

Future Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (2020) reviewed Jan 2022

Trustees have primary responsibility for safeguarding in their charity and the Charity Commission makes it clear that trustees need to take steps to safeguard and take responsibility for the children with whom the charity works.

Introduction

This child safeguarding policy is divided into two parts which cover the four Child safeguarding Standards as defined by Keeping Children Safe (KCS) – a global network of organisations that strive to ensure children are safeguarded and protected by all forms of abuse [www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk]. This policy will be reviewed annually by the trustees and updated as necessary.

Part 1: The Policy – is in accordance with KCS Standard 1 – ‘Policy: The organisation develops a policy that describes how it is committed to preventing and responding appropriately to [incidents of] harm to children’. This part is the core of the policy – and is reinforced by the Code of Conduct that all Future Academy trustees, staff and volunteers must adhere to.

Part 2: The child safeguarding guidelines – is in accordance with KCS Standard 2 – ‘People: The organisation places clear responsibilities and expectations on its staff and associates and supports them to understand and act in line with these’; KCS Standard 3 – ‘Procedures: The organisation creates a child-safe environment through implementing Child Safeguarding procedures that are applied across the organisation’; and KCS Standard 4 – ‘Accountability: The organisation monitors and reviews its safeguarding measures’. This part provides further guidance on the child safeguarding considerations in all areas of work.

Part 1: The Policy

1.1 Future Academy is committed to ensuring the health, safety, welfare and development of all participants and personnel regardless of gender, age, stage of development, disability, sexual orientation, religion, culture or ethnicity. We expect all Future Academy trustees, staff and volunteers to show respect for, and understanding of, all people’s rights and to conduct themselves in a way that reflects these principles.

1.2 The child safeguarding policy applies to all staff, trustees and volunteers regardless of their position, role or responsibility. References to “staff” throughout the policy relate to all staff, trustees and volunteers of Future Academy.

1.3 Terms and Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- 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

Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

Children include everyone under the age of 18.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. There are five key recognised types of abuse:

Physical Abuse: Actual or potential physical harm perpetrated by another person, adult or child. This may involve hitting, shaking, poisoning, burning or other physical acts.

Emotional Abuse: Persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts negatively on a child’s emotional development. This can include restriction of movement, degrading treatment, humiliation, bullying (including cyber bullying), threats, discrimination, ridicule or other non-physical forms of hostile or exclusionary treatment.

Neglect: Persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as well as provide adequate nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions.

Sexual Abuse: Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities that he/she does not fully understand and has little choice but to consent to. This may include rape, oral sex, penetration, masturbation, kissing, rubbing and inappropriate touching. Sexual abuse also encompasses the involvement of children in the viewing or production of sexual images, witnessing sexual activities and the encouragement of children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Exploitation: This encompasses, but is not limited to, commercial and sexual exploitation. Commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to the use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour. Child sexual exploitation involves children being engaged in any sexual activity in exchange for money, gifts, food, accommodation or any other material needs (e.g. child prostitution, the trafficking of children for sexual abuse and the exploitation of and creation and dissemination of sexually explicit videos and pictures).

Traditional Harmful Practices (Practices based on cultural beliefs and values that have harmful consequences for children e.g. witchcraft, early or forced marriage, female genital mutilation) and **Spiritual Abuse** (using text from spiritual books or quoting scripture as an excuse to perpetrate abuse and violence on children, or instilling fear into them) can also constitute child abuse.

1.4 Policy Aims

This is a pro-active policy designed to protect children who come into contact with Future Academy and its partners from physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation. The policy enables us to prevent, identify, report and respond to child safeguarding concerns and to ensure accountability and transparency at all times.

