

The Laurel Trust: safeguarding children policy

Context – our safeguarding responsibilities:

The Charity Commission makes it clear that protecting people and safeguarding responsibilities is a governance priority for all charities. It is a fundamental part of operating as a charity for the public benefit.

As part of fulfilling our trustee duties, we must take reasonable steps to protect from harm people who come into contact with The Laurel Trust. This includes:

- people who benefit from The Laurel Trust's work
- consultants and trustees
- other people who come into contact with us through our work

The Charity Commission will hold trustees to account if things go wrong and will check that trustees followed guidance and the law. Trustees are expected to take responsibility for putting things right.

As trustees we should all promote a fair, open and positive culture and ensure everyone involved with our charity is safe and protected, feels able to report concerns, confident that they will be heard, taken seriously and responded to.

The Charity Commission expects all trustees to make sure their charity:

- has robust policies and procedures in place, which are followed by all trustees, consultants and beneficiaries
- checks that people are suitable to act in their roles
- knows how to spot and handle concerns in a full and open manner
- has a clear system of referring or reporting to relevant organisations as soon as concerns are suspected or identified
- identifies and sets out risks and how they will be managed in a risk register which is regularly reviewed
- follows latest relevant statutory guidance, good practice guidance and legislation
- is quick to respond to concerns and carry out appropriate investigations
- does not ignore harm or downplay failures
- has a balanced trustee board and does not let one trustee dominate its work – trustees should work together
- makes sure protecting people from harm is central to its culture
- has enough resources for safeguarding and conducts periodic reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures and practice

Good Safeguarding Governance



What is a safeguarding children policy statement?

A safeguarding or child protection **policy statement** makes it clear what The Laurel Trust will do to keep children safe. It sets out:

- our organisation's commitment to protecting all children
- the procedures we will put in place to keep children safe and respond to child protection concerns.

Our policy must be responsive to change, reviewed as necessary, always following a serious incident and at least once a year, and available to the public.

Safeguarding procedures:

Our policy statement 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.

Safeguarding children duties apply to any charity working with, or coming into contact with, anyone under the age of 18, and for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) up to age 25.

Safeguarding children means to:

- protect children from abuse and maltreatment
- prevent harm to children's health or development
- ensure children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- take action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes

The Laurel Trust safeguarding policy statement

The purpose and scope of this policy statement:

The Laurel Trust is a grant-giving charity founded to support research and innovation in levelling up learning and life-chances in areas of deprivation and disadvantage throughout England. Its primary aim is to create strategic partnerships with schools and educational settings to improve the quality of teaching, learning and leadership thereby widening opportunities and reducing disadvantage for children.

There is an extensive research base that shows that children from families living in poverty do less well in early years, fall behind their peers throughout schooling and have more mental health issues and employment challenges in adult life. Many children who come from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities experience racism, bias, stereotyping or cultural misunderstanding as they grow up. This can result in some children being more likely to come to the attention of child protection services, while other children are less likely to receive effective support. We recognise that children with SEND may be more vulnerable to abuse and/or less able to speak out if something isn't right. We also understand that LGBTQ+ children face the same risks as all other children, but they are at greater risk of some types of abuse, for example bullying or hate crime. Additionally, COVID-19 and its legacy has impacted significantly on many children's learning, achievement and mental health and well-being. By working with groups of schools and their partners we wish to improve the educational outcomes and life-chances of children and their families living in some of the most deprived areas in the country. To this end, each year we invite collaborations of primary, special and secondary schools and early years' providers to submit creative research and innovation projects which are intended to have a tangible impact on learning in their schools and result in sustained school improvement and better outcomes for their children and communities.

The purpose of this policy statement is to:

- protect children, who are involved in any way in projects receiving funding from The Laurel Trust, from harm.
- provide Trustees and consultants, as well as beneficiaries receiving funding, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of The Laurel Trust in any capacity.

Legal framework:

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England.

- 'Working together to safeguard children', December 2023
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023.pdf
- 'Keeping children safe in education', 2025
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf
- 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales', 2024
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/prevent-duty-guidance-for-england-and-wales-accessible>

Supporting documents:

This policy statement 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 for Trustees
- our code of behaviour for consultants and beneficiaries
- our policy statement on photography and filming
- our acceptable use statement
- our school visit guide

Our Principles:

At the Laurel Trust we believe that:

- children should never experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, to keep them safe and to support schools and their partners to work in a way that protects them
- the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sex, or sexual orientation, have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's safety and welfare.

We will seek to keep children safe by:

- appointing a lead trustee board member for safeguarding
- adopting safeguarding best practice through our policy and procedures, including on-going training
- ensuring everyone involved with The Laurel Trust knows about and follows our policy and procedures confidently and competently
- recruiting and selecting any consultants and trustees safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- sharing concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know
- using our procedures to manage any allegations appropriately
- building a safeguarding culture where trustees, consultants and beneficiaries treat each other with respect, are comfortable about sharing concerns and supported when they do so.

Trustee lead for safeguarding:

Name: Rose Durban

Phone: 07703 446 816

NSPCC Helpline:

Phone: 0808 800 5000

Email: help@NSPCC.org.uk

This policy statement came into force on: 11 November 2020

The Laurel Trust is committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually

This policy statement and accompanying procedures was **updated and reviewed** on: 8 September 2025