

Safeguarding policy

Sheila Coates Foundation (SCF) was established with the aim of advancing the education and mental health of children and young people in England who have autism or a related condition. Through grant giving it will support schools and eligible groups to provide services, over and above those statutorily required, for children and young people with autism or a related condition.

This policy applies to SCF representatives ¹. It also relates to those applying for a grant. It is intended to ensure the safeguarding of children and young people who are grant beneficiaries.

Safeguarding is a fundamental part of the work of SCF and this commitment is reflected in the values of our organisation, which inform and support all our safeguarding activities.

We are:

- Ethical; working professionally and with integrity
- Young person focused; promoting the needs and successes of young people with autism
- A learning organisation; learning from young people, others and each other
- Collaborative; working collaboratively to support innovative project
- Ambitious; looking for positive impact in every project we support

Context

In creating the safeguarding policy, SCF has taken into account the documents 'Working together to safeguard children' (DfE 2018), 'Keeping children safe in-education' (DfE 2018a), updated September 2025, the Equality Act 2010, and additional relevant guidance and legislation.

Principles

We believe that everyone has a responsibility to promote the welfare of children and young people, to keep them safe and to act in a way that protects them and provides help and support to meet their needs as soon as problems emerge. We recognise that those with autism may be particularly vulnerable.

¹ SCF representatives refers to trustees, employees, volunteers and consultants
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SCF is committed to providing services that embrace diversity and promote equality of opportunity. Everyone who benefits from our services or works for us in a paid or voluntary capacity should be safe, empowered to play a part in promoting their own welfare and that of others and able to live a life free from abuse. This applies to all, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or belief.

Prevention: We will put sensible measures in place to prevent abuse, including the use of safe recruitment practices, promoting safe working practice and raising awareness of safeguarding.

Protection: We will provide policy, procedures, information and training to enable SCF staff, trustees and consultants to identify and respond appropriately to concerns about abuse.

Partnership: The SCF will work in partnership with statutory, regulatory and other relevant organisations to ensure that safeguarding concerns are responded to appropriately.

Empowerment: We will be person-centred and uphold rights in our safeguarding work.

Accountability: We aim to be transparent in our approaches and recognise the need for continuous learning and improvement.

Roles and responsibilities

All SCF representatives and grant applicants

Every individual working for the SCF, regardless of their role, has a part to play in safeguarding children and young people. All those directly involved will undertake training and must familiarise themselves with our safeguarding policy and procedures.

Trustees

SCF trustees approve the safeguarding policy and have a duty of care to their charity, which includes taking the necessary steps to safeguard those at risk from abuse, managing risk and protecting the reputation of the charity.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The CEO is responsible for the effective implementation of the policy. They will ensure that training, record keeping and procedures are followed. They will monitor safeguarding risk and report accordingly to the trustees. As line manager of staff they

will be informed of any allegations or concerns (in line with procedures).

Consultants and volunteers

Consultants have a responsibility to ensure that safeguarding is included, where appropriate, in their actions on behalf of the charity. They should take any action related to safeguarding in consultation with the CEO and lead trustee on safeguarding.

Business manager

The business manager is responsible for the maintenance and review of the policy and for ensuring that all those directly involved or employed by the charity are DBS checked and suitably trained.

After discussion with the CEO, the business manager may liaise initially with relevant applicants or colleagues if a minor error can be rectified prior to taking further steps.

Annually, the business manager will arrange for all relevant SCF representatives to sign a declaration concerning any convictions or pending proceedings for any relevant offence since their most recent DBS certificate was issued. The business manager's declaration will be reviewed by the CEO.

Every five years the business manager will ask those concerned to confirm that they hold a valid DBS certificate. The business manager's declaration and, if required, new DBS certificate will be reviewed by the CEO.

Grant applicants

Grant applicants will make their own arrangements for safeguarding, in partnership with their local Adult and Children's (where required) Safeguarding Boards. They are required to declare that they have in place robust and up to date safeguarding policies and procedures. SCF takes care to ensure that no young person, or their place of education, can be readily identified. Pseudonyms are used in case studies, and only the geographical location of schools or colleges, such as the South East of England, is referred to on our website. As part of due diligence, checks are made to ensure that reports from outside agencies, such as Ofsted, do not raise significant safeguarding concerns about any potential receiving establishment. If a concern is raised and has not clearly been addressed at the time of application, trustees reserve the right to refuse a grant application.

Lead trustee for safeguarding

The lead trustee for safeguarding has, with the CEO, the responsibility for developing and quality-assuring safeguarding activity across the charity and supporting best practice in working with any partners.

Breaches of policy

Failure to comply with the SCF safeguarding policy may be managed in a number of ways, depending on the nature and consequences of any incident. In some cases a combination of responses may be required.

- Local authority co-ordinated safeguarding investigation

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- Police investigation
- Referral to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)
- People & Performance disciplinary process
- Serious incident reporting to The Charity Commission
- Internal review or co-operation with an external review

Associated documents

- Guidance & Procedures for Safeguarding
- Grant Application and Giving Procedures
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Social media Policy
- Health and Safety Policy Statements

Guiding principles

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SCF Safeguarding Policy	
Version	5.1
Date issued	21.01.26
Next Review date	October 2025

Prepared by	Stephen Mcshane
Approved by	Board of trustees (via Email)
Revision Notes	5.1: Full review of document. Values updated to match strategic plan, external policy dates updated.