



Skylight Circus Arts Children's Safeguarding Policy

This policy has been developed with regard to relevant legislation, statutory guidance, sector guidance and local safeguarding procedures, including the following:

Legislation and External Guidance

- [Children Act 1989](#)
- [Children Act 2004](#)
- [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)
- [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#)
- [Department for Education – Out-of-school settings: safeguarding guidance for providers \(2026\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 \(where relevant to work delivered within or on behalf of schools and colleges\)](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)
- [Department for Education – Information sharing to safeguard children and young people \(2026\)](#)
- [NHS England – Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk in the NHS: Safeguarding Accountability and Assurance Framework, Fifth Edition 2026](#)
- [Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership – Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures](#)
- Charity Commission – Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees

Related Skylight Policies and Procedures

Copies of Skylight's related policies and procedures are available on request. Please contact info@skylightcircusarts.com

- Adult Safeguarding Policy
- Allegation Management Flowchart
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Safeguarding Flowchart
- Complaints Policy
- Confidentiality / GDPR Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Online Safeguarding Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Social Media and Digital Communications Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

This policy relates to the safeguarding of children and young people under the age of 18. For safeguarding concerns involving adults, please refer to Skylight Circus Arts' Adult Safeguarding Policy. This policy should be read alongside other relevant Skylight policies and procedures.

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Purpose & Aims

Skylight Circus Arts has a duty of care to safeguard all children and young people involved in Sklylight Circus Arts from harm and abuse. All children and young people have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be considered. Sklylight Circus Arts will ensure the safety and protection of all children and young people involved in Sklylight Circus Arts through adherence to the Child Safeguarding guidelines adopted by Sklylight Circus Arts.

For the purposes of this policy, a child is anyone under the age of 18.

Skylight Circus Arts (Sklylight) fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding. The aim of the Sklylight Safeguarding Policy is to promote good practice by:

- Making a positive contribution to a strong, safe and inclusive community and recognising the right of every child and young person to feel and remain safe.
- Recognising that all children and young people, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to protection from abuse, neglect, bullying, discrimination and exploitation.
- Promoting an anti-racist and anti-discriminatory approach, with clear expectations that staff, freelancers, volunteers and others working on behalf of Sklylight actively challenge racism, discrimination and discriminatory behaviour.

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safeguarding, support and protection while participating in Skylight activities and services.
- Ensuring that staff, freelancers and volunteers are able to recognise safeguarding concerns and respond appropriately, confidently and in line with Skylight's safeguarding procedures.
- Promoting a culture in which children and young people are listened to, taken seriously and supported to raise concerns about their safety or wellbeing.

Scope and Safeguarding Responsibilities

Our policy applies to all staff, freelance artists, trustees and volunteers working for Skylight. There are four main elements to our policy.

1. Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff, freelance artists and volunteers to work with children and young people.
2. Provide age-appropriate opportunities for children and young people to understand their rights, personal boundaries, how to recognise unsafe situations and how to raise a concern or ask for help.
3. Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse.
4. Establishing a safe environment in which children and young people can learn and develop.

We recognise that because of the regular contact with children and young people Skylight staff, freelance artists and volunteers are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. Skylight will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children and young people feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children and young people know that there are adults at Skylight whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities within our training programmes for children and young people to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

We will follow the procedures set out by Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership (RBSCP) and take account of guidance issued by the Department to:

- Ensure we have a Designated Safeguarding Lead who has received appropriate training and support for this role
- Ensure we have a nominated Trustee responsible for safeguarding
- Ensure every member of staff (including freelance artists, trustees and volunteers) knows the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and their role.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Ensure that parents and carers have an understanding of the responsibility placed on Skylight and staff for safeguarding
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and cooperate as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters including attendance at case conferences
- Keep written records of concerns about children and young people, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.

- Safeguarding records are stored securely, with access restricted to authorised persons, in accordance with Skylight's data protection and confidentiality procedures.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff, freelance artist, trustee or volunteer

We recognise that children and young people who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. Skylight may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at Skylight, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. Skylight will endeavour to support the person through:

- Skylight ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives everyone a sense of being valued
- Acknowledge that behavior coming from a child or young person can be extreme but we endeavour to maintain a safe space for everybody.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the person such as social services, child mental health service, education welfare service and educational psychology service.

