

Policy document for Child Protection and Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults



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This policy is accompanied by our 'Safeguarding Quick Guide' which is available on our website.

Policy Statement

Sweet Circus works to ensure that all children, young people and adults coming into contact with our services, employees, volunteers and others working on our behalf are protected and treated with respect. At the same time we aim to protect our employees from the risk of unfounded allegations.

For the purposes of this policy the term 'contractors' refers primarily to freelance staff who are contracted by Sweet Circus to carry out specific activities involving children, young people and adults.

This is done by: -

- Having a clear commitment to safeguarding principles throughout the organisation, from Directors, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
- Making sure our staff, volunteers and contractors are carefully selected, trained and supervised
- Ensuring our staff, volunteers and contractors have a clear understanding of professional conduct and know what behaviour or actions are not acceptable
- Giving parents, children, young people, adults at risk and workers information about what they can expect from us
- Letting parents, children, young people and adults know how to voice any concerns they may have

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT ALL STAFF WORKING OR ON BEHALF OF SWEET CIRCUS READ, UNDERSTAND AND ADHERE TO THIS POLICY.

If you have concerns about the conduct of any of our staff, instructors, volunteers or contractors you should contact our Designated Safeguarding Officer or if the concern involves them please refer to the Deputy Safeguarding Officer. There are further contacts on page 22.

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER (DSO):

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DEFINITIONS

Children, Young People, Adults at Risk and Safeguarding:

In the UK there isn't a law that defines what the age of a child is. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that a child "means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, maturity is attained earlier". This was ratified by the UK government in 1991, which means they agree to be legally bound by it.

England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland each have their own guidance for organisations to keep children safe. **They all agree that a child is anyone who is under the age of 18.**

The term '**young person**' is not a legal definition but is used to recognise a child who is maturing and nearing adulthood or has recently become an adult.

'**Child Protection**' is protecting children from abuse

'**Adult**' refers to anyone over the age of 18 years old

'**Safeguarding**' is a development of child protection: as well as protecting children from maltreatment it also includes preventing impairment of children's health or development. Safeguarding of adults at risk is generally included, protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

An '**Adult at Risk**' is defined in the Care Act as: any adult who has a need for care and support (whether or not the local authority or anybody else is meeting those needs), and as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

An '**Adult in need of care and support**' is determined by a range of factors including personal characteristics, factors associated with their situation or environment and social factors. Naturally, a person's disability or frailty does not mean that they will inevitably experience harm or abuse. Sweet Circus also recognise that a person's ability to protect or care for themselves can change due to any number of circumstances, a person may for example become temporarily at risk due to illness or challenging life events such as bereavement.

'**Capacity**' refers to the ability to make a decision at a particular time, for example when under considerable stress. The starting assumption must always be that a person has the capacity to make a decision unless it can be established that they lack capacity (MCA 2005). The Mental Capacity Act 2005. States that every individual has the right to make their own decisions and provides the framework for this to happen.

The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) is designed to protect and empower individuals who may lack the mental capacity to make their own decisions. It is a law that applies to individuals aged 16 and over. Someone can lack capacity to make some decisions (for example, to decide on complex financial issues) but still have the capacity to make other decisions (for example, to decide what items to buy at the local shop).

'Consent' refers to a person's agreement or permission for something to happen. Within safeguarding this usually refers to the sharing of information. Workers and volunteers within sports and physical activity organisations should always share safeguarding concerns, usually with their safeguarding lead or welfare officer in the first instance, except in emergency situations. **When dealing with children, never agree to keep their disclosure a secret.** As long as it does not increase the risk to the individual, the worker or volunteer should explain to the adult that it is their duty to share their concern with their safeguarding lead or welfare officer, this can be done without disclosing the persons involved. If it is thought that a referral needs to be made to the safeguarding adult's team, consent should be sought from the adult. Individuals may not give their consent to the sharing of safeguarding information with the safeguarding adult's team for a number of reasons. Reassurance, appropriate support and revisiting the issues at another time may help to change their view on whether it is best to share information. If they still do not consent, then their wishes should usually be respected. However, there are circumstances where information can be shared without consent such as when the adult does not have the capacity to consent, it is in the public interest because it may affect other people, or a serious crime has been committed.

Types of Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or adult at risk by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children or adults at risk may be abused in a family, in an institutional or a community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. The abuse may be intentional or not.

Physical Abuse - Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness.

Emotional Abuse - Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development or adults emotional wellbeing. It may involve conveying that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they met the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or adults at risk. These may include interactions that are beyond the persons developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child / adult at risk from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing a child / adult at risk frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children / adults at risk. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse - Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person or adult to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving a child or adult at risk in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, watching sexual activities, or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect - Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs and can result in the serious impairment of health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-

takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care of treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Self-neglect (adults)– this covers a wide range of behaviour: neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Modern Slavery – encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment. More relevant regarding adults at risk but children can also be affected.

Domestic Abuse – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse. It also includes so called 'honour' based violence.

Discrimination - abuse which centres on a difference or perceived difference particularly with respect to race, gender or disability or any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act.

