

## COVID-19 changes to our Safeguarding Policy

1 March 2021

**Response to COVID-19**

There have been significant changes within our setting in response to the outbreak. Our activities have been significantly curtailed.

Despite the changes, our Safeguarding Policy is fundamentally the same: **children and young people always come first, staff should respond robustly to safeguarding concerns and contact the DSL in line with our established safeguarding procedure.**

This annex sets out some of the adjustments we are making in line with the changed arrangements following advice from government and local agencies.

**The current position and local advice**

We have been unable to provide any of our normal fund-raising events and theatre productions involving children of the schools we support. However, we have released an on-line fund-raising film featuring current pupils and past clips of our productions. Our safeguarding policy was strictly adhered to in the production of this film.

Commented [JW1]: [insert here a sentence describing the practical changes you have made]

**Reporting arrangements**

Safeguarding arrangements continue in line with our child protection policy.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Henry Korda (020 8743 3856)

Commented [JW2]: Is there no deputy?

Other Safeguarding Trustees are: **Anna du Boisson ([aduboisson@aol.com](mailto:aduboisson@aol.com)) and Bharat Azad ([bharat.k.azad@googlemail.com](mailto:bharat.k.azad@googlemail.com))** Henry will always be available when the Foundation is open. In the unusual circumstance this is not possible Anna or Bharat can be contacted.

Staff will continue to follow the Child Protection procedure and advise the safeguarding leads immediately about concerns they have about any child, whether or not the concerns relate to direct work of the Foundation. COVID-19 means a need for increased vigilance due to the pressures on services, families, and young people, rather than a reduction in our standards.

Children's services may be affected by the impact of the virus on staff and an increased demand for services. Where a child is at risk of significant harm there may be a need to be

persistent in referring concerns to the local authority. For a discussion about any concerns you have regarding a child in Hammersmith & Fulham, please contact the Initial Contact and Advice Team (ICAT) where you will get straight through to a Social Worker on tel: 020 8753 6610 (Out of hours – 020 8748 8588).

The [Local Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) is continuing to operate in line with normal procedures. Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy. We have not been advised of any change to the [managing allegations](#) process where there are concerns about professionals, [referral thresholds](#) or referral process (020 8753 6600).

Should a child be at risk of significant harm and local agencies are not able to respond, the Foundation will immediately follow the safeguarding children partnership escalation procedure, [available here](#).

### **Identifying vulnerability**

The Foundation has considered the impact of the current arrangements on each child we work with. Where additional support or contact is required we have considered our role in putting this in place. Where any young person is still thought to be in need or at risk we have made a referral to children's services.

### **Attendance**

Where a child is expected and does not arrive at a session (including remote sessions) we will follow our attendance procedure and contact the family. If contact is not possible within the procedure the DSL must be informed.

The DSL will attempt a range of methods to contact the parent (Skype, FaceTime, through a relative etc) but if necessary arrange a home visit by the foundation or another appropriate agency. A risk assessment will be undertaken to consider manage the implications of COVID-19 alongside other risks perceived to the child. The risk of COVID-19 **does not override** the duty on the foundation to ensure children and young people are safe.

### **Staff will be aware of increased risk**

The pressures on children and their families at this time are significant. There will be heightened awareness of family pressures through being contained in a small area, [poverty](#), and financial or health anxiety. These areas should be considered in the setting of any work for children to undertake at home (including recognising the impact of online learning – see below). Staff will be aware of the mental health of both [children](#) and their [parents and carers](#), informing the DSL about any concerns.

This pandemic is already giving rise to that spirit of charity and community that brings people together, and we appreciate and value that people will want to help others during the challenges we are all facing. But now more than ever it is critical to ensure that charities protect and safeguard their beneficiaries, volunteers and staff. This is all the more relevant for those directly helping communities or vulnerable members of society who are self-isolating. Our safeguarding policy is a source of support on how to keep people safe, and what steps you should take if you identify concerns.

### **Peer on peer abuse**

We recognise the potential for abuse to go on between young people, especially in the context of their schools being closed or partially closed. Our staff will remain vigilant to the [signs of peer-on-peer abuse](#), including those between young people who are not currently attending our provision. When making contact with these families our staff will ask about relationships between young people.

### **Allegations or concerns about staff.**

With such different arrangements young people could be at greater risk of abuse from staff or volunteers. We remind all staff to maintain the view that 'it could happen here' and to immediately report any concern, no matter how small, to the safeguarding team.

Any staff or volunteers from outside our setting will complete an induction to ensure they are aware of the risks and know how to take action if they are concerned.

We have confirmed the arrangements to [contact the LADO](#) at the local authority remain unchanged.

If necessary, the Foundation will continue to follow the duty to refer to DBS any adult who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

### **New staff or volunteers**

New starters must have an induction before starting or on their first morning with the Senior staff member or a deputy. They must read the safeguarding policy and child protection procedures, the whistleblowing policy and the code of conduct. The senior staff will ensure new recruits know who to contact if worried about a child and ensure the new starters are familiar with the child protection procedure.

Our child protection procedures hold strong:

- Volunteers may not be left unsupervised with children until suitable checks have been undertaken. People supervising volunteers must have gone through a safer recruitment process, able to provide regular, day to day supervision and take action in all circumstances to protect the children.

- The Foundation will undertake a written risk assessment on the specific role of each volunteer to decide whether to obtain an enhanced DBS check (with barred list information) for all staff and volunteers new to working in regulated activity in line with [DBS guidance](#).
- If it is not possible to undertake ID checks in person on documents for the DBS it is reasonable to initially check these documents online through a live video link and to accept scanned images of documents for the purpose of applying for the check, in line with [guidance from the DBS](#). The actual documents will then be checked against the scanned images when the employee or volunteer arrives for their first day.

This policy has been remotely approved by Trustees on 3 February 2021 available on the Foundation website at [www.duboissondancefoundation.co.uk](http://www.duboissondancefoundation.co.uk).

Commented [JW3]: Date and link to be added