

## Child Safeguarding Policy

### Policy Statement

READ Foundation's mission is to deliver short- and long-term interventions to needy communities internationally with competence and compassion. 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 and safeguard them against actions (intended or unintended) that place them at risk of harm.

At **READ Foundation** we are committed to protecting children from harm and abuse. All staff, volunteers and representatives accept and recognise their responsibility to provide an environment which promotes the safety of the child at all times and demonstrates the highest standards of behaviour towards children, in both their professional and personal lives.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- All children regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare

We all have a duty to respond where necessary, regardless of whether the child is known to, or involved with READ Foundation. This duty also extends to acting where a concern related to incidents of abuse that occurred some time ago, there is no limit to our accountability to children.

All staff are responsible for ensuring that children are safeguarded in all their contact with READ Foundation and must do all they can to prevent, report and respond appropriately to child abuse and seek advice whenever action is needed.

Any violations of this policy will be treated as a serious issue and will result in disciplinary action being taken, including termination and any other available legal remedy.

### This policy applies to

- All permanent and temporary members of staff
- The Board of Trustees
- Volunteers and Interns
- Consultants



- Agency staff
- Ambassadors
- Visitors
- Partners
- Third party contractors (e.g. suppliers)
- Any other persons or organisations who represent READ Foundation, however briefly

### Equality Statement

- READ Foundation is committed to ensuring that equality is incorporated across all aspects of its delivery.
- READ Foundation respects the rights, dignity and worth of every person and will treat everyone equally within the context of our work, regardless of age, ability, gender, race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexuality or social/economic status.
- READ Foundation is committed to everyone having the right to enjoy their activities in an environment free from threat of intimidation, harassment and abuse.
- All READ Foundation staff and volunteers and representatives have a responsibility to oppose discriminatory behaviour and promote equality of opportunity.
- READ Foundation will deal with any incidence of discriminatory or abusive behaviour seriously, according to READ Foundation disciplinary procedures.

### Safeguarding or Child Protection

The term child protection has been changed to safeguarding as it reflects the wider. At a broad level, **READ Foundation** defines safeguarding as:

#### **Doing everything possible to minimise the risk of harm to children and young people.**

Safeguarding relates to the established organisational policies, procedures and practices employed to ensure READ Foundation is a safe organisation, and the actions taken by READ Foundation to protect our staff (and all those to whom this policy applies) from harm and from harming others.

This must include:

- Ensuring staff are properly checked when they are recruited
- Training for people who come into contact with children as part of their role to ensure they know what they need to do to keep children safe
- Ensuring our programmes are underpinned by safeguarding principles



READ Foundation will act with intention and foresight to ensure child safeguarding risks are identified, monitored and mitigated against in the assessment of its operations and partner operations to prevent the risk of a child being abused, exploited or harmed. It is also expected that child safeguarding will be considered when planning a programme as well as during.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To protect children and young people who receive READ Foundation's and its partners services. This includes the children of adults who use our services
2. To provide staff and volunteers and other representatives (see above) with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding

READ Foundation believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind and has a **zero-tolerance** approach to abuse and exploitation of children. READ Foundation workers, visitors, sub-grantees, suppliers/sub-contractors, and implementing partners are prohibited from engaging in any form of abuse or exploitation of children.

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

### 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 involves 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

### Legal Framework

The overriding legislation that addresses child protection issues is the Children and Young Person’s Act 2004. “The welfare of the child shall be paramount ....” This principle known as the “paramountcy principle”, means that when there is a child protection concern, priority should be given to ensuring the safety and welfare of the child. This may mean that the needs or wishes of adults are overridden.

It is important to work in partnership with parents/carers of the children but in the final analysis, the welfare of the child must always come first.

