

## Safeguarding policy

This policy applies to all, including the Chair of Trustees and the Board of Trustees, volunteers/sessional workers, agency staff, student recipients or anyone working on behalf of the Reading list Foundation.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive or benefit from services provided by the Reading List Foundation. This includes the children of adults who use our services;
- To provide staff, trustees and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding

The Reading List Foundation helps exceptional students from lower-income families succeed at university by awarding £275 textbook Scholarships. We therefore have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We believe that no individual should ever have to experience abuse of any kind and are committed to practice in a way that protects them. To this end, we acknowledge the following definition:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child Protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. 'Child' includes everyone under the age of 18.

The UK government states on its website that: *'Protecting people and safeguarding responsibilities should be a key governance priority for all charities, regardless of size, type or income, not just those working with children or groups traditionally considered at risk. A charity should be a safe and trusted environment and trustees must take reasonable steps to protect the people who come into contact with their charity through its work from harm.'*

### Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children and vulnerable adults, namely:

- [Keeping children safe in education \(KCSIE\) 2024: summary of changes](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children 2023](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children 2023 \(NSPCC Summary\)](#)
- The Care Act 2014
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims (Amendment) Act 2012
- The Equality Act 2010

- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 1998
- Children Act 1989

## **Policy aims:**

- To demonstrate the RLF's commitment with regard to safeguarding and child protection.
- To ensure that the welfare of the child is paramount, as identified in the Children Act 1989
- To raise the awareness of all who work for the RLF of the need to safeguard everyone and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse
- To demonstrate that we recognize some individuals are especially vulnerable due to the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, their communication needs or other issues
- To commit to all children regardless of their age, disability, gender, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or identity, having the right to equal protection from harm
- To show our commitment whilst working in partnership with young people, their parents, vulnerable adults, carers and other charities, to promoting the welfare of those we need to protect.
- To develop a structured procedure which will be followed by all trustees in cases of suspected safeguarding issues
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the Police and **MASH\*** whenever appropriate
- To make a clear commitment to ensuring that Trustees and anyone working on behalf of the Reading list Foundation has been checked as to their suitability, including verification of their identity, qualifications, and a satisfactory DBS check (A single central record will be retained by the Trustee with Safeguarding responsibility)

**\*Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (See below for further information)**

## **We believe that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility:**

The safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is part of the wider role of safeguarding and promoting welfare. In particular, this refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children or vulnerable adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm. Whether a trustee, a member of staff or a volunteer, everyone has a responsibility to promote safeguarding and the welfare of others and has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

We recognise that the safeguarding and welfare of children and vulnerable adults (in particular the protection of them from significant harm) depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have differing roles and expertise.

All of us should:

- be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect;
- be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose;
- share and help to analyse information so that an assessment can be made of the individual's needs and circumstances;

- contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the individual's welfare;

In committing to this responsibility, we will:

- Adhere to safer recruitment principals appointing new members of staff, volunteers or trustees and for those likely to come into direct contact with children or vulnerable adults,
- Take up references and make use of criminal records checks (DBS).
- Provide safeguarding training on a regular basis, with a recommended provider

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/training/safeguarding-charity-trustees>

## Key Definitions Relevant to Safeguarding Children

**A child** – is defined as a person who is aged under 18, and includes an unborn child.

**A child at risk** – is a child who:

- Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation or other kinds of harm.
- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs).

*It is important to note that the use of the term 'at risk' means that actual abuse or neglect does not need to occur, rather that early interventions to protect a child at risk should be considered to prevent actual harm, abuse and neglect.*

The two conditions necessary to demonstrate a child is at risk of abuse or neglect ensures that protection is provided to those with care and support needs who also require actions to secure their safety in the future. 'Risk of abuse' or 'neglect' may be the consequence of just one concern raised or as a result of cumulative factors.

**Harm** is defined as ill treatment; this includes sexual abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and psychological abuse.

