



Child Protection Policy 2021 Summary

Full version available upon request: info@starcatchers.org.uk

1. Introduction

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that every child has the right to be safe, and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. Starcatchers takes a children's rights approach, ensuring that the activities and opportunities it delivers meet these standards. The UNCRC was incorporated into law in Scotland in March 2021.

The definition of who is a child can vary. For the purposes of working with Starcatchers, a child is anyone under the age of 18 and also care-experienced young people under 26.

This policy is based on three key publications:

1. Children and Young People Act Scotland 2014 (revision due 2021);
2. Protecting Disabled Children from Abuse & Neglect 2014;
3. Creating Safety (in the Arts) 2019.

Designated Child Protection Officer: Judith Walsh 07976 531 117

It is everyone's responsibility to report concerns immediately to the DCPO.

Child Protection Officer (cover): Rhona Matheson rhona.matheson@starcatchers.org.uk

Digital Safety: Sarah Leary sarah.leary@starcatchers.org.uk

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Call this number if you, as an adult, have any questions about Child Protection and need support about what to do.

The Child Protection Policy is publicly available on the Starcatchers' website in a condensed version. The full Child Protection Policy forms part of the Terms & Conditions of each contract of work.

The children who participate in our work have a voice in Starcatchers' activities and understand their rights – including their right to be safe – through their lived experiences interacting with our Team. The families with whom we work have access to our Child Protection Policy and understand our commitment to safeguarding.



Starcatchers is Scotland's Arts and Early Years organisation, championing world leading arts and creative experiences for Scotland's youngest children, aged birth to five and their parents, carers and educators.

Starcatchers provides a variety of opportunities for children, young people and, in some cases vulnerable adults, to engage in the arts through four core pillars of activity:

- **Producing and Touring** – Producing and touring high quality, innovative productions and experiences across Scotland, and the rest of the world
- **Community Engagement** – Community engagement programmes offering consistent contact between artists, very young children and their parents and carers
- **Professional Development** – Professional development programmes that build confidence and capacity in the Early Years workforce and inspire artists to develop their practice
- **Advocacy** – Delivering campaigns, messages and learning that raises awareness of the positive impact access to the arts and culture from birth can have on children's development and overall wellbeing.

2. Policy Statement

Starcatchers believes it is always unacceptable for a child to experience abuse of any kind. As an organisation we recognise our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children, and commit to a practice that protects them. We believe everyone has a responsibility to understand and promote the welfare of children and to ensure that all those participating in Starcatchers activities feel safe, comfortable and respected. For the purpose of working with Starcatchers, children are all those under 18 and also care-experienced young people under 25.

We will make sure that all children have the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. Starcatchers recognises the additional discriminations and vulnerabilities caused by the intersectionality of these characteristics as well as with class, poverty and legal status.

This policy applies to all employees, freelancers and Board members of the charity. This includes all staff, artists and creative practitioners. For the purpose of this Policy they will be referred to as the Team.

The aim of this policy is to promote good practice by providing babies, children and young people with safety and protection while participating in Starcatchers' activities.



Although Starcatchers activities will always take place with parents or carers alongside their babies or children, Starcatchers still has a duty of care to safeguard all children from harm. Starcatchers also works with adults – including parents, practitioners and older carers – and has a duty of care to ensure they are safe from harm. Our care for adults is covered in our Health & Safety Policy, as these individuals do not fall under the legislative category of being ‘vulnerable adults’ within the Safeguarding context.

The Team will be trained to make informed and confident responses to specific issues about the wellbeing of a child or young person. The Team have a responsibility to report concerns immediately to the Designated Child Protection Officer.

The following rights-based principles should underpin all interaction with children:

- The best interests of the child or young person are a primary consideration.
- All children are treated fairly, with dignity and respect.
- All children have the right to express their views on matters that affect them.
- All children have the right to protection from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

3. Purpose of this Policy

- To provide protection for the children participating in Starcatchers’ activities, including the children of Team members.
- To provide the Team with clear processes for Child Protection.

4. Legislation

This policy is in compliance with the ‘Children and Young People Act (Scotland) 2014, the National Guidance for Child Protection Scotland 2014, Protecting Disabled Children from Abuse & Neglect 2014, and Creating Safety 2019.

Starcatchers is an authorised signatory registered with Disclosure Scotland, the vetting and barring scheme that processes PVG checks.

