFORMANCES BY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DURING SCHOOL HOURS

When Tree of Strings requires children and young people to take part in a performance which requires them to be absent from school, Tree of Strings will apply to the local authority where the child lives for an individual performance licence.

Tree of Strings ensures that the legal obligation associated with each licence is met in full, in addition to maintaining the additional procedures to ensure the wellbeing and security of these individuals as set out above.

EDUCATION SHARING EVENTS DURING SCHOOL HOURS

Tree of Strings' Education programme will occasionally deliver projects which culminate in a final performance, during school hours. These events will usually take place as closed events - attended only by other participating schools, and funders of activities.

As these events form part of an educational programme of work, and schools are making all the necessary arrangements for the activity and their pupils' participation, then Tree of Strings does not require performance licences for these events.

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

Tree of Strings' Chief Executive has overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy, which will be reviewed on an annual basis following its implementation and may be changed from time to time to ensure compliance with legislation and good practice.

Tree of Strings' Board will receive an annual safeguarding report, which will incorporate any changes or updates made to this policy. In addition, Safeguarding is a standing agenda item, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Trustee with responsibility for safeguarding being able to update the Board at regular meetings about any incidents, issues or concerns within the organisation.

Date of last policy review 13.04.2026

APPENDIX A: SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES & ROLES WITHIN TREE OF STRINGS

The Board will ensure that:

- A Trustee with responsibility for safeguarding is appointed and will receive appropriate training as required. This Trustee will liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and will provide the Board with appropriate information relating to Safeguarding, including any instances which could present a cause for concern.
- Safeguarding reporting is a standing agenda item, with an annual detailed report from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- The Chief Executive is appropriately trained and supported to undertake the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead for Tree of Strings.
- The Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually and updated in accordance with any changes in legislation or good practice and that it is compatible with national guidance and law.
- Tree of Strings is undertaking safe recruitment practices, including the appropriate use of references and checks on new staff and volunteers.
- Robust procedures are in place for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff or volunteers, and that these are in line with NSPCC guidance.
- All staff and volunteers engaging with activities involving children undertake the appropriate level of training on a regular basis.

The Chief Executive will ensure that:

- The policies and procedures adopted by the Board are fully implemented and followed by all staff and volunteers.
- Safer recruitment of staff and volunteers is practiced.
- The appropriate ongoing training, support and supervision is provided.
- All staff and volunteers, including temporary staff, have an awareness and understanding of Tree of Strings' safeguarding policies, and have undertaken appropriate training.
- All staff and volunteers feel safe about raising concerns about poor or unsafe practice in relation to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk, and such concerns will be addressed appropriately.

- Parents/carers and others responsible for children or adults at risk are aware of and have an understanding of Tree of Strings' responsibilities through the dissemination of Partnership Guidelines issued to schools and other community settings for Education Projects.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Act as the first point of contact regarding all safeguarding matters
- Attend Designated Safeguarding Lead refresher training annually
- Provide information, advice, support and training on safeguarding within Tree of Strings for staff and advise the Board of additional safeguarding training needs as they arise
- Ensure that Tree of Strings' safeguarding policy and procedures are implemented and followed and particularly to inform social services/health board of relevant concerns about individual children
- Be aware of the Local Area Child Protection Committee (LACPC/LSCB) and be familiar with procedures
- Ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of the referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, under confidential cover as quickly as possible (e.g. within a working day)
- Liaise with children's service authorities and other agencies, as appropriate
- Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by Tree of Strings, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome
- Have specific responsibilities to report any suspicions relating to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) to the appropriate authorities

The Trustee with responsibility for safeguarding will:

- Take the lead on behalf of the Tree of Strings Board in overseeing the organisation's approach relating to safeguarding
- Support the Designated Safeguarding Lead and their deputy in ensuring safeguarding is at the heart of decision-making in all activities involving children and adults at risk

- Assist other trustees to consider issues of safeguarding across all aspects of Tree of Strings' work
- Meet with Tree of Strings' Designated Safeguarding Lead and their deputy twice a year to discuss and review specific safeguarding arrangements, and to ensure that any risk areas are being effectively dealt with
- Present, in consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead an annual safeguarding report to the Board
- Act as the "point of last resort" Board contact for staff raising safeguarding concerns

The Deputy Safeguarding Lead will:

- Deputise for the Designated Safeguarding Lead in their absence (e.g. annual leave or sick leave) regarding all safeguarding matters
- Attend safeguarding refresher training annually
- Ensure that Tree of Strings' safeguarding policy and procedures are implemented and followed and particularly to inform social services/health board of relevant concerns about individual children in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Be aware of the Local Area Child Protection Committee (LACPC/LSCB) and be familiar with procedures
- Ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of the referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, under confidential cover as quickly as possible (e.g. within a working day)
- Support the Chief Executive to ensure that all staff and volunteers feel safe about raising concerns about poor or unsafe practice in relation to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk, and such concerns will be addressed appropriately

APPENDIX B: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND/OR ADULTS AT RISK.