Financial or Material Abuse (Adults)– including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits. This could be someone taking equipment from an athlete with dementia.

Cyber Bullying - cyber bullying occurs when someone repeatedly makes fun of another person online or repeatedly picks on another person through emails or text messages, or uses online forums with the intention of harming, damaging, humiliating or isolating another person. It can be used to carry out many different types of bullying (such as racist bullying, homophobic bullying, or bullying related to special educational needs and disabilities) but instead of the perpetrator carrying out the bullying face-to-face, they use technology as a means to do it.

Forced Marriage - forced marriage is a term used to describe a marriage in which one or both of the parties are married without their consent or against their will. A forced marriage differs from an arranged marriage, in which both parties consent to the assistance of a third party in identifying a spouse.

Mate crime (Adults) – a person befriends an adult at risk with intention of exploiting or taking advantage of them. Surveys indicate that people with disabilities can often become the targets of this form of exploitation. Different types of mate crime can include; theft, misuse of victims, physical assault or abuse, harassment or emotional abuse, sexual assault or abuse.

Radicalisation – Through direct relationships or social media contact perpetrators aim to attract people to their reasoning and inspire new recruits. Perpetrators will seek to embed their extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals of the legitimacy of their cause.

Cuckooing - Cuckooing is a form of crime, termed by the police, in which drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to use it as a base for county lines drug trafficking. Victims are often adults with disabilities and are put in a position where they feel they have no option but to comply.

County Lines - refers to a form of criminal activity in which drug dealers in major cities establish networks for the supply and sale of drugs to users in towns and rural areas, using other people (typically those who are young or otherwise at risk) to carry, store, and sell the drugs.

This list is not exhaustive, there are other forms of abuse and new forms of abuse do evolve. However, with an understanding of the types of abuse some participants may be at risk of, we can be more vigilant and prepared to take action should suspicions ever arise.

RECOGNISING ABUSE IN CHILDREN

Even experienced child protection professionals do not always find it easy to recognise signs of abuse, but it is important that you are aware of some of the signs when you are concerned about a child.

It is useful to look at two areas – physical signs and behavioural signs.

Physical abuse

Most children get cuts and bruises during their day-to-day activities, which makes it hard to spot when these may not be accidental.

Physical signs to look out for include:

- injuries which a child cannot explain, or explains unconvincingly
- injuries which have not been treated or treated inadequately
- injuries on parts of the body where accidental injury is unlikely (eg cheeks, chest or thighs)
- bruising which reflects hand or finger marks
- cigarette burns or human bite marks
- broken bones (particularly in children under the age of two)
- scalds, especially those with upward splash marks where hot water has been deliberately thrown over the child, or “tide marks” – rings on the child’s arms, legs or body where they have been made to sit or stand in very hot water

Behavioural signs to look out for include:

- reluctance to have their parents/carers contacted
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- running away or showing fear of going home
 - flinching when approached or touched
- reluctance to get undressed for sporting or other activities where changing into other clothes is normal
- covering arms and legs when this is not usually done
- depression or moods which are out of character with the child’s general behaviour
- unnatural compliance with parents or carers

Sexual abuse

Both boys and girls can be victims of sexual abuse, it can happen at any age and it can happen to any child (including those with disabilities). Several factors make it difficult to identify including the fact it is likely to happen in private and abusers may go to great lengths to prevent discovery.

- **Physical signs to look out for include:**
- pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal areas
- any sexually transmitted disease
- recurrent genital discharge or urinary tract infections without apparent cause

- stomach pains or discomfort when the child is walking or sitting down
 - Child who is unkempt, dirty or smelly (the child will sometimes refuse to observe personal hygiene in an attempt to make themselves unattractive)
- **Behavioural signs to look out for include:**
 - sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour
 - apparent fear of someone
 - running away from home
 - nightmares or bed-wetting
 - self-harm, self-mutilation or attempts at suicide
 - abuse of drugs or other substances
 - eating problems such as anorexia or bulimia
 - sexualised behaviour or knowledge in young children
 - sexual drawings or language
 - possession of unexplained amounts of money
 - taking a parental role at home and functioning beyond their age level
 - not being allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
 - alluding to secrets which they cannot reveal
 - telling other children or adults about the abuse
 - reluctance to get undressed for sporting or other activities where changing clothes is normal

Emotional abuse

This is also hard to identify with certainty. Some children are by nature shy but this does not mean they are being abused. Experiencing physical or sexual abuse will mean it is likely there are elements of emotional abuse present.

- **Physical signs to look out for include:**
 - a failure to grow or thrive (particularly if the child thrives when away from home)
 - sudden speech disorders
 - delayed development, either physical or emotional
- **Behavioural signs to look out for include:**
 - compulsive nervous behaviour such as hair twisting or rocking
 - an unwillingness or inability to play
 - an excessive fear of making mistakes
 - self-harm or mutilation
 - reluctance to have parents/carers contacted
 - an excessively high regard or level of admiration towards others, especially adults
 - an excessive lack of confidence
 - an excessive need for approval, attention and affection
 - an inability to cope with praise

- **Neglect**

This is a very difficult form of abuse to recognise and is sometimes seen as less serious than other forms, but its effects can be very damaging.

