



South London Botanical Institute

Safeguarding Policy (Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection) – **version 19.12.18 - DRAFT** **update by Helga Krauss on 10.10.17 version** Currently In Review

1. Purpose of Policy

This is a core commitment for the South London Botanical Institute (SLBI):

- a) To ensure that all children and vulnerable adults are able to visit the SLBI and use our services, safely and confidently, with no avoidable risk of harm.
- b) To support the SLBI's role in the local community by providing guidance on reporting concerns over abuse, when there is a reasonable basis to believe that this is happening to one of our child or vulnerable adult clients.
- c) To protect our own personnel and to set the framework for process in the unlikely event that we receive a significant concern regarding one of our staff, trustees, volunteers or wardens (including their children, who live on site and have friends to visit).

Whilst this policy generally covers children and vulnerable adults, it is also agreed that the principles relate to anyone visiting the SLBI or taking part in SLBI activities off-site. If any complaints are made of an abusive nature from anyone, these will be handled in a serious manner. The SLBI has a zero tolerance policy of abusive activity from any of its staff, volunteers, trustees or wardens.

2. Scope

In this context 'children' is taken to mean all individuals under 18 years of age. Where children will be treated differently based on their age, this is specified in the policy. A vulnerable adult is described as a person aged 18 years or over, who is in receipt of or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm.

All children and vulnerable adults will be covered by this policy regardless of disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, identity, and where not covered above, regardless of age.

This policy works to cover all activities run at the SLBI or run elsewhere by the SLBI. It will guide the activities of staff, trustees, wardens, volunteers, tutors and other contractors.

The SLBI is committed to:

- Valuing children and vulnerable adults and listening to them
- Providing effective management and support for staff and volunteers
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring necessary checks are carried out while privacy is not abused
- Sharing information about good practice in protection with all who need to know

- Sharing concerns with relevant agencies and involving children and parents appropriately
- Managing a safe environment
- Keeping information confidential, which means only sharing it with those who have a professional need to know.

3. Delivering activities safely

Children at the SLBI visit for group school visits, drop-in open days, drop-in activity days and pre-booked workshops. The SLBI does not generally deliver children's or vulnerable adults' activities that include overnight stays, personal care, or unsupervised children within our care.

The SLBI activity programme might occasionally provide an adult workshop or open day that attracts a vulnerable adult who attends unsupported. This is particularly the case when an adult's circumstances change to become more vulnerable - for example in old age.

The SLBI delivers some activities in which the same children return on regular occasions, for example the school holiday sessions. Within these sessions there is a small, possibility that a supervising adult might build up an inappropriate level of trust with such a child.

When delivering activities for children or vulnerable adults, the SLBI will ensure that:

- We understand any special needs among participants in advance
- A risk assessment is carried out for safety issues relevant to the group
- A named contact from the SLBI has a named contact to liaise with for the group
- Children and vulnerable adults are accompanied by a parent, carer or teacher when visiting
- Situations where one child is alone with one adult will be avoided.

Because of the small, but real, opportunity to build up trust with children on the holiday activities or with the wardens' children, or possibly with other ongoing contacts, a process of checks will be taken with staff, trustees, volunteers and wardens. This will include references for all and Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS checks - previously known as CRB checks) for those likely to be involved with children's activities (school visits and holiday activities) or with direct work with vulnerable adults.

Further safeguarding of the wardens' children is a shared responsibility of the SLBI and the wardens. The wardens will be primarily responsible for keeping their children safe according to the activities going on in the Institute, particularly the few activities which take place in the upstairs room. Staff will assist with this through regular communication of planned activity (and likewise wardens will advise staff if additional children will be at the Institute at times which might cause concern).

The Administrator is responsible for undertaking references for all of the above; the Education Coordinator is responsible for getting DBS checks for those relevant.

Staff and volunteers must never:

- do things for children or vulnerable adults of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- condone, or participate in, behaviour of children or vulnerable adults which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children or vulnerable adults, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children or adults to the exclusion of others.

Photos of children should only be taken with the parent's or carer's written consent. An appropriate form is in place and all images of children should be taken, stored and shared appropriately.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that staff should avoid actions or behaviour which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.

4. Guidance on reporting concerns

SLBI staff and volunteers will take seriously any reporting of abuse of or from children or vulnerable adults. This includes emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

Key staff will attend relevant safeguarding training, and others involved will read the guidance below, in order to understand the issues and symptoms to be reported.