Recognising Abuse and Safeguarding Concerns

Definition of Abuse: Child abuse happens when a person harms a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can also involve neglect. Children may be abused by:

- family members
- friends
- people working or volunteering in organisational or community settings
- people they know
- strangers.

Children experiencing abuse often experience more than one type of abuse over a period of time. Children who experience abuse may be afraid to tell anybody about the abuse.

Definitions and signs of child abuse

Many of the signs that a child is being abused are the same regardless of the type of abuse. They may struggle with feelings of guilt, shame or confusion, particularly if the abuser is a parent, caregiver or other close family member or friend. Anyone working with children or young people needs to be able to recognise the signs. These include a child:

- being afraid of particular places or making excuses to avoid particular people
- knowing about or being involved in 'adult issues' which are inappropriate for their age or stage of development, for example alcohol, drugs and/or sexual behaviour
- having angry outbursts or behaving aggressively towards others
- becoming withdrawn or appearing anxious, clingy or depressed
- self-harming or having thoughts about suicide
- showing changes in eating habits or developing eating disorders
- regularly experiencing nightmares or sleep problems
- regularly wetting the bed or soiling their clothes
- running away or regularly going missing from home or care

- not receiving adequate medical attention after injuries.

These signs do not necessarily mean that a child is being abused. There may well be other reasons for changes in a child's behaviour such as a bereavement or relationship problems between parents or carers. If you have any concerns about a child's wellbeing, you should report them following your organisation's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

[\(Definitions and signs of child abuse - NSPCC\)](#)

Sexual Abuse

Definition: Sexual abuse is forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. It doesn't necessarily involve violence and the child may not be aware that what is happening is abuse. Child sexual abuse can involve contact abuse and non-contact abuse. Contact abuse happens when the abuser makes physical contact with the child.

It includes:

- sexual touching of any part of the body whether the child is wearing clothes or not
- rape or penetration by putting an object or body part inside a child's mouth, vagina or anus
- forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity
- making a child take their clothes off or touch someone else's genitals.

Non-contact abuse involves non-touching activities. It can happen online or in person and includes:

- encouraging or forcing a child to watch or hear sexual acts
- making a child masturbate while others watch
- not taking proper measures to prevent a child being exposed to sexual activities by others
- showing pornography to a child
- making, viewing or distributing child abuse images
- allowing someone else to make, view or distribute child abuse images.
- meeting a child following online sexual grooming with the intent of abusing them.

Online sexual abuse includes:

- persuading or forcing a child to send or post sexually explicit images of themselves, this is sometimes referred to as sexting
- persuading or forcing a child to take part in sexual activities via a webcam or smartphone
- having sexual conversations with a child by text or online

Abusers may threaten to send sexually explicit images, video or copies of sexual conversations to the young person's friends and family unless they take part in other sexual activity. Images or videos may continue to be shared long after the abuse has stopped.

Abusers will often try to build an emotional connection with a child in order to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse. This is known as grooming.

Signs: There may be physical signs that a child has suffered sexual abuse. These include:

- anal or vaginal soreness or itching

- bruising or bleeding near the genital area
- discomfort when walking or sitting down
- an unusual discharge
- sexually transmitted infections (STI)
- pregnancy

Changes in the child's mood or behaviour may also cause concern. They may want to avoid spending time with specific people. In particular, the child may show sexual behaviour that is inappropriate for their age. For example:

- they could use sexual language or know things about sex that you wouldn't expect them to
- they might become sexually active or pregnant at a young age

Physical Abuse

Definition: Physical abuse happens when a child is deliberately hurt, causing physical harm. It can involve hitting, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or suffocating. It's also physical abuse if a parent or carer makes up or causes the symptoms of illness in children. For example, they may give them medicine they don't need, making them unwell. This is known as fabricated or induced illness (FII).