It also includes the impairment of physical or mental health (including that suffered from seeing or hearing another person suffer ill treatment) and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development (including that suffered from seeing or hearing another person suffer ill treatment).

The following identifies some types of harm but is not an exhaustive list. There are many other behaviours which may give rise to a safeguarding concern.

**Types of harm include but are not limited to:**

- **Physical abuse** – Hitting, slapping, over or misuse of medication, undue restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
- **Emotional/psychological abuse** – Threats of harm or abandonment, coercive control, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks, witnessing abuse of others.
- **Sexual abuse** – Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, including: physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Financial abuse** – This category will be less prevalent for a child but indicators could be, for example, not meeting their needs for care and support which are provided through direct payments, or complaints that personal property is missing.
- **Neglect** – Failure to meet basic physical, emotional or psychological needs which is likely to result in impairment of health or development.

**In addition to the above, harm can also include the following acts which are not included in the 2014 Care Act:**

- **Cyber bullying** – This occurs when someone repeatedly makes fun of another person –online, or repeatedly picks on another person through emails or text messages. It can also involve using online forums with the intention of harming, damaging, humiliating, or isolating another person. It includes various different types of bullying, including racist bullying, homophobic bullying, or bullying related to special education needs and disabilities. The main difference is that, instead of the perpetrator carrying out the bullying face to face, they use technology as a means to do it.
- **Forced marriage** – This is a term used to describe a marriage in which one or both of the parties are married without their consent or against their will; in the case of children, a person is only able to give their consent if they are over the age of 18 years. A forced marriage differs from an arranged marriage, in which both parties consent to the assistance of a third party in identifying a spouse but this does not apply to the under 18s, unless they are in Scotland which is governed by a different legal system and those 16 years and over may give their consent. The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 make it a criminal offence to force someone to marry.
- **A “mate crime”** – Is when “vulnerable people and children are befriended by members of the community who go on to exploit and take advantage of them” (Safety Network Project, ARC). It may not be an illegal act, but it still has a negative effect on the individual. A mate crime is carried out by someone the young adult or child knows, and it often happens in private. In recent years there have been a number of Serious Care Reviews relating to young people and children with a learning disability who were seriously harmed, or even murdered, by people who purported to be their friend.
- **Radicalisation** – The aim of radicalisation is to inspire new recruits, embed extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals to the legitimacy of a cause. This may be direct through a relationship, or through social media.

For further information see:

[Home - Devon County Council](#)

[Appendix 2](#)

## How we will seek to safeguard young people and raise trustee/staff awareness:

- All staff will be made aware of this policy as part of their initial induction process and there will be regular briefings and updates for all staff as required/necessary
- Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Appointing a nominated lead trustee for safeguarding
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance [more information about this is available from the Information Commissioner’s Office: [ico.org.uk/for organisations](http://ico.org.uk/for organisations)]
- Using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing (\*see below) measures in place
- Building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, are valued, listened to and respected
- Through annual review of the policy and procedures.

## Reviewing the Policy and Procedures

This policy and procedure will be reviewed every year, this will include checking telephone numbers, accuracy of personnel details, and any updates required by a change in local or national policy.

## **Procedures**

What to do if you have concerns about the safety or wellbeing of either a child or vulnerable adult:  
Whatever the nature of your concerns, discuss them with the designated member of the trust board as soon as is feasibly possible. In instances where there is a safeguarding concern see the 'Safeguarding Flowchart' (page 7), for the process to follow.

### **Concerns about Individuals under the age of 18**

You may have concerns about a child or vulnerable adult because of something you have seen or heard, or an individual may choose to disclose something to you. If a disclosure of information is made to you by a child (under the age of 18), you should ensure you:

- Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and refer to Children's Social Care Services.
- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is said.
- Reassure the child, but only as far as is honest, don't make promises you may not be able to keep *eg: 'Everything will be alright now', 'You'll never have to see that person again'.*
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the child refers to it. For example, you could say, *'You're not to blame'.*
- Do not interrogate the child; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
- Do not ask leading questions (*e.g. Did he touch your private parts?*), ask open questions such as *'Anything else to tell me?'*
- Do not ask the child to repeat the information for another member of staff.
- Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.
- Take notes if possible or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards.
- Record the date, time, place any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child (do not paraphrase).
- Record statements and observable things rather than interpretations or assumptions.