5. Scottish Government Policy

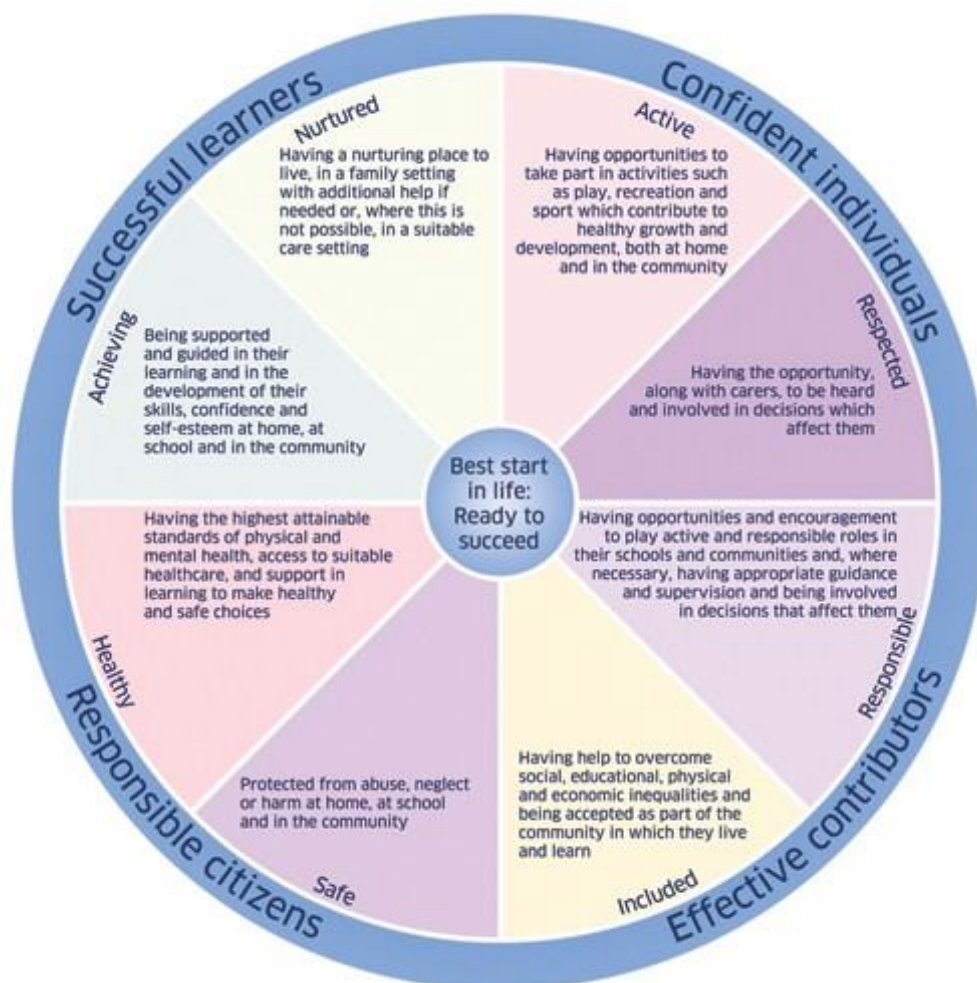
Child protection has to be seen in the context of Scotland’s Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) approach and Early Years Framework, as well as the global UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), currently being incorporated into domestic law in Scotland.

GIRFEC promotes action to improve the wellbeing of all children in the eight SHANARRI areas. These wellbeing indicators state that children must be supported to be: healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, included and, above all in this context, safe.

The primary indicator for child protection is to keep a child safe and, in so doing, attention is given to other areas of wellbeing as appropriate.

Starcatchers uses the SHANARRI wellbeing wheel to assess each concern, observation and disclosure it receives.

The DCPO will work with the person raising the observation or concern to mark which wellbeing indicator is being affected.





6. Definition of Abuse

Abuse is usually categorised into four types, as described in more detail in the full version of this policy.

Physical abuse
Emotional abuse
Neglect
Sexual abuse

Child abuse may be repetitive or serial or may be an isolated case. The majority of abuse is committed by people who have a close, trusting relationship with a child, for example; parents, relatives and friends. Abuse by stranger's accounts for only a very small percentage of cases.

The Starcatchers Team will be trained in Child Protection (usually the NSPCC's Introduction to Child Protection) at the start of their employment. This training is refreshed every two years. The DCPO also undertakes training in specific to the role.

