





# Policy Overview

It is the Policy of The Rock Project to safeguard the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk by protecting them from neglect and from physical, sexual and emotional harm. The Rock Project understand that individuals thrive in safe surroundings so we are committed to ensuring that our sessions are enjoyable for everyone involved and that safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and The Charity Commission requirements.

## **This safeguarding policy:**

1. applies to all adults including Directors, paid staff, volunteers, deputy staff and anyone working on behalf of The Rock Project.
2. recognises that the welfare and interests of children, young people & vulnerable adults at risk are paramount in all circumstances.
3. aims to ensure that all children, young people & adults at risk have a positive and enjoyable experience at The Rock Project in a safe and encouraging environment and are protected from abuse whilst participating in our sessions and otherwise.

It is the responsibility of all adults involved in The Rock Project to have read and understood the Safeguarding Policy & Procedures.

The Safeguarding Policy & Procedures must be adhered to at all times.

All breaches of the policy and procedures will be dealt with within the Safeguarding Processes and Procedures.

The Rock Project understand that **safeguarding is everyone's responsibility** and it is embedded across our organisation.

**We recognise that the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk is paramount and that all children, young people and adults at risk, regardless of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, marriage/civil partnership, race, religion and/or sexual orientation (all defined as protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse. Working in partnership with children, young people, adults at risk and their family, support network, volunteers and staff is essential in promoting and embedding this policy. This is a national policy and subject to the laws and guidance of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland; it's also in-line with the Local Safeguarding Partnerships in England, Wales (previously LSCB) and Scottish and Northern Ireland counterparts.**

## **If you have any concerns, please contact:**

- The Rock Project Safeguarding Lead, Ben Tiffin: **[safeguarding@therockproject.com](mailto:safeguarding@therockproject.com)**
- The Rock Project Deputy Safeguarding Lead, Sam Fry: **[sam.fry@therockproject.com](mailto:sam.fry@therockproject.com)**
- NSPCC: **0800 800 5000**
- Childline: **0800 11 11**
- CEOP (Online abuse): **<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>**

# Who is this policy for?

The Safeguarding policy is for everyone engaged within The Rock Project and includes all staff. This policy offers guidance for anyone who has a concern or disclosure about the welfare of a person at risk, or who wishes to make a safeguarding allegation or referral in regards to a volunteer or staff member, child or young person.

**‘Staff’** includes any tutor of The Rock Project, managers, directors and agency workers or any person in paid by for the company.

**This policy applies to those in a staff role and who raise a safeguarding concern.**

# Safeguarding Young People aged 7-18 and vulnerable adults

**It's the responsibility of all adults to make sure that their behaviour is appropriate at all times.** If there are concerns that an adult staff member has not followed the code of practice or procedures, the matter must be reported to our Safeguarding Lead who will co-ordinate an investigation. The Rock Project, in collaboration with the appropriate commissioner may suspend an adult's role while a thorough investigation takes place.

At The Rock Project, the safety and wellbeing of our students is our priority. We are dedicated to the following:

- **Taking the wellbeing of our students into account at all times**
- **Respect the rights and feelings of our students**
- **Taking all reasonable steps to protect our students from neglect, physical, sexual and emotional abuse.**

## Staff Code of Practice

- Remember that you are a role model at ALL times, inside and outside of The Rock Project
- You have been placed in a position of trust, **NEVER** abuse this
- Treat students equally with dignity and respect at all times
- Put the welfare of student's first
- Report all allegations, suspicions and concerns immediately to the session manager/franchisee
- Be mindful that someone may misinterpret your actions
- Respect all student's right to personal privacy
- Act within appropriate boundaries, even in difficult circumstances
- Create an open and transparent environment, encourage students to challenge inappropriate attitudes or behaviours and to voice any concerns
- Make everyone (students, parents and carers) aware of our safeguarding arrangements by directing them to our website home page when enrolling
- Work in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations. Should you be alone in a room with a child, ensure that the door is left open at all times and make your manager aware that you will be alone with the child.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of young people and respect their boundaries, not pushing them against their will
- Wear the Rock Project polo shirt and ID Badge at every session
- Carry an enhanced DBS certificate (to be renewed every three years)
- If any of the following occur, you should report it immediately to your session manager to record the incident, and they will ensure that the parents of the child are informed:
  - If you accidentally hurt a student
  - If a student seems distressed in any manner

- If a student appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- If a student misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done
- If an accusation is made, make sure you report it to your manager at first possible opportunity.