- **Physical signs to look out for include:**

- being constantly hungry and sometimes stealing food from others
- being in an unkempt state, frequently dirty or smelly
- loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- being dressed inappropriately for the weather conditions
- untreated medical conditions – not being taken for medical treatment for illnesses or injuries

- **Behavioural signs to look out for include:**

- being tired all the time
- frequently missing school or being late
- failing to keep hospital or medical appointments
- having few friends
- being left alone or unsupervised on a regular basis
- compulsive stealing or scavenging of food

Cyberbullying & abuse arising from the use of electronic communication and social media

Interactive social media technology has revolutionised the way that people connect and interact. Facebook, Twitter, blogs, instant messaging and photo and video exchange sites are increasingly popular and provide an opportunity for activity providers to connect with participants and potential participants. However, the use of social networking sites also introduces a range of potential safeguarding risks to children, young people and adults at risk. Potential risks can include, but are not limited to:

- bullying by peers and people they consider 'friends'
- posting personal information that can identify and locate a child offline
- sexual grooming, luring, exploitation and abuse contact with strangers
- exposure to inappropriate and/or content
- involvement in making or distributing illegal or inappropriate content
- theft of personal information
- exposure to information and interaction with others who encourage self harm
- exposure to racist or hate material
- encouragement of violent behaviour, such as 'happy slapping'
- glorifying activities such as drug taking or excessive drinking
- physical harm to young people in making video content, such as enacting and imitating stunts and risk-taking activities
- leaving and running away from home as a result of contacts made

There is also concern that the use of social networking services may increase the potential for sexual exploitation of children, young people and adults at risk. Exploitation can include exposure to harmful content (including adult pornography and illegal child abuse images), and encouragement for young people to post inappropriate content or images of themselves.

Specifically, for our industry the use of circus and pole, in burlesque, and other adult entertainment may lead young people to search for artists of inspiration and consequently be exposed to material which is of an unsuitable nature. It is the responsibility of instructors to have conversations covering this topic, and where appropriate guide participants to suitable content. Where relevant parents also should be made aware of these specific risks through sign up information.

There have also been a number of cases where adults have used social networking and user interactive services as a means of grooming children and young people for sexual abuse. The Home Office Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet identifies that online grooming techniques include:

- gathering personal details, such as age, name, address, mobile number, name of school and photographs
- promising meetings with sports idols or celebrities or offers of merchandise
- offering cheap tickets to sporting or music events
- offering material gifts including electronic games, music or software
- paying young people to appear naked and perform sexual acts
- bullying and intimidating behaviour, such as threatening to expose the child by contacting their parents to inform them of their child's communications or postings on a social networking site, and/or saying they know where the child lives, plays sport, or goes to school
- asking sexually themed questions, such as 'Do you have a boyfriend?' or 'Are you a virgin?'
- asking to meet children and young people offline
- sending sexually themed images to a child, depicting adult content or the abuse of other children
- masquerading as a minor or assuming a false identity on a social networking site to deceive a child
- using school or hobby sites (including sports) to gather information about a child's interests likes and dislikes.

Most social networking sites set a child's web page/profile to private by default to reduce the risk of personal information being shared in a public area of the site.

As a trusted adult in an activity setting you may become aware or suspicious through disclosure or overhearing conversations of potential online abuse. In addition to referring concerns to the designated safeguarding officer, you should

immediately report online concerns to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) www.ceop.uk. You should also report illegal sexual child abuse images to the Internet Watch Foundation at www.iwf.org. Where a child or young person may be in immediate danger, always dial 999 for police assistance.

- **Signs to look out for:**

- Child / young person suddenly stops using the computer / phone / tablet, even though they've always enjoyed it before.
- Child / young person doesn't want to use their device in a place where you, another adult or perhaps peers can see it.
- Child / young person turns off the screen, changes screens or hides screen, every time you walk by.
- Child / young person seems nervous or jumpy when he gets an instant message, text or email.
- Child / young person alludes to bullying indirectly by saying something like "there's a lot of drama at school / club" or "I have no friends."
- Doesn't want to go to school / club / activity previously enjoyed or appears uneasy about going.
- Becomes withdrawn

Radicalisation

Radicalisation can be really difficult to spot. Signs that may indicate a child is being radicalised include:

- isolating themselves from family and friends
- talking as if from a scripted speech
- unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- a sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- increased levels of anger
- increased secretiveness, especially around internet use.

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem, or be victims of bullying or discrimination. However, these signs don't necessarily mean a child is being radicalised – it may be normal teenage behaviour or a sign that something else is wrong. (<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/protecting-children-from-radicalisation>)

It can take a great deal of courage for a child to talk to an adult about what is happening and it can sometimes be hard for an adult to listen or recognise what is going on. It is important that workers and volunteers respond in an appropriate way. It is vital that everyone who works with children is equipped to recognise signs of abuse at the earliest opportunity so that harm can be stopped and the damage can start to be repaired.

(This information has been adapted from the EduCare Child Protection Awareness Programme, information from Active Sussex and information available on the NSPCC website.)