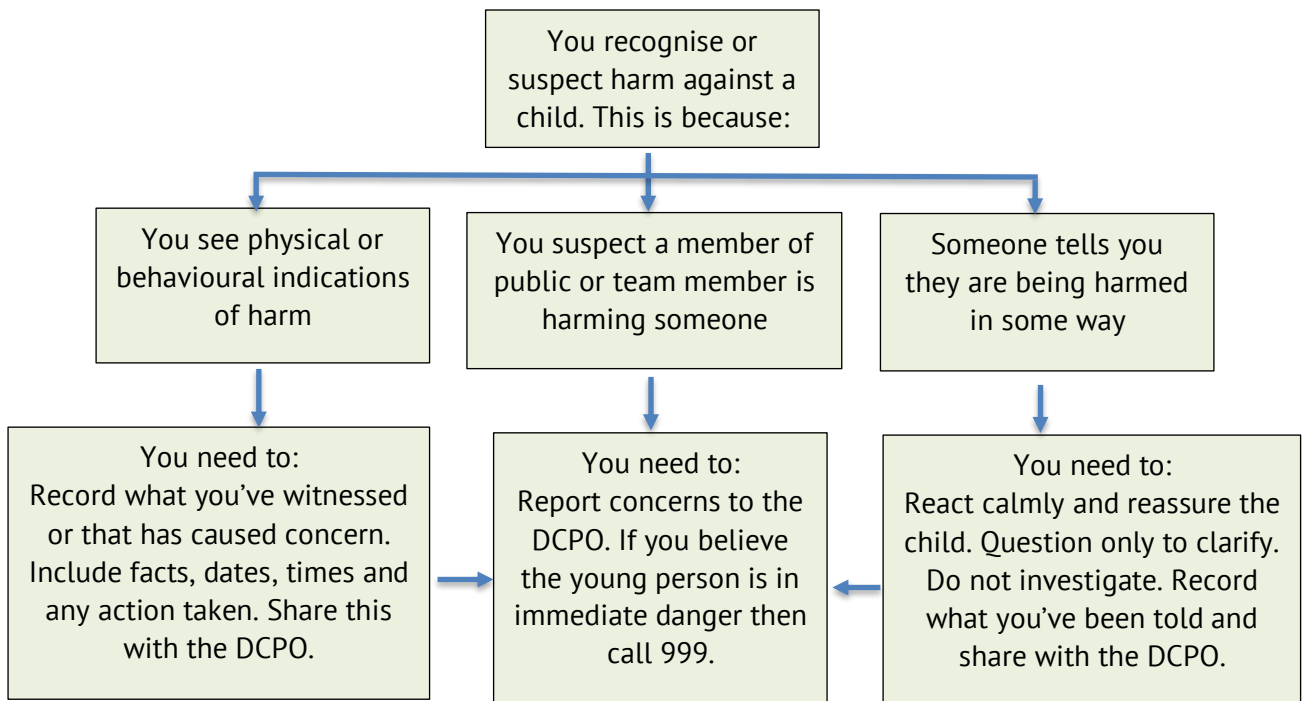
In addition, children can also find themselves in abusive situations caused by, for example, drug or alcohol misuse, bullying, domestic violence, verbal abuse, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

7. Signs of Abuse

Being aware of signs and indicators of abuse is essential if we are serious about seeking to protect children from harm and abuse. However, in many cases the signs will not be clear cut and decisions about what action to take can be difficult. The full version of this policy includes a list of signs/indicators of abuse, and our staff are trained regularly to ensure they remain aware.

8. Reporting Procedure

It is your responsibility to immediately inform the Designated Child Protection Officer but remember: if you have believe a child or young person is in immediate danger you should call 999.



9. Managing Concerns and Disclosures of Abuse

The full version of this policy explains what to do if you are concerned that a child is at risk of harm or they have made a disclosure of abuse:

1. Do not attempt to investigate
2. Never promise confidentiality
3. Listen
4. Do not ask closed or leading questions
5. Be neutral and non-judgmental
6. Reassure
7. Write down what you have been told/your concerns
8. Report the disclosure to your Designated Child Protection Officer

Please remember that disclosures of abuse may be online as well as in person. Starcatchers has an Online Safety Policy which covers the details of safeguarding in digital spaces.

Remember the 4 R's
 RECOGNISE
 RECORD
 REPORT
 REFER



The Board receives a full report of every escalated Child Protection issue and ensure that OSCR is informed appropriately and timeously.

10. Role of the Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO)

The role of the DCPO is to provide advice and support to the Team on all child protection matters and to liaise with the appropriate statutory organisations. It is their responsibility to pass information of a disclosure or suspicion of abuse on to the appropriate authorities and to consult with them on any immediate action that should be taken to ensure the safety of the child or young person.

However, it is not the responsibility of DCPO or any other member of the Team to carry out an investigation.

The DCPO should:

- maintain good relations with relevant individuals in the statutory organisations
- keep up to date with developments in child protection training and guidance issues
- provide basic training to all team members in the organisation and provide support and guidance on child protection concerns
- report immediately to the relevant statutory organisation any disclosure or suspicion of abuse or risk of abuse
- be responsible for the secure storage and appropriate sharing of recorded information
- monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the safeguarding policy

If you have any concerns about a child you should discuss these immediately with Starcatchers contacts:

Judith Walsh, Designated Child Protection Officer judith.walsh@starcatchers.org.uk
Head of Development & Operations 07976 531 117
Lead responsibility for dealing with disclosures and/or child protection concerns, policy development, good practice and training.