Signs: All children have trips, falls and accidents which may cause cuts, bumps and bruises. These injuries tend to affect bony areas of their body such as elbows, knees and shins and are not usually a cause for concern. Injuries that are more likely to indicate physical abuse include:

Bruising

- bruises on babies who are not yet crawling or walking
- bruises on the cheeks, ears, palms, arms and feet
- bruises on the back, buttocks, tummy, hips and backs of legs
- multiple bruises in clusters, usually on the upper arms or outer thighs
- bruising which looks like it has been caused by fingers, a hand or an object, like a belt or shoe
- large oval-shaped bite marks

Burns or scalds

- any burns which have a clear shape of an object, for example cigarette burns
- burns to the backs of hands, feet, legs, genitals or buttocks.

Other signs of physical abuse include multiple injuries (such as bruising, fractures) inflicted at different times. If a child is frequently injured, and if the bruises or injuries are unexplained or the explanation doesn't match the injury, this should be investigated. It's also concerning if there is a delay in seeking medical help for a child who has been injured

Emotional Abuse

Definition: Emotional abuse involves:

- humiliating, putting down or regularly criticising a child
- shouting at or threatening a child or calling them names

- mocking a child or making them perform degrading acts
- constantly blaming or scapegoating a child for things which are not their fault
- trying to control a child's life and not recognising their individuality
- not allowing a child to have friends or develop socially
- pushing a child too hard or not recognising their limitations
- manipulating a child
- exposing a child to distressing events or interactions
- persistently ignoring a child
- being cold and emotionally unavailable during interactions with a child
- not being positive or encouraging to a child or praising their achievements and successes.

Signs: There aren't usually any obvious physical signs of emotional abuse but you may spot changes in a child's actions or emotions. Some children are naturally quiet and self-contained whilst others are more open and affectionate. Mood swings and challenging behaviour are also a normal part of growing up for teenagers and children going through puberty. Be alert to behaviours which appear to be out of character for the individual child or are particularly unusual for their stage of development.

Babies and pre-school children who are being emotionally abused may:

- be overly-affectionate towards strangers or people they haven't known for very long
- not appear to have a close relationship with their parent, for example when
- being taken to or collected from nursery
- lack confidence or become wary or anxious
- be unable to play
- be aggressive or nasty towards other children and animals

Older children may:

- use language, act in a way or know about things that you wouldn't expect for their age
- struggle to control strong emotions or have extreme outbursts
- seem isolated from their parents
- lack social skills or have few, if any, friends
- fear making mistakes
- fear their parent being approached regarding their behaviour
- self-harm.

Neglect

Definition: Neglect is not meeting a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. This can result in serious damage to their health and development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer not:

- providing adequate food, clothing or shelter
- supervising a child or keeping them safe from harm or danger (including leaving them with unsuitable carers)
- making sure the child receives appropriate health and/or dental care
- making sure the child receives a suitable education
- meeting the child's basic emotional needs – this is known as emotional neglect.

Neglect is the most common type of child abuse. It often happens at the same time as other types of abuse.

Signs: Neglect can be difficult to identify. Isolated signs may not mean that a child is suffering neglect, but multiple and persistent signs over time could indicate a serious problem. Some of these signs include:

- children who appear hungry - they may not have lunch money or even try to steal food
- children who appear dirty or smelly
- children whose clothes are inadequate for the weather conditions
- children who are left alone or unsupervised for long periods or at a young age
- children who have untreated injuries, health or dental problems
- children with poor language, communication or social skills for their stage of development
- children who live in an unsuitable home environment.

Specific Safeguarding Concerns

Child sexual exploitation

Definition: Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Young people may be coerced or groomed into exploitative situations and relationships. They may be given things such as gifts, money, drugs, alcohol, status or affection in exchange for taking part in sexual activities.

Young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. They often trust their abuser and don't understand that they're being abused. They may depend on their abuser or be too scared to tell anyone what's happening. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol before being sexually exploited. They can also be groomed and exploited online. Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation can also happen to young people in gangs (Berelowitz et al, 2013). Child sexual exploitation can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults and involve multiple perpetrators.

Signs: Sexual exploitation can be very difficult to identify. Young people who are being sexually exploited may:

- go missing from home, care or education
- be involved in abusive relationships
- hang out with groups of older people
- be involved in gangs or anti-social groups
- have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- spend time at places of concern, such as hotels or known brothels
- be involved in petty crime such as shoplifting
- have access to drugs and alcohol
- have new things such as clothes and mobile phones, which they aren't able to easily explain
- have unexplained physical injuries.