This policy has been drawn up based on law and guidance that seeks to protect children and young people, namely:

### Law

- Children Act 1989
- United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Guidance from the Wakefield Safeguarding Children’s Board
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2016
- Working Together 2018
- Care Act 2014 (Section 11 regarding Modern Slavery)

### Policies & Guidance

- Employee Handbook
- Anti Fraud & Whistleblowing Policy
- Global Code of Conduct Policy



- Social Media Policy
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy

### Policy Aims

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Adopting child protection practices and safeguarding guidelines through procedures for staff and volunteers.
- Creating an open environment and identifying a 'designated person' to whom children can turn to if they need to talk.
- Creating child friendly communications relating to safeguarding, their rights and how they should expect our staff to behave.
- Developing an awareness of the issues which may lead to children being harmed.
- Putting in place procedures for reporting and responding to specific child protection concerns and breaches of the Safeguarding policy.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- Sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- Ensuring a risk assessment has been carried out before undertaking any activity and/or intervention.
- Putting the interests and welfare of the children we come into contact ahead of any other considerations – such as media/communication needs. Any depiction of children, in words or images, must protect their identity, preserve their dignity and be accurate. It is therefore mandatory to establish informed consent/assent from the child and/or informed consent from the caregiver before conducting any interview, photo shoot, filming or other content gathering activity.
- Ensuring complaints, grievance and disciplinary procedures are adhered to including adopting a whistleblowing policy that allows staff and other representatives to report concerns anonymously and without fear of retribution.
- Having Safeguarding as a critical component to induction processes.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.



- Adopting child centred and democratic staffing styles.
- Providing information as required to the Board.
- Being involved in training made available through various agencies and strengthen links within the sector.

## Policy Principles

### Best Interests

At an organisational and individual level, Read Foundation will always have the best interests, welfare and safety of children 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 represents unacceptable behaviour from READ Foundation representatives 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 with children and families on a regular



basis, to ensure that they recognise the signs of possible abuse and neglect and are able to report those concerns in line with this policy.

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

## Recruitment

### Safer Recruitment Procedures for Volunteers/Staff

- Volunteers and staff are carefully selected, trained and supervised. The Operations Manager within READ Foundation must ensure appropriate checks have been carried out prior to the involvement and participation of new staff/volunteers in delivering activities to young people.
- All applicants, whether paid or voluntary, will be subject to an interview to assess their suitability to work for the organisation.
- It will be made clear to all applicants for all posts within the organisation are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Every interview panel will include at least one person who has undertaken “Safer Recruitment” training.
- Any applicants for employment deemed to be in regular contact with children and vulnerable young adults will be subject to basic DBS checks prior to commencement of employment.
- All applicants will be requested to provide two referees who will be contacted to provide written references prior to employment and if necessary further checks should be undertaken by the line manager.





- References will be closely examined by HR and any queries discussed with the referee prior to job offer
- Declaration of past convictions or cases pending and agreement to have a DBS check completed, is of course a pre-requisite to approval to staff/volunteer to work with young people.
- In cases where applicants have unexplained gaps in their employment, or there is a history of frequent moves between jobs, explanations will be sought.
- Volunteers that take part in 'regulated activities' with children and/or vulnerable young adults will require basic DBS checks prior to undertaking a voluntary role.
- All staff will be subject to a 6-month probationary period. Positions will not be confirmed as permanent until the organisation is confident that staff members are considered safe and suitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable young adults.
- All commissioned workers (e.g. trainers) will be required to produce current DBS check and their professional testimonials to ensure their suitability to deliver their services.
- Should a staff member resign during and prior to completion of an investigation this will be noted on any subsequent reference sought

**ALL** volunteers/staff must sign and agree to abide by READ Foundation's Safeguarding Policy, and the Global Code of Conduct. Any concerns or objections regarding suitability of a staff member should be submitted to the CEO. These matters will be raised with the relevant external agencies with appropriate action taken including a formal response in writing to the concerned party if required. READ Foundation should not deal with concerns about a staff member in isolation, although we recognise the need to respect confidentiality in some instances.

