



## South London Botanical Institute

### Safeguarding Policy (Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection) – version 16.12.21

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#### 1. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of the policy is to ensure the delivery of the following core commitments:

- Valuing children, young people and vulnerable adults and listening to them so that all children and vulnerable adults are able to visit the SLBI and use our services, safely and confidently
- Providing effective management and support for staff, volunteers, trustees and wardens
- 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
- Keeping information confidential, which means only sharing it with those who have a professional need to know
- Managing a safe environment
- Ensuring that the children of the residential wardens and the children's friends are covered by this policy

*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 or online. 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, visitors or wardens.*

## **2. Scope**

In this context 'children and young people' is taken to mean all individuals under 18 years of age. Where children are 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 or cultural heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, identity, and where not covered elsewhere, regardless of age.

This policy covers all activities organised at the SLBI or run elsewhere or online by the SLBI. It includes the activities of staff, trustees, wardens, volunteers, tutors and other contractors, visitors to the SLBI and users of our services.

SLBI personnel also need to be aware of the possibility of a child or vulnerable adult being abused or neglected other than on SLBI premises and of their responsibility to report such concerns.

### **3. Delivering activities safely**

#### **a Introduction**

The following actions or behaviours are not an exhaustive or exclusive list of abusive behaviour, but are some examples of abusive behaviour:

- doing things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves
- condoning, or participating in, behaviour towards children or vulnerable adults which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- acting in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children or vulnerable adults, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- discriminating against, showing differential treatment, or favouring particular children or adults to the exclusion of others.

You should not do any of these things (even if asked) and if you see or think others are acting like this, it is your responsibility to stop it or, if necessary, report it (see below).

Further, abusers may be the person's carer(s), relatives, family friends, volunteers or professionals and their support staff, such as care workers, doctors and nurses, visitors to the SLBI and users of our services.

#### **b Children and Young People**

Safeguarding children and young people is everyone's responsibility

Children at the SLBI visit for group school visits, drop-in open days, drop-in activity days and pre-booked workshops and occasionally take part in online activities. The SLBI does not deliver children's activities that include overnight stays or personal care. We do not generally provide activities for young children who are unsupervised by teaching staff or carers. However, we may sometimes provide activities for young people between the ages of 15-18 years who are not accompanied by teachers, parents or other carers.

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.

### *Risk*

When delivering activities for children, 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 from the group/school and their contact details
- The named contact is made aware of any hazards before visiting (e.g. pond, poisonous plants etc.)
- Children are accompanied by a parent, carer or teacher when taking part in an activity, including those delivered digitally (e.g. a teacher will be onscreen and monitoring activities and interactions at all times during video workshops)
- All school groups are be accompanied by the correct number of adults throughout the whole visit: Ratios are: Special Educational Needs -1:1; Key Stage 1-1:5; Key Stage 2 -1:8. It is the school's responsibility to ensure a sufficient number of suitable accompanying adults.
- SLBI reserves the right to cancel any visit at any time and without notice if there are insufficient accompanying adults.
- Situations where one child is alone with one adult will be avoided.

- Planning activities for adolescents between 15-18 years includes obtaining parental/carer contact details and obtaining signed parental/carer consent.
- Photos and video recordings of children should only be taken with relevant signed consent on appropriate form and the child's name should never be used in the photo. Sometimes it might be more appropriate or acceptable to take photos of the back of children's heads. All images of children should be taken, stored and shared in compliance with GDPR. If in any doubt, refer to SLBI Education & Outreach Co-ordinator (EOC).
- School visits – The schools' booking form includes a statement about photo or video recording use. It clearly states the photos or video recordings are not for public use and that children's names will not be used. Photos can be used for funders' reports, for limited publicity and for internal documents.
- Schools' consent to take photos or record sessions will be obtained in advance by the EOC, liaising with a named teacher and using a photo permission form.
- Holiday activities & public events – The photographer or video streaming session facilitator should approach the parent or carer with the consent form, insert a brief description of the child's age, their clothing, the location in the SLBI & at which event the photo was taken or the streaming session was recorded. They should clarify and record with the parent the agreed use of the photo – e.g. does it include SLBI website, social media, Annual Report or is it limited to funders and/or internal documents.
- Photos and recordings of video sessions of children & young people should only be taken by designated staff members or volunteers.
- Some workshops may be delivered through video streaming platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet. All standards and requirements described above should be applied to video streaming workshops with clear expectations about security settings that include password settings/ screen share etc. No workshops should take place without the use of passwords and properly controlled admissions to the workshop online space by facilitators and moderators. Children should only access these events via official school accounts or through accounts managed by their parent or carer.