Sarah Leary, Communications & Marketing Manager sarah.leary@starcatchers.org.uk
Lead responsibility for online safety, GDPR and website compliance

Rhona Matheson, Chief Executive rhona.matheson@starcatchers.org.uk
Child Protection Officer to be contacted when the DCPO is not available



If these contacts are not available and you feel someone is in immediate danger, please dial 999.

If the child is not in immediate danger but you need urgent advice, please contact the relevant Local Authority Child Protection team or Partner provider (contact information is provided the full Policy and from the Starcatchers team).

11. PVG Checks & Supervision

Starcatchers requires all those working directly with children to be a member of Disclosure Scotland so that Starcatchers can run PVG checks before work begins. Starcatchers is an Authorised Signatory for regulated work with children.

It is not currently an Authorised Signatory for regulated work with vulnerable adults and therefore cannot run checks for those working with vulnerable adults. While vulnerabilities are threaded across society, Starcatchers' activities do not currently meet the Disclosure Scotland definitions of providing regulated work with vulnerable adults. We do, however, take the safety of our adults into consideration in our Health & Safety Policy, including Mental Health.

Guests and visitors do not need PVG-checked and should always be with team members.

Child Protection must be included in Risk Assessments.

PVG checks will be updated annually and budgeted for within multi-year projects and core costs.

As well as delivery practitioners, the management team will also be required to have membership with Disclosure Scotland and will be PVG-checked annually. This is to reflect that safeguarding responsibilities lie with the project managers.

As safeguarding sits at the heart of good governance, the Board will regularly discuss Child Protection and ensure that at least two individuals are registered with Disclosure Scotland have an annual PVG check for Starcatchers. Charity Trustees are also responsible to oversee Duty of Care and Misconduct of the charity, which a Safeguarding issue would fall under.

Artists, creative practitioners and coordinators working on Community Engagement delivery will be supervised by the relevant Project Manager and Head of Development



& Operations (who is also the DCPO). The managers should promote open channels of communication and make it clear to all team members that they should feel free to contact them at any time if a concern arises.

Supervision procedures for all Community Engagement team members will follow the following format:

- Project Coordinators will meet with artists for planning sessions regularly throughout the year for ongoing activity, or before any stand alone block of activity begins. This will ensure that everyone is familiar with the Child Protection policy and are able to clarify any issues or concerns.
- All artists will complete a session evaluation report for the Project Coordinator which will provide them with an opportunity to feedback on their experiences of working with the group and discuss any issues that arise.

The Chief Executive and Board will ensure Child Protection remains on the Risk Register.

12. Allegations

It is often not easy for people to accept that abuse could occur within their own organisation and/or that someone they know and work with could cause harm. Good practice in both the recruitment and supervision of the Team should reduce the risk of abuse; however, the possibility of an allegation being made against a member of the Team cannot be eliminated and must never be ignored.

If a child tells you that a member of the Team has caused them harm, this should be treated in the same way as any other disclosure. Remember the most important consideration is always the wellbeing and best interest of the child. The disclosure should be recorded in exactly the same way as in any other circumstance and the information passed on to the Designated Child Protection Officer who will follow the normal referral procedure and will additionally report the matter to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive should follow normal disciplinary proceedings and will discuss with HR before suspending the member of the Team concerned until the situation has been investigated.

These procedures are in place first and foremost to protect and promote the wellbeing of victim but should also reassure the Team that there is a consistent and predictable response to allegations of abuse.

13. Promoting Safe Practice



Starcatchers maintains a Company Handbook that provides a Code of Practice for all those involved in the organisation. In addition, all the Team receive this Child Protection Policy as part of their induction, making clear their role in implementing the policy. In particular, the Team are made aware of the basic rights of children to be treated with dignity, respect and impartiality.

The Board approves updates to policies, procedures, guidance and practices.

Our commitments to Safeguarding are published on the website, both in the Policy and also reflected in the charity's mission statement and values. In summary:

- Vetting and Barring (PVG) at recruitment, and then annually thereafter
- Code of Conduct
- Training at induction and then every two years
- Support
- Incidents Procedures are clearly communicated
- Intimate Care Needs are the responsibility of the parent/carer
- Use of Photographs and Images of Children is clearly managed
- Data Protection & Storage of Confidential Records complies with GDPR

Starcatchers will monitor and review this policy every year, and when there are relevant changes in legislation or circumstances.

Complete Review & Amendments – August 2021
Judith Walsh DCPO