

## Safeguarding Policy

### Purpose and Scope of Safeguarding Policy

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To protect children<sup>1</sup>, young people<sup>2</sup> and vulnerable adults<sup>3</sup> who come into contact of READ Foundation employees, its associates<sup>4</sup> and Implementing Partners (IPs) as recipients of our services. This includes the children of our beneficiaries.
2. To provide staff, our associates and IPs with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

It is our responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults to keep them safe. READ Foundation is committed to practice in a way that protects them from harm. This policy enables us to prevent, identify, report and respond to child safeguarding concerns - and ensure accountability and transparency at all times.

It is also our responsibility to ensure that Implementing Partners have proper safeguarding policies and procedures in place, we also support them to develop their own policies. Failure to meet this requirement may result in withdrawal, suspension, or termination of our partnership agreement.

### Policy Statement

Through our work we will come in to contact with some of the world's most vulnerable and marginalised communities. It is essential that we uphold the rights of children<sup>5</sup> and safeguard their right to protection<sup>6</sup> against actions (intended or unintended) that may place them at risk of harm.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989.
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of violence, exploitation, neglect and abuse.
- Some children, young people and vulnerable adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs, disability or other issues.

---

<sup>1</sup> UNCRC Article 1. For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 as youth without prejudice

<sup>3</sup> Vulnerable adult is 18+ individual who is not able to care for themselves due to physical, mental or functional inabilities. This can also include those who cannot protect themselves from any harm or abuse they may be subjected to.

<sup>4</sup> Associates refer to all who have contractual binding with READ Foundation including our trustees, volunteers, consultants, vendors, visitors, donors, interns etc.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/unicef-convention-rights-child-uncrc.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> UNCRC article 19



- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, vulnerable adults and their carers and other agencies is essential in promoting their wellbeing.

READ Foundation has a **Zero Tolerance** approach towards any violations of this policy. READ Foundation will take disciplinary action against anyone found to be in violation of this policy. This includes conducting an internal investigation, seeking legal advice and termination from employment.

**Legal Framework:** READ Foundation shall comply with all applicable laws, regulations, statutes and codes currently in effect i.e. UNCRC, UN Secretary General's Bulletin Special Measures for PSEA, International Labour Standards on Child Labour and Forced Labour.

### READ Foundation Policies & Guidance

The Safeguarding Policy at READ Foundation should be read in conjunction with the following policies that complement safeguarding at every aspect of the organisation:

- Employee Handbook
- Anti-Fraud & Whistleblowing Policy
- Global Code of Conduct
- PSEAH Policy
- Beneficiary Complaints & Feedback Policy and Procedures (BCFPP)
- General Data Protection Policy
- Serious Incident Reporting
- Equality Diversity Policy
- Equal opportunities Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Social Media Policy

### Safeguarding Principles



## Reporting Allegations/Incidents

- Any concerns or allegations should be brought to the attention of the Safeguarding & CP Advisor & Deputy CEO at dedicated email address [safeguarding@readfoundation.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@readfoundation.org.uk)
- The Safeguarding & CP Advisor will discuss concerns and provide the relevant advice on how to respond appropriately. An incident report form (Appendix 1) will be required to be completed.
- All staff/volunteers and other representatives should document concerns, facts, allegations and actions in the case record and share the form with Safeguarding & CP Advisor, who will ensure its confidentiality and proper record keeping.

Whilst it is not the role of individual staff members to **investigate allegations**, all staff and volunteers must bear in mind that it is their responsibility to take any safeguarding concerns seriously and report it when they see, suspect, shared by some relevant person or come across any such situation or incident. **Failure to do so could result in disciplinary procedures against them.**

## Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead within **READ Foundation** is:

**Shazia Naveed, Safeguarding & CP Advisor** who will share and discuss incidents with **Javeria Hashmi, Deputy CEO.**

Concerns should be sent to our dedicated safeguarding email address:

[safeguarding@readfoundation.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@readfoundation.org.uk)

The Safeguarding and CP advisor will inform the Safeguarding focal person at Board Level of reports made concerning anyone working with or for READ Foundation or with or for our partner organisations, within acceptable confidentiality boundaries. This will be done on a quarterly basis or earlier if urgent attention is required. This will be in the form of incident reporting and will not disclose victim/survivor's details, in order to preserve confidentiality and enabling trustees to hear appeals subsequently (if appeal is made in response to disciplinary actions).

