

Teams of Our Lady – Equipes Notre Dame GB



Safeguarding Policy

February 2021
Reviewed March 2024



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Introduction

Teams of Our Lady (Teams) is an international organisation with a formal structure in Great Britain. It is a registered charity in England and Wales. Its purpose is to support the spiritual development of Christian married couples; it is a religious organisation. Teams is not a children's charity; its main activities are to support teams of married couples. Teams is not an organisation to support vulnerable adults. Some may be vulnerable in some ways, perhaps through frailty of age or illness, but essentially Teams as an organisation is not responsible for the additional care or safety of any member, irrespective of their needs. Teams members who are friends might offer fraternal support; that would be a personal offer and not linked to TeamsGB.

Teams needs this Safeguarding Policy for the infrequent or rare occurrences when Teams arranges childcare or a programme for children for a specific event.

Children could be involved in a Teams activity when

- I I. Arrangements are made for an event when the parents are engaged in the event and the children are provided for separately by Teams or by the venue hosting the event.
- II II. Families are invited to an event when adults bring their children.

When provision for childcare or a children's programme is made by Teams, the procedure below will apply.

When families are invited to an event and bring children, unless there is a specific child-care programme, the family remains responsible for their children at all times.

Families in Teams may independently gather with their children when they wish in locations they chose, which may be at an outside venue or at someone's home. At these times parents are entirely responsible for the care and welfare of their children.

Safeguarding Children Procedure for Teams Events

Responsibility for the implementation of Teams Safeguarding policy for an event rests with the organisers of the event. Organisers must ensure they are aware of Teams Safeguarding policy, as well as other policies that may relate to children or vulnerable adults.

1. Adequate preparation will be made in advance for childcare or a children's programme
2. An estimate of the likely need will be assessed.
3. The venue for the event will be assessed for suitability for provision of a children's programme including consideration of the ages of the children. For inclusion in a Teams children's programme or childcare, the child must be able to toilet themselves without adult support. Parents or carers will be expected to confirm this on the registration form.

If a child has particular needs then this must be declared by the parents/carer and an assessment of whether child care can be given for the event will be made. The registration form will ask about particular needs.

4. The organisers of any event providing childcare will appoint a senior safeguarding person and inform parents, and the whole organising team who that person is.
5. The proper ratio of children to adults (as required by local authorities) will be decided. Parent involvement will not be included when deciding the numbers of adults needed.
6. Provision must be made for suitable toilets, separate to the provision for adults, and to include proper safeguarding supervision when in use.
7. Recruitment of suitable adults will be undertaken using a 'safer recruitment' process (see appendix) and requiring evidence for each employed / volunteer adult.
8. At least three people must approve the recruitment of each adult and advise the senior safeguarding lead accordingly.

9. There must be a risk assessment completed at least one month in advance for the venue and for the activities prepared
10. The Risk Assessment must include Activity Risk, Fire Risk and First Aid Risk with the perspective of any age of children who could possibly be near or involved.
11. Depending on the risk of infection at the time, provision must include full hygiene precautions and any Government guidance in place at the time.
12. The Risk Assessments must be made by involvement of the childcare team. They must be written.
13. There must be a procedure for communication of the completed and approved risk assessment with the childcare team. Training must be given for the childcare team so that everyone is certain that they know this policy and are competent in current standards.
14. A record of children and adults participating in the children's activity must be kept and archived for indefinite retention.
15. The taking of images (photographs or video) of children would be discussed in advance and then only taken with the specific permission of parents (or parent and child if over 10 years). Images will be kept only for a declared time (usually 5 years unless in printed material) and for use in specific purposes. Children in images must not be named. (see Data Protection policy)
16. When appropriate for the children, their ages, the venue, the event, the timings there will be a children's programme rather than the provision of childcare only.
17. Should a safeguarding concern arise then the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the Safeguarding Concern Response Procedure
18. The terms of being a volunteer, being paid or a contractor will be agreed. If a fee is to be paid that will be agreed too.
19. Insurance cover for the event will be checked by the TeamsGB Treasurers.
20. If a safeguarding concern arises the appended procedure will be used.

