

Friends of Shahnameh

Safeguarding Policy

Friends of Shahnameh as a voluntary educational group is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. It recognizes its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. Friends of Shahnameh acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

All volunteers will endeavour to work together to encourage the development of an ethos, which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people and adults.

In implementing this Safeguarding Policy, friends of Shahnameh

- Ensure that all volunteers understand their legal and moral responsibility to Protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation
- Ensure that all volunteers understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child or young person, or a volunteer's conduct towards a child/young person, to the organization's named person for child protection
- Ensure that the named person understands his/her responsibility to refer any safeguarding concerns to the statutory safeguarding agencies (i.e. Police and/or Social Work)
- Ensure that any procedures relating to the conduct of volunteers are implemented in a consistent and equitable manner
- Provide opportunities for all volunteers to develop their skills and knowledge, particularly in relation to the welfare and protection of children and young people
- Ensure that children and young people are enabled to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues and will have access to the organization's *Complaints Procedure*
- Ensure that all children attending one of the Friends of Shahnameh's sessions are always accompanied by their parents/carers and, when requested, have access to all guidelines and procedures;
- Endeavour to keep up-to-date with national developments relating to the welfare and protection of children and young people.

Section 1 Introduction

Section 2 Recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse

Section 3 A Named Person for Child Protection

Section 4 Stages to follow if you have concerns about a child or young person

Section 5 Managing allegations made against a volunteer

Section 6 Recording and managing confidential information.

Section 1 – Introduction:

Friends of Shahnameh provides teaching and activities to local people and organizations for the benefit of the whole community, including children and vulnerable adults (see separate document: 'Friends of Shahnameh Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults').

Friends of Shahnameh is committed to the welfare and protection of children and/or young people within all the activities our organization undertakes.

The purpose of these procedures is to ensure that all concerns about the care and protection of children/young people are effectively managed and that all volunteers are required to implement the procedures, even though we don't work with children and young people directly.

These procedures have been designed to ensure the welfare and protection of any child and/or young person who accompany their parents/carers accessing the services provided by Friends of Shahnameh. Friends of Shahnameh are committed to the belief that protecting children and young people is everybody's responsibility and therefore the aim here is to provide guidelines that will enable all volunteers to act appropriately to any concerns that arise in respect of a child/young person.

Friends of Shahnameh is committed to equality of opportunity in all areas of their work. All individuals will be treated in a fair and equal manner and in accordance with the law regardless of gender, marital status, race, religion, colour, age, disability or sexual orientation.

Section 2 - Recognizing the signs and symptoms of abuse

(See Appendix 1: Definitions of Abuse, as cited in: Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2013))

Abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person(s). Abuse comes in many different forms (see below) and may result in the person being physically injured. Failure to act in order to protect children and vulnerable people could also be considered a form of abuse.

Signs of abuse

Physical

Some possible signs include:

- Unexplained injuries
- Injuries on certain parts of the body
- Injuries in various stages of healing
- Injuries that reflect an article used

- Flinching when approached
- Reluctant to change
- Crying / instability
- Afraid of home
- Behavioural extremes
- Apathy / depression
- Bites – these can leave clear impressions of teeth. Human bite marks
Are oval or crescent shaped. If the distance is more than 3cm across, it
Indicates that they have been caused by an adult or older child.
- Fractures – these should be suspected if there is pain, swelling and
discoloration over a bone or joint. As fractures also cause pain it is difficult
for a parent or carer to be unaware that a child has been hurt.
- Burns/scalds – it can be very difficult to distinguish between accidental
and non-accidental burns, but as a general rule, burns or scalds with clear
outlines are suspicious, as are burns of uniform depth over a larger area.

Points to note:

- It is very rare for a child under one year to sustain fractures accidentally
- Bruising is very rare in babies who are not yet mobile.

Emotional

Some possible signs include:

- Clingy
- Attention seeking
- Over ready to relate to others
- Low self esteem
- Apathy
- Fearful / withdrawn
- Sleep disorders
- Depression / self harm
- Drink / drug / solvent abuse

Sexual including Child Sexual Exploitation

Some possible signs include:

- Age-inappropriate sexual behaviour / knowledge / promiscuity
- Wary of adults / running away from home
- Eating disorders / depression / self harm
- Unexplained gifts / money

Neglect

Some possible signs include:

- Tired / listless
- Unkempt
- Poor hygiene
- Untreated medical conditions
- Hungry
- Over eats when food is available
- Poor growth
- Poor / late attendance

Friends of Shahnameh will ensure that all volunteers, undertake training to gain a basic awareness of the signs and symptoms of child abuse.

