

Safeguarding and Protecting of Vulnerable Children and Families Policy

Introduction

Zarach's social mission is to end child bed poverty, giving children the opportunity to engage at school, and a chance to break the cycle. We work towards our social mission through receiving referrals from schools (and selected other agencies) when they have identified children experiencing bed poverty. From the referrals received, we engage with the families of the children referred, to undertake home visits, deliver bed bundles and, in some cases, provide additional support to enable families to access other services that can help them.

Zarach actively seeks to support some of the most vulnerable children and families in society and, to do this, obtains sensitive, personal data – from schools and from the families themselves – to do our work. All schools, children, families and other partners need to have the utmost confidence in our appropriate treatment of the information we receive and in the way that we perform our duties so that everyone is kept safe, at all times.

Purpose

The overall purpose of this policy, and supporting procedures, is to protect the welfare of the children and families that engage with the services we provide at Zarach, by ensuring all staff, volunteers, contractors or other Zarach representatives adhere to all relevant laws and best practice standards as set out. This includes how we respond to direct concerns of safeguarding raised by the Zarach team and/or the families we engage with during any of our arranged activities.

The relevant legislation that informs our safeguarding policy and supporting procedures includes The Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017. We have also considered the Working Together to Safeguard Children document by the Department of Education.

Our safeguarding policy aims to achieve the following three objectives:

- To create an open and 'safe for all' culture where children, families and the Zarach team are valued and their right to be safe and respected is upheld.

- To actively manage risks to minimise the circumstances where the Zarach team and the children and families we engage with may be exposed to or suffer harm.
- To work collaboratively with schools and other (statutory and community) partner organisations to ensure that the children and families we engage with are safeguarded and protected.

Scope

To create our 'safe for all' culture, this policy, and the supporting procedures, apply to all staff, volunteers, contractors or other representatives of Zarach, irrespective of their role, to enable them to be clear about:

- The expectations and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding as related to their role with Zarach.
- How they are expected to act in line with this policy, and all procedures, to keep themselves and the children and families we support safe.
- The procedures they are asked to follow in identifying, responding to and notifying others of any safeguarding concerns regarding the children and families we support.

Responsible people for this policy

Zarach's board of trustees are ultimately responsible for ensuring that this policy, and the supporting procedures are implemented. To support the meeting of this responsibility, one of the Zarach trustees will be the designated safeguarding lead and supported in fulfilling their duties with any required training. The board of trustees receive a safeguarding report at each meeting.

The day-to-day leadership and management of Zarach is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer who has the responsibility to ensure a robust operational process is in place to meet the requirements of this policy and uphold the associated procedures. At Zarach, this means that the National Family Engagement Manager and Regional Family Engagement Managers are the designated safeguarding leads (DSL), with Family Engagement Officers being designated safeguarding officers (DSO). The DSL and all DSOs are supported to attend any new and/or refresher training that will help them in the fulfilment of their roles.

The DSL and DSOs lead on the communication and implementation of this policy, and supporting procedures, on a day-to-day basis. Along with the Chief Executive Officer, the DSL and DSOs attend the internal safeguarding meeting which, at this time, is held on a quarterly basis, so that learning from safeguarding incidents, fulfilment of security checks and training requirements across the team, and adherence to procedures can be reviewed.

Defining abuse and harm

Abuse comes in many forms, and it is important that we are able to recognise the signs during our work with children and vulnerable adults. Abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, neglectful, financial, domestic violence and modern slavery.

Recruitment and training

Zarach is committed to ensuring the right people are recruited safely, have adequate induction, supervision and support, receive relevant training, follow policies and procedures, and live our values throughout their work.

The Safeguarding training includes mandatory training to be completed before work or volunteering commences; work area specific training; and refresher training. Areas covered through the various training provided includes:

- If an adult discloses a safeguarding concern whilst on a home visit or at Food Club.
- On arrival at the home if a child is displaying signs of concerning behaviour and absent from school.
- Concerns over the adult present at home visit.
- Obvious physical harm or requiring medical attention.
- Basic needs not being met, such as food, suitable clothing and receiving education.
- Children not being supervised.
- Unsuitable or dangerous home environment.
- Threatening or violent behaviours.

Work area specific information

Bed Deliveries

If at any point the Logistics Team feels there is an immediate risk, they should not enter the family home and if need be, follow appropriate safeguarding procedures.