RECOGNISING ABUSE IN ADULTS

Whilst observing the signs listed above in recognising abuse in children is helpful there may be other forms of abuse or other signs to be aware of when dealing with adults. Abuse can take place in any context and by all manner of perpetrators. Abuse may be inflicted by anyone in the club who a participant/member comes into contact with. Or another participant/member, workers, volunteers or coaches may suspect that a participant is being abused or neglected outside of the club setting. There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected, these include but are not limited to:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries – or lack of medical attention when an injury is present.
- Person has belongings or money going missing.
- Person is not attending / no longer enjoying their sessions.
- Someone losing or gaining weight / an unkempt appearance.
- A change in the behaviour or confidence of a person
- They may self-harm.
- They may have a fear of a particular group or individual.
- They or another person may tell you / another person they are being abused –
i.e. a disclosure.
 - You may notice a power imbalance between a participant and a family member. For example, a participant with Down Syndrome may be looking quiet and withdrawn when their brother comes to collect them from sessions, in contrast to their personal assistant whom they greet with a smile.
 - You may notice joking, banter, or hazing which appears to be jovial but is based on gender, race, or other discriminations.
 - You may notice that an individual often comes unprepared for a session having forgot or lost equipment / clothing.
 - You may notice that a participant often has to ask permission of another person, or often says that that person thinks /says / told them to do certain things.
 - You may notice a person beginning to discuss or mention politically extreme ideas.

Abuse can take place in any context and by all manner of perpetrator. Abuse may be inflicted by anyone in the club who a participant comes into contact with. Or club members, workers, volunteers or coaches may suspect that a participant is being abused or neglected outside of the club setting.

COMPANY USE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The use of text messaging services to communicate with individual young participants increases the vulnerability of both the young person and (typically) the coach/volunteer/officer. However, appropriate use has its place and can help to foster comradeship between participants and improve engagement with young people, parents and adults. For example, a group chat where participants encourage each other to attend or to try a new activity, Or for students to let instructors know they are running late.

If at any point a staff / volunteer receives a message from a student, or the conversation has or may leading somewhere inappropriate they will follow this protocol:

- Staff / volunteer will explain that it is necessary to bring a third party into this conversation as it may be considered sensitive, and the instructor wants to ensure they are not overstepping their boundaries.
- Staff/ volunteer will create a group chat which includes both the student and the DSO or deputy DSO.
- Staff / volunteer will screen shot the conversation so far into the group chat.
- Staff / volunteer will request the student continues the conversation within this new group chat. If they continue to send messages privately the staff / volunteer will screen shot them into the group chat and reply from there.
- The DSO or Deputy DSO may not even contribute to the conversation, this protocol is simply to protect both staff and students from misunderstandings or allegations.

If at any point a student feels they have received an inappropriate message from a staff member or volunteer, they should screen shot the conversation and speak to the SO or DSO as soon as possible. Contact details can be found on Page 2.

The use of mobile phones and other devices by instructors during practical delivery, for the general purposes of either making or receiving calls, checking their notifications or social media, is considered to be unsafe and inappropriate conduct except where directly related to the safety or wellbeing of a participant. The primary responsibility of the instructor must be the supervision and safety of the participants that they coach and the provision of a structured, quality coaching experience. Such devices may only be used within classes / workshops sessions for the following purposes:

- To play music required for the session
- Mobile phones and other devices may be used for video / photography to document and demonstrate progress or for purposes of promoting Sweet Circus. However, consent (which is included in our PARQ) to the use of

photos, videos for these purposes can be withdrawn at any time by parents / carers / adults by request

- To call emergency services if required (safety of other participants must be considered)
- To call a parent / carer / next of kin if required concerning the wellbeing of the participant, when it is safe to do so
- To call a parent / carer / next of kin if concerned that an expected participant has not arrived, when safe to do so
- In the event that an emergency has affected an instructor's kin and someone is trying to get hold of them, once safe to do so, the call can be answered
- When using the device to show / share suitable content with a group that participants may wish to follow up on outside of the session
- Essential communication with other instructors / staff that is time sensitive

The use of mobile phones and other electronic devices by participants is discouraged, although we do not enforce a ban as this can create anxiety and barriers to participation. Appropriate uses include:

- Photographs / videos of progress to celebrate achievement
- Photographs / videos to aid learning understanding and improvement
- Playing of music
- Communicating with Parents / Carers / Kin for purposes of collection or requiring equipment
- For young children / those with sensory difficulties who may need stimulus whilst waiting their turn.

Inappropriate uses include:

- Chatting on social media
- Checking notifications / emails
- Photographs / videos of other students
- Posting to social media whilst in session

Parents also are advised that if they wish to take photographs / video of their own child they must first check with the instructor that this distraction will not compromise safety. They must only take photographs of their own child unless explicit permission is sought from the parent / carer of any other children pictured.

Sweet Circus use social media, direct mail, email and other text messaging services to keep in touch with participants, disseminate information and promote our services. Permission to use images of participants is sought formally through PARQs and informally at adult drop in or online sessions and everyone has the right to opt out.