### Reporting Allegations/Incidents

- Any concerns or allegations should be brought to the attention of the designated safeguarding lead either to their mobile phone number or to the dedicated email address [safeguarding@readfoundation.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@readfoundation.org.uk)
- The designated safeguarding lead will discuss your concerns and provide the relevant advice on how to respond appropriately. You will be asked to complete an incident report form (if you haven't done so already)
- All staff/volunteers and other representatives should document concerns, facts, allegations and actions in the case record.
- The completed Incident Log must be signed by the staff member and designated safeguarding lead
- The designated safeguarding lead will be responsible for storing any report in a safe and secure environment.
- Ensure confidentiality - only "need to know basis" Inform parents, unless to do so may put the child at further risk
- A copy of the Incident Log will also be kept in the client record.



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. **A failure to do so could result in disciplinary procedures being implemented against them.**

### Designated Safeguarding Leads

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

**Mohammed Iqbal**

Tel: +44 (0) 7831 807390

Concerns can also be sent to our dedicated safeguarding email address:

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

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the Safeguarding Lead 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 in the form of incident reporting and not disclosing case details, in order to preserve confidentiality and enabling trustees to hear appeals subsequently (if one 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mohammed Iqbal) will keep the Safeguarding Lead at Board Level (Dr Usman Choudry) and the Chair of Trustees (Haroon Rashid) informed of progress in any investigation. Disciplinary actions that may result from an internal audit or investigation will be decided by the CEO (Jahangeer Akhtar), Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mohammed Iqbal) and Chair of Trustees (Haroon Rashid).

If you are concerned about the behaviour of any member of staff or volunteer, please follow the Internal Concerns Flow Chart at Appendix 2. If the concern is about the designated person, please report this to the CEO (Jahangeer Akhtar) of READ Foundation.

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

### Responding to Disclosure of Abuse

#### What to do if a child/young person discloses abuse to you.

- Remain sensitive and calm and listen to what the child is saying, give the child time to say what they want
- Be compassionate and offer reassurance that they were right to tell, are being taken seriously, that they were not to blame, and you will do all you can to make sure they are safe
- Believe the child/young person and tell them that you believe them



- Explain that you must tell someone who can help, but it will be on a need to know basis
- Let the child talk - don't interview or ask leading questions or press for information
- Be non-judgemental
- Check you have understood correctly what the child/young person is trying to tell you
- Tell the child what will happen next. Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling and that it will be dealt with appropriately
- Involve appropriate individuals immediately; you don't need to get anyone's permission to report a concern
- Be aware that the child/young person may try to retract all they have told you.
- Record what has been said as soon as you can, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's/young person's own language
- Discuss concerns with the designated Safeguarding Lead (Mohammed Iqbal), complete the Incident Reporting Form (see Appendix 1)

#### Do not:

- Enter into a pact of secrecy with the child/young person. Assure them that you will try to help and **have to** tell other people in order to do this
- Express shock, anger or embarrassment
- Question unless for clarification
- Add your own comments or opinions
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate make/pass judgment about the alleged perpetrator
- Contact the alleged perpetrator
- Pass on the information to anyone other than those who are designated to manage disclosures
- Pressurise the child to disclose further details
- Take sole responsibility. Consult the designated person so you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself.

The issue about whether or not to seek the consent from parents/carers regarding sharing information about their child to another agency or professional must be governed by whether or not the child is at risk of significant harm. Any and all information about children and young people is treated as confidential and with respect.

#### Dealing with Concerns about a Colleague

The vast majority of people who work with children are well motivated and would never harm a child. Unfortunately, a few do, and it is essential that the organisation creates a culture that makes staff / volunteers willing and comfortable to voice their concerns, particularly those about someone with whom they work or whom they know. Again, the organisation's Safeguarding procedures should be followed.

All staff including volunteers and trustees should:



- Adopt a “whistle blowing approach” in line with the organisation’s Whistleblowing Policy, if they suspect any form of abuse of children including taking / circulating photographs / images of children by a staff member, volunteer or trustee;
- Report their concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mohammed Iqbal)

Failure to report suspicions or actual incidents could result in disciplinary procedures being instigated by the organisation.

During an investigation, support will be given both to the individual who voices concerns and to the suspected perpetrator. Once the investigation is completed, the organisation must decide what action, if any, is necessary to prevent a similar situation arising again.

