

The Laurel Trust: Safeguarding Procedures

Our procedures are about everyone involved with The Laurel Trust understanding the steps to doing safeguarding well. This includes our safeguarding policy and associated procedures, roles and responsibilities, what to do if you are worried about a child, our approach to safer recruitment, our training commitment and how we stay up-to-date and gain assurance that we have a safe culture.

Understanding the risks:

Anyone can be at risk of abuse. People are at risk at different times and in different situations. As an organisation, as a trustee board and as individuals, we have a responsibility to safeguard children. A child is anyone under the age of 18, and for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) up to age 25.

We take seriously our responsibility to ensure that the research leads, for each of the projects that we support, understand their duty of care to recognise the potential risks and protect those involved in their research, taking all the necessary steps to ensure that they minimise any risks and manage any distress or emotional harm that may arise.

Recognise, respond and report:

A safer organisation prepares its staff and volunteers so they're ready to deal with problems when they happen.

As individuals and as a Trustee Board it is essential that everyone understands that if they are aware of an incident or allegation of abuse or harm, they cannot ignore it or believe it is for someone else to deal with. Rather, they should follow our policy and procedures so that we:

- handle concerns in a secure and responsible way
- act quickly, ensuring that any further harm or damage is stopped or minimised
- ensure it is reported to all relevant agencies and regulators
- plan what to say to those involved with our charity and the media if appropriate
- are open and transparent so that we build The Laurel Trust's reputation for acting with integrity
- can review what happened to understand how to stop it from happening again.

Recognising Concerns:

As trustees we must work hard to ensure, and remain assured, that everyone connected with The Laurel Trust feels valued, respected and safe so that they are able to speak up. Through annually completing the same NSPCC online certificated training, 'Charity Trustees: your duties to safeguard and protect' and having regular updates on safeguarding at Trustee board meetings, people will know the signs and symptoms of harm and abuse and be alert to possible warning signs. We will support

people to remain vigilant by regular reminders of the different types of harm and signs of abuse:

- [collection of guides to different types of harm](#) or [this definition and signs of abuse factsheet](#) (from NSPCC Learning)

As part of our ongoing commitment to safeguarding we will emphasise to everyone connected with The Laurel Trust that people do not need to be certain before they speak up. If anyone is ever worried about someone, they should always speak to the trustee with lead responsibility for safeguarding. We believe that:

- Abuse, harassment and harm can happen to anyone. It is not always visible and often not spoken about
- Abuse, harm and neglect are wrong. We have a duty to do something about it
- When everyone understands safeguarding and their right to be safe, people are better protected
- An organisation that takes safeguarding seriously and does safeguarding well is an organisation that is trusted
- The Charity Commission expects every charity to make safeguarding a priority

We endorse the five NCVO statements that encourage people to speak up: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_I0loz0yh8 and their slideshow of them is on our website:

- We must all stand up for people who can't speak up for themselves.
- Speaking up if you're worried someone is harming or abusing someone else is always the right thing to do.
- People are often worried that if they report someone for doing wrong, they'll hurt that person. But doing nothing could hurt others even more.
- There are many reasons why people might feel uncomfortable or be scared to report suspicions of abuse. That's ok. It's worth fighting those fears so you can help someone.
- If you speak up The Laurel Trust will protect you and make sure you're not harmed or criticised for it.

Responding to Safeguarding Concerns:

Our general principles in relation to responding to safeguarding concerns are:

- If you see or spot something, say something, so, for example on a trustee visit to a setting or a school, please refer any concern(s) to the school designated safeguarding lead (DSL), so they can decide what the next steps are
- If on a visit, someone mentions a concern to you, never promise to keep the information confidential but report it to the school DSL, so they can decide what the next steps are
- Write a clear statement of what you have been told, seen, or heard for the school DSL
- Report the steps you have taken to The Laurel Trust DSL.

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns:

If a child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, you can share information with appropriate agencies or professionals (the school DSL) without the child's or their parent's consent.

If a child is in immediate danger: **call the police on 999**. They will assess the situation and take the appropriate action to protect the child.

If a child is not in immediate danger: follow The Laurel Trust's safeguarding procedures as soon as possible (see the Responding to Safeguarding Concerns section above)

If you're not comfortable with how The Laurel Trust has responded to the issues you have raised, contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line to discuss your concerns: 0800 028 0285

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/publications/whistleblowing-advice-line-poster.pdf>

On receipt of any report of safeguarding concerns the Trust DSL will liaise, as appropriate, with the school DSL, the police and the Charity Commission.