The Chair of Trustees will also be fully informed and therefore would not be able to hear an appeal as a result of any disciplinary action.

The Safeguarding & CP Advisor will keep the Safeguarding focal person at Board Level (Dr Usman Choudry) and the Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO) informed of progress in any investigation. Disciplinary actions that may result from an internal audit or investigation will be decided by the SMT under supervision of CEO (Jahangeer Akhtar) and Chair of Trustees (Haroon Rashid).

If the concern is about the Designated Safeguarding Lead or you want to escalate your concern, please report this to the Deputy CEO (Javeria Hashmi) at [Javeria.hashmi@readfoundation.org.uk](mailto:Javeria.hashmi@readfoundation.org.uk) who will form a new investigation committee to make a fair decision.

*Please note: If abuse occurs within the community which may not be due to our organisation's operations or programmes, we still have a responsibility to report.*



### Reporting to External Bodies

There is a **zero-tolerance** response towards any allegation of abuse or exploitation of children against READ Foundation staff through either:

- a) The consideration of a referral to law enforcement authorities for criminal investigation, where appropriate, and consulting with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in England and/or their equivalents in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; or
- b) By an internal READ Foundation investigation, in accordance with child safeguarding and any (if relevant) disciplinary procedures, should a referral to statutory agencies be inappropriate. Internal action may also be recommended by a statutory agency or at the conclusion of an investigation by them. Such investigations may result in dismissal, ending of voluntary roles and/or the termination of partnership agreements or other forms of relationship.

All concerns about the welfare of children and vulnerable adults in the UK will be reported to the relevant statutory agencies. At other locations and countries incident reports will be made to the relevant authorities unless to do so would place the victim at risk of additional harm.

READ Foundation will ensure that suitably trained investigators are available to conduct any internal investigation and will follow relevant guidelines to guarantee investigations are fair, transparent, impartial and focused on the needs and welfare of children.

READ Foundation will comply with its legal obligations to refer individuals to the relevant barring authorities should there be evidence that an individual has harmed a child/young people/vulnerable adult or placed them at risk of harm.

Where appropriate, READ Foundation will report safeguarding concerns to the Charity Commission, FCDO and any other relevant agency; we will also ensure we meet any such reporting obligations to donors.

These arrangements also apply to any representative or staff of any IPs with whom READ Foundation has signed a partnership agreement/deed/funding agreement.

### APPENDIX 1

#### Safeguarding Incident/Concern Reporting Form

Section 1: Child's/Young Person's Details	
Full Name:	
Gender: Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Age:
First Language:	Date of Birth:
Full Postal Address:	
Communication needs (interpreter/signer/other):	



Additional support needs or any disability:		
Other:		
How is the child connected to READ Foundation?		
Section 2: Your Details		
Your name:	Your position:	Date & time of Incident:
Section 3: Your report		
Are you reporting your own concerns or raised by someone else?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Reporting my own concerns	If reporting concerns raised by someone else, please provide their name and position within the organisation:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Reporting concerns raised by someone else		
Please provide full details of the incident or concerns you have, including times, dates or other relevant background information (such as a description of any injuries, whether you are recording fact, opinion or hearsay):		
The child/young person's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how (record young person's words verbatim if possible. When asking, think of 'TED' Tell me, Explain, Describe):		
Note: Listen carefully when they are sharing the incident with you.		

Please provide details of the person alleged to have caused the incident/injury including, where possible, their name, address and date of birth (or approximate age) and current location (if known):

Please provide details of any witnesses to the incident(s)

Next steps (what is the outcome/your suggestion):

Your signature:

Designated Safeguarding Person received information.