1.5 Prevention of Abuse

Future Academy will:

- Treat all people with respect
- Invite caregivers to observe all Future Academy activities
- Be alert to potential indicators of child abuse, neglect and exploitation and recognise that a child may be in need of help and safeguarding
- Be alert to the possible risk which any individual – both in the community and within Future Academy – may pose to children
- Make use of the appropriate up-to-date guidelines and procedures for the protection and wellbeing of children with whom Future Academy works or comes into contact with
- Make sure a child safeguarding risk assessment has been carried out before undertaking any activity. This includes the Health and Safety Checklist
- Put the interests and welfare of the children above any other considerations e.g. media. Any depiction of these children in word or images must protect their identity, preserve their dignity and be accurate. It is 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
- Carefully recruit and select all trustees, staff and volunteers in leadership positions
- Take all concerns and allegations of abuse seriously
- Report and respond appropriately to all child safeguarding, suspicions and observed cases within 24 hours following the set procedures for reporting concerns
- Share information about safeguarding concerns with agencies as required
- Provide effective management for trustees, staff and volunteers through monitoring, supervision, support and training
- Ensure that the behaviour of all Future Academy staff complies at all times with the Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding Policy

1.6 Identification of Child Safeguarding Issues

Issues of concern (“red flags”) may include:

- A child telling someone that he/she has been abused
- A child sustaining an injury where there is no satisfactory explanation
- A child behaving or appearing in such a way as to give rise to concern or suspicion

- Concerns that a staff member's behaviour towards children is inappropriate
- Receiving an allegation that a Future Academy representative is abusing a child
- Witnessing abuse in another organisation or within the community

1.7 RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES OR CONCERNS

Immediate Response to a Person Disclosing Abuse

Trustees, staff and volunteers to whom a disclosure is made should:

- Ensure the person is safe
- Ensure that the child receives appropriate medical attention immediately if he/she is suffering from a serious injury
- Stay calm
- Listen carefully to what is said without interrupting
- Allow the person to continue at her/his own pace
- Explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others - do not promise to keep secrets.
- Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned when an allegation has been made and is being investigated
- Ask questions for clarification only and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared. All information, however seemingly insignificant, about any situation that gives rise for concern that a person might be suffering harm must be passed on.
- Comprehensive notes should be taken. It is important to record the details of an allegation or reported incident regardless of whether or not a referral is subsequently made to a statutory agency. The report should be clear and factual since any information you have may be valuable to professionals investigating the incident and may, at some time in the future, be used as evidence in court. The report should be signed and dated.

It is not the responsibility of Future Academy staff to investigate or to decide whether a person is being abused – merely to report discovery or suspicion of abuse to the Lead for Safeguarding or their deputy/proxy, following the guidelines given in this policy. It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred – this is a task for professional agencies on a referral to them of concern about the person by the Lead for Safeguarding.

- Incidents occurring in Beirut should be reported immediately to the Safeguarding proxy (Ahmad Al Jamal) who, in consultation with the Lead for Safeguarding (Jane Watts) may decide to report the incident to the local authorities (Ministry of Social Affairs +9611611260/Police), if it is in the best interests of the child.
- The proxy will store the incident Report (and any documents associated with the concern) securely. A copy should be sent to the Lead for Safeguarding by the fastest possible method (password protected). If the Lead for Safeguarding is not available, contact must be made with the Deputy for Safeguarding. Prompt action is paramount.
- Incidents occurring in the UK must be reported to the Lead for safeguarding who will decide on the most appropriate course of action (Social Care Team[Essex 03456037627]/NSPCC 08088005000/Police).
- Confidentiality must be maintained at all times. Only individuals for whom the information will enable further protection of the child should be informed.
- In the instance where the concern is related to the Lead for Safeguarding, the concern will be managed by the remaining trustees.

1.8 Whistleblowing Procedure

A 'whistleblowing' procedure is one through which you can raise a child safeguarding concern confidentially outside of the proposed reporting lines outlined above. You do this directly by reporting a concern to the Lead of Safeguarding. The whistleblowing procedure is used:

- If a senior member of staff or the safeguarding proxy is implicated

- Where there is a conflict of interest
- If you feel you cannot raise the child safeguarding concern through the proposed reporting procedure or if you have tried this and it has not worked

1.9 Legal Framework

This Child Safeguarding Policy is based on international and national legislation. Its main legal framework is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and is also in compliance with Section 11 of the Children Act (2004); Keeping Children Safe Safeguarding Standards (2014); and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)

1.10 Investigation, Outcomes and Disciplinary Action

All incidents will be investigated fairly and remain confidential in line with Keeping Children Safe guidelines on the Managing of Child Safeguarding Allegations. This is essential to ensure not only that the child involved is protected but also that staff are protected from false accusations. Future Academy must ensure access to emotional and psychological support to alleged victims, witnesses and other staff as well as the alleged perpetrators. Future Academy staff involved in any investigation will receive appropriate training.

