Adult Safeguarding Policy for Parents and Carers

Purpose of this policy

School Food Matters (SFM) is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of all individuals participating in our programmes, including parents and carers who may be vulnerable. This policy explains how we identify and respond to concerns about the safety or welfare of adults connected to our programmes in schools.

1. Our Commitment to Safeguarding

School Food Matters believes that every adult has the right to:

- live free from abuse, harm, and neglect
- be treated with dignity and respect
- have their concerns taken seriously
- receive appropriate support when needed

We take all safeguarding concerns seriously and act promptly in line with national legislation, including the **Care Act 2014**, and local safeguarding procedures.

2. Who This Policy Applies To

This policy relates to **adults connected to the schools in which we work**, including:

- parents, carers, or guardians attending SFM sessions or events
- volunteers or adult participants involved in school-based activities
- any adult who may be at increased risk due to disability, mental or physical health, domestic situations, or other vulnerabilities

3. What Is a "Vulnerable Adult"?

An adult may be considered vulnerable if they:

- have care and support needs
- are at risk of abuse or neglect
- are unable to protect themselves from harm
- are experiencing a temporary vulnerability due to circumstances such as crisis, health issues, language barriers, or social isolation

Vulnerability may be permanent or temporary, visible or hidden.

4. Types of Abuse or Harm

Abuse may include, but is not limited to:

- **Physical abuse** – causing physical harm
- **Emotional/psychological abuse** – threats, coercion, intimidation
- **Financial abuse** – misuse of money or property
- **Neglect** – failing to provide necessary care or support
- **Domestic abuse** – controlling, violent or threatening behaviour in relationships
- **Discriminatory abuse** – harassment based on race, gender, disability, religion, or other characteristics
- **Organisational abuse** – poor care or unsafe practices in groups or institutions

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5. How We Keep Adults Safe

Training

SFM staff and volunteers receive adult safeguarding training, including how to:

- recognise signs of abuse
- respond appropriately to a disclosure
- follow our internal reporting procedures

Safe working practices

We ensure:

- respectful and professional communication with all adults
- safe and inclusive environments at school-based events
- risk assessments for activities involving adult participation

Partnership with schools

We work closely with each school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure consistent standards and procedures.

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6. What We Do if There Is a Concern

If an SFM staff member or volunteer is worried about an adult's safety or wellbeing, we will:

1. **Listen** – calmly and without judgment if a concern is raised or disclosed
2. **Record** – what was said or observed, factually and promptly
3. **Report** – the concern to:
    - the SFM Designated Safeguarding Lead
    - the school's DSL
    - appropriate safeguarding or emergency services
4. **Act** – always in the adult's best interests, following legal duties and professional guidance

We will not promise confidentiality. If someone is at risk, we must share information with appropriate services.

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7. Information Sharing

We only share information when:

- it is necessary to safeguard someone from harm
- there is a legal basis, such as risk of serious harm
- it is with the appropriate safeguarding or emergency services

All records are stored securely and handled in line with GDPR.

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8. What parents and carers can expect from us

Parents and cares can expect:

- respectful and supportive interactions
- clear communication about activities and expectations
- a safe and inclusive environment
- prompt and appropriate action if concerns are raised about you or someone else

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9. How to Raise a Concern

If you are worried about your own safety or the safety of another adult, you can contact:

School Food Matters

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Stephanie Slater (Chief Executive)
- **Email:** stephanie@schoolfoodmatters.org
- **Phone:** 020 8878 8333

The School's DSL

Details are available directly from the school office.

In an emergency

If someone is in immediate danger, call **999**.

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10. Review of Policy

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if there is:

- a change in legislation
- a significant safeguarding incident
- feedback from schools, parents, or staff

Latest review April 2026