This Code of Conduct sets out the behaviour expected from all Tree of Strings staff when working with children and adults at risk as part of our Education programme or during attendance at events.

Our aim is to create a safe, respectful and inclusive space for everyone. This Code helps us run projects and activities that are enjoyable, protects participants from harm, and ensures appropriate behaviour.

GOOD PRACTICE – WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU

At Tree of Strings, we ask that you:

- Treat everyone with respect, fairness and dignity
- Make activities welcoming, accessible and enjoyable for all
- Give positive and constructive feedback instead of negative criticism
- Respect differences in gender, sexuality, culture, class, race, ethnicity, disability and religion
- Challenge discrimination and encourage people to speak up if they feel uncomfortable
- Avoid being alone with a participant in a private or unobserved space. We recommend that at least two music leaders are present on every community project. Where this is not possible, we suggest that a member of staff or volunteer from the partner support organisation is invited into the space.
- Maintain clear personal and professional boundaries with all partners and participants
- Only make physical contact if it is essential (e.g. to prevent an accident)
- If physical contact is essential to demonstrate an art or musical activity, ensure that is done with consent, respect, and is relevant to the activity
- If you are first aid trained, always ask for permission before administering first aid or medical assistance, where possible
- Report any accidents or injuries to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible
- Be attentive to any changes in a participant's behaviour that could indicate abuse or self-neglect
- Speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead about any concerns you have, even if they seem small – it is always better to raise a concern than stay silent
- Read and follow Tree of Strings' Safeguarding Policy and other relevant policies. If you are unsure about anything, ask for clarification
- Report any safeguarding concerns or disclosures immediately, in line with our Safeguarding Policy. You should pass it on even if somebody has asked you to keep something secret

WHAT YOU MUST NOT DO

You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical, inappropriate or sexually provocative behaviour
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Make sexual comments or jokes
- Do personal tasks for children or disabled or at-risk adults that they can do themselves

- Accompany children or disabled or at-risk adults into the toilet
- Add participants to your personal social media accounts
- Share your personal contact details (phone number, email, home address) with participants
- Share your personal phone, computer or laptop with participants
- Invite children or adults at risk to your home
- Allow or ignore inappropriate or discriminatory language or behaviour
- Ignore or fail to report concerns raised by a participant
- Keep any concerns or worries to yourself about a participant or colleague to yourself, however small
- Agree to keep concerns or disclosures a secret if someone asks you to. Always report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Meet participants outside of Tree of Strings' project whilst still acting as a Tree of Strings staff member or volunteer.
- Give lifts in your car to children or adults at risk
- Use actions or language that may cause a child or adult at risk to lose self-esteem or confidence

Tree of Strings' Designated Safeguarding Lead is Elinor Shields

She can be contacted on 07492 817682

APPENDIX C – TEMPLATE MEDIA CONSENT FORM

EDUCATION PROJECT MEDIA CONSENT FORM

Your child has been taking take part in our project this academic year, which ends with a joint schools event at our festival in Abbotsbury on 3 July 2026.

We may take photos and record videos of your child taking part in the project.

This letter asks for your permission and explains how we will use the photos and video recordings.

Photos and videos

As part of the project, we want to be able to take photos and videos that record the activities in the school workshops and the final event at Abbotsbury. These may include your child.

Any photos and videos will only be used for the following purposes:

- To promote our project; in print or digital (e.g. in local newspapers, on any of our social media platforms etc.)
- To promote Tree of Strings on our website and on our social media platforms
- To keep in our archive as a record of the project
- To use as part of a formal evaluation of the project
- To report back to people who have funded the project
- To use as evidence for Arts Award
- To raise funds for our organisation and future projects

We will never identify your child by name. We only ever use the name of your group (e.g. the name of your child's school) to identify the photo or video.