Equally participants can be removed from group email lists and any group chats by simply asking to be removed. Parental consent must be obtained for children / young people to join any group chats which are only used for participants in our youth group and adults. Communication with younger children should always be via their parents.

Sweet Circus do monitor group chats that are hosted by the company and will challenge any inappropriate content or language in addition to removing participants if it is deemed necessary for the wellbeing of the group.

Staff and volunteers are encouraged by to carefully consider who they give access to their personal information online. All staff and volunteers should ensure that there is a clear differentiation between their personal and professional profiles. Where social media profiles are used to promote, comment on, or communicate with Sweet Circus participants, all other content must be suitable for that audience. We advise against allowing any child or young person to become a facebook friend. Where possible use the club's/organisation's own webpage/profile/email instead of using personal accounts.

CODE OF CONDUCT – EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRACTORS

Sweet Circus believes that the safety of its participants and visitors is of paramount importance. Visitors and participants should not be put at risk at any time while they are involved in Sweet Circus activities. Sweet Circus will provide both informal and formal safeguarding training for all staff & contractors working regularly with children at induction and at least every 3 years. All staff and contractors working regularly with children are required to submit DBS clearance at least every 3 years.

We seek to reduce likely situations for abuse and help protect our staff, volunteers and contractors from false accusations by ensuring that we adhere to a clear Code of Conduct, as outlined below.

This Code of Conduct outlines the behaviour expected from staff, volunteers and contractors. It is set out to help protect children, young people and adults at risk, promote good practice and challenge inappropriate behaviour. It serves to maintain professional and respectful standards of behaviour and will reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse being made.

All members of staff, volunteers and contractors are expected to report any concerns or breaches of this Code of Conduct to our Designated Safeguarding Officer / Deputy Safeguarding Officer. A breach may result in a disciplinary procedure, and a serious breach may result in a referral to the police, and/or the relevant Safeguarding Partnership.

IT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO:

- Spend time alone with a child or adult at risk separated from other adults and activity.

Exceptions: *Private lessons*

Lessons for a child should ideally have the parent present, especially with younger children, and only led independently when the parent has observed a number of lessons with you.

Lessons for an adult: another adult or member of staff should be on the premises where possible certainly for the first few sessions until a professional relationship is established.

- Offer money to a child, young person or adult at risk
- Engage in rough physical games, including horseplay
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching

Note: With regards to Aerial Circus or any activities that require physical spotting, safety is our first priority, but care should be taken to avoid touching unnecessarily. The use of forearms rather than hands can often be effective where appropriate.

Language used for body parts should be appropriate to the group, if appropriate ask what language participants are comfortable with.

- Socialise with child participants outside project hours in person or by means of social media / electronic communication, or with adults unless an independent friendship has been previously established.

Exemptions: *Text based communication channels such as whatsapp can be used to communicate with your students within the guidelines laid out in the social media section of this document*

- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Allow adults to use inappropriate language in front of children
- Make sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a participant

Note: Be sensitive and aware of the language used to describe body parts when demonstrating / explaining moves and tricks. We want to promote a relaxed semi informal environment but be aware that the language used in the home may differ from that which is natural for us to use.

- Let allegations a child makes go unrecorded
- Do things of a personal nature for children or adults at risk
- Act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- Conduct a sexual relationship with a child or adult at risk or indulge in any form of sexual contact with a child or adult at risk. This includes showing suggestive images on electronic devices or engaging in discussions of a sexual nature

ALL STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRACTORS MUST:

- Read, understand and follow Sweet Circus's Safeguarding Policy at all times
- Report disclosures, suspicions of abuse or breaches of this policy (see flowchart in the appendix)
- Ensure that their standards of personal behaviour, conduct and language are professional
- People engaged in leading workshop sessions must ensure that the content of workshop sessions is appropriate for the age, gender and maturity of participants with adaptations made where necessary
- Supervisors of activities must ensure that there is always an appropriate adult/child ratio for the activity

- Treat all participants and parents with respect and provide examples of good conduct you wish others to follow
- Recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or adults at risk
- Ensure any relationships with children and young people are kept on a professional level and that appropriate boundaries are maintained – for example, it is appropriate to be friendly but not to be a friend to children and young people that you are working with. We understand that friendships and or relationships between adults can develop and it is important that you are able to separate your professional relationship from your social relationship with a participant. It would be advised to let our safeguarding officer know if a friendship or relationship is developing with a participant.
- When leading activities, know at all times where children are and what they are doing
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- Challenge inappropriate language and behaviour
- Uphold the rights of young people and adults at risk to express their views and opinions about how they are being treated
- Ensure any contact with children and adults at risk is appropriate and in relation to the work of the project

**DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER:
(DSO):**

Miz Wells

Director

mizoid@outlook.com

07718 996 853

DEPUTY SAFEGUARDING OFFICER:

Sophie Scott Harman

Director

sophieaerialist@hotmail.com

07974 341 642

The role of the designated safeguarding officer / deputy officer includes:

