

Safeguarding Policy

1.0 Introduction

1.1 As a charity whose prime concern is children, Reading Family Aid has a responsibility to ensure the welfare of the children that benefit from its services. All Trustees and Volunteers must recognise that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

2.0 Requirements

2.1 This policy sets out to define the exact requirements of its Trustees and Volunteers with regard to their interaction with children during the course of their work for Reading Family Aid. The rules below must be strictly adhered to.

3.0 Rules

3.1 All children that take part in a Reading Family Aid organised trip must be accompanied by a 'Responsible Adult' who has full responsibility for those children for the duration of the trip including travel to and from the destination. Whilst it is the aim of Reading Family Aid to provide a fun activity in a safe environment it does not accept responsibility for children during the activity.

3.2 A 'Responsible Adult' is the child's parent, legal guardian or a person who has been given consent to accompany and take responsibility for the child/children for the duration of the trip.

3.3 All volunteers of Reading Family Aid must be at least 18 years of age.

3.4 All volunteers must receive a copy of this policy before participating in any activity.

3.5 No volunteer must give anything to any child/ren unless the Responsible Adult has been made aware.

3.6 Only under exceptional circumstances (for example if the child has been lost), may a volunteer communicate with a child or be alone with a child without the Responsible Adult being present. In such a case, the Trustee or Volunteer must immediately seek out another Trustee or Volunteer, or employee of the site being visited if relevant.

3.7 Under no circumstances should a volunteer take a child in their car. They may travel in an insured vehicle with the child/children if accompanied by the Responsible Adult

3.8 If it is known that a situation may arise during an outing where the Responsible Adult of a child may be in a different location from the child and/or alone with volunteer, then the Responsible Adult must give their written permission for this to happen. In such a case there must always be at least two volunteers with the children.

4.0 What to do if a child makes a disclosure:

4.1 The following procedures apply if you are presented with information about actual or suspected abuse.

1. Always stop and listen, giving your undivided attention and respecting any silences.
2. Reassure the child that they are right to tell you.

3. If possible make brief factual notes about what you are being told. Keep these notes as they may be useful when writing a report later. These notes must be a true account of exactly what the child has said.
4. Keep calm, do not panic and do not pass judgment (the alleged perpetrator may be someone you know.)
5. Never make a promise to keep what has been said confidential or a secret because you have a responsibility to report.
6. Do not ask leading questions. Never attempt to carry out an investigation of the abuse by trying to interview the child or any persons involved.
7. Immediately report the incident to a Reading Family Aid Trustee who will either call the local MASH (multi agency safeguarding hub) team 0118 937 3641 or call 999

5.0 What to do if you suspect abuse

- 5.1 Make a written record of your concerns and include;
 - A factual account of what has happened
 - The date and time
 - Your signature
- 5.2 Report the incident to a Trustee of Reading Family Aid
 - Do not discuss any incident outside of Reading Family Aid
 - Your report could become a piece of evidence and could be used in court
 - It is your duty of care to always put a child/ren safety as your top priority
- 5.3 A Trustee of Reading Family Aid will consider the information given to them and act accordingly contacting the relevant appropriate bodies.

6.0 Photography and Videos

- 6.1 Volunteers are not permitted to take photographs of children participating in activities without the explicit consent of the responsible adult.
- 6.2 Photographs, videos and other media (e.g. audio) in which individuals can be identified can be seen as **personal data** in the eyes of the law, and must be taken, stored and used in line with data protection principles. This means that:
 - They must only be **used for the purpose they were taken for**. So, if you took the photos to help your group to publicise its work and fundraise, you should only use them for this purpose.
 - They must be **suitable** for the purpose they are taken for, and **not excessive**. So, for example, in order to publicise your group you probably don't need hundreds of photos of the same person, or photos of someone doing something which is nothing to do with your group.
 - They must not be held longer than necessary. So, if your group dissolved and no longer needed publicity, you should no longer keep the photos.
 - They must be destroyed if the people in them ask you to destroy them.

- They must be held, and disposed of, securely so that they don't end up in the hands of a third party.

7.0 What if a child goes missing?

7.1 Responsible adults are responsible for the supervision of their children at all times. It is suggested that parents familiarise themselves with lost children procedures at the place of activity and that children wear an emergency contact band on their wrist.

8.0 What if a family cannot be located?

8.1 Responsible adults should be contactable, either by Reading Family Aid or by the Leader of the Organisation through whom they have come on the trip, for the duration of the activity and have responsibility for returning to the meeting point at a time directed by the volunteer at the start of the activity. Reading Family Aid has a duty to consider the welfare of all participants and cannot be held responsible for families failing to return on time at the end of an activity.