

NECDT Safeguarding policy (children and adults at risk)

Last review: 16/12/2019

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SECTION A: Safeguarding policy and statement

1. Safeguarding Policy Statement

The NECDT is committed to safeguarding¹ all children, young people and adults at risk that come into contact with our work. The welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult is paramount. We believe that all children, young people and adults at risk have an equal right to feel safe and be protected from abuse regardless of their age, race, religion, ability, gender, language, background or sexual identity and consider the welfare of the child/ young person/ adults at risk as paramount. We recognise that safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk and protecting them from harm is everyone's responsibility².

This policy establishes the roles and responsibilities of everyone who works for The NECDT in relation to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom their work brings them into contact. In the context of child protection, children and young persons refers to anyone under 18 years of age and vulnerable adult is someone over 18 who is vulnerable in either their physical or mental capacity.

NECDT is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for the children, young people and adults at risk who access our programmes and facilities and come into contact with members of our staff. We will take all reasonable steps to protect children, young people and adults at risk using our programmes and facilities, from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment whilst respecting their rights, wishes and feelings.

We enable all our staff and those who work with us to make informed and confident decisions regarding safeguarding and child protection. We expect everyone (staff, directors, mentors, associates and volunteers and anyone working on behalf of the company) to have read, understood and adhere to this policy and the related policies and procedures, and to have undergone any necessary safeguarding training relevant to their role within the organisation. It is everyone's responsibility to promote the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. In following the policy NECDT personnel are always expected to maintain a sense of proportion, apply common sense to situations and protect the child, young person or vulnerable adult's welfare as priority.

NECDT duties include safeguarding staff, volunteers and associates. Staff, volunteers and associates are expected to adhere to our Code of Conduct as well as the policies and procedures associated with this Safeguarding policy.

This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years. Next review deadline:

¹ Definitions of safeguarding for children and adults at risk adhered to in this policy are contained in the Appendices of this document

² *Working Together to Safeguard Children* HM Government 2015

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2. Aims of the Safeguarding Policy

2.1 The Company will take every reasonable step to ensure that children, young people and adults at risk are protected where:

- Our own staff are directly involved in a project or programme.
- We broker the relationship between a school/ youth setting/ community venue and an associate/ organisation working directly on our behalf.
- We contract an associate/ organisation to work with a school/ youth setting/ community venue.
- We work in partnership with another organisation or agency.

2.2 We endeavour to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk by:

- Recognising that all children and adults at risk have the right to freedom from abuse and protection from harm.
- Valuing, listening to and respecting all children, young people and adults at risk that access our programmes and facilities.
- Creating a safe and healthy environment within all our programmes, avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur.
- Ensuring safe recruitment of all staff, volunteers and associates by adhering to the Recruitment Policy and carrying out all the necessary checks, including DBS and reference checks.
- Providing effective management of staff and associates through supervision, support and training.
- Ensuring that all staff who work with children, young people and adults at risk adopt best practice to safeguard and protect individuals from abuse, and themselves against false allegations.
- Sharing information about safeguarding with staff, directors, children, parents, school staff, community workers, carers, associates and clients as appropriate.
- Developing and implementing an effective policy and related procedures around taking and accessing images of children, young people, and adults at risk who access our programmes.
- Responding to any allegations appropriately and implementing the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedure.
- Having in place Designated Officers who will be trained appropriately to co-ordinate child protection issues and give advice.
- Ensuring confidentiality is maintained where appropriate and that access to confidential information is restricted to the appropriate authorities.
- Carrying out a regular audit and review of the effectiveness of our Safeguarding Policy.
- Sharing concerns with agencies who need to know involving children, school staff, community workers, carers and parents appropriately.
- Adopting this policy and adhering to our associated policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff.

3. Roles and responsibilities

NECDT has identified a Designated Officer to oversee Safeguarding practice and manage Safeguarding issues. In the Designated Officer's absence, the role will be undertaken by the Deputy Designated officer or the Chair of the Board of Directors.