Harmful sexual behaviour

Definition: Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour which is displayed by children and young people and which may be harmful or abusive. It may also be referred to as sexually harmful behaviour or sexualised behaviour. HSB encompasses a range of behaviour, which can be displayed towards younger children, peers, older children or adults. It is harmful to the children and young people who display it, as well as the people it is directed towards.

HSB can include:

- using sexually explicit words and phrases
- inappropriate touching
- using sexual violence or threats
- sexual activity with other children or adults.

Sexual behaviour between children is considered harmful if one of the children is much older – particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other isn't (Davies, 2012). However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them – for example, if the older child is disabled (Rich, 2011).

Signs: It's normal for children to show signs of sexual behaviour at each stage in their development. Children also develop at different rates and some may be slightly more or less advanced than other children in their age group. Behaviours which might be concerning depend on the child's age and the situation.

Domestic abuse

Definition: Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between people who are, or who have been in a relationship, regardless of gender or sexuality. It can include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse.

Exposure to domestic abuse is child abuse. Children can be directly involved in incidents of domestic abuse or they may be harmed by seeing or hearing abuse happening. Children in homes where there is domestic abuse are also at risk of other types of abuse or neglect.

Signs: It can be difficult to tell if domestic abuse is happening, because abusers can act very differently when other people are around.

Children who witness domestic abuse may:

- become aggressive
- display anti-social behaviour
- suffer from depression or anxiety
- not do as well at school - due to difficulties at home or disruption of moving to and from refuges.

Bullying and cyberbullying

Definition: Bullying is when individuals or groups seek to harm, intimidate or coerce someone who is perceived to be vulnerable.

Bullying includes:

- verbal abuse, such as name calling
- non-verbal abuse, such as hand signs or glaring
- emotional abuse, such as threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone
- exclusion, such as ignoring or isolating someone
- undermining, by constant criticism or spreading rumours
- controlling or manipulating someone
- racial, sexual or homophobic bullying
- physical assaults, such as hitting and pushing
- making silent, hoax or abusive calls.

Bullying can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. When bullying happens online it can involve social networks, games and mobile devices. Online bullying can also be known as cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying includes:

- sending threatening or abusive text messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- 'trolling' - sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- encouraging young people to self-harm
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name.

Signs: It can be hard to know whether or not a child is being bullied. They might not tell anyone because they're scared the bullying will get worse. They might also think that the bullying is their fault. No one sign indicates for certain that a child's being bullied, but you should look out for:

- belongings getting 'lost' or damaged
- physical injuries such as unexplained bruises
- being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school
- not doing as well at school
- asking for, or stealing, money (to give to a bully)
- being nervous, losing confidence or becoming distressed and withdrawn
- problems with eating or sleeping
- bullying others.

Child Trafficking

Definition: Child trafficking is child abuse. It involves recruiting and moving children who are then exploited. Many children are trafficked into the UK from overseas, but children can also be trafficked from one part of the UK to another. Children may be trafficked for:

- child sexual exploitation
- benefit fraud
- forced marriage
- domestic servitude such as cleaning, childcare, cooking
- forced labour in factories or agriculture
- criminal exploitation such as cannabis cultivation, pickpocketing, begging, transporting, drugs, selling pirated DVDs and bag theft.

Children who are trafficked experience many forms of abuse and neglect. Physical, sexual and emotional abuse is often used to control them and they're also likely to suffer physical and emotional neglect. Child trafficking can require a network of organised criminals who recruit, transport and exploit children and young people. Some people in the network might not be directly involved in trafficking a child but play a part in other ways, such as falsifying documents, bribery, owning or renting premises or money laundering (Europol, 2011). Child trafficking can also be organised by individuals and the children's own families. Traffickers trick, force or persuade children to leave their homes. They use grooming techniques to gain the trust of a child, family or community. Although these are methods used by traffickers, coercion, violence or threats don't need to be proven in cases of child trafficking - a child cannot legally consent to their exploitation so child trafficking only requires evidence of movement and exploitation.