Following discussion with the designated safeguarding member of the trust board, if there remains a concern the designated safeguarding trustee should in the first instance liaise with Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in place at the educational establishment to which the child is enrolled. If it is suspected there is deliberate injury, or are concerned for a child or adult's immediate safety or they are afraid to return home, Children/Adult Services or the Police must be contacted without delay.

### **Concerns about individuals over the age of 18**

- It is not your responsibility to decide whether or not an adult has been abused. It is however everyone's responsibility to respond to and report concerns.
- If you are concerned someone is in immediate danger, contact the police on 999 straight away. Where you suspect that a crime is being committed, you must involve the police.
- If you have concerns and or you are told about possible or alleged abuse, poor practice or wider welfare issues you must report this to designated safeguarding trustee, or, if this individual is implicated then report to the Chair of Trustees.
- It is good practice to seek the adult's views on what they would like to happen next and to inform the adult you will be passing on your concern.
- It is important when considering your concern that you also ensure that keep the person informed about any decisions and action taken about them and always consider their needs and wishes.

## **How to respond to a concern**

- Make a note of your concerns.
- Make a note of what the person has said using his or her own words as soon as practicable.
- Discuss your safeguarding concerns with the adult, obtain their view of what they would like to happen, but inform them it's your duty to pass on your concerns to the designated safeguarding trustee.
- Describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about.
- Take care to distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion. It is important that the information you have is accurate.
- Be mindful of the need to be confidential at all times, this information must only be shared with your designated safeguarding trustee and others on a 'need to know' basis.
- If the matter is urgent and relates to the immediate safety of an adult at risk then contact the emergency services immediately.
- NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity#protecting>
- To a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) This is a centralized team where professionals from various agencies—such as police, health, education, and social care—co-locate to share information and make rapid, joint decisions to protect vulnerable children and adults. It acts as a "front door" for safeguarding concerns, improving early identification of risk and ensuring faster, more coordinated interventions. Each Local authority has its own online published contact details, an example of which is shown below:

**For consultation and enquiries in DEVON please contact:**

For concerns that require an urgent response please telephone: 0345 155 1071

Email: [mashsecure@devon.gov.uk](mailto:mashsecure@devon.gov.uk)

Fax: 01392 448951

Enquiry Form available at: <https://devoncountycouncil.outsystemsenterprise.com/MASH/homepage>

Post: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, P.O. Box 723, Exeter EX1 9QS

Emergency Duty Team out of hours 0845 6000 388

Police non-emergency 101

**Making Referrals to Disclosure and Barring Service:**

The following guidance is taken from the DBS website:

<https://disclosure.homeoffice.gov.uk/HomeOfficeExternalPortal/faces/oracle/webcenter/portalapp/pages/login.jspx>

*A referral is information about a person. It tells the DBS of concerns that an individual may have harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or put a child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm.*

*The power to refer can be used when an organisation thinks a person has either:*

- *harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult*
- *has satisfied the harm test; or*
- *has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence and;*
- *the person they're referring is, has or might in future be working in regulated activity and;*
- *the DBS may consider it appropriate for the person to be added to a barred list*

**Condition 1**

- *you withdraw permission for a person to engage in regulated activity with children and/or vulnerable adults. Or you move the person to another area of work that isn't regulated activity.*

*This includes situations when you would have taken the above action, but the person was re-deployed, resigned, retired, or left. For example, a teacher resigns when an allegation of harm to a student is first made.*

## **Condition 2**

*You think the person has carried out 1 of the following:*

- *engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults. An action or inaction has harmed a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk or harm or;*
- *satisfied the harm test in relation to children and / or vulnerable adults. E.g. there has been no relevant conduct but a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult still exists*
- *been cautioned or convicted of a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations ) offence*

