



**Safeguarding Policy Addendum
in response to the coronavirus pandemic**

May 2021

Introduction

Since March 2020, the Coronavirus pandemic has led to enormous change for the operations of the Severn Rivers Trust and for society as a whole. In spite of the challenges and changes in our work, our organisational commitment to a working culture where all can feel safe and valued remains the same.

As outlined in our Safeguarding Policy and Toolkit:

We believe that children and adults should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and adults at risk and to keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

We take the view that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Learning over the past two decades has shown that harm experienced by young people can be reduced with collaborative working and taking an integrated approach to safeguarding and child protection.

If any member of the team (including staff, volunteers and contractors) has a concern about a child or adult at risk they should act immediately – following the steps in the Safeguarding Policy and Toolkit.

Our Safeguarding Team remains the same:

The Severn Rivers Trust's Designated Safeguarding Officer is Alice Fallon.

The Severn Rivers Trust's Trustee for Safeguarding is Penny Cameron Watt.

We continue to operate Safe Recruitment Practices for all new staff and volunteers, whether they are working with groups face-to-face or online.

We continue to follow existing statutory guidance and are regularly reviewing and updating our policy and procedure to reflect circumstances as they evolve throughout the pandemic and beyond.

New ways of working during this period

The Severn Rivers trust have made a number of significant changes to the way we work. We have also adapted and changed many of our activities for communities so that they can be run in covid-secure ways.

Key relevant **internal** changes within the Severn Rivers Trust are:

- All staff are now home-based, and therefore managed remotely
- Downsizing of the head office in Martley and temporary office closures during lockdown periods
- New protocol and risk assessments to limit the risk of contracting or spreading covid-19 which is regularly reviewed and updated
- An increase in online communications – e.g. via video calls
- More lone working – for example when conducting site visits to avoid contact outside staff household 'bubbles'
- Continuing operations during a time of heightened stress and anxiety for the wider public

The main ways our community engagement activities have changed are:

- Cancelling or postponing almost all face-to-face engagement activities through 2020

- Increased presence online – including more content for social media and the website, more email correspondence with participants, and offering ‘live’ activities online (e.g. virtual learning activities via Zoom)
- More measures in place for face-to-face activities to make sure they can run safely as lockdown restrictions ease, for example booking procedure, limits on group sizes, organizing and cleaning of equipment.

Specific areas of concern during the pandemic

Children and adults at risk are now more vulnerable than before because there are fewer opportunities for the people in their lives to spot identify and respond to safeguarding concerns and issues. This is particularly important for children during times of school closure.

Staff should be alert to the possibility of families being in crisis and the heightened risk of domestic abuse during periods of high-level restrictions. It is especially important to remember these increased risks when visiting sites that might be isolated, for example rural farms.

We also recognise that some people’s mental health may suffer during the pandemic, and this includes children and adults at risk as well as their families.

Risks within our work

Site Visits

When conducting site visits including going to farms, visiting schools and conducting work at river locations, staff should remain vigilant to potential safeguarding and welfare risks. They may be visiting families or individuals who are experiencing extreme difficulties, and who may not have had contact with others for a significant period of time. Staff should make sure they have saved the numbers and details for support organisations like Samaritans and NSPCC (see full list of useful contacts in our Safeguarding Policy and Toolkit).

Some of the signs you may spot include:

- aggressive or repeated shouting
- hearing hitting or things being broken
- children crying for long periods of time
- very young children left alone or outdoors by themselves
- children looking dirty or not changing their clothes
- children being withdrawn or anxious.

These signs don't necessarily mean that a child is being abused, there could be other things happening in their life which are affecting their behaviour. Nonetheless, by contacting the NSPCC hotline, or other services we can help make sure families receive the support they need.

Staff should also remain alert to signs of modern slavery, and feel confident in how to respond if they have any suspicions – please see the full Safeguarding Policy and Toolkit for guidance on Modern Slavery.