Modern slavery is another term which may be used in relation to child trafficking. Modern slavery encompasses slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking (HM Government, 2014). The Modern Slavery Act passed in 2015 in England and Wales categorises offences of slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking.

Signs: Signs that a child has been trafficked may not be obvious but you might notice unusual behaviour or events. Children who have been trafficked may:

- have to do excessive housework chores
- rarely leave the house and have limited freedom of movement
- not have any documents (or have falsified documents)
- give a prepared story which is very similar to stories given by other children
- be unable or reluctant to give details of accommodation or personal details
- not be registered with a school or a GP practice
- have a history with missing links and unexplained moves
- be cared for by adults who are not their parents or carers
- not have a good quality relationship with their adult carers
- be one among a number of unrelated children found at one address
- receive unexplained or unidentified phone calls whilst in a care placement or temporary accommodation.

There are also signs that an adult is involved in child trafficking, such as:

- making multiple visa applications for different children
- acting as a guarantor for multiple visa applications for children
- having previously acted as the guarantor on visa applications for visitors who have not left the UK when the visa expired.

Female genital mutilation

Definition: Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision or cutting. The age at which FGM is carried out varies. It may be carried out when a child is new-born, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during pregnancy (Home Office et al, 2016).

FGM is child abuse. There are no medical reasons to carry out FGM. It's dangerous and a criminal offence.

Signs: A child at risk of FGM may not know what's going to happen. But they might talk about or you may become aware of:

- a long holiday abroad or going 'home' to visit family
- relative or cutter visiting from abroad
- a special occasion or ceremony to 'become a woman' or get ready for marriage
- a female relative being cut – a sister, cousin or an older female relative such as a mother or aunt
- missing school repeatedly or running away from home.

A child who has had FGM may:

- have difficulty walking, standing or sitting
- spend longer in the bathroom or toilet
- appear withdrawn, anxious or depressed
- have unusual behaviour after an absence from school or college
- be particularly reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations
- ask for help, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.

Regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales must report 'known' cases of FGM in under-18s to the police (Home Office, 2016). Further information about definitions and signs of abuse can be found on the NSPCC website.

Responding to a Safeguarding Concern or Disclosure

Everyone working on behalf of Skylight Circus Arts has a responsibility to act on concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or young person. Concerns must be taken seriously, recorded and shared promptly in accordance with Skylight's safeguarding procedures.

If a child or young person makes a disclosure:

- Listen carefully and give them your full attention.
- Stay calm and take what they tell you seriously.
- Allow them to speak in their own words and at their own pace.

- Do not investigate, interrogate or ask leading questions. Questions should only be used where necessary to clarify what the child is telling you.
- Do not promise to keep the information secret. Explain that you will need to share the information with people whose job it is to help keep them safe.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling you and that they are not to blame.
- Do not confront the person alleged to have caused harm.
- Make an accurate written record as soon as possible, using the child's own words wherever possible. Record what was seen, heard or disclosed rather than assumptions or personal opinions.
- Report the concern to Skylight's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL as soon as possible.

If you have a safeguarding concern

A child does not need to make a disclosure for a safeguarding concern to be reported. Concerns may arise from something you have seen or heard, changes in a child's behaviour or presentation, information provided by another person, or a combination of smaller concerns over time.

All safeguarding concerns should be recorded and reported to the DSL or Deputy DSL as soon as possible, even where you are unsure whether the concern meets the threshold for referral to Children's Social Care.

Staff, freelancers and volunteers must not investigate suspected abuse themselves.

Immediate danger

If a child is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical attention:

Call 999 immediately.

Take any reasonable and proportionate action necessary to protect the child from immediate harm and inform the DSL or Deputy DSL as soon as it is safe to do so.

A safeguarding referral must never be delayed because the DSL is unavailable.

Reporting Internally

Safeguarding concerns should normally be reported immediately to:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Martine Bradford

Tel: 01706 650676

Email: martine.b@skylightcircusarts.com

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Charma Force

Tel: 07809203454

Email: charma.f@skylightcircusarts.com

If the DSL and Deputy DSL are unavailable, or if there is concern that appropriate action is not being taken, any member of staff, freelancer, trustee or volunteer may contact Children's Social Care or the Police directly.