Date:

Time:

DSL's signature:

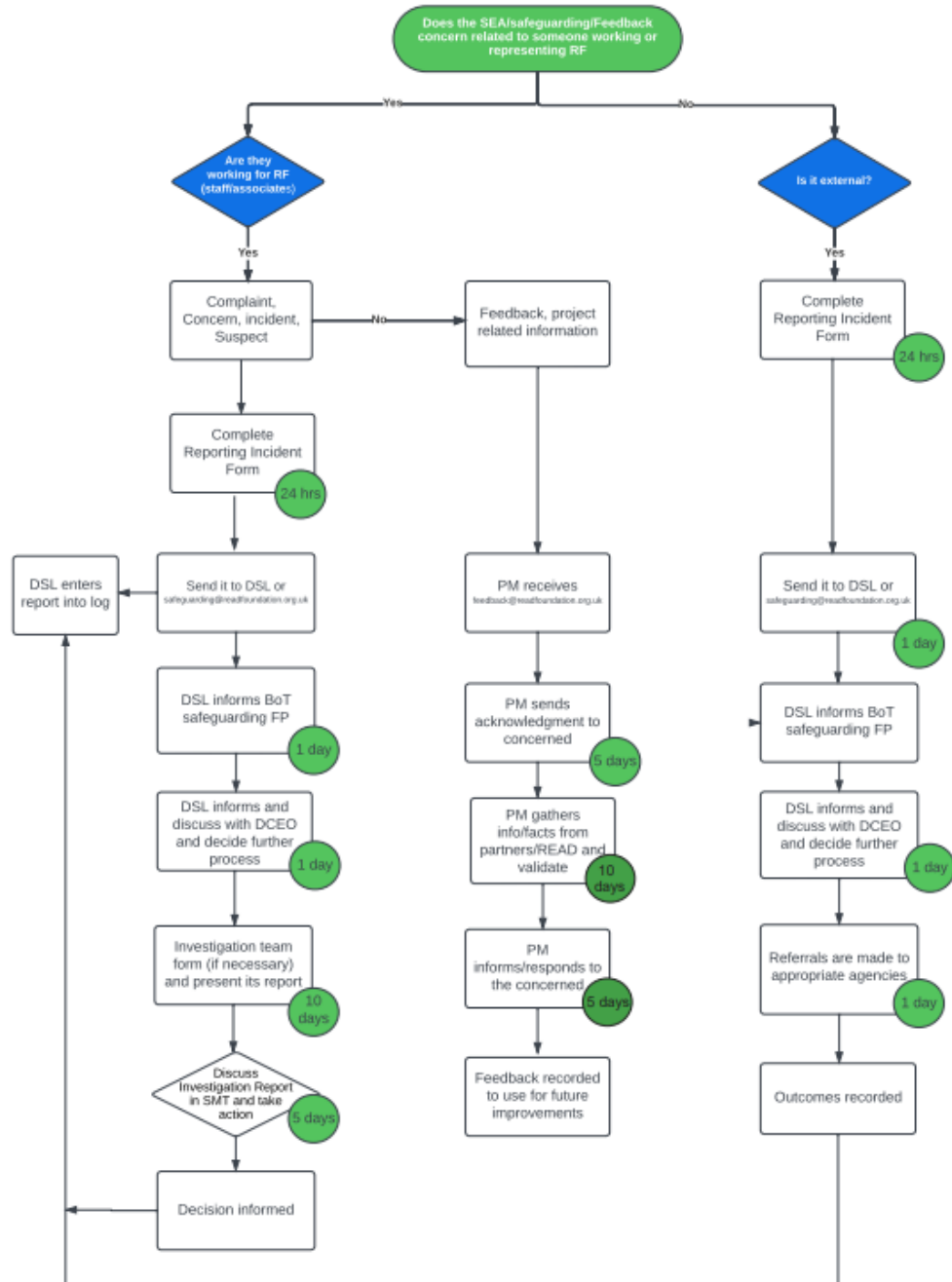
A copy of this MUST be submitted to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or their Deputy) within 24 hours.

If victim/survivor needs health assistance, please ensure it is provided before recording the incident directly or through referrals.



## APPENDIX 2

### REPORTING FLOW CHART



## APPENDIX 3

**Safeguarding and Child Protection:** In relation to adults, the Care Act 2014 provides a definition of adult safeguarding as the act of "protecting a person's right to live safely, free from abuse and neglect." Unlike children, adults are categorized under a wider range of abuse types. These include physical abuse, emotional/psychological abuse, financial abuse, sexual abuse, organisational abuse, neglect, discriminatory abuse, domestic violence, modern slavery, and self-neglect.