The Charity Commission requires any registered charity to report 'serious incidents'. The Laurel Trust must report to the Charity Commission if any safeguarding concerns have resulted or could have resulted in harm. This includes some situations where our own policies or procedures have not been followed properly. If those breaches have put people who come into contact with The Laurel Trust through its work at significant risk of harm, we must report them even if no actual harm occurred. A report should always be made where the level of harm to the victims and/or the likely damage to the reputation of or public trust in the charity is particularly high

The responsibility for reporting serious incidents rests with the charity's trustees. In practice, for The Laurel Trust, this is delegated to the DSL in liaison with the Chair of the Trustee Board. Upon receipt of a report, the Charity Commission will:

- focus on the conduct of the trustees
- focus on steps the trustees have taken to protect the charity
- consider what the trustees have done to make sure they're compliant with their legal duties and responsibilities towards the charity in managing safeguarding concerns.

The Commission will be looking for assurance that we have taken steps to limit the immediate impact of the incident and, where possible, prevent it from happening again. They may undertake an investigation and decide how to respond on the basis of evidence collected.

Roles and responsibilities:

Safeguarding is most successful when everyone knows their rights and responsibilities. Everyone needs to play their part in keeping children and adults at risk safe.

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

The Laurel Trust has a lead trustee for safeguarding, who is our designated safeguarding lead (DSL). However, as a trust we are very clear that safeguarding is the responsibility of all trustees. The DSL has strategic responsibility for making sure:

- everything the Trust does reflects our safeguarding accountabilities
- supports the trustees in developing their individual and collective understanding of safeguarding
- takes responsibility for managing any referrals to social services
- reporting when problems are discovered and keeping internal records up to date
- acting as a point of contact if someone wishes to raise a concern or complain about a lack of action in relation to safeguarding concerns

Trustee Responsibilities:

As Trustees, we commit to modelling best practice in relation to:

- safeguarding
- bullying and power imbalances
- sexual harassment
- good record-keeping
- creating a supportive atmosphere where people feel able and supported to raise and report concerns.

Beneficiary School responsibilities:

The Lead school and partner in each collaborative research partnership should have effective safeguarding children policies, procedures and practice and provide evidence of this in their initial submissions. As beneficiaries, the lead school and its partners should:

- set out the steps they will take to protect those involved in their research and manage and mitigate any potential risks to participants
- ensure that their research design doesn't give advantage or perceived advantage to one group of participants over another and children's individual rights are balanced against the benefits of the research
- receive the consent of parents/carers and the child before posting any identifiable information or images of children on social media
- communicate as soon as possible with The Laurel Trust about any safeguarding risks or concerns that have arisen in relation to the research programme.

Policies and Procedures:

- The Laurel Trust Safeguarding Policy sets out our commitment to protecting all children and the procedures we will put in place to keep children safe and respond to child protection concerns. Our policy is responsive to change, reviewed as necessary, always following a serious incident and at least once a year and is available to the public.
- Our policy should be read alongside our Safeguarding Procedures which support our safeguarding policy in practice and explain the steps we will take to keep children safe, what to do when there are concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing, how we respond to concerns about a child, including reporting to the relevant authorities and how we make sure we recruit the right people to work with The Laurel Trust.
- Our Code of Conduct sets out our expectations of ourselves. As a Trust we recognise that being clear about standards of behaviour is an important part of our commitment to safeguarding.

Safer Recruitment:

The Laurel Trust prioritises the safety and welfare of children and takes safer recruitment seriously. It's important that anyone connected with the Trust is safe and responsible. From time to time we recruit new trustees and consultants and ensure that our recruitment and induction arrangements clearly state and actively promote the organisation's commitment to:

- safeguarding and protecting all children by implementing robust safer recruitment practices
- identifying and rejecting applicants who are unsuitable to work with children
- responding to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process
- responding promptly to concerns about the suitability of trustees and consultants once they have begun their role
- ensuring all new trustees and consultants participate in an induction which includes their safeguarding responsibilities and their ongoing commitment, as with all existing Trustees, to undertake safeguarding training, at least annually, by completing the NSPCC Charity Trustee Safeguarding Training, and by reading and declaring that they have done so, at minimum Part one of the latest 'Keeping children safe in education'.

Safe culture:

Safeguarding is not just about putting a series of rules, policies and procedures in place. At its core, it's about being an organisation where everyone is respected and feels safe. Everyone involved with The Laurel Trust should feel they have the power to keep themselves and others safe from harm, and to report or challenge inappropriate behaviour.

We expect, accept and act on respectful challenge on behalf of the children and communities we serve as part of our mission and purpose. We encourage

suggestions and feedback on key documents so we know they work well. We work to make sure all discussions are carefully planned, with thought given to the language we use. We listen when people speak up and take their views seriously.

As trustees we are committed to regularly remind everyone of how to speak up about safeguarding concerns and support people when they do. We have each agreed to ensure our safeguarding training is up to date.

We review our policy and procedures at least annually.

Safeguarding Procedures agreed by the Trustee Board on: 11 November 2020

Reviewed on: 12 September 2022