Concerns or allegations involving a person who works or volunteers with children must follow Skylight's Allegation Management Procedure and the appropriate LADO process.

Making an External Referral

Where there are concerns that a child may be suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care without delay. Staff, freelancers and volunteers must not investigate suspected abuse themselves.

For children living in Rochdale, safeguarding referrals by professionals must be submitted through the Rochdale Children's Services Portal. If a concern is urgent but the child is not in immediate danger, the referral should be submitted through the portal and EHASH contacted to advise them of the urgency.

A referral must not be delayed because the DSL or Deputy DSL is unavailable. Any person may contact Children's Social Care or the Police directly where necessary.

If a child is in immediate danger, call 999.

Working with Parents and Carers

Skylight will normally work openly with parents and carers and, where it is safe and appropriate to do so, inform them about safeguarding concerns and information that needs to be shared. Parents or carers should not be informed where doing so could place the child or another person at increased risk of harm or compromise effective safeguarding arrangements, including a Police investigation. Where there is uncertainty, advice should be sought from Children's Social Care.

Recording, Information Sharing and Confidentiality

The organisation should ensure that any records made in relation to a referral should be kept confidentially and in a secure place. Information about child protection and safeguarding concerns should be shared on a 'need to know' basis, but it should be remembered that the issue of confidentiality is secondary to a child's need for protection.

Concerns or Allegations About Adults Working with Children

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Skylight Circus Arts in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities.

Skylight Circus Arts will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- a criminal investigation
- a child protection investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.

Any concerns should be reported to Skylight Circus Arts' DSL. If they are unavailable or your concern is involving them, please contact the Safeguarding Representative on the Board of Trustees. Contact details found at the end of this policy.

The LADO process applies where it is alleged that a person who works or volunteers with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Where these criteria may be met, Rochdale LADO **must be contacted within one working day**. Skylight must not investigate the allegation or question the alleged victim, alleged perpetrator or potential witnesses before consultation with the LADO, other than taking immediate action necessary to safeguard a child.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- Skylights Designated Safeguarding Lead/s
- the parents/carer of the person who is alleged to have been abused if applicable
- the person making the allegation
- children's social care /police
- the Board of Trustees

Seek social care advice on who should approach the alleged abuser's parents/carers. Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Internal inquiries and possible suspension

Any immediate action required to safeguard children will be taken. Suspension is not an automatic response to an allegation. Decisions about suspension or other temporary measures will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking account of advice from the LADO, Police or Children's Social Care where appropriate.

A written summary of how the concern was dealt with may be forwarded to the appropriate safeguarding officers (LADO/ Children's Safeguarding Officer). If there are any queries/ concerns left outstanding, then these should also be raised with the relevant officer so that resolution can be sought.

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the Skylight Circus Arts Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff, volunteer or any person working on behalf of/representing the organization should be reinstated and if so how this can be sensitively handled.

This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Skylight Circus Arts Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Staff Conduct and Professional Boundaries

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's and adult's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good staff conduct means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all children and young people equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each child / young person, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children and young people (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Making circus fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required during supporting circus activities e.g stilt walking, trapeze, tightwire walking etc, it should be provided openly. Be mindful as it may be difficult to maintain appropriate hand positions when the adult is constantly moving.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible.
- Ensuring that if group teams are taken on trips, they should always be accompanied by sufficient and appropriate staffing.
- Ensuring that at residential events, staff should be mindful of safeguarding procedures when entering children's rooms and should not invite children into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children and young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.

- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children and young people to avoid excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent if circus artists are required to transport young people in their cars.

Practices to be avoided:

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the organisation or the child's parents/carers. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

- avoid spending time alone with children away from others
- avoid taking or dropping off a child to an event or activity

Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Share a room with a child/young person
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child/young person, even in fun
- Reduce a child / young person to tears as a form of control
- Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child/young person
- Do things of a personal nature for children / young person, that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children/young person to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children and young people particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents/ carers and the child involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Do not take on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained. Staff and volunteers should be mindful about appropriate 'spotting' and supporting techniques for riskier activities and explain to and ask permission from participants.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur, this should be recorded and reported promptly to the DSL. The DSL will determine any further safeguarding action and whether and how parents or carers should be informed.