1.11 Accountability

All children and communities that Future Academy work with must be made aware of and understand Future Academy's commitment to child safeguarding. Information on this policy must be made available to them in appropriate, child friendly formats.

1.2 Core Principles

These principles apply when dealing with concerns and reports of abuse – and during any potential investigations.

Child Rights Approach: All children 'without discrimination of any kind' (article 2 of UNCRC) have the right to be protected from 'all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual violence' (article 19 of UNCRC)

Best Interest of the Child: All action taken to protect children will be in accordance with the best interest of the child (article 3 UNCRC)

Standards Based Approach: Future Academy has adopted a standards-based approach to Child Safeguarding. Where there is discrepancy between national laws and practices and international standards then this policy, together with a decision taken by the Lead of Safeguarding and Proxy, will take precedence. All staff agree to adhere to these standards when they join Future Academy and they will be held accountable to these standards.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality must be maintained during all stages of the disclosure and reporting process. This is to protect the child from further or future harm. All reports/records will be kept in a secure place with limited access. Disclosure of information can only be made to relevant parties on a need-to-know basis.

Transparency: Throughout the process of reporting on and responding to an allegation of abuse, all information should be recorded carefully and comprehensively by those responsible for carrying out the investigation. This is to ensure an accurate documentation of the incident. Rumours should be recorded as such and not factual evidence. Information that both corroborates and contradicts the allegation should be recorded. All information gathered, as well as decisions taken and the reasons for them, should be clearly outlined in the final report.

Sensitivity: Incidents of child abuse are potentially traumatising for both the victim and all those associated with the alleged incident. The gathering of information should therefore be undertaken with the utmost sensitivity and respect for all those associated with the case.

Child Participation: Children should be empowered to understand their rights to safety and what represents unacceptable behaviour from Future Academy staff – and what to do if they have a concern. Children should be spoken to in a child-friendly manner and, where possible, in their own language. Where possible the child should only be interviewed once as part of an investigation to avoid any additional distress. The investigator should be trained in how to speak to children who are victims of abuse.

Declaration Form

I have read and understood my responsibilities outlined in this Child Safeguarding Policy (Part 1), Code of Conduct and Procedures. I agree with the terms contained therein and accept the importance of complying with the provisions while working with or representing Future Academy in any way. I understand that the consequences for non-compliance could have serious repercussions.

If any of my personal circumstances change that might affect my ability to undertake my duties and create a possible risk to children, I undertake to inform Future Academy's Safeguarding Lead or Proxy immediately and seek their guidance.

Name:

Job Title/Role:

Signature:

Date:

Part 2 – Child Safeguarding Guidelines

Standard 2: People

Standard 3: Procedures

Standard 4: Accountability

This second part of the Child Safeguarding Policy provides child safeguarding guidance for different areas of work in accordance with Standards 2, 3 and 4 of the guidelines issued by Keeping Children Safe.

2.1 Human Resources, Recruitment and Child Safeguarding

Future Academy recognises that abuse can occur within organisations dedicated to the wellbeing and protection of children. It is essential that Future Academy recognises these risks and takes substantive and effective measures to prevent them. Specific steps to prevent abuse can be taken during the recruitment and selection process – such as vetting; identity, reference and qualification checks; publishing information on child safeguarding in job descriptions; and interview questions covering previous engagement with children. All information should remain in personnel files for future reference.

All people who join Future Academy are required to read, fully comprehend and sign the Child Safeguarding Policy and the Code of Conduct. These signed forms are kept in the personnel files. For non-permanent staff in Beirut without personnel files, the Safeguarding Proxy conducts the briefings and keeps all forms in one Child Safeguarding file. Failure to sign the Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct will result in the candidate not being appointed to the role.