Further guidance and the most recent tool for reporting safeguarding concerns in a charity can be found using the following links:

[examples of harm to children](#)

[examples of harm to vulnerable adults](#)

<https://www.charitysafeguarding.dcms.gov.uk/handling-safeguarding-allegations-charity?page=1>

***For weekly updated guidance and awareness see:*** <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/vcs>

## **\*Whistle-blowing**

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues, poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the charity's safeguarding arrangements. The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures within the organisation.

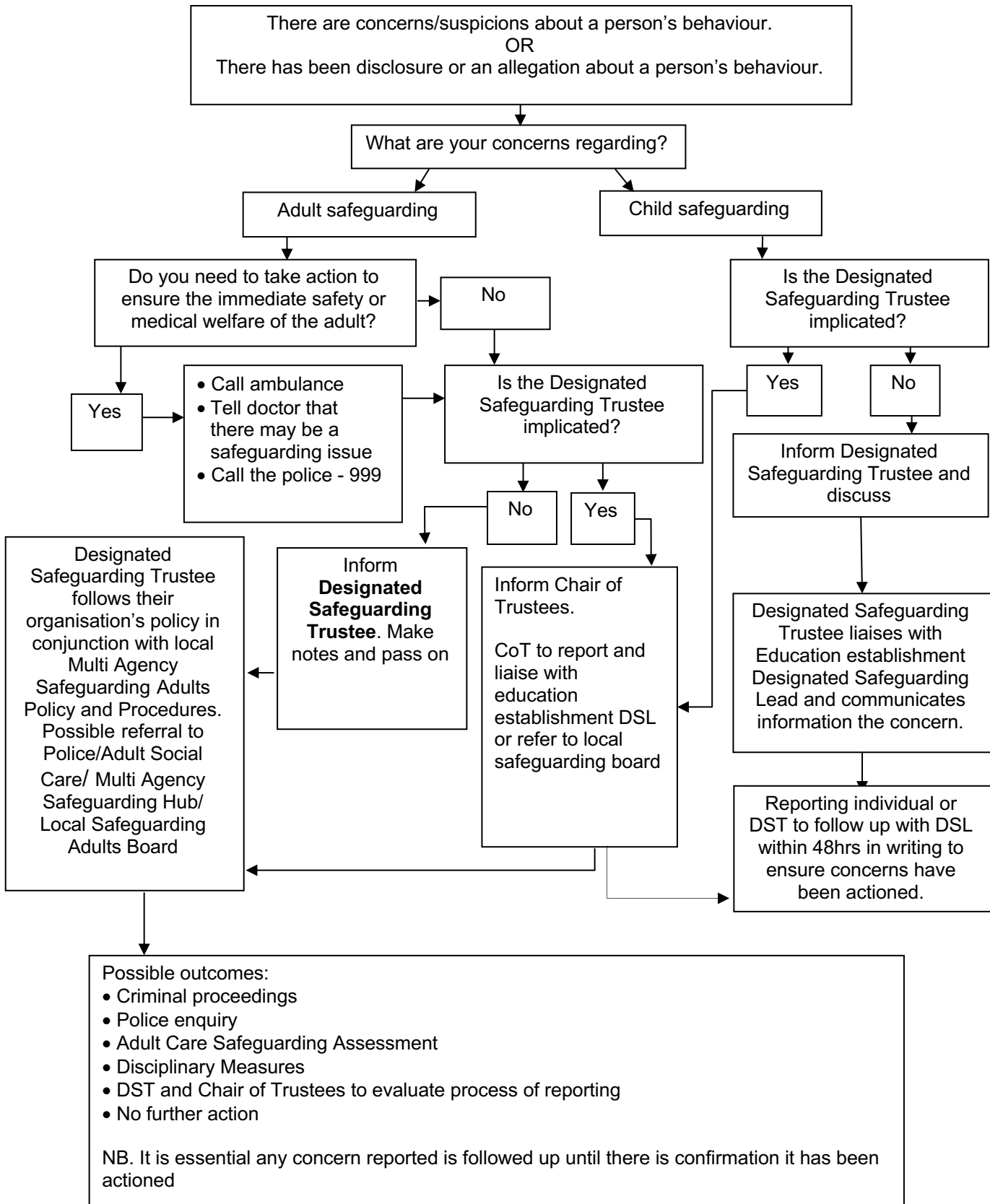
Whistle-blowing regarding a Trustee should be made initially to the Chair of Trustees whose contact details are readily available.

