

Policy for the Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

DOCUMENT FOR INTERNAL USE

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1. Statement

engage is committed to promoting gallery education practice which safeguards and promotes the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Through its programmes of work, **engage** recognises it has a duty of care to ensure that the galleries we work in partnership with safeguard all children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom they may work directly, regardless of race, gender or sexuality.

As the lead organisation working in the field of gallery education, **engage** believes that:

- The welfare of the child / young person / vulnerable adult is paramount;
- All children and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- All staff (paid/unpaid) working for **engage** should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

engage has a duty of care to safeguard all children and vulnerable adults involved in its activities from harm. **engage** will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in its programmes of work, carried out with galleries and partner agencies, through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by **engage**.

engage will follow the guidelines of the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008 when working in Wales.

Policy aims

This policy aims to ensure that the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount in all relevant areas of **engage**'s work, to include:

- Recruitment and training of staff
- Programmes of work carried out with galleries and partner agencies
- Grant programmes where **engage** distributes funding to members
- Advice and guidance given to members
- **engage**'s professional development programme and publications
- Use of images in **engage** publications and on the website

The policy requires all staff and freelancers (paid or unpaid) working for **engage** to promote good practice by:

- Putting the safety and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults above all other considerations
- Being aware of the health & safety and child protection policies of the hosting institutions of any **engage** project and following appropriate procedures, for example recording any accidents or injuries in the accident book where the incident took place
- Reporting any child protection concerns to the designated person for child protection in the education setting
- Working in an open environment – avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication
- Immediately reporting any incidents, which could be misinterpreted to your line manager
- Treating all children, young people and vulnerable adults equally, and with respect and dignity
- Always considering whether your actions are warranted, proportionate and safe and applied equitably
- Reporting any suspicion of abuse or disclosure of abuse to your line manager, even if the suspected abuse involves another member of staff or other freelance employee.

2. Prevention of abuse or neglect

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not

allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the arts environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. An arts practitioner will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practise should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

All staff working directly with children must pass a police/CRB check (a record of the document number must be held in the office).

Practises to be avoided:

The following should be avoided except in emergencies:

Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others. If a child wishes to talk confidentially it should be done in a communal environment with another member of staff present, ideally of the same gender as the child. Avoid taking or dropping a child to an event in a vehicle on your own.

If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of the **engage's** Designated Person for Safeguarding and the child's parents. For example a child sustains an injury and needs to attend hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick up a child at the end of the session.

Incidents which must be reported / recorded:

If any of the following occur you should report it immediately following the process below:

- If you accidentally hurt a participant
- If any child/vulnerable person seems distressed in any manner
- If a child/vulnerable person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- If a child/vulnerable person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

3. Reporting an incident

If an incident involving any of the above occurs, you should report it, whether you feel it is significant or not, for your own safety and the safety of the child concerned. The process to be followed for reporting incidents on any **engage** programme of work or event is to:

- Report the incident to the Designated Person for Safeguarding at the venue, if there is no designated person present, then report directly to the most senior Manager for the event.
- The Designated Person /Manager should make a note of the incident and both parties should sign and date it.
- Then report the incident to the Director of the Gallery who will decide whether further action needs to be taken, or whether the child concerned should be monitored.
- For incidents of a more serious nature the incident will be reported to the **engage** Designated Person and/or the Director of **engage** who will then decide on a course of action, where necessary in consultation with the Board.

4. Recruitment of staff and volunteers

engage recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

All staff working on behalf of **engage** involving children will be required to read the safeguarding policy before beginning a project. They will be required to sign and date the declaration on their contract stating that they have read the policy and will adhere to it. At the start of each project or programme of work the Child protection procedures will be explained to all staff.

Work Experience Placements / Internships

Placements will normally only be offered to students over the age of 18.

Staff Training

All staff are responsible for knowing and following **engage** policy and good practice guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. If staff have any questions about policy or guidelines they should refer, in the first instance, to their line manager.

The Director, with the Designated Safeguarding Person, is responsible for keeping up-to-date with issues and legislation relevant to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults, identifying training opportunities, and for briefing / updating staff / freelancers as necessary.

Briefing on policy, practice and issues related to safeguarding is part of staff and freelance induction at **engage**. Freelance or occasional staff will receive a copy of this policy with their contract.

5. Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for **engage**, in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

engage will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation,
- A child protection investigation,
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Action if there are concerns:

a) Concerns about poor practise

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practise; the Designated Person for Safeguarding will deal with it as a misconduct issue. If the allegation is about poor practise by the Designated Person for Safeguarding, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it will be reported to **engage's** Board who will decide whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

b) Concerns about suspected abuse

Any suspicion that a child or vulnerable person has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Director or Designated Person for Safeguarding, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child/person in question and any other child/person who may be at risk. The Director or Designated Person for Safeguarding will then undertake an information gathering process. As a consequence of this, the person accused may be informed of the allegation and suspended on full pay while an investigation is made. Confidential records will be kept of the allegation and all subsequent proceedings. The Designated Person for Safeguarding will refer the allegation to the Children's Services or Social Care department who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.

The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the relevant department.

If the Designated Person for Safeguarding is the subject of the suspicion / allegation, the report must be made to the Director or in her absence **engage's** Board who will refer the allegation to Children's Services/Social Care.

In the case of a false accusation, **engage** will offer ongoing support and guidance to the staff member to settle back into work and help others to overcome their concerns.

Confidentiality

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 Child Protection Officer
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Social services/police
- The Director
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

engage will seek Children's Services/Social Care advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

c) Concerns outside the immediate gallery environment (e.g. a parent or carer):

Significant changes in a child's behaviour or appearance will be investigated.

Parents/carers will normally be the first point of contact, although, suspicions, will be referred as appropriate by the Designated Person for Safeguarding, to the Social Care Services or the police as soon as possible.

The Designated Person for Safeguarding should also report the incident to **engage's** Board.

d) Record keeping

To ensure that this information is as useful as possible, a detailed confidential record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

Child/Vulnerable Person's Name

Child/Vulnerable Person's Address

Date of Birth of Child/Vulnerable Person

Timed and dated observations describing the concerns (where possible, the child's exact words)

The dated name and signature of the Observer

Such records will be kept in a locked file and will only be accessible as appropriate.

The Designated Person for Safeguarding for engage is:

Jane Sillis

In the absence of a safeguarding officer, or if you want to raise an issue regarding that Designated Person, please approach the Director of engage or the Board representative for Safeguarding.