

SOAR	Safeguarding Policy	Version: 2.1 Date: 30 January 2023
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SOAR Project

Registered charity 1068361

Safeguarding Policy

Date adopted	10 October 2022
Review periodicity	1 year
Next review	September 2023

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Section 1: Details of the Organisation

Name of the Organisation: SOAR Project, Registered charity 1068361

Address: St Peters Centre, Storer Road, Loughborough LE11 5EQ

Tel No: 01509 414 221

Email address: office@soarproject.org.uk

Membership of Organisation: Trustees, Staff Members plus variable numbers of volunteers

Charity Number: 1068361. **Regulators details:** The Charity Commission

(Contact details: Address: PO Box 1227, Liverpool, L69 3UG Tel No:0845 300 0218)

Insurance Company: Ansvar Insurance (Charity Connect policy no. CCP 2144101) providing indemnity for Employers Liability, Public Liability and Trustees Indemnity.

The following is a brief description of our organisation and the type of work/activities we undertake with children: **Working with Schools and Churches to promote the Christian Faith**

Schools: *RE Lessons, Assemblies, Lunchtime Clubs and Activities, After-school Clubs and Activities, Prayer Spaces*

Churches: *Acts of Worship, Holiday Clubs, Pre-school Clubs, Detached Youth Work, Summer Mission, Discipleship groups, Occasional Events, Training advice on working with young people*

Town: *Town Chaplaincy*

NB: Although SOaR does not work directly with vulnerable adults it can bring workers into contact with them on a regular basis

Our commitment

As Trustees we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and, where necessary, vulnerable adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and vulnerable adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect.

We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to *“all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”*. We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from *“all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.”*

As Trustees we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The policy and attached practice guidelines are based on the safeguarding standards published by Thirtyone:eight formerly the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (31:8)

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The Trustees undertake to:

- endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- support the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and vulnerable adults.
- not allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

Section 2

Recognising and Responding Appropriately to an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse

Understanding Abuse and Neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against a vulnerable adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child (or the vulnerable adult).

In order to safeguard those in our organisation we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point its definition of abuse (Article 19), which states:

- 1. Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.*
- 2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.*

Also, for adults, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5 which states:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Detailed definitions, signs and symptoms of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included as appendices in this policy.

Definitions of abuse: Appendix 2 including "Further Definitions of Abuse"

Signs and symptoms of abuse: Appendix 3 Children and Young People; Vulnerable Adults

How to respond to a child in a possible abuse situation: see 1. and 2. below plus Appendix 5

How to respond to a vulnerable adult in a possible abuse situation: see 1. and 3. below plus Appendix 6

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Safeguarding Awareness

The Trustees are committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training as and when local training is available and, at least, once every 3 years. Workers who attend training should then disseminate the information to their colleagues.

Relevant courses relating to safeguarding applicable to the work of SOaR will be accessed from the following providers: Leicester Diocese, The Methodist Church, Thirtyone:eight and the Baptist Union.

The Trustees will also reserve the right to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern. However, as most of SOaR's work is with and on the premises of other organisations, initial contact will be made with the host organisation. If a worker from SOaR is unhappy that a host organisation does not respond appropriately they should then follow the procedures laid down in this policy.

Responding to Allegations of Abuse

The following procedures should be adhered to and under no circumstances should a worker carry out his/her own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Volunteers should speak to a worker about any concern they may have unless the concern relates to the worker in which case they should speak to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should:

- Report concerns as soon as possible to **Tom Wearn**, Designated Safeguarding lead: Mobile No. **07816556202** or email: t.wearn@hotmail.com who is nominated by the Trustees to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
 - In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to:
- If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to Thirtyone:eight (formerly CCPAS) PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Telephone **0303 003 11 11**. Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.
- Where the concern is about a child the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact Children's Social Services. Where the concern is regarding an adult in need of protection, contact Adult Social Services or take advice from 31:8 as above.

