

The Writers' Block – Child Safeguarding Policy & Procedures

Reviewed July 2025

Policy Statement

The Writers' Block is a creative writing venue and programme created and managed by Kernow Education Arts Partnership (KEAP). Since March 2025, KEAP has traded publicly as The Writers' Block. All staff and volunteers who work at The Writers' Block are employed by KEAP as the registered charity and legal organisation.

For the purposes of this policy, all references to The Writers' Block or TWB will mean 'The Writers' Block, a trading name of Kernow Education Arts Partnership'.

This policy covers activity which takes place in The Writers' Block, in other cultural and community venues and in schools. The reporting and responsibilities will differ depending on the location and groups being worked with.

The Writers' Block has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in The Writers' Block activities from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable are taken into account. The Writers' Block will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in The Writers' Block activities through adherence to the Child Safeguarding guidelines adopted by The Writers' Block. The Writers' Block is fully committed to this aim, which over-rides all other concerns.

We believe that:

- The welfare of the child or young person is paramount.
- All children and young people, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Staff and volunteers should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

Policy Aims

The aim of The Writers' Block's Child Safeguarding Policy is to promote good practice and to allow all staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child safeguarding issues

Where the policy refers to 'staff' this includes anyone employed by The Writers' Block through the payroll or on a freelance basis or working with The Writers' Block as a volunteer.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually and amended when necessary.

Risk Assessments

A new Risk Assessment will be carried out whenever any part of the Safeguarding procedures are changed.

A Reactive Risk Assessment will be carried out following a concern or disclosure of abuse being raised.

Promote Good Practice

Abuse (emotional, neglect, physical or sexual) can occur within many situations including the home, the school and the arts environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. An artist or The Writers' Block volunteer may have regular contact with young people and should seek to adhere to the highest standards of child safeguarding at all times. They should be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document, usually to The Writers' Block Director.

Code of Conduct

Definition of terms: For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, the term 'staff' or 'member of staff' will include all artists, volunteers, trustees and paid employees who work on behalf of The Writers' Block.

The term 'child', where used on its own, will include all children and young people under the age of 18.

The role of staff and volunteers

In your role at The Writers' Block you are acting in a position of trust and authority and have a duty of care towards the children and young people we work with. You are likely to be seen as a role model by young people and are expected to act appropriately.

We expect people who take part in our services to display appropriate behaviour at all times. This includes behaviour that takes place outside our organisation and behaviour that takes place online.

The following Code of Conduct illustrates how to create a positive culture and climate. It is based on the NSPCC Behaviour Code for Adults Working with Children.

Responsibility of staff and volunteers

You are responsible for:

- Prioritising the welfare of children and young people
- Providing a safe environment for children and young people
 - Ensuring equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose
 - Having good awareness of issues to do with safeguarding and child protection and taking action when appropriate.
- Following our principles, policies and procedures
 - Including our policies and procedures for safeguarding and child protection, whistleblowing and online safety
- Staying within the law at all times

- Modelling good behaviour for children and young people to follow
- Challenging all inappropriate behaviour and reporting any breaches of the behaviour code to The Writers' Block Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Reporting all concerns about abusive behaviour, following our safeguarding and child protection procedures
 - This includes inappropriate behaviour displayed by an adult or child and directed at anybody of any age.

Respecting children and young people

You should:

- Listen to and respect children at all times
- Value and take children's contributions seriously, actively involving them in planning activities wherever possible
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy as far as possible
 - If you need to break confidentiality in order to follow child protection procedures, it is important to explain this to the child or young person at the earliest opportunity.

Diversity and inclusion

You should:

- Treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination
- Understand that children and young people are individuals with individual needs
- Respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems, and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to the group/organisation
- Challenge discrimination and prejudice
- Encourage young people and adults to speak out about attitudes or behaviour that makes them uncomfortable.

Appropriate relationships

You should:

- Promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect
- Avoid showing favouritism
- Be patient with others
- Never shout at or reprimand a child
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- If you are working in a school, be aware that they may have different codes of conduct, for example, no use of first names, no sweets or chewing gum. Ensure you respect their policies.
- Make sure your language and conversation, and that of the children and young people is appropriate
- Exercise caution when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people. Be aware they may open up to you. Do not agree to keep anything a secret and encourage them to tell a teacher or parent.