The role of the Designated Officer is to:

- Assume overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection for the Company.
- Ensure and support the rest of the Company to understand the key issues in relation to safeguarding and the cultural/ education sectors.
- Establish contact with the senior member of Gateway services responsible for child protection in the local area.
- Be a point of contact within the organisation for staff, board, partners and associates in relation to safeguarding and child protection. This includes advice, guidance and disclosures.
- Be aware of local statutory safeguarding procedures and networks.
- Make decisions about safeguarding and child protection.
- Receive and assess information from staff and associates who have a child protection concern.
- Report the issue to a Safeguarding Officer within the school/ organisation where the events took place.
- Make a formal referral to a statutory child protection agency or the police without delay.
- Record the concern and action in the child protection log.
- Decide which positions require DBS disclosure

N.B. It is not the role of the Designated Officer or the Company to investigate individual child protection or safeguarding concerns. The responsibility of the Designated Officer or the Company is to ensure that concerns are shared and appropriate action taken.

Designated Officer

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Circus Central conducts some work through outreach sessions in other settings. In doing so, all staff and volunteers should be clear that other settings' policies and procedures should be adhered to at all times. When working in other settings the host organisation's Safeguarding and Child Protection policies and procedures will always supersede the Circus Central Safeguarding and Child Protection policy in the event of a procedural dispute. Child protection matters should be brought to the attention of the host organisation's contact by The NECDT personnel on the ground. These concerns should also be reported to the Designated Officer as soon as is practicable.

Responsibilities of personnel/partners working with The NECDT:

1. Each person/partner should familiarise themselves with this child protection policy and have their own in place as appropriate within children, young people and vulnerable adults Protection Legislation if they are sub contractors.
2. When setting up any new project or scheme, each Project Manager will assess whether children, young people and vulnerable adults are to be involved/included in the project in any capacity and identify the implications of that in terms of children, young people and vulnerable adults protection including occasional circumstances e.g. providing transport.
3. Project managers should consider the necessity of parental/career consent before participation in NECDT activities, and consider the necessity of chaperones. There is an opportunity in the consent process to inform both parents/carers and participants of the issues/tasks involved. This is not always possible at all events - eg in a public festival setting. A disclaimer notice is helpful in this instance -This responsibility may also be that of the client. Children should not necessarily be prohibited from an activity due to the lack of parental consent as this may not be possible, or achievable and in some cases parental consent may be implicit in allowing the child to be present in the first place.
4. Projects involving childrens', young peoples' and vulnerable adults' organisations ie schools, will require that a teacher, member of support staff or project worker must always accompany the children when they are involved in the project. It is deemed reasonable that this person is responsible for the children's safety and conduct. Consideration should be taken as to whether they should be encouraged to undertake their own risk assessment.
5. If the **project is run by a partner organisation** and children, young people and vulnerable adults associated with that organisation are involved, if the Project Manager has concerns about child protection, they should discuss with the Nominated Child Protection Officer.
6. Before a child, young person or vulnerable adult is filmed during an NECDT event, considerations of appropriate consent should be made, where at all possible and individual children's opinions respected where consent is withdrawn by the participant.
7. All personal data is to be kept secure, not passed onto a third party and securely deleted once the project is finished, or on request of parent/guardian.
8. Any suspicions of abuse should be reported to the Project Manager/ Producer who will alert the Designated Officer. The Designated Officer will report on to other jurisdictions as appropriate.
9. NECDT recognises that the internet plays an important part of people's lives for both the purposes of education and entertainment. NECDT personnel will adhere to NECDT's social media policy.

SECTION B: Code of conduct for safeguarding

1 Principles of Good Practice

The NECDT undertakes to:

- Promote the general welfare, health and personal development of children, young people and adults at risk and protect them from harm of all kinds.
- Recognise that children, young people and adults at risk have rights as individuals and treat them with dignity and respect.
- Recognise that those working for The NECDT will be perceived by children, young people and vulnerable adults as trusted representatives of The NECDT
- Ensure communication with children, young people and vulnerable adults is open and clear
- Assess the risks to children of its activities
- Raise awareness about what children, young people and adults at risk are entitled to be protected from.
- Adopt and consistently apply a thorough and clearly defined method of recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers.
- Have an appropriate response procedure in relation to accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse.
- Establish positive links with parents/ guardians and other relevant organisations.
- Ensure staff only have appropriate physical contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults ie for reasons of health and safety as outlined in the Code of Conduct. NECDT staff, volunteers and associates must adhere to Code of conduct rules relating to contact.