## Practices never to be sanctioned

- Do not trivialise abuse or let it go unreported
- Do not join in physical contact games with students
- Do not overstep boundaries with students by engaging in friendships or sexual relationships
- Do not allow activities that encourage bullying behaviour such as dares or forfeits
- Do not use any inappropriate, suggestive or threatening language, whether verbal, written or online
- Do not tell students that they can speak with you in complete confidence or that you'll keep a secret, let them know that all safeguarding issues must be reported but will be kept on a need to know basis.
- Do not borrow money from a student
- Do not give money or gifts to a student. If a student is struggling financially to get home for example, speak with the session manager who will liaise with the parents and ensure there is a written record of the situation.
- Do not befriend students on social media, and **NEVER** privately message them
- Never give students a lift, or invite them to your house
- Do not arrange meetings or outings with a child or their family outside working hours
- Do not have, or perceive to have favourites
- Do not allow a student to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Do not allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Do not reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- **NEVER** rely on your reputation or position to protect you

Note: It may be necessary for tutors or volunteers to make physical contact with children, particularly if they are very young and need guidance with their instrument. For example, a guitar tutor may need to place a child's fingers on guitar strings, or a drum tutor may need to position a child's hands whilst holding the drum stick to ensure that they understand the correct positioning. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the children involved. There is also a need to be responsive to a person's actions. If a young student is fully dependent on you, talk with them about what you are doing and give choice where possible.

## Photographs and video recordings

Photographs and videos of children performing at The Rock Project sessions or at our End of Year Gigs may be published on our website and social media channels. We understand that this can be a sensitive issue for some and therefore have the following procedures in place, to be adhered by all staff at The Rock Project:

- We ask consent from parents on the registration forms upon enrolment which is recorded digitally on our system database
- All photographs and recordings must be made on The Rock Project Equipment
- Any photographs and recordings must be published through approved The Rock Project channels only

At our gigs, we understand that parents like to take photographs and recordings of their children performing. We encourage this, but should always make it clear that any media that they have recorded is for personal use and sharing with friends and family only. Some children legally cannot be photographed or recorded due to safeguarding issues, and the compere should make this known at the beginning of the gig, whilst reiterating that they should only focus on recording/photographing their own children.

# Our commitment

## **At The Rock Project, we are committed to:**

- Working in line with the rules outlined for the safety and security of young people through our processes, procedures and guidance.
- Promoting and prioritising each of our student's wellbeing and safety all times.
- Following protocol quickly and efficiently on any allegation or concern raised.
- Making sure that all students are kept safe from harm whilst at our sessions.
- Working in partnership with statutory safeguarding agencies and other organisations. The Rock Project will refer a member of staff to a statutory agency if we have significant concerns about their suitability to work with young or vulnerable people, or if we have to exclude them from the company in line with our guidance or the relevant national legislation.
- When necessary, sharing information with other organisations about individuals or an incident, even when there's no concern about abuse or harm. If this happens, The Rock Project will only share information with the consent of the individual involved or if there is a duty to refer.
- In the rare instance where a statutory agency requests information from us due to a wider investigation, we are obliged to comply without consent from the child or parent/carer.
- Regularly reviewing and strengthening our safeguarding practice. Our practice is subject to regular reviews, and any changes will be communicated to our franchisees to update their session leaders and tutors.
- We understand that some people may not report abuse at the time that it occurred. We encourage anyone that feels that they have a concern or allegation to come forward and speak directly to our safeguarding lead. We're committed to ensuring that all conversation will be dealt with sensitively and professionally, and will only be shared to ensure the safety of children. We may report concerns or allegations to the appropriate agency if a child may be currently at risk or harm or if a crime has been committed. This would be fully explained to the individual and the safeguarding lead will offer support throughout this process.
- We host a series of links on our website of companies which can support our students should they feel they can't/don't want to talk to their tutors or anyone they know. These include NSPCC, Childline and CEOP. Tutors will remind students of these resources regularly.

# Types of Abuse

Abuse is a form of mistreatment that can be either inflicted by others or self inflicted. Abuse can take place at home, at school or college or within any other physical environment. It can also happen in any online or virtual environment such as on social media or games consoles. An abuser can be anyone, but they're often known by the young person or adult that 's at risk. An abuser may make every effort to build trust with a young person or adult at risk and will often befriend them. This is grooming behaviour.

## Variations of abuse (but not limited to):

- **Addiction:** The person being unable to stop a particular behaviour such as drinking alcohol, taking drugs, gambling etc. This can impact relationships, health, finances. Addition is often experienced with other issues and can make people vulnerable, particularly to coercion or mental health issues. Misuse of substances can also alter a person's mood or mental health. Not all substances that can cause harm are illegal, however they should never be permitted within the context of The Rock Project.
- **Bullying:** Behaviour that can be threatening, abusive, aggressive, intimidating, humiliating or demeaning. It can happen between young people, adults, in groups or on a 1:1 basis. It can also happen online or in the 'real world'. Online bullying can happen on social media networks, on gaming devices or via mobile phones or tablets.
- **Emotional/Psychological:** Emotional mistreatment of a person that results in their wellbeing or development being affected. Emotional abuse can occur in other types of abuse, or can occur on its own.
- **Neglect:** Neglect is failure to meet a child or young person's physical or mental needs that may damage, or impair their development.
- **Physical:** An individual being injured or hurt by someone else i.e. Being punched, hit, or assaulted. Physical harm can also occur by poisoning or inflicting illness on someone else. It's an intentional act.
- **Self harm:** Causing harm to yourself by putting yourself in danger or hurting yourself intentionally. Self harm is largely a coping strategy that young people adopt to release emotional stress.
- **Sexting (including sexual images produced by young people):** When someone shares a nude, semi-nude or sexual image of themselves or others, or sends sexually explicit pictures. Sharing, possession or distribution of sexual images of a person under the age of 18 is illegal in the UK.
- **Sexual:** Involvement in a sexual act where the person does not wish to be involved, does not have the understanding to make an informed choice or by coercion i.e. rape, sexual assault, kissing, inappropriate touching or exposure. This also includes sexual exploitation (bribery), non-contact activities (watching sexual activities, being encouraged to behave in a sexual way). Sexual abuse can also occur online on social media or on electronic devices.