It is noted that with the above procedure, it may be difficult to include a children's programme or childcare in Teams events. For an event, the organisers of the event are responsible for confirming the safeguarding requirements are met. For regional events the Regional Couple should be informed. For national events the Province team should be informed. If the safeguarding requirements cannot be met then a children's programme cannot be held.

The provision of a virtual children's programme by video or webpage may be an alternative.

Risk assessment for events

Those responsible for the Risk Assessment will consider the likely needs of all members including adults who may have sensory impairment or particular needs. Registration forms will ask about particular needs and this information will be used to finalise arrangements and the Risk Assessment before the event.

Communication of Policy

This policy is placed on the website, advertised in e-communications and discussed at 'Formation for Responsibility' meetings. To be circulated (via website link) to all Regional and Sector Couples when approved.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed periodically as any changes in regulations or best practice occur; this will be at least every 3 years

Agreed

This policy was agreed by the Trustees in February 2021, Reviewed March 2024.

Signed:Chairperson Date:

Appendix 1

Safer Recruitment

A safer recruitment process will comprise:

1. Considered identification of the job role and responsibilities. There may be different role descriptions for the manager and assistants in a childcare setting. This will include a person specification and advise that a criminal records check is required in line with current regulations.
2. An application form giving personal details, how they meet the person specification, job history and a declaration of unspent criminal convictions or none.
3. Taking of two referees who are not related to them.
4. A Disclosure and Barring Check or use of the DBS updating system for children at an enhanced level.
5. Interview
6. Decision to recruit, or not, by three people. The DBS certificate will not be copied or kept but the original must be available to view by the appointment group.

Appendix – Safeguarding Concern Response Procedure

1. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, the Movement will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- The Children and Vulnerable Adults Act 1989.
- The Children and Vulnerable Adults Act 2004.
- Working Together 2015
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for Practitioners 2015
- Mandatory reporting of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) 2016

The Designated Senior Persons for Child Safeguarding in this the Movement are the Regional Couples.

For an event that includes childcare the Regional Couples will identify a Senior Designated Person for the event who may or may not be one of the Regional Couples, but will have appropriate safeguarding training.

The Designated Senior Person will refer all cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children care and:

- Police (cases where a crime may have been committed).
- Assist in any ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children and vulnerable adults Act 1989 and police investigations.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to Childcare volunteers on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.

Raising Awareness

- The designated safeguarding lead for each event should ensure the Movements policy is known and used appropriately.
- Ensure the child Safeguarding policy is available publicly.

2. THE MOVEMENT PROCEDURES – VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

All volunteers engaged in childcare must follow the policy and the agreed risk management procedure.

All volunteers must work together under the instruction of the team leader.

No volunteer must put themselves in a position of being one to one with a child.

If any volunteer is concerned about a child or vulnerable adult, he or she must inform the Designated Senior Person for the event.

The volunteer must record information regarding the concerns on the same day. The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations. ie "he said, I said .." opinion may be added but must be identified as such.

The Designated Senior Person will decide whether the concerns should be referred to Children Services; or the police. If it is decided to make a referral to Children's Services this will be discussed with the parents, unless to do so would place the child or vulnerable adult at further risk of harm.

As a person who works with children and vulnerable adults, volunteers have a duty to refer safeguarding concerns to the Designated Senior Person for child or vulnerable adult protection. However, if:

- concerns are not taken seriously by an organisation or
- action to safeguard the child or vulnerable adult is not taken by professionals and
- the child or vulnerable adult is considered to be at continuing risk to harm

then volunteers should speak to another DSP in the Movement or the Super Regional Couple.

If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child or vulnerable adult or vulnerable adult a referral should be made to children and vulnerable adults' social care immediately. Anybody can make a referral.

3. WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

All volunteers should be aware that the main categories of abuse are:

- Physical abuse.
- Emotional abuse.
- Sexual abuse.
- Neglect.