- Keeping up-to-date with current legislation and developments with regards to Safeguarding children young people and adults
- Attending relevant Safeguarding training with regards to understanding DSO responsibilities and with regards to good practice, recognising poor practice and reporting suspected concerns of possible abuse
- Seek advice from the NSPCC/Child Protection in Sport Unit, the Ann Craft Trust (adults), or Safeguarding Leads at other local bodies such as Active Sussex if and when necessary
- Receive and record information from staff, volunteers, participants (children or adults) or parents/carers who have safeguarding concerns. Assess the information properly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information about the matter as appropriate, and safely storing relevant and necessary information
- Any concerns should be raised/referred into the local statutory Child Safeguarding Services or Adult Social care services (see key contacts p.22), as soon as possible unless there is immediate concern over the safety or welfare of a child or adult and then the appropriate emergency services should be called.
- The Deputy officer will take the lead on any issues arising in the absence of or regarding the conduct of the Designated Safeguarding Officer,
- If the DSO or deputy isn't available then other staff/volunteers, members or parent/carers can seek urgent advice from the the NSPCC/Child Protection in Sport Unit, the Ann Craft Trust (adults), or the local statutory services. See flowchart of procedures (p. 20-21) and key contacts (p.22).

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE DISCLOSES TO YOU

Staff, volunteers and contractors are not expected to investigate suspected incidents but are expected to act promptly and effectively in communicating the issues to child and adult protection professionals, via the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).

There may be instances when children, young people or adults at risk who are being abused will approach staff that they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening and taking seriously what they say you will be helping them.

Please follow the guidelines listed below

1. Remain calm and in control. Even if what is being disclosed is shocking to you, try not to show this
2. You may wish to find a spot that is quiet but always ensure that you are still visible to others and not on your own in a closed room with the child/young person
3. Listen carefully to what is being said
4. Reassure them that they have done the right thing by talking to you
5. Don't give your own view or opinions
6. Only ask questions if you don't understand what is being said
7. Don't promise to keep a secret – the welfare of the child is paramount and takes precedence over confidentiality (For adults, you can initially discuss with the DSO without identifying the individual see 'consent' on page 4 guidance)
9. Remember that it is not your job to prove whether this information is true or not
10. If you are concerned that the child may be at risk of immediate harm it is acceptable to ask "are you at immediate risk of harm?"

It is common that the child, young person or adult at risk will start to disclose to you whilst you are on your own - It is not appropriate to call another worker over – but equally you may be putting yourself at risk of a later allegation if you are locked away in a private place with a child or young person. Ideally try to make sure the door of the room you are in is not shut. It is usually easy to have a private conversation with other people still able to see you.

Occasionally, particularly with adults a disclosure may start to be made in public as a form of oversharing. In this instance it is appropriate to ask if they would like to come and have a chat with you separately. If it is safe to do so you can take this person to another area of the room, if not you may need to ask if they can chat to you at the end of the session, again observe notes above about being left alone with the young person, child or adult at risk.

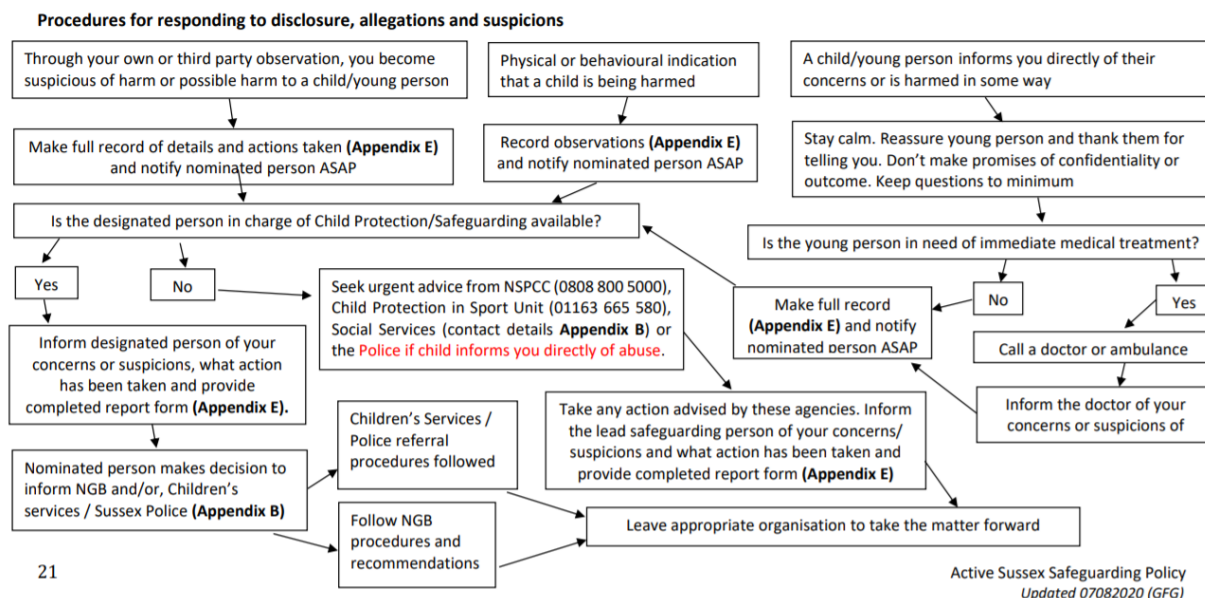
After the Disclosure

- Write a detailed record of what has been said (there is a prompt form available at the end of this policy)
- Contact DSO as soon as possible and pass on details of the disclosure
- If DSO or deputy DSO is not readily available and you are concerned that the child is at immediate risk of harm it is your responsibility to report the incident to the police by dialling 101 (or 999 if it is an emergency) and let your DSO know as soon as possible.
- DSO should take initial advice by phone from Health and Social Care. The Child Protection Partnership or NSPCC Helpline
- The DSO should follow up phone call in writing within 24 hours