Any photos and recordings (including animation) will be used for a maximum of 5 years, although it is likely to be less.

If you change your mind about allowing us to use a photo or video that your child is in, you can ask Tree of Strings to stop using your child's image(s) / footage / audio at any time.

Tree of Strings will not use photos in any future communications, and we will do our best to remove it from areas that we control. Photos and videos may continue to appear in communications already in circulation, particularly those we do not control (e.g. after it has been published on social media or in print).

Sometimes it may be impossible to cut your child's image out of a video that has already been made, so please think carefully about this when signing this form, as we will want to continue to use that video for the purposes outlined above.

If you want further details of how Tree of Strings collects, uses and retains any personal data, please see our privacy policy at <https://treeofstrings.org/privacy-policy/>.

Your Consent

Please tick the following:

- € I give permission for Tree of Strings to take photos and videos of my child during workshops and at the Abbotsbury festival, and my child and I understand how photos and videos may be used as part of this project.
- € I understand that Tree of Strings will own all rights (including copyright) in my child's image(s) / footage / audio and I will not object to how Tree of Strings use these provided they are for a purpose outlined above and these will not identify my child's name.
- € By signing this consent form, I permanently assign all property rights (including copyright) in my child's image(s) / footage / audio to Tree of Strings.

ADDITIONAL CONSENT TO SHARE MEDIA WITH YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

We partner with your child's school to deliver this project. The school may want to be provided with copies of the photos and videos that we have taken.

Please tick below:

- € You consent to us sharing photos and videos that your child may appear in with your child's school. You acknowledge that we have no control over how the school will use these photos or videos.

If you have any concerns about how your child's school will use these photos or videos, please consult their data and privacy policy or raise any questions you have with them directly.

Name of child/young person: _____

Name of parent/guardian: _____

Signature of parent/guardian: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D – TREE OF STRINGS’ SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP GUIDELINES

Tree of Strings’ education projects provides opportunities for children to work with our professional musicians each year. To ensure that all our activities are enjoyed by pupils, and that our musicians can work in a supported environment the following guidelines have been developed to enable schools to receive the very best outcomes from our projects and performances.

School staff and Tree of Strings musicians deliver these activities together; school staff are responsible for discipline and the organisation of the class, group or participants and the musicians are responsible only for the musical and creative elements of activities.

Musicians should never be left alone with a group of children, and in the rare case where one-to-one activities may be required (e.g. within a special school setting, or if a Tree of Strings musician is providing coaching to an individual pupil) this should be agreed with Tree of Strings’ team in advance to ensure that arrangements are in place so that this activity fully complies with Tree of Strings’ Safeguarding Policy.

To comply with Tree of Strings’ Safeguarding Policy, schools must provide Tree of Strings with the name and contact details for the school’s Safeguarding Lead for the dates when activities are taking place. This should be issued to Tree of Strings when schedules are confirmed, and at least one week prior to activity taking place.

For one off projects or performances Tree of Strings should be made aware of any specialist needs, behavioural issues, or potential discipline issues of pupils within the groups Tree of Strings musicians will be working with to ensure that our activities can be planned accordingly, with Tree of Strings providing additional support for our musicians if required.

For projects musicians should be informed of any specialist needs, behavioural issues, or potential discipline issues within the cohort of children engaged with these projects. This will be discussed at the initial planning meeting for each project by relevant staff, the musicians delivering the project and the Tree of Strings team.

Recording of performances or workshops must be agreed in advance with Tree of Strings.

Schools should provide an appropriate and safe environment for Tree of Strings activities, based upon the numbers of pupils involved and the type of activities being provided. In most cases, we would expect our activities to take place in the school hall, or large classroom to enable group activities to take place.

Schools should make any additional equipment such as a piano, tuned or un-tuned percussion, access to smartboards etc. accessible for workshops and performances to ensure that activities are able to be delivered successfully and in full.

For activities involving performance opportunities:

Schools must provide Tree of Strings with the relevant documentation to enable us to apply for a Child Performance Licence for any activities taking place outside school hours as advised by Tree of Strings. This is a legal requirement, and Tree of Strings will advise each school as to whether this is required for their project or final performance, and the timeline for completion and return of this documentation.

Schools are responsible for the transportation of their pupils from the school to the performance venue.

School staff are responsible for the welfare and discipline of pupils at all times when they are at the rehearsal and performance.