You may have concerns that a child is being abused or neglected elsewhere other than at the SLBI. If so, please tell the SLBI leader of the event or activity that the child is attending, or a staff member, who will take appropriate action and will report it to the safeguarding lead.

### c Vulnerable Adults

The SLBI works with partner organisations to provide a range of activities for diverse audiences, including groups whose members are or may include some people who are vulnerable. The SLBI does not deliver activities for vulnerable adults that include overnight stays or personal care. SLBI does not deliver activities for unaccompanied groups of vulnerable adults. However, we seek to include individual vulnerable adults who attend activities (in person or online), unless they pose a risk to themselves or others.

Adults' circumstances can change, bringing increased vulnerability - for example in old age, following an accident or illness or after a significant life-event. From time-to-time a vulnerable adult might attend a workshop or open day unsupported. If attending unsupported, the individual may or may not indicate that they are vulnerable or it might not be evident that the adult is vulnerable or they may deny or not be aware that they are vulnerable.

It is essential that all those acting on behalf of the SLBI treat all visitors with respect, politeness and awareness.

### *Risk*

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

- We understand any special or specific needs that participants have in advance of the visit, and take steps to meet those needs
- A named contact from the SLBI has a named contact from the group together with their contact details
- A risk assessment is carried out for safety issues relevant to the group
- The group leader is made aware of any likely hazards or risks before visiting (e.g. pond, steps, uneven paving etc.)

- Vulnerable adults are accompanied by a carer or group leader when visiting
- Situations where one vulnerable person is alone with one adult from SLBI are avoided
- Written consent for photographs should be obtained from the subject or group leader.

Individual's names should not be used.

Some workshops may be delivered through video streaming platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet. All standards and requirements described above should be applied to video streaming workshops with clear expectations about security settings that include password settings/ screen share etc. No workshops should take place without the use of passwords and properly controlled admissions to the workshop online space by facilitators and moderators.

You may have concerns that a vulnerable adult is being abused or neglected elsewhere other than at SLBI. If so, please tell the SLBI leader of the event or activity that the vulnerable adult is attending, or a staff member, who will take appropriate action and will report it to the safeguarding lead.

#### d Wardens' children

Safeguarding the wardens' children is a responsibility shared between the SLBI and the wardens, the children's parents. The wardens will be primarily responsible for keeping their children safe in relation to the activities going on in the Institute, particularly the 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 when activities are planned).

#### e Risk to others

On very rare occasions a person may cause a disturbance or pose a risk to others. If this happens, SLBI personnel should not put themselves or others at risk.

- Get everyone to a safe place. This might be inside the building or outside on the pavement.
- If necessary in your judgement, call the police on 999.

## 4. Guidance on reporting concerns

### a Introduction

The safeguarding lead for the SLBI is a designated trustee, currently Michael Clarke, who can be contacted via the SLBI office or on 0779 626 1607 or [michaeleclarke@gmail.com](mailto:michaeleclarke@gmail.com).

If the safeguarding lead cannot be contacted, concerns should be reported to the activity lead or a member of staff, who will ensure it is dealt with and reported appropriately.

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 and volunteers will receive relevant safeguarding training and will ensure that other volunteers for whom they are responsible are familiar with our policies and the reporting guidance below.

Individual staff or volunteers should not investigate concerns - this is the role of the statutory agencies once they have been contacted by the safeguarding lead.

### b Child Protection

If a child or young person wishes to report an incident:

- Stay calm
- Find a quiet place where your conversation won't be interrupted. Keep in mind your organisation's guidelines about being alone with a child or young person
- Attempt to make the child or young person feel safe and secure
- Be patient
- Listen carefully to the child or young person and take it seriously
- Reassure them that they have done nothing wrong in telling you



- Write down what you have been told as soon as possible. It should be dated, timed and signed.
- Give it to the designated safeguarding lead (or staff member) immediately

The safeguarding lead should report concerns immediately to the following authority:

Lambeth Social Services -24 hrs      020 7926 5555

More information can be found here:

<https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/community-safety-and-anti-social-behaviour/abuse-and-violence/lambeth-safeguarding-websites>

And on the website of the Lambeth Safeguarding Children Board: <https://www.lambethscb.org.uk/>

And on the HM Government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

### c Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

- Record your concerns in writing making a note of the date, time, your concerns and the circumstances surrounding them, as well as anything that has been said by anyone in relation to the matter. If someone has disclosed abuse to you, where possible, use their own words in your report. Then immediately contact the adult safeguarding lead in your organisation or a senior colleague. In an emergency, contact the police on 999.