The following are examples of how concerns about a child or young person's safety can come to light:

- a child or young person alleges that abuse has taken place or that they feel unsafe
- a third party or anonymous allegation is received
- a child or young person's appearance, behaviour, play, drawing or statements cause suspicion of abuse and/or neglect
- a child or young person reports an incident(s) of alleged abuse which occurred some time ago
- a report is made regarding the serious misconduct of a worker towards a child or young person.

Section 3 - A Named Person(s) for Child Protection

Friends of Shahnameh have an appointed individual who is responsible for dealing with any safeguarding concerns.

The named person for Safeguarding within Friends of Shahnameh is:

Named Person for Child Protection: **REDACTED**

Mobile number: **REDACTED**

The role and responsibilities of the named person is :

- To ensure that all volunteers are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they are concerned that a child/young person may be subject to abuse or neglect
- Ensure that any concerns about a child/young person are acted on, clearly recorded, referred on where necessary and, followed up to ensure the issues are addressed
- The Named Persons will record any reported incidents in relation to a child/young person or breach of Safeguarding policies and procedures. This will be kept in a secure place and its contents will be confidential.

Section 4 - Stages to follow if you have concerns about a child

Friends of Shahnameh recognizes that they have a duty to act on reports or suspicions of abuse. When worrying changes are observed in a child's or young person's behaviour, physical condition or appearance volunteers will:

Stage 1

- Initially talk to a child/young person about what you are observing. It is okay to ask questions, for example: "I've noticed that you don't appear yourself today, is everything okay? But never use leading questions
- Listen carefully to what the young person has to say and take it seriously
- Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a Child/young person makes a disclosure
- Always explain to children and young people that any information they have given will have to be shared with others
- Notify the organisation's Named Person for Child Protection
- Record what was said as soon as possible after any disclosure.
- The person who receives the allegation or has the concern should complete the pro-forma and ensure it is signed and dated
- Respect confidentiality and file documents securely;

Stage 2

- The Named person(s) will take immediate action if there is a suspicion that a child has been abused or likely to be abused. In this situation the Named Person will contact the police and/or Stockport's local authority children's department.

- If a referral is made direct to the Stockport Children's Department this must be followed up in writing
- The named person can also seek advice and clarity about a situation that is beginning to raise concern through the NSPCC 24 hour National Safeguarding Helpline on 0808 800 5000

Section 5 – Managing allegations made against a volunteer

Friends of Shahnameh will ensure that any allegations made against a volunteer will be dealt with swiftly and in accordance with these procedures:

- The volunteers must ensure that the child is safe and away from the person against whom the allegation is made.
- The named person for safeguarding should be informed immediately.
- In the case of an allegation involving the named person, alternative arrangements should be sought to ensure that the matter is dealt with by one of the directors.

The Director to act as the Independent Person for Child Protection: **REDACTED**

Mobile number: **REDACTED**

The individual who first received/witnessed the concern should make a full written record of what was seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible after observing the incident/receiving the report. It is important that the report is an accurate description. (*See Appendix 2: Disclosure of Information or Record of Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse*).

The named person (if appropriate) can support the volunteer during this process but must not complete the report for them. This report must be made available on request from either the police and/or social services.

- Regardless of whether a police and/or social services investigation follows, Friends of Shahnameh will ensure that an internal investigation takes place and consideration is given to the operation of disciplinary procedures. This may involve an immediate suspension dependant on the nature of the incident.

Section 6 - Recording and managing confidential information.

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The Friends of Shahnameh Named Person for Safeguarding
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation.
- Social services/police.
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

All policies regarding Safeguarding and Data Protection will be reviewed and updated annually by the Friends of Shahnameh management committee.

Useful Contacts/Support Organisations

If you are worried about a child and think they may be a victim of neglect or abuse, please call: 0161 217 6028, Out of Hours Team on 0161 718 2118

If you have reason to believe that a child is at immediate risk of harm, contact the **police on 999**

NSPCC Safeguarding Helpline is a free 24-hour service that provides counselling, information and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse. Telephone: 0808 800 5000 – Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

ANYONE who is concerned about the welfare of a child, including:

- Parents, carers or relatives who need advice
- Children or young people in need of help and advice
- Education, health and social welfare professionals seeking culturally sensitive advice and information.

Appendix 1

Definitions of Abuse as cited in: Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2013)

PHYSICAL ABUSE: May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent/carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE:

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

NEGLECT

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

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, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Appendix 2:

**DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION OR RECORD OF ALLEGATIONS OR
SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE**

When completing this form record what the child has said and/or your concerns legibly and accurately.

Child's Surname

Forename(s)

Address.....

.....

.....

Date of Birth.....

Your Observations (e.g. change in behaviour)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Child's account of what happened (if given)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Please note that you must inform the child of the action that you propose to take.

Action that you took as a result of this disclosure

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Your Signature..... Date

Please ensure that this form has been filled out correctly, because in the event of a disclosure

being made, it is the person to whom the disclosure is made that the relevant authorities will come for an account of what was said.