- if you accidentally hurt a child/young person
- if they seem distressed in any manner
- if a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- if a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Safer Recruitment, DBS and Safeguarding Training

Skylight Circus Arts recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children/young people in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- Skylight will record and store the employee details of volunteers/staff and freelancers.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service if required.
- If appropriate, two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- If appropriate, staff, freelancers or volunteers to provide evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo).

Disclosure and Baring

- Skylight will assess roles against the current legal definition of regulated activity with children and current DBS eligibility guidance. From 1 September 2026, supervision does not exclude a person from regulated activity where the relevant activity and frequency criteria are met. Where a role is regulated activity, it is eligible for an Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information.
- Skylight's policy is to carry out a new DBS check or appropriate Update Service status check at intervals of every 3 years.

Working with Partner Organisations

Responding to concerns when working with a partner group or organisation:

- All concerns must be discussed with Skylights Safeguarding Lead and the discussion should be recorded.
- Skylight may work with the partner organisation's safeguarding lead to determine a course of action. However Skylight may also seek advice or refer independently to Rochdale Safeguarding Partnership.
- A written summary of how the concern was dealt with may be forwarded to the appropriate safeguarding officers (LADO/ Children's Safeguarding Officer). If there are any queries/ concerns left outstanding, then these should also be raised with the relevant officer so that resolution can be sought.

Where the statutory conditions for a Disclosure and Barring Service referral are met, Skylight will fulfil its legal duty to make a referral to the DBS. This includes relevant circumstances where an individual has been removed from regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not resigned or otherwise left.

Key Safeguarding Contacts and Reporting Information

In the case of an emergency that requires immediate and urgent action:

If you suspect a person is at immediate risk of harm call 999 and speak to the Police. All calls concerning worries about children and young people are treated seriously.

Report Internally

If you have any safeguarding concerns or issues you should follow safeguarding procedures and first point of contact should be Skylight Circus Arts Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Martine Bradford

Tel: 01706 650676

Email: martine.b@skylightcircusarts.com

If Skylight's DSL is unavailable, please contact Skylight's

Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Charma Force

Tel: 07809203454

Email: charma.f@skylightcircusarts.com

If your concern involves the designated safeguarding lead/s, please go directly to our Safeguarding Representative on the Board of Trustees:

Board of Trustee's Safeguarding Representative

Martin James Lee

Email: martin.l@skylightcircusarts.com

Making an External Referral

Anyone can contact Rochdale Children's Social Care or the Police. Call 999 and speak to the police if you suspect a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm.

Multi-agency Professionals should use the Children's Services Portal which can be accessed [here](#).

For all other reporting:

Rochdale Children's Social Care (via the Early Help and Safeguarding Hub)

Hours: 8am – 4.45pm Tel: 0300 303 0440

Out of Hours service

Hours: 5pm – 8am & weekends Tel: 0300 303 8875

All calls are treated seriously. You will be asked where the child lives and who looks after the child.

If it is found that a child is being abused or is at risk of significant harm professionals will work together with the family to ensure that the child can be protected.

Alternatively you can contact the NSPCC 24/7 on 0808 800 5000

[Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children's Partnership](#)

<https://rochdalesafeguarding.com/rbsp>

If you are in any doubt about reporting your concerns don't think 'What if I'm wrong?' think 'What if I'm right?'

Remember - Safeguarding is Everyone's Business!

LADO / Staff Volunteer Allegations Management

LADO - Allegations Management, should be contacted by Skylight's Designated Safeguarding Lead when there has been an allegation of abuse by Professionals and Volunteers working with children & Young People.

The LADO provides management and oversight of individual cases of allegations of abuse made against those who work with children.

[Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children's Partnership - LADO](#)

[Employer leaflet](#)

[Employee leaflet](#)

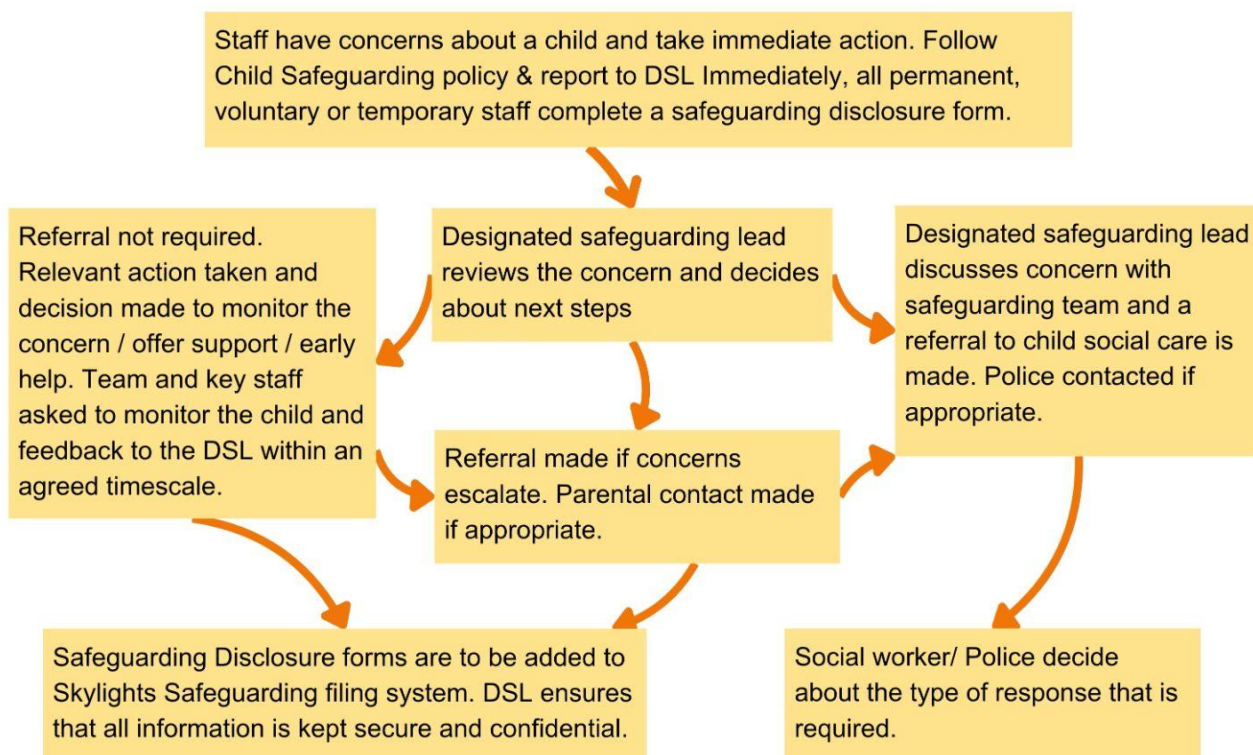
[Parent/carer leaflet](#)

For advice, or to make a referral regarding Allegations Management, please email the Rochdale LADO **lado@rochdale.gov.uk** using the Multi-agency Management of Allegations Form

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually. Please see the footer for review dates.



Skylight Circus Arts Child Safeguarding Flowchart



Staff should do everything they can to support social workers. At all stages, staff should keep the child's circumstances under review (involving the DSL or deputies as required) and re-refer if appropriate, to ensure the child's circumstances improve.

The child's best interests should always come first.

In an emergency, call the police.

If a child is in immediate danger, please call 101 or 999

Skylights Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Martine Bradford | Tel: 01706 650676

martine.b@skylightcircusarts.com

Deputy Safeguarding Lead:

Charma Force | 07809203454

charma.f@skylightcircusarts.com

Skylights Board Member responsible for safeguarding:

Martin James Lee | martin.l@skylightcircusarts.com

The Local Authority Designated Officer is: Louise Hurst

Tel: 0300 303 0350 Email: LADO@Rochdale.gov.uk

Social Care referrals:

0300 303 0440 | ehash@rochdale.gov.uk

Children's Social Care, Floor 4, Number One Riverside, Smith Street, Rochdale, OL16 1XU

Rochdale Children's Social Care (via the Early Help and Safeguarding Hub)
Out of Hours service

Hours: 5pm – 8am & weekends

Tel: 0300 303 8875