All people who join Future Academy will be signposted to all the relevant policies for their role. These include: Risk Management, Health & Safety, Whistleblowing, Bullying and Harassment, Complaints procedure, Online Protection and Photography Policy. There is an initial induction process and annual child safeguarding training.

All staff will wear Future Academy staff T-shirt so that they are easily identified by children and caregivers. New/junior staff will be monitored and supervised by senior staff. They will be escorted into camp by senior staff. No Future Academy staff member will ever work alone with individual children or groups of children.

2.2 Programme Development, Grant Management and Child Safeguarding

Project Design and Implementation

Each new project should include:

- Staff capacity analysis, including training of new staff and/or partners
- Budget for mitigating child safeguarding risks/concerns and training must be included in the overall project budget
- Risk assessment of the activities planned and site
- Health and Safety checklist for planned activities
- Awareness and understanding of child safeguarding considerations to be incorporated into activities and implemented with children on a regular basis
- Children and adults participating in Future Academy activities must be made familiar with the Child Safeguarding Policy and related reporting procedures
- When collaborating with partner organisations the Safeguarding proxy should be identified at the planning stage

Project Monitoring and Evaluation

- Regular open discussions with staff, volunteers and partners will be held to evaluate the implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy
- Use of child friendly tools to evaluate and assess with children the compliance of the project staff/partner to the child safeguarding standards at planned intervals
- Project monitoring visits to include formal child safeguarding checks at planned intervals

Reporting

- Annual report to summarise child safeguarding including lessons learned to inform future projects
- Child Safeguarding Incident log to be reviewed every six months to support Future Academy in identifying safeguarding trends thus strengthening our prevention and response mechanisms

2.3 Portraying Children in External Communications and Child Safeguarding

External communications constitute any information about a child we work with – written, audio or visual – that will be shared with an external audience, including

- Press – newspapers, magazines, online news sites
- TV and broadcast – news, documentaries, films
- Social Media – encompassing Future Academy’s own social media platforms and other individuals/organisations who support us
- Direct mail and emails to supporters
- Reports and publications – policy reports, annual reports etc.
- Advertising

All Future Academy external communications that prominently feature children, individually and in groups, will be prepared in consultation with relevant child protection specialists. This will be the proxy in Beirut and the Lead and/or deputy lead of Safeguarding.

The project manager of any communications campaign, in consultation with the aforementioned, will conduct a risk assessment and decide if any such campaign puts a child at risk, contributes to their vulnerability or in any way allows the child to be traced.

Informed Consent and Assent

For all children both informed consent (from the relevant caregiver) and informed assent (from the child) must be secured prior to gathering and using any information about them in external communications (written, audio or visual). For children who only appear in the background of a photo, outside of Future Academy activities, and who cannot be identified, no consent needs to be obtained.

Future Academy commits to providing children and their caregivers the option to withdraw their consent/assent after it has been given.

Positive and Respectful Portrayal

Children are shown as active participants in their own lives and inside their communities. They should be appropriately dressed according to their culture or religion. Recording images of naked children is prohibited.

Privacy, anonymity and safety

Using an alias when writing child stories will uphold the child’s right to privacy and anonymity. (Always add a disclaimer).

Choosing Children to Portray

Choosing to portray particular children for any communications objective can be perceived as favouritism and may lead to tensions among children and communities. Be sensitive to these dynamics.

Interview Children with Care

Do not force discussions which may trigger difficult memories; do not try to ‘stage a story’ to fit your objectives. Members of staff who know the children and their community will provide guidance.

Edit and Translate Quotes with Care

Edit and translate quotes accurately. Do not try to change what they have said. Inaccurate quotes can breach child safeguarding standards (e.g. by exposing children to retribution from factions that can abuse them).

Take Care using Photos

When using photos be aware that they could be reused in inappropriate contexts; they may have identifying symbols that could place children in danger. Avoid using descriptors on photos that can be stigmatising or provoke a hostile response in certain contexts.

Photo Database: All photographs will be kept in a secure area with access only given to key officials.