See Appendix 2 Reporting Concerns Flowchart

### Reporting to External Bodies

There is a **zero-tolerance** response towards any allegation of the 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
- 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 in the UK will be reported to the relevant statutory agencies. In other jurisdictions reports will be made to the relevant authorities unless to do so would place the child 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 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 or placed a child at risk of harm

Where appropriate, READ Foundation will report child 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 partner agreement with whom READ Foundation has an agreed relationship.



## Contact with Children

### Those associated with the delivery of READ Foundation's work must:

- Conduct themselves in a manner consistent with Read Foundation values, this Child Safeguarding Policy, Global Code of Conduct Policy and related policies and procedures at all times
- Treat all children with respect regardless of their race, colour, gender (including gender diverse children), language, religion, opinions, nationality, ethnicity, social origin, property, disability, sexual orientation or other status
- Report any incidents or concerns where a child, young person or vulnerable adult is, or is likely to be, at risk of harm immediately (and definitely within 24 hours) in accordance with READ Foundation Reporting Procedures
- Inform line managers and Operations Manager (Mohammed Iqbal) of any changes in circumstances since their first involvement with READ Foundation which may impact upon the ability to comply with this Child Safeguarding Policy and the Global Code of Conduct such as an investigation by another agency into child safeguarding allegations
- Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence which relates to child exploitation and abuse, including those under traditional law, which occurred before or occurs during association with READ Foundation
- Ensure wherever possible that when working with individual children another adult is present
- Obtain informed consent from the child and/or parent or guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child or obtaining their story. An explanation of how the photograph, film or story will be used must also be provided
- Ensure photographs, films, and videos present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive
- Provide a safe and conducive environment for activities
- Challenge attitudes and behaviours that contravene this Child Safeguarding Policy, the Global Code of Conduct and any other related policies and procedures

### They must not:

- Use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, intended to humiliate or culturally inappropriate or be of a bullying nature
- Engage children in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity including paying for sexual services or engaging in other transactional forms of sexual services with anyone under the age of 18 years of age. Mistaken belief in the age of the child is not an acceptable defence.
- Engage in any sort of child abuse whether sexual, physical, emotional, neglect, grooming, harassment or exploitation via digital or other means including the use of suggestive conversations, comments, texting, instant messaging and emails or via social media sites
- Befriend a child they are supporting on social media such as Facebook. Such involvement could impact on their judgement in safeguarding situations.
- Physically punish or discipline child beneficiaries
- Do things for children of an intimate, personal nature that they can do for themselves



- Physically or verbally intimidate children and/or prevent a child from expressing his/her opinion
- Condone, participate in or encourage behaviour with children which is illegal
- Invite child beneficiaries into their home, unless this has agreement at the relevant Director level and only if necessary for the protection of the child
- Sleep in the same bed or room as a child beneficiary
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment to, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others
- Engage in any other relationships which might constitute an abuse of trust such as sexual relationships with a beneficiary family member
- Not abuse their position to withhold professional assistance, or give preferential treatment, gifts or payment of any kind to a child, or another person in relation to a child in order to solicit any form of advantage or sexual favour from a child.
- Act as a negotiator in, or assist the process of, financial settlement between the family of a child victim of abuse or exploitation and the perpetrator
- Work alone/unsupervised with children or young people. Wherever possible and practical, two adults should be present during workshops and other children's activities. Where this is not possible staff should seek alternatives such as the presence of adult community members and/or use of open spaces that are visible to others in the area.
- Carry out duties, visiting or volunteering with children and vulnerable adults whilst under the influence of alcohol, solvents or drugs
- Marry or carry out traditional practices involving a child that could be harmful to the child or engage a child in exploitative labour, even if it is culturally acceptable
- Under any circumstances transport unaccompanied children and young people in their own vehicles.
- Access indecent images of children through any medium
- Under any circumstances, release or discuss any images or aspects of work relating to children and families via social networking websites as this may have safeguarding implications
- Not engage in child labour including hiring of children for domestic or other labour: which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury

### Additional Guidance

#### Group situations

- A minimum of two staff, wherever possible, will work together with groups of children. If this is not possible, arrangements should be made with the delivery partner, or host organisation, to provide a member of staff to support the session.
- Staff will not be left alone for long periods with individual children or small groups. Staff will endeavour to seek support if a child needs to be taken aside – for example, for time out for behaviour issues. A suitable place within the same room should be chosen where possible. All such incidents must be reported. Complete Incident Form at Appendix 1
- Staff will ensure the layout within activity venues will permit constant supervision of all children and the staff working with them.
- Children will be encouraged to develop a sense of autonomy and independence through staff support in making choices about their care and safeguarding.
- Risk assessments to be carried out before any session take place and these are to be signed off by a relevant senior manager



- Before any activity begins, children will be informed of what behaviour and attitudes to expect from our staff and how to raise a concern or complaint should we fall short

### **One to one situations**

READ Foundation does not encourage working one to one with young children. However, we recognise that in some cases this is not realistic. Any such cases should be agreed with your line manager and the child's parent or guardian.

Where one to one work is required, to safeguard both children and staff, the following guidance must be followed:

- One to one work must be undertaken in premises where there are other people in the building i.e. READ Foundation premises, school, children's centre, client's home, health centre etc. Staff are not to meet with children in remote or secluded areas
- A full risk assessment should be undertaken and signed off by the relevant senior manager before the session take place
- Staff must inform their Manager of all one to one sessions and these must be included into the weekly timetable/time sheet. If it is thought appropriate, senior managers may ask that another member of staff be present
- Prior to the start of the session, the worker must contact the Manager to confirm that the session is going ahead; how long it will last; and when they will be expected to return to the office/go home if at the end of the working day
- Details of the session must be agreed with the parent or guardian before they proceed and an assessment of the need to have them present, or close by needs to be undertaken with them
- You should avoid the use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs during the session as they may create an opportunity for, or interpretation of secrecy
- If during a visit you feel uncomfortable at any time, you should leave and report this to your Line Manager. Complete Incident Form at Appendix 1.
- You must report all incidents where the child becomes upset, distressed or angry or has any other emotional reaction during the session. Complete Incident Form at Appendix 1
- If the worker is not returning to base, then the Manager must be given a reason for this.
- On completion of the one to one session, the worker must contact their Manager informing him/her that the session is over. If the Manager is unavailable, then a message must be left. A full debrief should happen within 2 working days of the session ending.

### **Away Days and Residentials**

Travelling on day trips and residentials may form part of the programmes at READ Foundation. Trips may vary from short journeys across town or involve more complicated arrangements involving overnight stays. READ Foundation is committed to ensuring that we follow appropriate standards to ensure the safety of our members. This will include gaining consent for all children and from a parent/guardian via a signed consent form; vital contact details to be left with a home-based contact; adequate ratios of staff to children (1:8) is adhered to at all times, and a lower ratio where there are children with behavioural/challenging issues.

Risk assessments will be carried out and signed off by relevant line managers before any residential or trip is authorised.



### Photography / Visual Records

Photographs of children and young people and families may be considered as personal data as defined by the data Protection Act 1988, if any individual can be identified from the photograph/image. Photographs cannot be displayed in public places without the specific consent of the child, young person, parent or carer.

Permission/Consent should always be sought from parents, carers, children and young people (who are deemed Fraser competent) before photographs/images are taken and displayed in any form.

Staff and other representatives must ensure they respect the privacy of children when producing images of children including

- Never showing images which would allow a child or children to be identified, particularly ensuring that a child's full name, location and image are never combined
- Respecting the image guidelines and ensuring images do not breach these policies

In no circumstances must staff or volunteers use their personal phone to take or store any images of children. Staff are not permitted to use their personal phones to contact any child or young person.

### COUNTRY CONTEXTS AND CHILD SAFEGUARDING

Every READ Foundation country office is required to have a context-specific Child Safeguarding Policy in place. This should complement this global Child Safeguarding Policy.

The document should consider the local context regarding appropriate behaviour, national laws, local reporting and responding procedures etc. and these should be made clear within the policy document.