The local Children's Social Services office telephone number (24 hours) is 0116 305 0005

The local Adult Social Services office telephone number (office hours) is 0116 305 0004

The out of hours emergency number is 0116 255 1606

The Police Child Protection Team telephone number is 0116 222 2222

- Where required the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should then immediately inform the insurance company and other strategic personnel. Initially **Keith Rose** (Chairperson of SOaR Trustees) Telephone no: **07948403189**

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- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures. Accident & Incident Sheets to be completed and a hard copy of every completed form should be sent to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator for secure safe keeping in a secure place. The forms will be securely appended to a page numbered Accident & Incident Books.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from 31:8.
- The Trustees will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy 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.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from 31:8, although the Trustees hope that members of the organisation will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. It is hoped by making this statement that the Trustees demonstrate their commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

In the event of an allegation of abuse the role of the safeguarding co-ordinator/deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who then have a legal duty to investigate.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child relating to:

1. Allegations of Physical Injury, Neglect or Emotional Abuse

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy in conjunction with the worker will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or 31:8) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carers to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carers is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by 31:8 (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

2. Allegations of Sexual Abuse - Children

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy in conjunction with worker will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carers or anyone else.

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- Seek and follow the advice given by 31:8 if, for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services or the Police. 31:8 will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

3. Suspicions or Allegations of Physical or Sexual Abuse – Vulnerable Adults

Where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection and if a vulnerable adult has a physical injury or symptom of sexual abuse the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy in conjunction with the worker will follow this procedure:-

- Discuss any concerns with the individual themselves giving due regard to their autonomy, privacy and rights to lead an independent life.
- If the vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.
- For advice contact the Adult Social Care Vulnerable Adults Team who have responsibility under Section 47 of the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and government guidance, 'No Secrets', to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively 31:8 can be contacted for advice. Government information relating to 'No Secrets' may be accessed at the following website:

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4008486

4. Allegations of Abuse Against a Person Who Works with Children/Young People

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will need to liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to a 'designated officer' formerly known as a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) – Mark Goddard 0116 305 7957 or Kim Taylor 0116 305 5641

It is also important that any such incidents should also be brought to the attention of the minister or leader of the church attended by the worker/volunteer involved

NB. There may also be a requirement under law to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) who hold the lists of people barred from working with children and vulnerable adults – this will require discussion with the 'designated officer'.

SECTION 3 Prevention

Safe Recruitment

The Trustees will ensure that all workers will be appointed are trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those applying have complete an application form and a self-declaration form
- Those short listed are interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained and followed up where appropriate

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- A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check has been completed (SOaR will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information).
- Qualifications, where relevant, have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant completes a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct (See Appendix 4)

As Trustees we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. Trustees will ensure that all workers have been issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The Trustees undertake to follow the principles found within the 'Abuse of Trust' guidance issued by the Home Office and accept the importance of clear boundaries in regard to personal relationships which can develop.

http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/s_to_u/sentencing_manual/s16_abuse_of_a_position_of_trust_sexual_activity_with_a_child/

SECTION 4

Pastoral Care

Supporting those affected by abuse

The Trustees are committed to offering pastoral care and support to those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of SOaR and will work with statutory agencies as appropriate. It is essential that any advice given is correct both in terms of the advice given and where it is available.

To assist in effective pastoral care and where appropriate, the Trustees may appoint one person to deal with the authorities, another to offer support to the victim and their family and another to provide pastoral care to the alleged or found guilty perpetrator. If it is necessary, another person may be appointed to support the perpetrator's family.

Working with offenders

The Trustees consider it inappropriate for anyone who is known to have abused children or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults to work as a worker or volunteer for SOaR. The Trustees agree that any suspicion, relating to the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults, about a worker or volunteer should be logged and discussed with the Chair of the Trustees and the Safeguarding Co-ordinator without delay. If, after this, it is deemed necessary, the Chair and the Safeguarding Co-ordinator would speak with the person concerned and take whatever action is deemed appropriate.

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SECTION 5

Practice Guidelines

As an organisation working with children, young people and vulnerable adults we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation.

As well as a general code of conduct for workers we also have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in and these are attached. These will usually be in the form of attached appendices.

Working in Partnership

There can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults e.g. in terms of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding. We therefore have clear guidelines in regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership. We will discuss, with all partners, our safeguarding expectations. For longer term projects it is essential that the SOaR staff responsible for the project ensure that those from the partner organisation are fully informed and agree to abide with SOaR's Safeguarding Policy for the duration of the project.

Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and vulnerable adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

The Safeguarding Policy is a working document and, as such, will be reviewed by the workers and the Safeguarding Co-ordinator at the end of the school year (July) in readiness for the new academic year. Following this the Trustees will review the policy each year at their September meeting when any changes should be ratified or amended. When agreed it should be signed and dated by the leadership. The ratification of the policy will be presented as an annual item in the AGM Report.