

Safeguarding Policy

Policy Statement

Osprey Leadership Foundation (OLF) is fully committed to actively safeguarding the [1] security, [2] privacy, and [3] dignity of the children and young people who attend OLF activities.

OLF operates in the UK and the Gambia and acknowledges that working practices and the cultural context differ between these two settings. The processes and procedures employed to manage child safety are intended to reflect local context and will vary as a result.

What is child security?

Children have the right to be completely secure from the fear or reality of abuse resulting from any inappropriate contact with any adult which, for the purpose of this policy, means anyone who works for OLF in a paid role or voluntary role, including a member of staff, a volunteer, an OLF trustee, a partner delivering projects on behalf of OLF, a sponsor (from now on collectively known as "OLF Associates") or any other person.

We take seriously our responsibility to promote child-safe practices and to protect children from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation in any form while they are engaging with OLF projects.

OLF will take positive action to prevent child abusers from becoming involved with OLF and will instigate legal action against any school staff who abuse a child.

The legal context

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child [1989] provides the foundation for OLF's child protection stance both in The Gambia and in the UK. All decisions and actions in response to child protection concerns will be guided by the principle of "the best interests of the child".

Both the UK and the Gambia are a State Party to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Gambia one of the few countries that has a comprehensive Children's Act [Gambia, 2005], which harmonises domestic laws with the Convention as well as with other child-focused international conventions and declarations.

Although the Children Act [The Gambia, 2005] does not explicitly prohibit all corporal punishment, corporal punishment is not tolerated on any OLF project. Any staff member or project partner who uses corporal punishment against a child will be immediately dismissed in line with their contract. Corporal punishment is prohibited by law in the UK.

Corporal punishment is defined by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child as: "any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light."

What is the safeguarding responsibility of an OLF Associate?

It is the responsibility of an OLF Associate to:

- Be aware of situations that may present risks and learn how to avoid those situations or minimise risk.
- Contribute to an environment where children are able to recognise unacceptable behaviour and feel able to discuss their rights and concerns.
- Follow all guidance laid out in the "Information for OLF Staff, Volunteers and Associates"
- Raise concerns about any suspected abuse:
 - Related to incidents in the UK- with the Charity Director, who is the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO). It is their responsibility to immediately inform the OLF trustees.
 - Related to incidents in the Gambia- with the Gambia Coordinator. They must inform the Charity Director, and it is their responsibility to immediately inform the OLF trustees.

The trustees are responsible for ensuring that the proper statutory reporting procedures for each country are followed.

Recruitment and Selection

All staff and volunteers working directly with children in the UK will be expected to have an enhanced DBS check. References will also be taken on all staff and volunteers recruited either in the UK or abroad.

If a staff member or volunteer is convicted of any crime during their engagement with OLF, they must report this to the Charity Director immediately. Failure to do this may result in immediate dismissal from their role.

Conduct that constitutes child abuse

Child abuse can take a range of forms. These include, but are not limited to:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse or exploitation
- Neglect
- Emotional and psychological abuse
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child trafficking
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Grooming

Child abuse may be a deliberate act or could be failing to act to prevent harm. It consists of anything that individuals, organisations, or processes do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which harms a child or damages his or her prospects of safe and healthy development into adulthood.

External visitors may only visit OLF projects with the agreement of OLF trustees, the OLF Director or the OLF Gambia Coordinator.

These standards apply to all OLF Associates, as well as visitors to OLF projects. All OLF Associates, must bear in mind the principles of this policy and be aware how their behaviour may be perceived.

Unlawful or other conduct by OLF Associates that violates the intent of the Child Protection Policy and jeopardises OLF's reputation will not be tolerated.

What is child privacy?

Children and their families must be confident that OLF is protecting the integrity of information [including photographs] that is shared about them with the public.

OLF takes potential abuse of child photographs on the internet very seriously. Privacy also demands that children, their families and communities be shielded from any potential inappropriate contact from sponsors or others.

OLF Associates have a responsibility to use images of children sensitively and gain consent to share images publicly, e.g. on social media.

Images of OLF projects must not be used for any purpose other than those agreed by the Charity Director. More information about the use of photographs can be found in the attached "*Information for OLF Staff, Volunteers and Associates*"

What is the definition of child dignity?

The lives of children, their families, and members of their community should be portrayed with accuracy and dignity.

Everyone taking part in an OLF project has the right to be respected and feel safe and confident in their environment. Children and young people should be treated as active partners in their projects, and encouraged to take a role in shaping their own experience.

Information for OLF Staff, Associates, and Volunteers

Our safeguarding policy is intended to protect children during their interactions with the charity. This document gives you information about what abuse is, common signs that someone is being abused, and what to do if you are worried.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. You should never ignore concerns that you have, or concerns that other people report to you.

As an international charity, we must remain mindful of cultural contexts and differences in legislation and reporting frameworks when we think about safeguarding. The policy and infrastructure that exists for child protection in the UK is not present in the same way in developing countries such as the Gambia.

However, child abuse is unacceptable throughout our work, regardless of where it is taking place. OLF will strive to ensure all children in our projects are treated fairly and kept safe.

Child Abuse

Child abuse can take a range of forms. These include, but are not limited to:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse or exploitation
- Neglect
- Emotional and psychological abuse
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child trafficking
- Female Genital Mutilation. This is illegal in both the UK and the Gambia
- Grooming

Common Signs that a Child may be Being Abused

Some common signs that there may be something concerning happening in a child's life include:

- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
- becoming withdrawn
- seeming anxious
- becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
- lacks social skills and has few friends, if any
- poor bond or relationship with a parent
- knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age

- running away or going missing
- always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body.

What to do if you suspect abuse or poor practice has occurred

If you are concerned about the welfare of a child, or you are concerned about an adult's behaviour towards a child, you must act. Do not assume that someone else will help them.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. It is important that you report your concerns to the DSO. All matters will be fully investigated and appropriate action will be taken. Action may include referral to the police or local authority. The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is of paramount importance.

If a child tells you that they are being, or have been, abused

If you're in a situation where a child discloses abuse to you, you should:

- **Listen carefully to the child.** Avoid expressing your own views on the matter. A reaction of shock or disbelief could cause the child to 'shut down', retract or stop talking
- **Let them know they've done the right thing.** Reassurance can make a big impact to the child who may have been keeping the abuse secret
- **Tell them it's not their fault.** Abuse is never the child's fault and they need to know this
- **Say you will take them seriously.** A child could keep abuse secret in fear they won't be believed. They've told you because they want help and trust you'll be the person who will listen to and support them.
- **Don't talk to the alleged abuser.** Confronting the alleged abuser about what the child's told you could make the situation a lot worse for the child
- **Explain what you'll do next.** If age appropriate, explain to the child you'll need to report the abuse to someone who will be able to help
- **Don't delay reporting the abuse.** The sooner the abuse is reported after the child discloses the better. Report to the DSO as soon as possible so details are fresh in your mind and action can be taken quickly.

Always make a record of the conversation or incident as soon as possible, using a Safeguarding Incident Form. This must be stored as agreed with the DSO and in line with GDPR regulations.

What to do if you're not sure

If you're in a situation where you suspect abuse of a child but they haven't actually said anything to you, you should speak to the DSO, who will help you to take the appropriate action. This may include taking advice from other people who have contact with the child, or speaking to an organization such as the NSPCC (UK) or Unicef (Gambia)

More information can be found at www.nspcc.org.uk and <https://www.unicef.org/gambia/>

If you think a crime has been committed

If you think a crime may have been committed you should report this to the police. In some cases, a report to the local authority may also be passed onto the police. If a child or adult at risk is in immediate danger call (+44)999 in the UK or (+220)17 in Gambia.

Always make a record of the conversation or incident as soon as possible, using a Safeguarding Incident Form. This must be stored as agreed with the DSO and in line with GDPR regulations.

Keeping Children and Adults at Risk safe during OLF activities

Good Practice

All OLF Associates should adhere to the following principles and actions:

- Always work in an open environment and avoid being alone with a child or vulnerable adult.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with children and vulnerable adults, and avoid unnecessary physical contact

- Where any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and with the consent of the child or vulnerable adult. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is not intrusive or distressing, and is with the person's consent.
- Make the experience of volunteering or fundraising enjoyable, promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying.
- Treat all people equally and with respect and dignity.
- Always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Keep a record of any incident involving a child, for example if they are injured during the course of activities with the charity.

Poor Practice

The following are regarded as unacceptable behaviours and will result in disciplinary action being taken. This may include dismissal.

- Unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with children or vulnerable adults, away from others.
- Taking children alone in a car on a journey, however short.
- Taking children into your home where they would be alone with you.
- Allowing or engaging in any inappropriate touching in any form.
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually suggestive or provocative games.
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Doing things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves. If you are in any doubt, don't do it.

Use of Photography and Film

Consent from a parent/carer/guardian should be sought before any images of children are taken and used by the charity. Where images are taken at larger events, e.g. big school trips, it may not be practical to gain specific consent for each child. Instead, parents/carers/guardians will be informed

that images will be taken and it is their responsibility to inform staff if they do not wish for images of their child to be used.

Anyone who is taking photographs on behalf of OLF will receive a copy of this policy. Photographs taken by OLF may be used for the purposes of the celebration of fundraising activities and achievements, and for the promotion of future activities.

Where photographs or videos of children are sent to the charity by members of the community, it is assumed that consent has been granted for these to be published in relation to the event or activity in question (e.g. a press release about the fundraising activity in which the child has been involved). These images will not be used for other purposes without specific permission.

Personal information, such as home address, will never accompany an image of child.

Key Contacts

The Designated Safeguarding Officer for Osprey Leadership Foundation is Tim Mackrill, Charity Director. All safeguarding concerns should be referred to him in the first instance, even if you are not sure that someone is at risk or being abused.

If he is un-contactable, urgent safeguarding concerns should be reported to Barry Dore, Chair of Trustees.

External Contacts

Rutland County Council Safeguarding Team: 01572 758407

childrensreferrals@rutland.gov.uk

Out of hours: 0116 305005

Leicestershire County Council Safeguarding Team 0116 305005

Gambia Police Child Welfare Unit HQ

+220 4201381