2. Circus Central Standards and Practice for Safeguarding

2.1 Standard

NECDT provides services to children, young people and vulnerable adults including circus skills and interactive performance arts training, mentoring, apprenticeships, tours, clubs and showcases of work.

The principles in this policy extend to all the ways children, young people and vulnerable adults can be involved with NECDT including, but not limited to: being performers, volunteers and participants in NECDT workshops and events, to being audience members, attendees at The NECDT events, on work experience placements or online etc.

2.1.1 To value each child, young person and adult at risk, recognising their individuality and seeking to develop their potential - mental, physical, emotional- and to maximise their contribution to the group and to society.

2.1.2 To ensure that all children, young people and adults at risk participate in an enjoyable and safe environment in which they can have fun and feel valued.

2.1.3 To treat children, young people, and adults at risk with dignity and respect, and to encourage them to do likewise in their relationship with others.

2.2 Practice

2.2.1 To deliver programmes which are appropriate planned in advance.

2.2.2 To have adequate leadership in terms of participant ratios as determined by health and safety standards for the programme.

2.2.3 To ensure there is a GDPR compliant contact, address and telephone number on file for each child, young person and adults at risk.

2.2.4 To be aware of the parent/ guardian's arrangements for the delivery and collection of children/ young people from Circus Central's activities, and generally to maintain good communication with parents.

2.2.5 To ensure each worker has access to a copy of the Company Safeguarding Policy and be familiar with its contents. They should know who to contact if neglect or abuse is suspected, or if a complaint is made and what basic procedures to follow.

2.2.6 Plan all programmes with safety in mind ensuring dynamic risk assessments are standard practice.

3. Responding to allegations or suspicions

If a member of staff, volunteer or associate has any reason to suspect that a child, young person or adult at risk is being subjected to physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or exploitation, then the Safeguarding children and adults at risk procedure must be followed.

- Report the matter to the Designated Officer, or in their absence the Deputy Designated Officer.
- The Designated Officer will assess the nature of the suspicions or the disclosure.
- The Designated Officer will consult the relevant Officer at the venue involved (e.g. school, theatre, community centre etc) , and or contact NSPCC or the police.
- Company staff must not attempt to investigate the matter themselves. This is the responsibility of the police.
- If an allegation is made against a member of the company staff, volunteer or associates, the Company will act swiftly and there will either be a criminal investigation, a child protection investigation, or a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.
- If an allegation is made against an attendee, the charity reserves the right to implement measures, including barring the attendee, to safeguard participants.
- The charity aims to promote a 'safe city' by collaborating with organisations around safeguarding concerns.

4. Whistle blowing policy

All staff, associates and volunteers are assured that they can disclose confidential information relating to unacceptable behaviour by other members of staff/ associated and will be protected in doing so.

Where a complaint made, there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation (undertaken by the police)
- A child or adult protection investigation (undertaken by social services/police)
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation (undertaken by Circus Central)

Civil proceedings may also be initiated by the person/family of the person who alleged the abuse. Any disciplinary investigations will be conducted in accordance with Circus Central's disciplinary policy and will take into account all available information including details from the police and social services.

5. Complaints Policy

Circus Central strives for high standards in all aspects of our work. Using the policies and procedures in place we aim to be fair at all times, providing satisfaction to anyone using our services. The staff and associates who represent the organisation are committed to high standards of conduct and service at all times. The complaints procedure will be made available to members of the public on request.

These internal procedures do not replace or detract from the right of employees or associates to pursue complaints under any relevant discrimination legislation.

6. Grievance Policy

Circus Central has a Grievance Procedure in place to ensure all staff, volunteers and associates are given a fair hearing concerning any grievance that they may wish to raise. The grievance procedure is available to staff via the employee handbook, the crew page, or on request.