Tree of Strings will provide appropriate and adequate spaces for breaks and allocated toilet facilities for pupils participating in these events, in line with good practice and legislation for children as performers.

Should a safeguarding concern arise, Tree of Strings staff will follow our safeguarding procedures and report the concern immediately to our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Our DSL will liaise with the school's DSL at the earliest opportunity to ensure appropriate information sharing and action.

While the school retains statutory responsibility for the child where activities are delivered under its supervision, Tree of Strings also maintains an independent duty of care and safeguarding responsibility. Our DSL will therefore ensure that appropriate referrals are made, including to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), where required.

If there is a clear and immediate risk of harm, Tree of Strings staff will contact the emergency services without delay as part of our duty of care.

APPENDIX E: SAFEGUARDING REPORT FORM

SAFEGUARDING REPORT FORM

Details of Child, Young Person or Adult at Risk:

Name	
Address	
Contact Number	
School/Care Setting Name & Address	
Person with parental or caring responsibility	

Details of Person Reporting Concerns:

Name	
Job Title	
Organisation	
Contact Number	
Email Address	

Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of someone else? Please give details:

- Own concerns
 Someone else's concerns

If someone else – please include full name, role, organisation and contact details:

Details of the incident or concerns:

Please include information on the context and background leading to the disclosure, include specific details around dates, times, location and any other factors. Please include any relevant information (such as a description of any injuries, etc.) and whether you are recording this as fact, opinion or hearsay. Include the format of the information (e.g. letter, phone call, direct contact) and record all persons present.

Child/Young Person/Adult at Risk's account:

Please detail the individual's account of what happened. Use their own words as much as possible. Don't ask leading questions (and clearly state if you add any of your own interpretation to their account).

Child/Young Person/Adult at Risk's wishes and feelings:

Please details the wishes and feelings of the person making a disclosure in terms of what they would like you to do with this information. Remember – Never promise to keep a secret but be clear that you will need to share relevant information to help keep them safe.

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Details of Witness/es:

Please provide contact details for any witnesses to the allegation and specify their relationship to the person:

Name	
Address	
Contact Number	
Relationship to the Child/Young Person/ Adult at Risk	

Witness Account:

Please give details of the witness' account of what happened. Please use their own words as much as possible and don't ask leading questions.

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Signed by:	
Full name:	
Date:	
Time:	

Any suspected or reported abuse must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Elinor Shields on 07492 817682, or in her absence to Ellen Marsden, Education Lead.

You will be required to share this completed form, along with any rough notes taken ASAP, but at the very latest within 24 hours of the incident occurring.

All records will be kept in a confidential and secure place and shared only to safeguard a child or adult at risk, in line with the information sharing protocol and requirements of the Data Protection Act.

APPENDIX F: USEFUL CONTACTS

TREE OF STRINGS DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD
Elinor Shields, Chief Executive

elinor@treeofstrings.org 07492 817682

TREE OF STRINGS DEPUTY SAFEGUARDING LEAD
Ellen Marsden, Music Lead

ellen@treeofstrings.org

POLICE

Call 999 if there is a clear and immediate threat to a child

Alternatively, if you want advice from the police and the child is not in immediate need of protection, you can call them on 101.

NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000 for adults concerned about a child's safety or wellbeing

[The helpline can also provide advice and guidance on issues affecting children and can discuss concerns with individuals ahead of reporting concerns to the relevant authorities]

ChildLine 0800 1111 for children and young people

SAFEGUARDING REFERRAL CONTACTS

Contacts in areas where Tree of Strings regularly works:

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH & POOLE

Call the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 01202 123334

If you need to speak to someone outside normal hours (9.00am to 5.00pm), contact the Out of Hours Teams on: 01202 738256

For BCP local authority: 01202 817600 or email: LADO@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

DORSET

Call the Children's Advice and Duty Service on 01305 228866

If you need to speak to someone outside normal hours (9.00am to 5.00pm), contact the Out of Hours Teams on: 01305 228558

For Dorset local authority: 01305 221122 or email: lado@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Dorset Police (includes BCP)

In an emergency (child in immediate need of protection) call 999.

Safeguarding referral unit: 01202 123334, email: mash@dorset.pnn.police.uk

OTHER CONTACTS IN DORSET & BCP

Pan-Dorset (Dorset and BCP) directory of contacts:

<https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms/media/8114/104f-local-directory-24082023.docx>