Personal Photos: Where events are taking place and individuals (including children, caregivers and spectators) want to take photographs of children, staff in consultation with the Child Safeguarding Proxy

must apply professional judgement as to whether photography is appropriate under the circumstances, including assessing any possible risks.

Social Media and Safeguarding

Future Academy wants to inspire as many people as possible to support our projects and we will actively engage with society using a range of social media platforms. All images and stories are subject to the standards outlined above.

See Code of Conduct for further guidance regarding the use of digital images and social media.

See Online Protection and Photography Policy for further information.

2.4 Ensuring Best Practice: Education and Training

Ongoing education and training is required to ensure that all safeguarding practices are integrated and maintained in all aspects of our work

- Before starting employment with Future Academy each member of staff must read and sign the Child Safeguarding Policy and the Code of Conduct. We will not employ staff unless they have done so. As part of the induction period staff will receive a briefing on the Safeguarding Policy. The induction process will also inform new staff of other policies which include Whistleblowing, Complaints, Bullying and Harassment, Online Protection and Photography, Risk Management and Health and Safety.
- All Future Academy staff will participate in a child safeguarding training within their first three months of being hired. There should be a child safeguarding refresher training one year after the completion of the last training which also incorporates any changes made to the policy, procedures and practices.
- Safeguarding lead, deputy and proxy will receive additional training specific to their responsibilities
- Child safeguarding will be included as a standard agenda item for all trustee board meetings and all Beirut management team meetings (CW, AAJ, CS)
- In UK the Lead of Safeguarding is responsible for the provision of briefing/awareness sessions/training to all staff. In Beirut the Safeguarding Proxy is responsible for this.
- Awareness-raising sessions are provided by Future Academy to children participating in our activities. A child friendly approach will be used. Picture formats and any other approach which is age and culturally appropriate will be used.

2.5 Partner Organisations

On occasion Future Academy will enter into collaborative partnerships with other organisations e.g. MSF (Beirut). All partner organisations are required either to have their own child safeguarding policy in place, incorporating response and reporting procedures of a similar standard to those of Future Academy or to adopt and sign Future Academy's policy. Training on child safeguarding must be part of any partner agreement.

Donors

All donors (institutional, corporate or individual) will be made aware of the Child Safeguarding Policy. This will be done by ensuring the information is online, and by actively communicating about the policy. Any donors wishing to visit a specific Future Academy activity will be required to sign the Child Safeguarding Policy and the Code of Conduct.

2.6 Maintaining Accountability

Standard 4 of Keeping Children safe (KCS) guidelines is focused on accountability – that the organisation monitors and reviews its safeguarding measures. In line with this standard, organisations are required to

- 1) Regularly monitor the implementation of child safeguarding policies and procedures;
- 2) Report on progress, performance and lessons learned to key stakeholders in annual reports
- 3) Use learning from practical case experience to inform policy reviews and changes to safeguarding measures;
- 4) Review policies and practices at regular intervals and have them formally evaluated every three years.

To ensure we adhere to KCS standard 4 Future Academy has put the following measures in place:

Risk Assessment and Mitigation

Prior to the start of every project, child safeguarding risks are included in an overall risk assessment and mitigation plan. Risk assessments encompass:

- Identifying Future Academy's potential impact on, or contact with, children
- Identifying and analysing the potential risks of that impact or contact
- Evaluating the risks in terms of the probability they could occur and the seriousness of the impact on the children
- Use of PESTLE analysis and risk matrix
- Implementing strategies to minimise and prevent risk
- Reviewing and revising risks and preventative measures throughout the project duration

Further information on Risk assessment and Accountability can be found in the Risk Management Policy

Self-Audit

On an annual basis, Future Academy will implement a self-audit using the Keeping Children Safe audit tool and guidance. This process will involve representatives from the board of trustees, key officials and staff delivering activities in Beirut.

Review

This policy is approved and endorsed by the Board of Trustees of Future Academy. It is reviewed by the trustees annually; whenever legislation changes and after any safeguarding incident.

External Evaluation/ Audit

An oversight committee, formed of trustees not involved in the day-to-day running of Future Academy activities, will formally evaluate policies and practices every three years.