7. Procedures for the recruitment, appointment, and training of staff, associates and volunteers.

Circus Central recognises that it is important that all staff, working in a 'Regulated' position with children and young people, whether they are full-time, part-time, freelance, paid or unpaid, have appropriate recruitment and selection procedures applied to them and that as much information as possible is ascertained as to their suitability for the position. This means choosing people with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience, and working to ensure those whose behaviour could be a threat to the safety and well-being of children, young people or adults at risk are identified and screened out. To ensure this the Company adheres to our Recruitment, appointment and training policy and procedures.

8. Disclosure

Where working with children and young people is an expected part of the job personnel will be required to have an Enhanced CRB disclosure/DBS (as prescribed by regulatory authorities). This applies to trustees, staff, persons engaged on freelance contracts, volunteers and leaders. In cases, which should be exceptional, where the position is going to entail unsupervised work, ie regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge with children and young people, a disclosure will be required before the role may be undertaken.

Personnel engaged in positions which do not usually entail working with children will, on occasions where an assignment involves supervised contact with children, be required to complete a Child Protection Personal Disclosure Form. Barred Persons from working with children, young people and vulnerable adults will be excluded from work with The NECDT.

If an individual elects not to undertake a disclosure/DBS check once requested by a Nominated Manager, they will not be entitled to participate in work relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults.

9. Use of images and documentation

There is evidence that some people have used children and young people's events and activities as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or video footage of children and young people. Staff members should be vigilant at all times ensuring that any person using camera or videos at Circus

Central events or activities which involve children, young people, and adults at risk should be approached with a customer care approach. Staff members should adhere to our Use of images policy and procedures.

10. Work Experience

NECDT offers work experience placements to children, young people and vulnerable adults, although primarily designed to help young people become familiar with the workplace and circus life, it is also beneficial to The NECDT as it encourages a sense of being involved in the circus. Safeguarding and Protection issues will be considered by the Designated Officer prior to the start of any work experience, particularly if a mentor is to work solo with the child, young person and vulnerable adult.

11. Health and Safety

Where children, young people and vulnerable adults are involved, the risk assessment must take account of their particular vulnerabilities which will include protection. The risk assessment should set out what arrangements are in place for their care and supervision, eg by a school, parent, carer, guardian or chaperone and how these will be communicated to the appropriate parties. All NECDT staff, volunteers and associates must adhere to the Health and Safety policy.

12. Transport

Children, young people and vulnerable adults will be deemed to remain the responsibility of their parents or guardians outside of activities/sessions and may use public transport on their own. NECDT is only responsible once they have arrived at destination unless being accompanied. However in circumstances where individuals are known to be at risk or where other arrangements are agreed responsible adults should ensure that these arrangements are met.

When children, young people and vulnerable adults are being transported as part of an NECDT project/activity they should be accompanied by a parent, guardian, carer, chaperone or teacher as is deemed appropriate in a suitable vehicle.

Young Persons - A Young Person in these terms is someone who is officially over school leaving age 16, so does not require a chaperone, but is under 18. NECDT provides a duty of care for young persons when travelling on behalf of NECDT.

13. Accommodation

Children: Children will be accompanied by a cleared person (CRB/DBS) responsible adult or their own parent, if required to stay overnight as part of a project. Should a parent prefer to accompany and stay overnight with their child then NECDT will respect their wish where this is possible to accommodate.

Sleeping arrangements will depend on the event or type of accommodation, camping, hotel, hostel etc. Parent's will be informed of these arrangements in advance. There will always be a no boys in girls room and visa versa rule, unless this is supervised. E.g. a meeting needs to happen in a hotel room.

Young Persons : (a Young Person is someone who is over 16, but under 18) Written parental/guardian

consent will be sought before a Young Person is asked to stay unaccompanied overnight in accommodation unless this is a public event to which they are travelling to as an independent person with their own parental knowledge.

Vulnerable Adults: In the event of a vulnerable adult requiring overnight accommodation suitable care arrangements need to be in place including potentially the presence of a carer.

SECTION C: Review

The company is committed to reviewing policy and procedures at least every three years, updating and amending as appropriate. The Board of Trustees will sign off policies and procedures: they may choose to select a representative sample to review at any given time.

Date reviewed: _____

Board Member's signature: _____

Position: _____

Staff Member's Signature: _____

Position: _____

Next Review due: _____