# Reporting concerns

All concerns and allegations will be reported to safeguarding lead Ben Tiffin who can be contacted at **[safeguarding@therockproject.com](mailto:safeguarding@therockproject.com)**. All safeguarding concerns and allegations will be dealt with in accordance to the statutory child safeguarding guidance and will be treated sensitively. All staff will cooperate fully with the statutory authorities in all cases.

## Reporting Procedure

**If you have witnessed something that causes you concern, but a child has not approached you:**

- Don't ask the child or anyone else involved any questions
- Immediately record your concerns in writing using the Record of Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse form (at the end of this document), including a note of the date, time and other colleagues present. Hand this to the session manager or franchisee who will then make a decision on what to do next.

**If you are approached by a child that discloses information to you which is cause for concern:**

- Make sure that you keep calm and give the child or young person your full attention
- Listen to their concerns and be supportive, allow them to talk freely but don't be pushy
- Do not investigate the allegation yourself, for example, don't ask to see evidence of abuse
- Explain to the child or young person that the information they have shared will need to be shared with specific people, but only to keep them safe. You should never agree to keep anything a secret or confidential.
- Reassure the child or young person that they are brave and that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Inform the child what will happen next
- Following this conversation, you should immediately make a record the conversation in writing using the Record of Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse form (at the end of this document), including the date and time and hand to your session manager or franchisee who will pass to the Safeguarding lead for referral. The safeguarding lead will make the referral to the appropriate authority within 24 hours.
- Ensure all discussions are kept confidential
- All future incidents involving you or The Rock Project are recorded

### Concerns involving a colleague

If you are concerned or receive allegations about the conduct of one of your colleagues, this should be reported to your session manager or franchisee immediately. If the concern relates to the session manager or franchisee, you must contact The Rock Project Safeguarding Lead at first possible opportunity ([safeguarding@therockproject.com](mailto:safeguarding@therockproject.com)).

The Safeguarding Lead may then:

- Provide appropriate support for the child or young person
- Report the suspicion or allegation to the relevant agencies who may include the Police and/or Social Services and/or Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) within 24 hours of receiving the complaint
- Make a written record of the contact at any of these agencies to which the case has been reported
- Provide appropriate support for the person against whom the allegation has been made, and inform them in writing of any action that has been/will be taken.
- Confirm to you (the person that originally reported the allegation) that action has been taken. If you feel that insufficient action has been taken and you still have concerns for the safety and welfare for the child or young person you should report your suspicions again, explaining why you feel the action taken to date is insufficient.

The Rock Project has a duty of care to take all allegations or suspicions of abuse seriously and to take the appropriate action, including the DBS. In light of this, anyone who has had an allegation made against them may be suspended from their duties with immediate effect. If the DBS subsequently bars a person that has had an allegation made against them, The Rock Project will no longer allow them to teach at any session.

**Do not attempt to assess yourself whether or not the allegations are true and do not attempt to deal with any suspicion or report of abuse yourself.**

**If you're in doubt of what to do, contact the Safeguarding Lead. If a child or young person is at immediate risk of significant harm call 999 and request the police.**

# Safeguarding roles and responsibilities

Everyone within The Rock Project must fully understand and implement our safeguarding policies and procedures.

**All tutors:** Provide a safe space for all sessions to run safely for all students. Must follow our Staff Code of Practice, and regularly remind themselves of The Rock Project's full safeguarding policy and procedure. Remain alert, question inappropriate behaviours and seek advice, support and report any allegations or concerns to the Session Manager or Franchisee.

**Franchisees & Session Managers:** Must complete safeguarding course. Must respond to allegations and advise tutors of actions required. The safeguarding lead is the fundamental source of advice on all safeguarding matters.

**Safeguarding Lead:** Have a legal responsibility for dealing with safeguarding issues, providing advice and support to The Rock Project staff, liaising with the Local Authority and working with a range of other agencies.

**Head Office:** Hold the responsibility of ensuring that an effective safeguarding policy is implemented. Together with the safeguarding lead, we ensure and oversee compliance, effectiveness and reporting.

## Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, The Rock Project safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person
- Work safely and effectively with children

All staff and tutors are required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All tutors/volunteers should receive formal or informal induction during which:

- A check should be made that an **enhanced** DBS application has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures)
- Qualifications are substantiated
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified
- All franchisees to hold a basic safeguarding qualification, valid within two years.
- Child protection and safeguarding processes and protocol are explained to all tutors and full understanding is confirmed in writing upon enrolment (Safeguarding Policy Compliance Form)