Lambeth Social Services -24 hrs      020 7926 5555

Email: [adultsocialcare@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:adultsocialcare@lambeth.gov.uk)

Local Police                      020 7326 1212 (for non-emergency)

- Be prepared to provide the following details:
  - your name, address, telephone number and your role;
  - the action you have taken so far;
  - as many details about the person as you can including their name, address, and carer's details.
- You must not, however, disclose confidential information such as the person's diagnosis or gender orientation, unless this is relevant to the situation;

- what you have been told or observed about the person, providing dates where possible and details of the person's emotional state at the time;
- what the person has said in response to any suspicions or concerns you have had
- When you make the referral, agree with the person you are making the referral to, what the person's carers will be told, by whom and when.
- Confirm telephone referrals in writing within 48 hours.
- Your local authority social care department should acknowledge receipt of this, but if you haven't heard back within three working days, you must contact them again.
- Social care or the police will advise you on what to do next, including whether the carers should be involved. Social care will then take responsibility for ensuring that appropriate further enquiries are made.
- If the person needs urgent medical attention, obtain this first as a matter of urgency. After this, consult with your local adult social care department or the police on whether to involve the person's carers.
- Keep an accurate dated record of what you have seen, heard and done. Whoever it is that makes a referral of suspected abuse to the council's social care department, the identity of the person who reports the abuse will not be disclosed without their prior agreement

More information can be found here:

Lambeth Safeguarding Adults Board: <https://www.lambethsab.org.uk>

And here for trustees: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>

The SLBI will 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 or naming or discussing the child. Always advise the safeguarding lead of this contact immediately.

Further information on organisations' responsibilities can be found in the following governmental documents:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/780846/Criminal\\_reporting\\_of\\_safeguarding\\_offences\\_including\\_overseas\\_v3.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/780846/Criminal_reporting_of_safeguarding_offences_including_overseas_v3.pdf)

## 5. Protecting our own personnel

### a Starting a new role

*Who needs a DBS check and why?*

- Staff, trustees, volunteers, wardens and others as appropriate will be assessed to ensure they are suitable for their role delivering SLBI activities and services.
- SLBI will obtain references for all volunteers
- Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS checks - previously known as CRB checks) will be sought for those likely to be involved with children's activities (school visits and holiday activities) or working directly with vulnerable adults.
- Staff and volunteers cannot undertake any unsupervised face-to-face work with children or vulnerable adults until satisfactory DBS checks have been received.

The criteria for DBS assessment is:

- whether the worker is doing work that, if unsupervised, would be a 'regulated activity' (such as regular and frequent contact with children or vulnerable adults).

The level of supervision of activities and the short-term nature of those activities mean that most SLBI services for children, young people and vulnerable adults are unlikely to be 'regulated activities'. For example, education volunteers do not work frequently or alone with the same children. However, they might work with groups of children unsupervised by a DBS holder for periods of time.

As a matter of good practice, to ensure individuals' suitability for the roles and to avoid risk, education volunteers are required to complete a DBS assessment as part of their recruitment.

*How we do DBS checks*

- The person responsible for reviewing roles and the need for DBS checks is the Education & Outreach Coordinator (EOC). The EOC is responsible for getting DBS checks for individuals working with children and young people from an accredited organisation, for checking identity papers, and receiving the DBS results.
- The Administrator carries out this process in regard of the EOC themselves.
- Record checking systems change regularly. The EOC will keep up to date on what is required and adapt accordingly, for example, asking for written consent to check certificates from other places.
- As an employer, the SLBI will treat DBS check applicants who have a criminal record fairly and will 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 Programme Manager may need to discuss the contents with the Education & Outreach Coordinator. This includes discussion of whether or not an individual has any criminal record. This is a legal duty on employers.
- The SLBI must keep records of DBS checks securely and only available to those who need to see them.
- If copies of certificates are kept, this should be in a locked cabinet.
- DBS checks must be destroyed when no longer required.

#### b Complaints against our personnel

##### Allegations against staff, trustees, volunteers and other SLBI personnel

It is a fact that organisations who pledge to help and care for people who may be vulnerable might unwittingly recruit staff or volunteers who pose a risk to those groups.

Never let allegations against SLBI personnel go unreported, including those against you or your colleagues.

### False allegations

False allegations do happen. However, they will be investigated with the same processes and procedures as for all allegations.

- Use of Video streaming

The SLBI also recognises the additional psychological pressures of working via video streaming and undertakes to ensure that there are regular breaks and levels of work content when working both internally and externally.

Signed on behalf of SLBI Trustees:

Michael Clarke, Acting Co-Chair of Trustees, 10 December 2021

Date for review: 10.12.22 (or sooner, if those with named responsibilities are no longer able or available to undertake those roles).