- Ensure your contact with children and young people is appropriate and relevant to the nature of the activity you are involved in
- If a child initiates physical contact such as approaching you for a hug, you should gently deflect them and stay side on
- If the nature of the workshop requires any physical contact, ensure you have another staff member present and that you have briefed any teachers/youth leaders. You should also gain permission from the children/young people.
- Ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people
 - If a situation arises where you are alone with a child or young person, ensure that you are within sight or can be heard by other adults
 - If a child specifically asks for or needs some individual time with you, ensure other staff or volunteers know where you and the child are.
- Only provide personal care in an emergency and make sure there is more than one adult present if possible

Inappropriate behaviour

When working with children and young people, you must not:

- Allow concerns or allegations to go unreported
- Allow children to use inappropriate language or behaviour unchallenged
- Take unnecessary risks
- Smoke, consume alcohol or use illegal substances
- Develop inappropriate relationships with children and young people
- Make inappropriate promises to children and young people
- Engage in behaviour that is in any way abusive including rough or sexually provocative activities.
 - Including having any form of sexual contact with a child or young person
- Let children and young people have your personal contact details (mobile number, email or postal address) or have contact with them via a personal social media account
- Act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- Patronise or belittle children and young people
- Make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people.

When you arrive at The Writers' Block or school

Your vehicle:

- Drive slowly on the school and other venue premises. Take particular care when reversing.
- If you do not know where the school entrance is, it is better to stop and go into the school on foot rather than drive around the school grounds.
- Never obstruct fire exits when parking, even if only temporarily, to find out where to go or unload.
- Check with Reception where you can park. You may be allowed nearer to the school to unload.

- Keep the vehicle locked at all times.
- Never give a pupil or participant a lift in your vehicle.

On arrival at a school:

- Go to Reception at the school to get signed in. Take photo ID, and DBS check if necessary. You will be given a Visitor badge to wear.
- Make sure you know and follow school procedures and times.
- Ask where the staff toilets are, never use the children's toilets.
- Avoid wandering around the school.

On arrival at The Writers' Block or another venue:

- Make yourself known to the The Writers' Block staff.
- You may be given an ID lanyard to wear.
- Make sure you know and follow The Writers' Block procedures.
- There are no staff toilets, you should use the disabled toilet if the general toilets are being used by children.

Health and Safety

- Staff and volunteers are expected to promote Health and Safety considerations to children and young people.
- All volunteers and staff must agree to work in accordance with The Writers' Block's policy on Health and Safety and to work without causing danger to themselves, to other volunteers or to the general public.
- Risk assessment should be a part of planning any project and should take into account all aspects of the project, but particularly any risks relating to protection of children and young people. Risk management should be an ongoing part of every project.

Communicating with Children & Young People by Email, Phone, Text and Social media

It is recognised that from time to time The Writers' Block may deliver work directly with young people rather than through a school or youth group and that most areas of work allow us to communicate through a virtual medium such as online, or via texting, so it is important to consider young people's safety when they use this form of media.

Where these situations are expected to arise, the Director should be informed and the following code of conduct should be followed.

Contacting a young person:

All under 18's must have parental/guardian permission for The Writers' Block to contact the young person via email or mobile phone.

Via email

When emailing young people about a The Writers' Block piece of work, all email addresses of young people must be "blind carbon copied" (bcc) so their email address can be concealed. You must always copy in a member of staff so no emails are just between just you and a young person. Emails from young people to a practitioner should go via a The Writers' Block email address and forwarded onto the practitioner where possible.

Via mobile phone

Contacting a young person on their mobile should be done within office hours and when another member of staff is present. If contact takes place outside these hours or when there are no other staff members present ensure that it is recorded and emailed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead on helen@thewritersblock.org.uk

Social media

You should never use social media to contact or communicate with a young person. You should not accept their friend requests on Facebook, or use any type of instant messaging service such as Messenger or Snapchat. WhatsApp projects groups may be required for some projects, but these will be set up by The Writers' Block, only for young people over the age of 12, and will be closely monitored.

You should also recognise that your personal social media profile and behaviour will reflect on you as a professional working with young people, so you should review who is able to view your posts, and where it is not possible to control this (e.g. Instagram) you should consider your content carefully.

If a young person initiates inappropriate contact via email, text, phone or social media, The Writers' Block staff must inform the young person that it is inappropriate and then inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Recruitment and Training of Staff and Volunteers

The Writers' Block recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure suitable people are recruited.

Interview and induction:

- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek an Enhanced Disclosure should that be necessary for the post
- Two confidential references will be required, of which one should be regarding previous work with children (for posts in which there will be direct contact with children).
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo) will be required.
- All staff and volunteers will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations.