Individual staff or volunteers should not investigate concerns - this is the role of the statutory agencies.

If a child or vulnerable adult wishes to report an incident of abuse:

- Listen carefully to the child. DO NOT directly question the child.
- Give the child time and attention.
- Allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed as evidence.
- Use the child's own words where possible.
- Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
- Reassure the child that:
 - you are glad they have told you;
 - they have not done anything wrong.
- Explain what you are going to do next and that you will need to get help to keep the child safe.
- Do NOT ask the child to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.

The concerns should be reported immediately to one of the following authorities.

Lambeth Social Services	020 7926 5555
Out of Hours Social Services	020 7926 1000
Local Police	020 7326 1212.

More information is contained in the publication 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused'

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf

And the chapter on Safeguarding Adults

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance/safeguarding>

The SLBI should assist local authority Social Services or the Police when they are making enquiries about the welfare of children. Information about a child must therefore be shared on a 'need to know' basis. When such requests are received by telephone, always maintain security by

checking the telephone listing before calling back. Always advise the designated responsible people of this contact immediately.

5. Protecting our own personnel

a) Starting a new role

All personnel will be accepted for a role as staff member, trustee, volunteer or other, on the basis of their ability to deliver the job as required.

Once an individual has been appointed to a role, they will be inducted in our processes to keep children and adults safe from harm.

Most roles will require a reference to be provided, as above.

All roles will be assessed to see if they require a standard DBS check and individuals will be notified of this in advance. These are the criteria for assessment:

- whether the worker is doing work that, if unsupervised, would be regulated activity (at SLBI, this might involve regular contact with children, or support of vulnerable adults). If the worker is not, the remaining steps are unnecessary;
- whether the worker will be supervised by a person in regulated activity who has themselves received a DBS check, and whether the supervision will be regular, and day to day;
- whether the supervision will be reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children, e.g. is it in the same room.
- whether the supervised worker is a volunteer. Whilst currently no Education volunteers work alone with children, they are still asked to complete a DBS form as it is good practice.

The person responsible for reviewing roles and the need for DBS checks is the Education Coordinator. The person responsible for carrying out DBS, certifying identity papers, and receiving the DBS checks is the Education Coordinator. However their own DBS check will be received by the Administrator.

Systems are frequently changing, for example it is currently possible to check certificates that have been provided in another position – the Education Coordinator will keep up to date on what is required and adapt accordingly, for example, asking for written consent to check certificates from other places. **The SLBI currently (since 2018) uses CBR Business Solutions to carry out DBS checks (formerly called Charity Backroom).**

As an employer, the SLBI must treat DBS check applicants who have a criminal record fairly and should not discriminate because of an irrelevant conviction or other information revealed.

Certificates are now provided directly to the applicant. The SLBI will receive personal information related to applications and will receive disclosure information when previously checked certificates are provided to them by their employees or applicants for posts, including volunteers.

The SLBI must keep the information in a DBS check confidential - they may only disclose that information internally where it is directly relevant to another member's duties within the SLBI e.g. the Project Manager may need to discuss the contents with the Education Coordinator. This includes discussion of whether or not an individual has any criminal record. It is a legal offence to breach this rule.

The SLBI must keep records of DBS checks securely and only available to those who need to see them. Applications will not be kept as this fits with current advice, but copies of certificates are sometimes kept. These will be locked in a cabinet. DBS checks must be destroyed when no longer required.

Staff and volunteers cannot undertake any unsupervised face-to-face work with children or vulnerable adults until satisfactory DBS checks have been received

b) Complaints against our personnel

In the unlikely event that a complaint of abuse by one of our personnel is received at the SLBI, the complaint will be reviewed by the member of personnel alerted - unless the complaint is against themselves in which case they are obliged by this policy to refer it to another member of personnel, ideally a member of staff.

This person should encourage the complaint to be made in writing, recording date, names, and nature of complaint. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the person reviewing it will discuss with Social Services on number above to establish whether the complaint reaches the threshold that warrants action. They will not discuss the complaint with the individual concerned unless this is agreed with Social Services. They will discuss with higher personnel (eg a trustee) if necessary and will act promptly.

Signed on behalf of SLBI Trustees:

Name:

Date: 10.10.17

Date for review: 10.10.19 (or sooner, if those responsible for carrying out checks are no longer able to undertake this responsibility).