- The Zarach logistics team of staff and volunteers will deliver goods to our beneficiaries' homes. The team will consist of two-three people, with a lead staff member or volunteer who will be appropriately trained and have a Basic DBS certificate.

- Any other ad hoc volunteers will never be left alone with the beneficiary and will be always supervised.
- Two members of staff should always be visible to avoid placing Zarach staff, volunteers or families in a vulnerable situation. At no time should a Zarach team member be alone with a beneficiary.
- All ad hoc and regular volunteers will have signed a confidentiality agreement prior to visiting a family home.
- The logistics team should not enter a home unless there is an adult present at the delivery address. For the avoidance of doubt, Zarach defines the adult present as needing to be 18 years of age.
- The logistics team should not make physical contact with beneficiaries or make any contact outside of Zarach's service delivery. The team's behaviour should always follow Zarach's staff policies and procedures and volunteer Code of Conduct.

Family Engagement

- The Zarach Family Engagement team of staff and volunteers complete initial and follow up home visits to enable the bed stock to be accurately placed and to sign post families to relevant services and encourage engagement with schools.
- The Family Engagement team works both alone or in pairs. Staff and volunteers must read and abide by the Lone Working policy and procedure any time they are in such lone working situations. These procedures include ensuring all home visits are logged so that a staff member is aware of the visits you are making and when.
- If a home visit has been identified as higher risk, there will be two Zarach members present. When entering into a high risk home, the URN must be recorded on the Child Protection WhatsApp group, including who is entering the home and when they leave.
- The Family Engagement team has rigorous recruitment processes and training programmes before a home visit is undertaken alone.
- Please see the Zarach National Family Engagement Safeguarding Policies and Procedures document for further in-depth details about safeguarding during Family Engagement work.

Food Club & Happy Holidays

- Food Club and Happy Holidays will be run by a Zarach staff member, supported by volunteers.
- The staff member will have had safeguarding training as part of their induction as well as annual update training.
- During Food Club (and associated activities) there will always be a Designated Safeguarding Leader on call. One off (or ad-hoc) volunteers will always be in an open room and never alone with vulnerable adults or children.
- Risk Assessments will be completed for any activities being provided by third party providers to ensure they meet Zarach's safeguarding requirements.

Fundraising

Fundraising staff and volunteers are to be made aware of the Code of Fundraising Practice from the Fundraising Regulator as part of their induction process, so that we ensure our fundraising activities are of a high standard and safe.

- It is vital that we always uphold our values and are open and respectful while fundraising. Current and potential donors should never feel pressured to support us, they must be able to make an informed decision and treated fairly and with respect.
- At present we do not use third party fundraisers. If Zarach appoints any third party fundraising agency in the future, the agency's credentials, quality assurance and safeguarding practices will form part of the due diligence undertaken before appointment. Any appointment will include regular reviews to ensure all required standards are being maintained.
- Please see our fundraising policy for further information regarding our Fundraising and Communication practices. This includes how we deal with complaints, contact donors, and share stories and pictures.

Internal

Any staff member or volunteer who has an internal concern regarding Zarach's safeguarding practices, should refer to the Whistleblowing policy.

Reporting Concerns

Our Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) assist the trustees in ensuring we have the correct safeguarding procedures in place to protect everyone involved with Zarach. They will also ensure concerns raised are reported to the correct organisation and that we are actively learning from events and implementing new procedures to minimise risks.

Name	Position	Contact Details
Jess Sandy	National Family Engagement Manager	jess@zarach.org 07481 781616
Julie Pickering	Regional Family Engagement Manager	julie@zarach.org 07481 785938
Rose Lee Gough	Regional Family Engagement Manager	rose@zarach.org 07886 229462
Bex Wilson	Chair Of The Board Of Trustees	bex@zarach.org

If any team member witnesses a crime, or an individual is in immediate danger, they should call the police immediately. Volunteers and staff are trained to never enter a home if it is deemed unsafe on arrival. If a safeguarding cause for concern is identified, the team member should complete the Cause for Concern Form, following the detailed procedures and with as much detail as possible about the concern, and forward to a DSL within 24 hours.

Depending on the nature of the cause for concern, the relevant agencies will be notified and a detailed written account of everyone involved will be submitted by the DSL. The agencies will vary depending on the assessment carried out by the Zarach DSL. These agencies could include the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline, Police, Referrer, Social Services, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Local Child Protection Services and Charity Commission.

Review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, or more frequently if there are changes in the law and/or new standards of best practice.

The annual review of this policy is next due in October 2025.