Regarding children, the definition of safeguarding is more comprehensive and is outlined in the document "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 - A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children." This guide sets out the legal requirements and expectations for individual services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The document "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018" does not differentiate between safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The definition includes the following aspects:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Separate from safeguarding children is the concept of "child protection." The Children Act 1989 defines child protection as the situation where there is "reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm." The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. Physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect all fall under the categories of significant harm. Harm is defined as the ill-treatment or impairment of health and development.

In simple terms, safeguarding encompasses the overall well-being of a child, and every professional and organisation bears responsibility for safeguarding children. Within the realm of safeguarding, child protection comes into play when there is suspicion of maltreatment or risk of maltreatment to a child.

### Definitions

**Child:** anyone under the age of 18, irrespective of the age of consent and/or majority in the country they reside. This policy applies equally to all children regardless of their background, age, class, gender, ethnicity, religion, ability or sexual orientation.

**Child Safeguarding:** the organisational policies, procedures, systems and practices applied to safeguard children who come in to contact with READ Foundation and all those associated with the delivery of our work from all forms of harm, including the responsibilities of all representatives to embed these at the activity level to ensure READ Foundation is a child safe organisation.

**Child Protection:** the prevention of and response to significant harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence against children. This includes the integration of child protection into all of READ Foundation programming to enhance the protective environments for children in the community.



**Child Abuse:** involves the abuse of children's rights and includes all forms of violence against children, which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of a safe and healthy development into adulthood.

**Physical Abuse:** Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

**Emotional Abuse** Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic abuse, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may also expose children to emotional abuse.

**Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Neglect:** Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision.

**Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE):** Sexual exploitation of children and young people involve exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where children receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money or humanitarian aid) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities.

In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources or because they are working in a position of trust.

**Child Commercial Exploitation:** using children in work or other activities for the economic benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour, child soldiers, and involving children in criminal activities. Elements of child commercial exploitation are connected to **Child Trafficking and Modern-Day Slavery:**

- A child has been trafficked or enslaved if he or she has been moved within a country, town or city, or across borders whether by force or not, with the purpose of exploiting the child. This may include forced labour such as domestic servitude and forced criminality such as begging or cannabis cultivation and debt bondage where victims forced to work to pay off debts that they will never be able to which can be passed down to children.
- Modern slavery is listed as a category of abuse within the Care Act 2014 and is treated as a child protection issue, requiring a safeguarding response due to the risk and trauma suffered by victims. If



you suspect that a child or young person may be a victim, please call the Modern Slavery helpline on 0800 0121 700 for advice and support.

**Bullying:** In addition, **READ Foundation** recognises that we have a responsibility to: *“protect children from bullying and to have policies and procedures in places to do so”* and staff should appropriately challenge bullying in any form i.e. physical or emotional. Bullying is not an accepted behaviour towards anyone at **READ Foundation** be they child, staff, volunteer or parent. Anyone found to be bullying others will be dealt with seriously both regarding the behaviour exhibited and the reasons for the behaviour.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) refers to procedures that intentionally alter, mutilate or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. FGM is medically unnecessary and can have serious health consequences, both at the time it is carried out and in later life. FGM has been a criminal offence in the UK since 1985. In 2003 it also became a criminal offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to take their child abroad to have female genital mutilation. It is mandatory to report known cases of FGM.

**Traditional Harmful Practices:** Practices based on cultural beliefs and values that have harmful consequences for children e.g. witchcraft and early or forced marriage for example.



## APPENDIX 4

### Policy Principles

#### Best Interests

At an organisational and individual level, READ Foundation will always have the best interests, welfare and safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults at our heart; from programme design and delivery to reporting or responding to an incident.

#### Child Participation

Children should be empowered to understand their rights to safety and what constitutes unacceptable behaviour from READ Foundation perspectives and what to do when they have a concern. Children should be spoken to in a child-friendly manner and, where possible, in their own language. Child friendly communications which are age appropriate and reflect literacy standards of the children we work with will be produced and shared at the outset of our work with children.

