

## Section 3.32 RBGE Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

### 1. Statement of Intent

#### 1.1 Introduction

This policy sets out the principles and procedures for the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk, involved in RBGE's activities.

RBGE believes that it is unacceptable for a child, young person or adult to experience abuse of any kind and accepts its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of these groups when they are engaging with RBGE. This policy sets out how we will do this.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide protection and a safe and supportive environment for children, young people, and adults at risk when engaging with RBGE. This covers visitors on our premises and includes children, young people or adults at risk who use our services and facilities, whether that be onsite in our gardens or online.
- Provide robust procedures to safeguard those under our supervision and minimise any foreseeable risks that may impact on them.
- Provide appropriate and accurate information and guidance for staff and volunteers to ensure the safety and wellbeing of any of the at-risk groups and the safety of our teams.
- Ensure that everyone within or associated with RBGE is aware of their responsibilities, including what to do if they become aware of any instance of abuse, and that they are kept up to date with any developments within this policy and associated procedures.

#### 1.2 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- 'Children' and 'young people' are defined as being under the age of 18. The United Nations Children's Rights Commission (UNCRC) defines children as those under 18 years, and those between 14 years and 18 years as young people or youth. The Scottish Children's Parliament has defined young people as age 14 years and above. Both these definitions are covered by this policy and are adopted by RBGE.
- An 'adult at risk of harm', which is often shortened to an 'adult at risk', is defined as an adult (age 16 or over) who is unable to safeguard their own personal wellbeing, property rights or other interests; is at risk of harm; and/or because they are affected by a disability, mental disorder, illness or physical infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected. This includes imbalances of power between individuals as the result of poverty, lack of access to education, or membership of any group (Protected Characteristics of the Equality Act 2010).
- A 'protected adult' is defined as an individual aged 16 or over who is provided with (and thus receives) a type of care, support or welfare service. By referring to 'adults at risk' within this policy we are also referencing 'protected adults'.
- 'Abuse' and 'neglect' are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child, young person, or adult at risk by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, harm to them.

### 1.3 Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, students, community group leaders or other group organisers, Trustees, agency workers, consultants, contractors, service providers across all RBGE gardens and any third parties working on behalf of the RBGE, in partnership with RBGE or in conjunction with RBGE, including those working internationally.

To ensure our partners meet our expectations, any partner we work with will need to provide a copy of their safeguarding policy and appropriate risk assessments. RBGE will expect the partner to have an up-to-date policy or practice in place and completed, prior to any partnership working.

RBGE acknowledges that child-rearing practices can and do vary between cultural and ethnic groups. This policy reflects our obligations under Scottish and UK law towards the safety of children and vulnerable adults. Nevertheless, care should be taken in the application of this policy regarding cultural differences and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

### 1.4 Principles

- RBGE believes all children, young people and adults at risk, regardless of age, gender, disability, racial heritage, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from harm and abuse of any kind. RBGE accepts its responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people, and adults at risk and to keep them safe.
- All suspicions, concerns or allegations of harm or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately, with fairness and in a timely manner.
- We will work collaboratively, both internally within our teams and with any external partners, or appropriate agencies to ensure the safety of children, young people and adults at risk.
- Our safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and regulatory requirements.
- We will ensure our teams and appropriate adults have the correct disclosure checks, are trained and kept up to date with best practice.

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

There are several key roles and responsibilities attributable through this policy:

### Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (SDSL)

RBGE's Director of Learning and Engagement (Sarah Cathcart) currently acts as our Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead. This role has overall responsibility for the oversight of safeguarding within RBGE, assisted by DSLs within divisions. This role has the following responsibilities.

- Has strategic oversight and ensures this policy and its implementation are actively adhered to.
- Ensures that confidential, detailed, and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns/allegations are maintained and securely stored.

- Reports cases (anonymised where relevant) for review at Executive Team meetings, Health & Safety Committee and reports any significant safeguarding incident or concern to RBGE's Board of Trustees.
- Reviews this policy annually and as required by changes in legislation and/or government guidance and by the Disclosure & Barring Service, or other appropriate authorities, ensuring it is up-to-date and fit for purpose.
- Ensures staff and volunteers have read, understood and signed this policy (delegating to relevant managers/supervisors/partners as appropriate) and this is part of staff induction.
- Ensures that safeguarding issues and consequences arising from investigations are communicated to relevant staff members (unless confidentiality prevents this), so that informed decisions on future activities can be made.

### Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)

Our DSLs will:

- Act as a point of contact for staff, volunteers or contractors concerned about the safety and welfare of a child, young person, or adult at risk.
- Ensure that everyone knows where they can find the safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Liaise with appropriate local agencies for support or advice and know where to find local contacts.
- Organise training as required in responding to safeguarding concerns and demonstrate an awareness and understanding of current issues within the field of safeguarding.
- Support and advise staff reporting concerns and make appropriate decisions about the actions to take to protect a child, young person, or adult at risk.
- Lead on reviewing, updating, and developing RBGE safeguarding policy and practices and monitoring implementation.

### Staff

We will include information in all staff inductions and expect everyone to make themselves aware of and adhere to the safeguarding policy and guidance, including references in any risk assessments where appropriate.

If you have any concerns over the behaviour of another member of staff, volunteer or contractor representing RBGE in safeguarding terms, you should report this to a DSL.

### Line Managers

As a line manager, you will you liaise with POD to ensure that any new team member meets the disclosure requirements for the role and completes relevant training as appropriate to the role.

If you are engaging or overseeing activities which involve work with children, young people, or adults at risk, you must ensure that appropriate risk assessments have been carried out and that procedures are in place. Where you identify staff/roles that are at risk of being placed in sole responsibility of a member from these groups, you must inform any DSL or the SDSL before proceeding with any new pieces of work which may pose a risk.

If you are involved in procurement and engaging contractors for work, you must ensure that the appropriate requirements are met before work takes place. It is your responsibility to ensure that contractors have appropriate risk assessments and that procedures are in place with regards to safeguarding, where the potential to engage with a child, young person or adult at risk exists.

All line managers must inform any DSL or the SDSL of any breach of this policy or concerns over the behaviour/conduct of a member of staff, volunteer or contractor representing RBGE as soon as possible.

## Volunteers

Volunteer co-ordinators should ensure that all volunteers in their area are made aware of, and adhere to, RBGE's safeguarding policy and guidance. Returning volunteers who have not completed an appropriate disclosure check will be asked to undertake one before recommencing their placement with us.

## People and Organisational Development (POD)

POD will coordinate safeguarding training as required. POD will hold a record of PVG checks undertaken for those whose roles carry the risks outlined in this guidance, and details of current disclosure certificates and monitor and activate any renewals of disclosures required.

POD will act to ensure adherence throughout the organisation to our resourcing and employment policies and practices. These will be reviewed periodically with the SDSL and DSL team to ensure their suitability for protecting children, young people, or adults at risk.

## 3. Ways of Working

It is not the responsibility of anyone working or volunteering at RBGE to decide whether abuse or neglect has taken place. Rather, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns or suspicions to allow enquiries to be made and necessary action to be taken to protect the child, young person, or adult at risk. This applies both to allegations/suspicions of abuse occurring within RBGE and to allegations/suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

### 3.1 Disclosure Checks

When recruiting staff, freelancers, external tutors or volunteers we will make all reasonable efforts to satisfy ourselves that an individual is a fit and proper person to work with children, young people, or adults at risk. This will include full PVG clearance checks for those who undertake regulated work, and basic disclosure checks for staff and volunteers whose role involves some contact.

A rigorous assessment of third-party contractors' safeguarding policy and procedures will be an integral part of the assessment process for all submitted tenders for unsupervised work at RBGE. A review of the contractors' safeguarding practice will be a standing item in the agenda of all monitoring meetings for the delivery of unsupervised work following the award of any tender or contract.

## 3.2 Working with groups and individuals

### Supervision

- Where possible, advise that no employee, volunteer, student, contractor, or Trustee at RBGE should be left in sole supervision of a child, young person, or adult at risk as part of their working duties, unless in exceptional, unforeseen circumstances, such as a medical emergency, lost children or occurrences caused by the action of a third party. This applies both onsite at RBGE locations or on any field trips. In all these instances, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and relevant Director must be made aware to agree these roles, activities, and controls before the work proceeds or immediately following an emergency.
- Where possible, a responsible person, such as a parent, guardian, teacher, group leader or carer, should be present during the time of all engagement, as appropriate. It is the duty of this responsible person to carry out their own risk assessment where necessary. Where this is not possible, then the RBGE teams will take additional safeguarding measures such as risk assessments.
- Arrange for an appropriate ratio of adults to be present, bearing in mind the activity, number, ages, and any needs of the individuals, in line with best practice
- Meetings with individuals should take place as openly as possible (ideally with more than one responsible adult present in the room or with an open door to allow visual contact by another responsible adult).