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures within the organisation.

Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) and email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

# Safeguarding Flowchart

## Dealing with Concerns, Suspicions or Disclosure



**Remember to involve the adult at risk throughout the process wherever possible and gain consent for any referrals to social care if the person has capacity**

## Contact Details

Contact	
Julie Sadler-Smith Designated Safeguarding Trustee	Julie Sadler-Smith 07866971719

## We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually

This policy and procedure will be reviewed every year, this will include checking telephone numbers, accuracy of personnel details, and any updates required by a change in local or national policy.

## Record of Reviews and changes

Signed:



Signed:

Date: 01/04/2026

This policy was reviewed on:

Date	Changes/Review By:	Comments
08/03/2023	J Sadler-Smith	Trustees to confirm SG Policy read
02/04/2024	J Sadler-Smith	Information regarding contact numbers/emails checked
23/01/2025	J Sadler-Smith	New guidance on handling SG allegations in a charity- tool for recording concerns/handling allegations. Next Review Date: Jan 2026
01/12/2025	J Sadler-Smith	NSPCC audit undertaken and 'Action Plan' generated which will be made available to all Trustees for discussion.
31/03/2026	J Sadler-Smith	NSPCC 'Action Points' followed up: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Draft letter for Trustee signatures (agreement sought at meeting)</li> <li>2. Clarification re: MASH groups</li> <li>3. Storing of student information checked</li> <li>4. Draft Online Safety Statement available for discussion/agreement</li> </ol>


## Appendix 1 Incident Report Form

To be completed as fully as possible if you have a concern regarding any individual. If an adult, it is important to inform them about your concerns first and that you have a duty to pass the information onto the Designated Safeguarding Trustee (DST). The information will then be discussed in order to agree a course of action in conjunction with yourself, the adult involved and if necessary social care or other relevant organisations.

<b>Section 1 – Details of the individual at risk</b>	
Name	
Address	
Date of Birth / Age	
School (if under 18)	
Contact number	
<b>Section 2 – Your details</b>	
Name	
Contact phone number(s)	
Email address	
<b>Section 3 – Details of Concern</b>	
Detail what you have seen/been told/other that makes you believe the individual is at risk, is being abused or is at risk of abuse (include dates/times/evidence from records/photos etc.). If an adult, include their views of on what they would like to happen.	
<b>Office Use – Completed by DST</b>	
Details of any contact with the adult at risk. Have they consented to information being shared outside of the Reading List Foundation?	
Details of any other agencies contacted – advice can be still sought without giving personal details if you do not have consent for a referral	
Details of the outcome of this concern	

## Appendix 2

Find out more about Safeguarding and Child Protection at:

- NSPCC: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/vcs>
- Childline: <http://www.childline.org.uk/pages/home.aspx>
- Anti-Bullying Alliance: <http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>
- Beat Bullying: <http://www.beatbullying.org/>
- Childnet International –making the internet a great and safe place for children. Includes resources for professionals and parents <http://www.childnet.com/>
- Thinkuknow (includes resources for professionals and parents) <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>
- Safer Internet Centre <http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>
- Transgender <http://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk/>
- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/deaf-and-disabled-children>
- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/lgbtq-children-young-people>
- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection-schools/safeguarding-children-with-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send>
- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/children-from-black-asian-minoritised-ethnic-communities>