All volunteers should be concerned about a child or vulnerable adult or vulnerable adult if he/she presents with indicators of possible significant harm.

Generally, in an abusive relationship the child or vulnerable adult may:

- Appear frightened of the parent's or other household members e.g. siblings or other outside of the home.
- Act in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development (full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups).
- Display insufficient sense of "boundaries", lack stranger awareness.
- Appear wary of adults and display "frozen watchfulness".
- Abnormal bruising or any other signs of physical abuse.

Volunteers at an event would be expected to manage the behaviour of children. Should volunteers observe poor behaviour that would upset another child (or adult) (Bullying) then, with the Senior Designated Person, the child's parent(s) would immediately be engaged to support the circumstances so that the matter is resolved. The matter would be recorded.

4. DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE

If a child or vulnerable adult discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the volunteer should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is being said.
- Allow the child or vulnerable adult to talk freely.
- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult, but not make promises which might not be possible to keep.
- Not promise confidentiality – it might be necessary to refer to Children and vulnerable adults' Services: Safeguarding and Specialist Services.
- Reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault.
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell.
- Listen, only asking questions when necessary to clarify.
- Not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Explain what must be done next and who must be told.
- Make a written record.
- Pass the information to the Designated Senior Person without delay.

Support

Dealing with a disclosure from a child or vulnerable adult, and safeguarding issues can be stressful. The volunteer should, therefore, consider seeking support from him/herself and discuss this with the Designated Senior Person.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults raises issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by all volunteers in the Movements.

- All volunteers in the Movements have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children and vulnerable adults with other professionals, particularly the investigative agencies (Children Services and the Police).
- If a child or vulnerable adult confides in a volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the volunteer tell the child or vulnerable adult in a manner appropriate to the person's age/stage of development that they cannot promise complete confidentiality – instead they must explain that they need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or vulnerable adult or other children and vulnerable adults safe.

6. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

The Movement will:

Ensure the safeguarding policy is available publicly either via the Movement's website or by other means.

Parents should be informed prior to referral, unless it is considered to do so might place the child at increased risk of significant harm by:

- The behavioural response it prompts e.g. a child being subjected to abuse, maltreatment or threats / forced to remain silent if alleged abuser informed;
- Leading to an unreasonable delay;
- Leading to the risk of loss of evidential material;
- Placing a volunteer at risk.

Ensure that parents understand the responsibilities placed on the Movement and volunteers for safeguarding children.

7. RECORD KEEPING

When a child or vulnerable adult has made a disclosure, the volunteer should:

- Record as soon as possible after the conversation.
- Don't destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court.
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child or vulnerable adult.
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any injuries.
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions.

All records need to be given to the Designated Senior Person promptly. No copies will be retained by the volunteer.

8. ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING THE MOVEMENT VOLUNTEERS

An allegation in any information which indicates that a volunteer may have:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child or vulnerable adult.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child or vulnerable adult.
- Behaved towards a child or vulnerable adult or children and vulnerable adults in a way which indicates she/he would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children and vulnerable adults.

This applies to any child or vulnerable adult the volunteer has contact within their personal, professional or community life.

The person to whom an allegation is first reported should take the matter seriously and keep an open mind. She/he should not investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification; it is important not to make assumptions. Confidentiality should not be promised, and the person should be advised that the concern will be shared on a "need to know" basis only.

Actions to be taken include making an immediate written record of the allegation using the informant's words – including time, date and place where the alleged incident took place, brief details of what happened, what was said and who was present. This record should be signed, dated and immediately passed on to the Event co-ordinator.

If the concerns are about the event co-ordinator the Senior designated person should be approached. If this is not deemed possible and the matter is considered serious, the Super Regional Couple should be contacted directly.

The recipient of an allegation must **not** unilaterally determine its validity.

The Senior Designated person will assess whether it is necessary to refer the concern to the Local Authority or Police.