Wherever possible the specific Child Safeguarding Policy for each country will be developed in consultation with local staff and children. They should be available in the local language, in child-friendly format, and shared and made available (displayed/communicated) in all settings where children come into contact with READ Foundation representatives.

Country offices will also ensure that staff sign a copy and that the relevant guidelines/statements/principles are displayed in an appropriate way around the office.

All visitors to our country programme offices, including Read Foundation head office representatives, are required to receive a location specific child safeguarding briefing which should focus on context-specific child safeguarding considerations.

A commitment to safeguarding is fundamental to Read Foundation's partnership approach and through our representatives, we will challenge and help new and existing partners to address safeguarding in their organisation and in the communities in which they work. All READ Foundation partners will be required to evidence what measures they have in place to protect people at risk from abuse in order that they meet our due diligence commitments.

### CHILDREN AND AWARENESS-RAISING

Awareness-raising activities for children and their caregivers need to be provided when Read Foundation first enters a community and begins to work with groups of children. The nature of the





sessions are context-specific, depending on the specific project and level of contact staff have with children within the project.

Awareness-raising sessions provided by Read Foundation are sensitive to age, gender and culture. READ Foundation will ensure that children and their caregivers are familiar with the Child Safeguarding Policy and know when and how to use it.

A child-friendly approach, utilising child-friendly materials that are age and culturally appropriate, will be used when informing children about child safeguarding issues.

## **PARTNERS**

All partner organisations are required to:

- a) Have their own Child Safeguarding Policy (or minimum clauses) in place, incorporating response and reporting procedures of a similar standard to those of Read Foundation's policy or;
- b) Adopt the core standards as defined by Read Foundation for partnership working and child safeguarding
- c) Receive support in the development of a policy (especially in countries where capacity building of local organisations is key).

This will be decided in consultation with Programmes Compliance and country office management (if applicable) and the partner agency.

The partner agreement (Memorandum of Understanding; MoU; PFA) will note the possible consequences of negligent implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy and/or relevant response and reporting procedures. This may include the possible withdrawal of funding/support and termination of the relationship with the partner.

READ Foundation may also be asked to assist in an investigation involving one of their members of staff, beneficiaries, and/or stakeholders.



**APPENDIX 1**

**Safeguarding Incident/Concern Reporting Form**

Section 1: Child's/Young Person's Details		
<b>Full Name:</b>		
<b>Gender:</b> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Age:</b>	<b>Date of Birth:</b>
<b>Ethnicity:</b>	<b>Religion:</b>	<b>First Language:</b>
<b>Full Postal Address:</b>		
<b>Communication needs (interpreter/signer/other):</b>		
<b>Additional support needs or any disability:</b>		
<b>Other:</b>		
<b>How is the child connected to READ Foundation?</b>		
Section 2: Your Details		
<b>Your name:</b>	<b>Your position:</b>	<b>Date &amp; time of Incident:</b>
Section 3: Your report		
<b>Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else?</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Responding to my own concerns  <input type="checkbox"/> Responding to concerns raised by someone else	<b>If responding to concerns raised by someone else, please provide their name and position within the organisation:</b>	
<b>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):</b>		



<p><b>The child/young person's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how (<i>record young person's words verbatim if possible. When asking, think of 'TED' Tell me, Explain, Describe</i>):</b></p>
<p><b>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):</b></p>
<p><b>Please provide details of any witnesses to the incident(s)</b></p>
<p><b>Next steps (what is the outcome/your decision):</b></p>