Online Communications

Online communications have given us an excellent way to stay connected and keep offering engaging content and activities for communities during this period. However, it is essential that all of our online communications are carefully planned with safeguarding as a main consideration, and staff are absolutely clear on the expectations for professional behaviour and clear boundaries in their activities online.

Social media contact with communities is carefully managed through the official SRT channels to make sure we can engage in an appropriate and transparent way.

General principles for online communications

- Staff using social media and online communication tools for work must have appropriate training and support.
- Follow correct booking procedure for online activities and ensure you have appropriate consents to deliver activities online for children and adults at risk.
- Ensure clear communication of safeguarding procedures with responsible adults (teachers and/or carers) and participants for any online activities.
- Signpost teachers and/or carers to SRT's Safeguarding Policy, and provide information on how to raise concerns if they have any.
- Take care when planning activities and communications to always avoid adults being on their own with children – it is the same online as in person, we always avoid one-to-one situations.
- Do not direct or private message with children or adults at risk, and do not have one-to-one videocalls with them without another responsible adult (e.g. a member of staff, parent or teacher) present.
- Do not make contact with or accept friend-requests on social media from children or adults at risk that you have met as part of your work.
- Select the appropriate online platform or tool for the communication, and adjust the settings where you can with a view to keeping participants safe – for example limiting the levels of interaction in a webinar, or turning off microphones and cameras in an online lesson.
- Remain alert to possible warning signs of safeguarding issues, e.g. inappropriate content being shared by a young person, and know how to respond in these situations (e.g. signposting appropriate services and reporting concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Officer).
- If you are ever in any doubt, or have any questions or concerns about online communications and keeping participants safe you should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

What to do if you have any suspicions or concerns

The process for reporting abuse, including conversations you might have had, things you have noticed or concerns that have been raised remains exactly the same. Please refer to the Severn Rivers Trust Safeguarding Policy and Toolkit to see the flow diagrams for reporting concerns and the contact details for our Safeguarding team. You can also find more detailed advice on how to respond when someone tells you they are being abused, and the forms you need to fill to make sure we keep detailed accurate records.

Remember in an emergency if you believe someone may be in danger you should ring 999.

Useful Contacts

For more on...	Contact...	Here...
Child protection information	NSPCC	www.nspcc.org.uk
Worried about a child	NSPCC	Helpline: 0808 800 5000 help@nspcc.org.uk
Concern about how workplace child protection issues are being handled	NSPCC	Whistle blowing advice line: 0800 028 0285 help@nspcc.org.uk
Domestic abuse	Refuge	Domestic abuse helpline: 0808 2000 247 www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
Children wanting help advice and support directly	Childline	www.childline.org.uk Helpline: 0800 1111
Child sexual abuse prevention campaign and helpline	Stop it now!	www.stopitnow.org.uk Helpline: 0808 1000 900
Online safety resources to help children stay safe online	UK Safer Internet Centre	https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/
Reporting harmful online content	Report Harmful Content	https://reportharmfulcontent.com/
Reporting child sexual abuse imagery online	Internet Watch Foundation	https://www.iwf.org.uk/what-we-do/why-we-exist
Information about safeguarding Adults at Risk	Ann Craft Trust	https://www.anncrafttrust.org/
Information about Modern Slavery	Salvation Army	www.salvationarmy.org.uk/modern-slavery
Specialist support for all adult victims of modern slavery	Salvation Army	Confidential referral helpline: 0300 303 8151
Suspensions or concerns about Modern Slavery	Modern Slavery Helpline	www.modernslaveryhelpline.org Helpline: 08000 121 700
Support with suicide risk	Samaritans	www.samaritans.org Helpline: 116 123

Safeguarding Leads at Severn Rivers Trust



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Designated Safeguarding Officer

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Penny Cameron Watt

Trustee for Safeguarding

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Signatures

Designated Safeguarding Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alice Fallon."

Name: Alice Fallon

Date: 18 May 2020

Trustee for Safeguarding

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Cameron Watt".

Name: Penny Cameron Watt

Date: 18 May 2021

Board of Trustees Chair

Name:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Wheeler."

Date: 19th May 2021