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS (BUT NOT BASED ON ACTUAL DISCLOSURE)

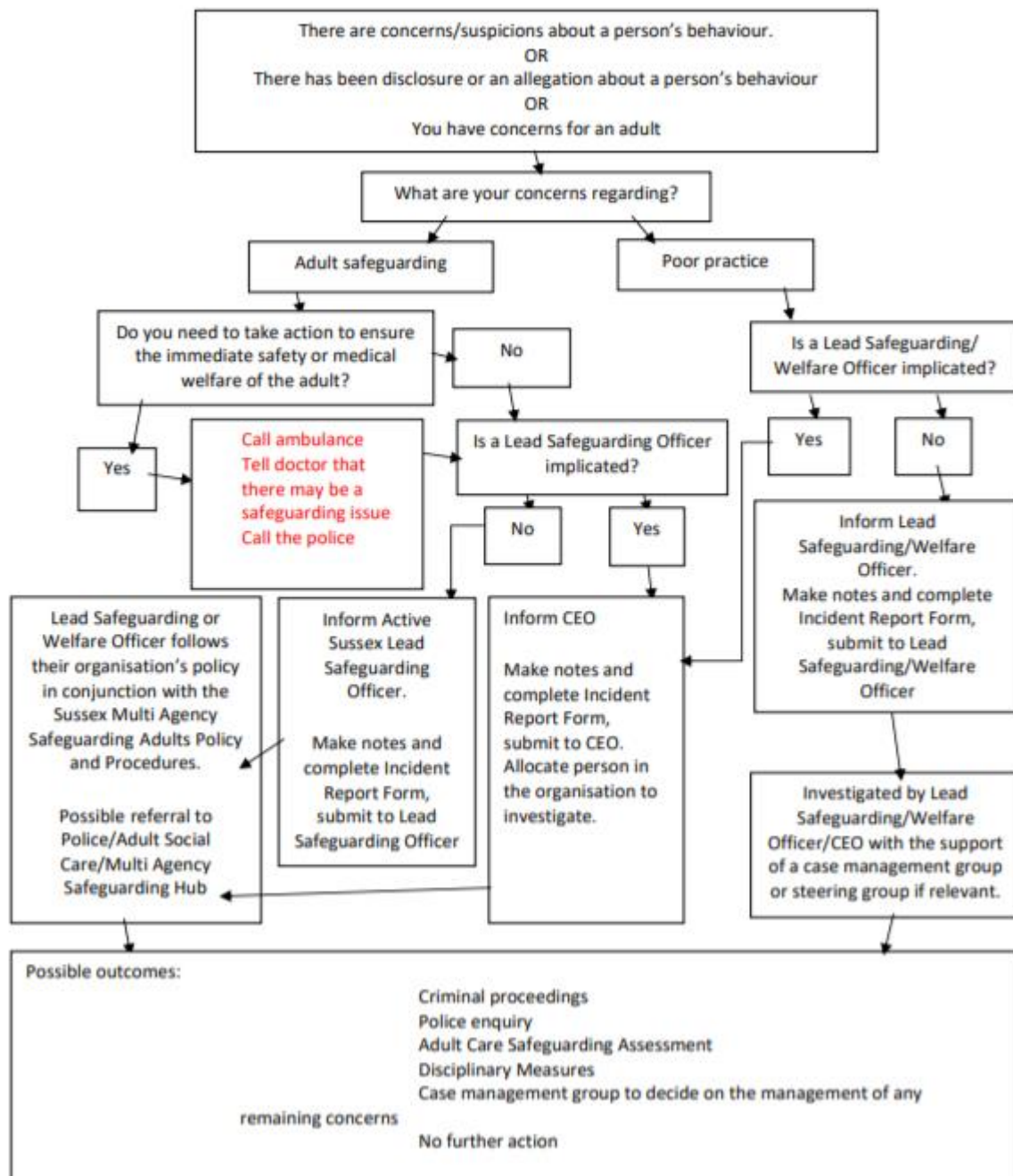
- Speak to Sweet Circus's Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) about your concerns
- The DSO will take notes based on your conversation
- The DSO will decide on next steps, based on the referral process (see below)
- If the DSO / deputy is not available and you believe the child, young person or adult at risk is at risk of immediate harm it is your responsibility to report this to the police by dialling 101 (or 999 if it is an emergency) and let the DSO know as soon as possible.