**Your signature:**

**Designated Safeguarding Person received information**

**Date:**

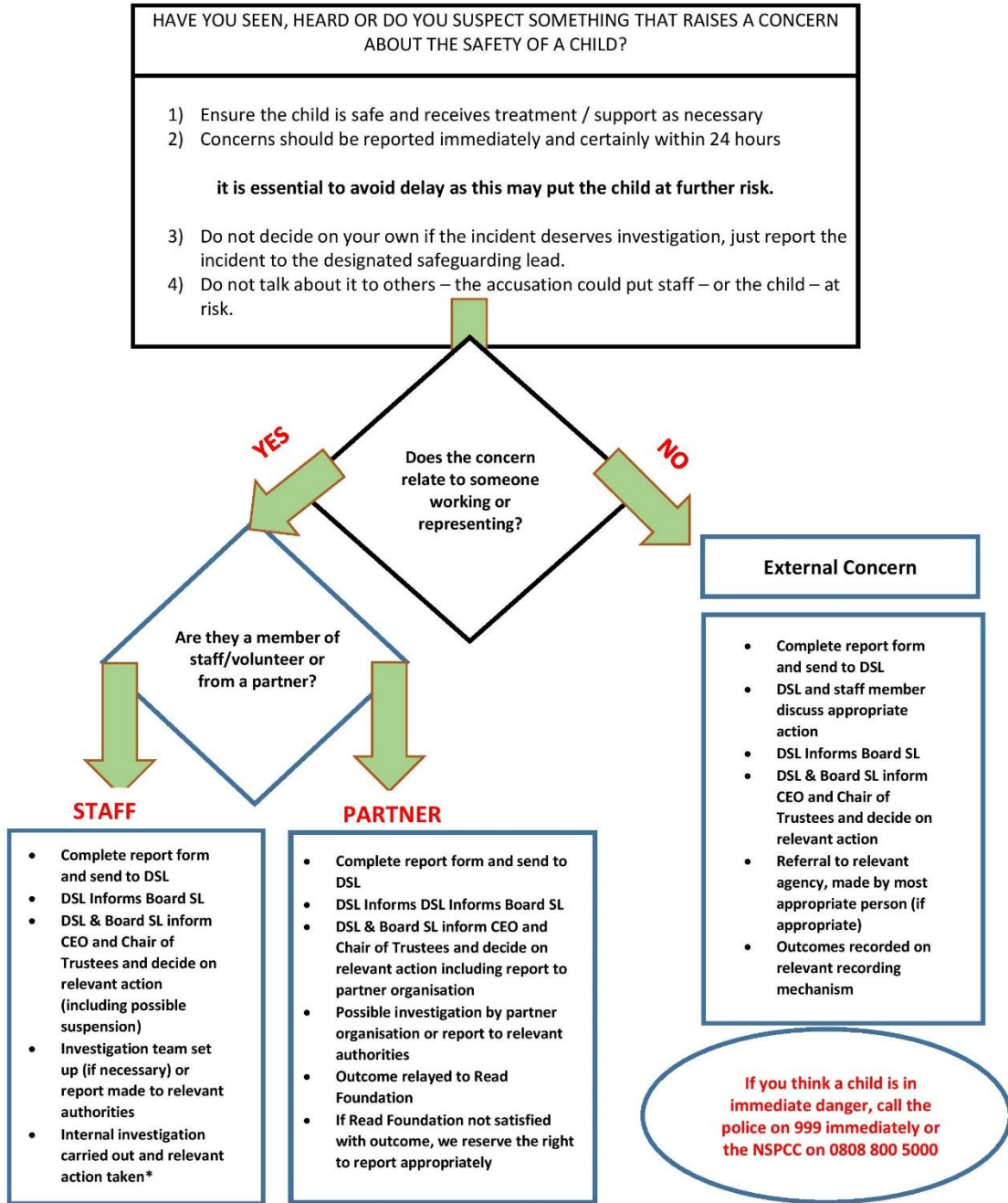
**Time:**

**DSL's signature:**

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



**APPENDIX 2**  
**REPORTING FLOW CHART**



\*Possible Outcomes Include: No Case to Answer (not proven); Warning or Advice on Future Conduct; Further Training or Support Needed; Suspension; Termination of Contract; Referral to Independent Safeguarding Authority Barred List

<b>Policy Number</b>	RF/POL/006	<b>Version</b>	V.01
<b>Responsible Dept.</b>	Operations		
<b>Approved By</b>	BOT	<b>Approval Date</b>	01.07.2022
<b>Next Review Due</b>	01.07.2023		