#### Confidentiality

We are committed to confidentiality in sharing sensitive information in relation to child safeguarding incidents reported to us. Information that identifies individuals will only be shared with due consideration to the safety of the child, witnesses or subject of complaint, or to protect the integrity of an investigation.

Information can be disclosed without consent in certain circumstances such as if disclosure is justified in the wider public interest.

All sensitive information held by READ Foundation of children and young people will be stored securely on our IT systems and manual filing systems. We have strict procedures for the way this is done. Any and all information about children and young people is treated as confidential and with respect. There are also clear rules and guidance about storing, recording and sharing information which staff receive training on, in line with GDPR. Further protection is given following disclosure, by limiting the availability of the information and allowing access by individuals or groups on a strictly “need to know” basis with the welfare of the child paramount.

#### Risk Approach

READ Foundation has duty of care to provide protective environments for children in all operations and activities; staff should, where possible, ensure that proposals demonstrate that the risks children may face as a result of a project have been identified and addressed, and will be monitored.

#### Training

READ Foundation will facilitate training opportunities for all staff within the organisation, either online or in person. Priority will be given to those staff groups who work directly with children and families on a regular basis, to ensure that they recognise the signs of possible abuse and neglect<sup>7</sup> and are able to report those concerns in line with this policy.

---

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/eLibrary/Content/Internet/537/6683/6714/44027152157.pdf>



READ Foundation will ensure that **all** new staff have attended an introduction to safeguarding workshop within **two months** of taking up their post. This opportunity will also be made available to volunteers to enable a culture of a child-focused READ Foundation to prevail.

Training should be updated and reviewed regularly in line with changing legislation, experience and knowledge of the sector. Refresher training will take place **every two years** for existing staff. Safeguarding training should include:

- Basic awareness of Safeguarding issues
- READ Foundation's Safeguarding policies and procedures including supporting policies

Type of training	Staff
Introduction to Safeguarding at READ Foundation	New staff as part of induction. All other staff – refresher training to be attended every 2 years
International Safeguarding	All staff who travel to, or work in, overseas programmes
Additional and specialist training	Safeguarding Leads training – one lead at board, management and coordinator levels  Safeguarding for trustees – Board level safeguarding lead
Safer Recruitment	All relevant staff who will be involved in recruitment

## APPENDIX 5

### Staff Waiver Form

(This form to be used by staff for getting pictures on personal mobile/camera)

READ Foundation staff using personal mobiles or cameras to capture photographs and data or making calls must read this form carefully, especially those who are visiting field areas are required to fill this form prior to visiting a child, young person or vulnerable adult. We are committed to ensuring that children's rights are respected, and their safety and comfort is paramount.

<b>Name of staff:</b>			
<b>Trip Details:</b>			
<b>Department:</b>			
Start Date		End Date	
<b>Purpose of Travel (please tick)</b>		Media field trip	
Programme Delivery/M&E		Finance/Audit	
Marketing/Communication Delegation			
Others			

Guidelines and requirements		
Please read and agree to each item individually		Agree
1	In case, if I need to take a picture of the project activity, orphan child during field visit, I will obtain their consent before taking photographs or making a clip or video.	
2	Pictures taken with my personal mobile will be purely used for making part of reports or official use, I will not use them for personal purposes.	
3	I will not upload any photos of project beneficiaries, orphan child or activity on my personal social media.	
4	I understand and acknowledge that if I use photographs of children or adults in RF assisted families/communities for anything other than my official use, I will be wholly accountable for any legal consequences.	
5	I will show respect to the staff, children, families and communities I meet and take into consideration any cultural sensitivities and abide by the laws of the country I am visiting.	
6	I will not use my personal phone to make calls to speak with beneficiaries, orphan children and young people. In case I need to for official purpose, I will inform my supervisor in writing.	

Name:

Signature:

Designation:

Date:



<b>Policy Number</b>	RF/POL/006	<b>Version</b>	V.03
<b>Responsible Dept.</b>	HR & Operations & Programmes		
<b>Approved By</b>	BOT	<b>Approval Date</b>	20.11.2024
<b>Next Review Due</b>	20.11.2025		