### Travel

Transporting a child, young person, or adult at risk without another RBGE member of staff or other adult in an RBGE hired vehicle or a member of staff's own vehicle should not be undertaken unless unavoidable.

### Planning activities

- For activities with children, young people or adults at risk, ensure health and safety requirements and risk assessments are appropriate and implemented.
- Where possible make sure children, young people, and adults at risk are accompanied by their own adult carers and ensure that a signed parent/guardian consent form has been obtained if direct supervision is provided.
- For evening and corporate events, safeguarding should be included in the event risk assessment and procedure should be shared with staff and third parties.

## 3.3 Safeguarding While Working Overseas

RBGE recognises that some of our international work takes place in areas experiencing poverty and deprivation, and that individuals in these areas may consequently be more vulnerable to harm and abuse.

Prior to travelling it is the responsibility of the member of staff to ensure they are aware of relevant contact details for appropriate organisations within the country to which they are travelling. This information should be included in the Travel Form prior to travel. In the case of a safeguarding issue arising whilst working internationally the SDSL should be informed by completion on return by e-mail of the Safeguarding Incident Report Form.

### 3.4 Safeguarding in an online environment

An increase in online access has also led to the need for consideration of online safeguarding. In addition to the types of abuse outlined in Annex A, RBGE also recognises that we have a duty to ensure that all children, young people, and adults at risk involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online.

In addition to other policies and procedures in place, we will seek to keep children, young people and adults at risk safe specifically online by:

- Ensuring that the online learning team undertake relevant safeguarding training and provide clear and specific directions to them on how to behave online through our behaviour code for adults.
- Developing an online safety agreement for use with children and young people and their parents/carers.
- Reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly.
- Ensuring that usernames, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively.
- Ensuring personal information about the adults, children and young people who are involved in our organisation is held securely and shared only as appropriate, meeting GDPR requirements.
- Ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given.
- Examining and risk assessing any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation.
- Ensuring a regular review of online learning programmes so that any potential problems have been identified and resolved, in acknowledgement of the speed in which digital technology changes and that new areas of risk may arise.

### 4. How Do I Report a Safeguarding Concern?

If you have any concerns around the welfare of a child, young person, or adult at risk at any time, or someone discloses that they are being abused, contact a DSL. Please email [dsl@rbge.org.uk](mailto:dsl@rbge.org.uk). RBGE staff can reach out to a DSL with any concerns.

1. If the DSL (or another senior manager, if the DSL is not available) considers the individual concerned is in immediate danger, or there has been a crime committed (e.g. you witness physical abuse), contact must be made with the emergency services and/or the appropriate authorities (parents/social services) to help ensure the individual does not remain in an unsafe environment. A full detailed record must be made. The person contacted in such a case should subsequently contact the police for advice, by calling either 999 (for an emergency) or 101 or by contacting Social Services for community groups as appropriate.
2. Following this, the individual should complete the Safeguarding Incident Report Form with the person who raised the concern and send it to [dsl@rbge.org.uk](mailto:dsl@rbge.org.uk). This inbox is monitored by all the DSL's. The form can be found in Annex D to this policy.
3. For weekend cover, then the Garden Duty Manager should be a first contact and for evening cover, the event manager followed by a call to Sarah Cathcart, Director of Learning & Engagement.

## Confidentiality

Every effort must be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only with information stored in a secure place.

Any allegation of online safeguarding issues will be treated in the same way as outlined for other forms of abuse.

## Review

This policy will be reviewed yearly by the SDSL and DSL group, in conjunction with POD.

## Annexes:

Annex A – Types of Abuse and Neglect

Annex B - Examples of possible safeguarding situations

Annex C – Examples of specific safeguarding situations where accusations are made against individuals

Annex D - Safeguarding Incident Report Form

Annex E – Legal Framework

Annex F – External Referral Sources

Policy Owner: RBGE Safeguarding Group

Last reviewed: April 2025

Next review: April 2026

All non-staff members will be asked to read and confirm compliance with this policy by signing and dating the last page when working with RBGE.