Flowchart of procedures relating to Children and Young People:



(<https://www.activesussex.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Active-Sussex-Safeguarding-Adults-Policy-updated-07082020-2.pdf>)

Flow Chart of Procedures relating to Adults at Risk:



(<https://www.activesussex.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Active-Sussex-Safeguarding-Adults-Policy-updated-07082020-2.pdf>)

Key Contacts:

Sussex Police: 101 / 999 Emergencies only

Sussex Police Child Protection Team: 0845 6070999

Concerning Children:

Safeguarding children partnership (East Sussex)

Single Point of Advice (SPoA) Mon-Thurs 8.30am-5pm and Fri 8.30am-4.30pm.

Phone: 01323 464222

Out of Hours Social Care Service - Children's services: 01273 335905/6

Email: 0-19.SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk

[Online referral form](#)

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000 <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

Childline 0800 1111

Kidscape 020 7730 3300

Child Protection in Sport Unit 01163 665 580

Concerning Adults:

East Sussex County Council Health & Social Care connect 0345 60 80 191

Out of hours social care service: 01323 636 399

Email: HSCC@eastsussex.gov.uk

[Online referral form](#)

Other sources of information:

The Safe Network www.safenetwork.org.uk

Working Together To Safeguard Children Document

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf

DBS Update Service Employer Guide

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-update-service-employer-guide>

Citizens Advice <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/children-and-young-people/child-abuse/getting-help/child-abuse-and-confidentiality/>

The Care Act 2014

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/introduction/enacted>

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF/VOLUNTEERS/CONTRACTORS & Whistle Blowing

This may include anyone directly employed by Sweet Circus in a paid or voluntary capacity working with children and young people or adults at risk. A concern may be raised by any one employed directly or indirectly by Sweet Circus, by a participant, parent, carer or member of the broader community. You should speak to the DSO in the first instance, or if the concern is with them the deputy DSO. If you prefer, or you are not satisfied with the result, you can report your concerns directly with an outside body see key contacts on page 22.

In the case of an investigation of abuse against a member of staff, there may be three types of investigation:

- Criminal
- Child/ adult protection
- Disciplinary or misconduct

Where an allegation is made against an employee

The DSO must contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as soon as possible to discuss any allegation against a staff member or volunteer working with children. In the case of a very serious or urgent matter, the police should be contacted.

LADO: Paul Startup, telephone 01323 466606 or 07825 782793, email paul.startup@eastsussex.gov.uk

The employee may be suspended in cases of a more serious nature

Any person who discloses information will be treated with sensitivity and be fully supported by Sweet Circus.

Whistleblowing is the reporting of unsafe or unlawful practice in the workplace. The public interest disclosure act (1998) protects so-called whistle-blowers from dismissal and victimisation. **Concerns about colleagues must always be reported.**

It is your responsibility to report things that you feel are not right, or if anyone at work is neglecting their duties. You should speak to your DSO in the first instance, or if the concern is with them the deputy DSO. If you prefer you can report your concerns directly with an outside body see key contacts on page 22. You can find guidance on whistle blowing here: www.cqc.org.uk/content/report-concern-if-you-are-member-staff

It may be difficult for the person in charge to distinguish whether an allegation against a member of staff is due to poor working practices or abuse - it may be one of a series of instances which, when put together, can cause concern.

It should be acknowledged that an allegation against any member of staff will generate concern amongst other staff. There may be difficulties in reporting colleagues but the way in which they are dealt with will be professional and fair and, above all, protect the welfare of the child, young person or adult at risk. Staff will need reassurance that they will be supported if they disclose information about a colleague.

Incident Reporting Form (Produced by the Safe Network www.safenetwork.org.uk) (please adapt for cases involving adults at risk.)

Private & Confidential

Details of the Child and their Parents / Carer:

Name of Child:

Gender: Male Female

Age:

Date of Birth:

Parent's / Carer's name(s) (if known):

Home address (if known)

Your Details:

Your Name:

Your Position:

Date & Time of incident:

Report:

Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else?

Responding to my own concerns.

If responding to concerns raised by someone

Responding to concerns raised by someone else.

else, please provide their name and position within the organisation/group

Please provide details of the incident or concerns you have, including times, dates or other relevant information(describe any injuries / whether fact, opinion or hearsay):

The Child's account, of what has happened and how:

Please provide details of the person alleged to have caused the incident / injury including where possible any details:

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

Have you spoken to the Parents?

If yes, please provide details of what was said:

- Yes
- No

Have you spoken to the Child?

If yes, please provide details of what was said:

- Yes
- No

Have you spoken to the person the allegations are being made against?

If yes, please provide details of what was said:

- Yes
- No

Further action taken to date:

Have you informed the statutory authorities?

Children's Local Safeguarding Board:

Yes No

Police

Yes No

Please provide the name of the person you have spoken to and his/her contact number:

Data Protection

As the person completing this form, you must notify each person whose information you include about what will happen to their information and how it may be disclosed except to the extent that doing so would prejudice either the prevention or detection of a crime or the apprehension or prosecution of an offender.

Your signature:

Date:

Time: