

Strange Futures (SF) Safeguarding Children Policy

Designated Safeguarding Officer, (DSO): William Moore (Co-Artistic Director), contactable on independent Safeguarding email address: willmoore.strangefutures@gmail.com

Contact the Police on 999 if there is an immediate risk of significant harm to a Child.

Inform the DSO of any concerns as soon as possible, and within 24 hours at the very latest.

**Worcestershire County Council Family Front Door, (formerly Access Centre):
01905 822666 (Monday - Friday 8.30am - 5pm)**

**Emergency Out of Hours Duty Team:
01905 768020**

**Worcestershire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):
01905 846221 or email LADO@worcestershire.gov.uk**

1. Introduction:

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Act 2004, Children and Families Act 2014, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015, Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working together to Safeguard Children 2018

Strange Futures (SF) fully recognises its moral and statutory responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Children. Every Child has the right to safety and to be free from harm, regardless of their culture, disability, gender, language. Our policy applies to all Staff, Committee Member(s) and Volunteers working for/collaborating with SF.

There is a separate Policy regarding the safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults.

SF follows procedures set out by Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board, (WSCB):

SF has five elements to its Safeguarding Children Policy:

1. Establishing a safe environment in which all Staff, Committee Member(s) and Volunteers have a sound working knowledge of the Safeguarding Policy; understanding their responsibilities to be vigilant to the signs of abuse and neglect and maintain an attitude of "it could happen here."

2. Ensuring that all Staff, including Volunteers and Committee Member(s), understand what processes they are required to follow in the event of any concern and that these processes are robust and carried out rigorously and with pace.
3. Ensuring that safer recruitment is always followed within SF, including for Volunteer and Committee Member(s) posts. For Staff who will come into direct contact with Children, a DBS, (Disclosure and Barring Service) check is carried out and staff sign up to the Update Service.
4. Ensuring a culture of transparency and accountability, so that every adult is able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and are aware of whistleblowing and helplines. This includes Staff being aware of procedures to follow if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of Staff or Volunteer, including making a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer, (LADO).
5. Ensure that all Collaborators and Partners of SF understand and comply with SF's Safeguarding Policy.

2. Procedures for Managing Concerns:

SF adheres to Child protection procedures that have been agreed locally through Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board and their Levels of Need Guidance.

2.1. When concerned about the welfare of a Child, or if a disclosure is made, Staff members should always act in the interests of the Child and have a responsibility to take action as outlined in this policy.

2.2. All Staff are encouraged to report any concerns they may have and not see these as insignificant. On the occasion, a referral is justified by a single incident, such as injury or disclosure of abuse. More often however, concerns accumulate over time and are evidenced by building up a picture over time and thus accurate record keeping is vital.

2.3. If a disclosure is made by a Child, Staff must listen without prejudice, demonstrating active listening skills. The Staff member must never question the Child, nor interrupt them. The Staff member must write down exactly what the Child says, using the Child's own words as far as possible. The Staff member should remain impartial and respectful, whilst not passing any judgement.

2.4. It is NOT the responsibility of SF to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All Staff DO however have a duty to recognise concerns and pass the information on in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

2.5. The Designated Safeguarding Officer, (DSO), should always be used as first point of contact, with any concerns from any person being passed directly to them, without delay.

2.6. Following receipt of information, the DSO will consider what action to take, following advice and guidance from Children's Services via the Family Front Door. All information and actions taken must be timely and fully documented.

2.7. It is imperative that any records are kept confidentially and secure, locked away.

2.8. If at any point, there is a risk of immediate, serious harm to a Child, a referral should be made directly to Children's Services; anyone can make a referral. This includes if the DSO and senior member of SF are not available and/or the staff member is convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the Child's safety.

If a member of Staff does not feel that their concerns about a Child have been addressed appropriately by the DSO, they should contact Children's Services themselves to discuss their concerns.

3. Information Sharing and Confidentiality:

3.1. SF recognise that all matters relating to Child protection are highly confidential.

3.2. The DSO will only disclose information about a Child to other Staff on a need to know basis.

3.3. All Staff have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies to safeguard Children.

3.4. All Staff must be aware; that they must never promise a Child to keep secrets.

4. Communication with Parents / Carers:

4.1 SF will always undertake appropriate discussion with parents/carers prior to involvement with another agency **unless to do so would place the Child or an adult at further risk of harm or would impede a criminal investigation.**

5. Safer Recruitment of Staff, Volunteers and Committee Member(s):

5.1. The recruitment of adults to paid and Voluntary posts with SF is robust in seeking to establish the suitability of candidates and to identify and reject any person who might cause a risk or harm to Children.

5.2. For positions involving direct contact with Children and vulnerable adults, a DBS is required. For further information visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

5.3. Every member of Staff, Volunteer and Committee Member(s) must have initial training in safeguarding as part of their induction and be fully compliant and knowledgeable of the SF Safeguarding Policy.

6. Allegations against Staff / Volunteers / Committee Member(s):

6.1. SF acknowledges that an allegation may be made against a member of Staff/Volunteer/Committee Member(s).

6.2. The Individual receiving the allegation will immediately inform the DSO and Chair of Executive Committee; unless the allegation involves either of these individuals.

6.3. The DSO/Chair will discuss the allegation with the LADO prior to undertaking any investigation.

6.4. The Individual involved will be asked to isolate from The Company without prejudice whilst the investigation is conducted. In the first instance, the allegation may not be discussed with the Individual involved. Investigations must be guided by LADO and remain highly confidential.

6.5. The outcome of the investigation determines what action is taken regarding the continuation of the Individual as part of SF.

7. Whistleblowing:

7.1. All Staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of colleagues, knowing that they have the right to do so in complete confidentiality.

7.2. Whistleblowing should be discussed with the DSO and Chair of Executive Committee, unless an allegation involves one of them. Concerns can also be made directly to the LADO. On receipt of a whistleblowing concern, the DSO and Chair should discuss with LADO.

8. Photography and use of Images, (including handheld devices):

8.1. SF will NEVER take a photograph of a Child without the written consent of their Parent / Carer.

8.2 If permission is granted for a photograph to be taken of a Child, further explicit consent in writing MUST be given by the Parent/Carer before the image is put onto the internet, eg via website or social media.

This permission must be sought from the Local Authority in the case of Looked After Children, including those in foster care.

This Safeguarding Policy was amended and accepted by W.Moore , M. Simmonds and J. George (Co-Artistic Directors) on 23rd January 2026.

For best practice, the Safeguarding Policy should be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains concurrent with recent legislation.