

Safeguarding Policy

Schoolreaders recognises its responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

This policy applies to all staff, trustees, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of Schoolreaders.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect children and young people who benefit from the Schoolreaders service from harm
- To provide staff with the principles that guide our approach to safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in “Keeping Children Safe in Education” (KCSIE 2023) as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical 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

Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

Introduction

Schoolreaders recognises its responsibility to create and maintain a safe environment for the children we support.

Schoolreaders recognises its responsibility to report concerns regarding children we support to an appropriate body, and to share information and work with other agencies as appropriate.

Thus, Schoolreaders has in place policies and procedures to guide and support actions relating to:

- Any concern of actual or suspected situations of abuse, exploitation or radicalisation of children
- Any allegation of staff or volunteer misconduct relating to children

In particular, Schoolreaders have in place the following information:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Essentials for Volunteers in Schools
- Schoolreaders Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Schoolreaders Safeguarding Guidance
- Reading Support Guidance for Volunteers

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, the 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

Our Service

Schoolreaders is an "Introducer" service. Our charity recruits volunteers and matches them to partner schools that require additional reading support for their pupils.

Using our service, schools are able to access reading volunteers and volunteers are able to be matched with an appropriate school.

The reading volunteer's prime relationship is with the Host School which is responsible for the vetting including enhanced DBS, and barred list check where appropriate, induction and ongoing support of the volunteer in line with their own recruitment policy and safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding Procedures

Safeguarding policies and procedures are communicated to all staff and volunteers.

Host Schools are required to carry out an enhanced DBS check (and barred list check where necessary) for each reading volunteer and confirm to the Operations Team that this is complete with no cause for concern prior to the reading volunteer starting in the school.

Host Schools agree to our code of conduct in which they confirm that they will carry out an induction that covers the school's safeguarding policy, procedures and expected conduct and ensure the reading volunteer knows how and who to report any concerns to.

Volunteer application process: Reading volunteers answer a pre-application check list covering prior convictions and confirm they understand that the host school may carry out on-line pre recruitment checks on them. They also agree to the Schoolreaders code of conduct in which they confirm they will follow school policy and report any problems or concerns as they arise to the designated school safeguarding lead and undergo an enhanced DBS check and barred list checks where appropriate.

Reading volunteers complete Schoolreaders supplementary safeguarding training.

Schoolreaders Organisational Responsibility:

The CEO, takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding.

Safeguarding is a standing agenda item on Schoolreaders senior management team meetings and at each trustees meeting.

Policies and procedures are reviewed at least annually. Schoolreaders will always:

- Ensure appropriate policies and procedures exist for the administration of applications and presentation of volunteer profiles to Host Schools.
- Ensure any concerns or objections with regard to the suitability of a volunteer are submitted to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at Schoolreaders.
- Where a volunteer raises a concern about a child's safety or welfare, the process is to direct volunteers to the Designated Safeguarding Lead within the Host School and notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead at Schoolreaders.
- Share information about safeguarding and child protection with appropriate staff including training where required.

- Keep Safeguarding policies under regular review.

Host Schools Responsibilities:

When registering with Schoolreaders the Host School agrees to:

- The Schoolreaders code of conduct
- Take full responsibility for the volunteer in school.
- Follow their own recruitment practices and undertake suitable vetting procedures prior to a volunteer start.
- Carry out enhanced DBS checks (and barred service check if necessary) with every volunteer before the volunteer starts in school and confirm to Schoolreaders that this has taken place with no cause for concern.
- Carry out an induction that covers the school's safeguarding policy, procedures and expected conduct.
- Ensure the volunteer knows the name of the designated safeguarding lead and/or deputy designated safeguarding lead within the school to whom any safeguarding issues, concerns, incidents or allegations should be reported.

Individual Responsibility:

When registering with Schoolreaders the individual agrees to:

- The school being responsible for their welfare whilst in school.
- The fundamental principle that children have the right to be safe and this takes precedence over all other considerations.
- The Schoolreaders Volunteer Code of Conduct.
- Read the Schoolreaders Safeguarding policy and the Guidance on Child Protection and Safeguarding Essentials.
- Complete the supplementary safeguarding guidance provided by Schoolreaders prior to being matched to a partner school.
- Attend any Safeguarding and Health and Safety training/briefing provided by the school.
- Be aware of the Schools safeguarding policy, procedures and expected conduct and who to report any concerns to.
- If they have any Safeguarding concern, they will report it to the DSL in school and notify the DSL at Schoolreaders that a report has been made to close the loop.
- Not to start in school until they have an enhanced DBS clearance (and barred list checks if necessary).
- To treat all safeguarding matters with confidentiality.

Recruitment of Volunteers, Staff and Trustees

Schoolreaders has safer recruitment policies and processes. Clear job descriptions and person specifications are in place for all paid positions. Clear role descriptions are in place for all voluntary positions. An application form which includes sections covering information relevant to safer recruitment is completed by everyone who applies for a paid position.

Safeguarding Contact

Designated Safeguarding Lead – Annabel Cox

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Caroline Dowson

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