All staff and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction, during which:

- A check will be made that qualifications can be substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities will be clarified.
- They should receive a copy of The Writers' Block's Code of Conduct and sign to say they have received and read it.
- Child safeguarding procedures are explained and training needs are identified.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced Disclosure:

The DBS's aim is to help organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable to work with young people or other vulnerable members of society.

There are three types of check which are undertaken by the DBS:

Standard checks: These are suitable for eligible roles that do not involve regular contact with children or vulnerable groups such as finance or security. A standard check will show any unspent convictions, cautions, warnings or reprimands along with any spent convictions and cautions that are not eligible for filtering.

Enhanced checks: These are suitable for eligible roles where the applicant will be working/volunteering with children, young people and/or vulnerable groups. An enhanced check will show any unspent convictions, cautions, warnings or reprimands along with any spent convictions and cautions that are not eligible for filtering. Intelligence held by the police may also be included if the Police reasonably believe it is pertinent to a recruitment decision.

Enhanced with DBS Barred List checks: These are suitable for roles where the applicant will be working/volunteering in a **regulated activity** with children and / or vulnerable adults. An enhanced check with DBS Barred list check will show the same information as an enhanced check along with any information held on the barred list(s) being checked.

The Writers' Block requires any member of staff whose role is deemed 'regulated activity' by the Disclosure and Barring Service to have an Enhanced Disclosure with a barred list check, which is less than 3 years old or which can be viewed through the DBS Update Service. The Writers' Block reserves the right to ask for a new disclosure if the current one is not deemed suitable. The Writers' Block can process DBS checks, please contact Helen Reynolds on helen@thewritersblock.org.uk

For more information, please see Disclosure and Barring Service website
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

Training:

Staff and volunteers will receive training to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them against false allegations.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
- Work safely and effectively with children or young people.

The Writers' Block requires staff and volunteers to attend at least one good practice and child safeguarding awareness training workshop, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection.

The Writers' Block will programme these workshops as required and in the meantime, before formal training takes place, staff and volunteers will receive informal training and this Child Safeguarding Policy & Procedures.

Supervision:

- Staff and volunteers will have access to a complaints procedure.
- Staff will have an annual review meeting.

Use of photographs and video

- Schools or parents will be asked to give their permission for photographs/video to be taken.
- Schools must give prior written permission for the use of any photographs or video (see *attached permission form – Model 1*).
- Children's names will not accompany photographs unless they are, for example, prizewinners or members of a troupe where we have the permission of either their parent or school. For older young people, first names may be used, with parental permission.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for The Writers' Block, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns using the process outlined in *Model 5 Flowchart: Reporting child protection concerns*.

The Writers' Block assure all staff that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports their concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

If a member of staff or volunteer was worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, they can contact the Safeguarding Children Unit, Social Services, the police or phone the NSPCC Helpline. These contact details can be found on p10.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation.
- A child protection investigation.
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

Complaints against a member of staff will always and without exception be investigated. The police and other agencies will be informed at the discretion of the school/ The Writers' Block and the designated officer will be informed in all cases. The results of the police and child protection investigation may influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

The Writers' Block's Designated Officer with responsibility for Child Safeguarding:

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Helen Reynolds. When an artist is working in a school and has a concern or is disclosed to, they should report to the school's designated child safeguarding officer in full and make an account to the The Writers' Block Designated Safeguarding Lead. See *attached Model 2 – Reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse – contact details*.

If the activity is not taking place in a school, reports should be made directly to the The Writers' Block Designated Officer.

Accidents and injuries:

If a child or young person is injured – while at a The Writers' Block event or participating in a The Writers' Block project in a school – the The Writers' Block member of staff or volunteer must make a record of the injury in The Writers' Block's or the school's accident book. This record should be counter-signed by a teacher if in a school.

If a child or young person arrives for a The Writers' Block arts activity with an obvious physical injury, a record must be made in the school's accident book. This record should be counter-signed by the person with responsibility for the individual. This record can be useful if a formal allegation is made later. It will also be a record that the individual did not sustain the injury whilst working with The Writers' Block.

If someone discloses to The Writers' Block staff:

It is possible that a child or young person who is suffering, or has suffered, abuse will disclose to a The Writers' Block member of staff. This is something that everyone should be prepared for and must handle carefully. Follow the procedure outlined in *Model 3- Advice on how to respond to a child making an allegation of abuse* and *Model 4 - a checklist for reporting suspected abuse*. Both documents are based on models provided in NSPCC's 'firstcheck'. In confidence, make the The Writers' Block Designated Officer fully aware of the situation.

Rights and confidentiality:

If a complaint or allegation is made against a member of The Writers' Block's staff, they should be made aware of their rights under both employment law and internal disciplinary procedures. This is the responsibility of the The Writers' Block Designated Safeguarding Lead. Both the alleged abuser and the person who is thought to have been abused have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998. In criminal law the Crown or other prosecuting authority has to prove guilt and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty. *See attached NSPCC flowchart for reporting of concerns (Model 5).*

Internal enquiries and suspension:

In the event of an accusation of abuse being made against any member of The Writers' Block's staff, the individual accused will be automatically suspended pending further investigations. The temporary suspension of a member of staff in no way implies guilt or innocence. It is a measure intended to protect and reassure both staff and children.

The Writers' Block's Disciplinary Committee (composed of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Chair of Trustees and one other Trustee) will assess all cases based upon available information.

The member of staff against whom an accusation of abuse has been made will be summoned to an interview with the Disciplinary Committee as early as possible. They are entitled to be accompanied to this interview. Minutes will be taken of the interview. The task of the Disciplinary Committee is to decide whether or not the accused member of staff should be allowed to continue to work with children. At all times the welfare of children should be of paramount importance.

In all cases where the accusation of abuse is found to be true, the Disciplinary Committee will normally terminate the employment, contract or agreement with the individual. A Trustee

found to have abused a child will be asked to stand down from The Writers' Block. Lesser measures may be taken at the discretion of the Disciplinary Committee.

Action if bullying is suspected

The same procedure should be followed as set out above in 'Responding to allegations or suspicions'.

Whistle Blowing Policy

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express your concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or you may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable children or young person who are targeted. These children need someone like you to safeguard their welfare.

Don't think what if I'm wrong - think what if I'm right

Reasons for whistle blowing

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening
- To protect or reduce risks to others
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself

What stops people from whistle blowing

- Starting a chain of events which spirals
- Disrupting the work or project
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- Fear of not being believe

How to raise a concern

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why
- Approach the The Writers' Block Designated Safeguarding Lead or School Child Protection Officer.
- If your concern is about your immediate manager/Headteacher, or you feel you need to take it to someone outside the school/organisation, contact the Multi Agency Referral Unit (MARU)
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response - don't let matters rest.

- Ideally, you should put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places where you can.
- A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

What happens next

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries.
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation.
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

Self reporting

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

Further advice and support

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from The Writers' Block Designated Safeguarding Lead and Chair of the board of trustees.

Model 1 – Image Permission Form

• <i>*Organisation/artist</i> would like to use images/film of: (please give brief description of the project activity or specific image)
Other partner organisations in this project activity are below:
Our intended use is: (e.g. publication title, website etc) To be held by <i>*organisation/artist</i> and partner organisation for use in publications, promotional material and as advocacy and display at events and presentations Please circle to indicate your permission Yes / No To be used by the above organisations on their websites and social media but the name and age of the child will not be stated. Please circle to indicate your permission Yes / No
Name and signature of head teacher/parent/carer: (Print name, sign and date. Please ensure you have read the terms of consent attached as your signature here is acceptance of these) Name: School/Organisation:

1. I consent to **organisation/artist* taking and using any photographs/films, which are produced from the above assignment.
2. If I am the head teacher/director of the group, I confirm that I have obtained the permission of the adult or parent/carer of any children/young persons/vulnerable adults who are participating in the assignment or who appear(s) in the photograph(s)/film(s).
3. I am aware that the school/organisation, children/young persons/vulnerable adults participating in the assignment or persons whose image appears in the photographs/film has no rights of ownership, copyright or other interest in the photograph/film produced from this assignment.
4. I confirm that at all times during the assignment that the school/organisation shall supervise and be responsible for the children/young persons/vulnerable adults participating in the shoot/filming.

5. The storage and retention of images and film is subject to **organisation/artist* Privacy Policy which can be viewed on *website address*.
6. You may revoke your permission for use of images or film at any time. Please email *email address*

Model 2 - Reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse

Important Contact Details

First Point of Contact is The Writers' Block Designated Child Safeguarding Officer:

Name:	Helen Reynolds
Job:	Development Director
Email Address:	helen@thewritersblock.org.uk
Mobile:	07771 981094

It is not the responsibility of The Writers' Block's staff, freelance or otherwise, to contact the Multi- Agency Referral Unit. This responsibility lies with the school's designated child protection officer and the The Writers' Block Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Appropriate contacts outside The Writers' Block to be contacted by The Writers' Block Designated Safeguarding Lead if required:

Multi-Agency Referral Unit

T +44 0300 123 1116

E multiagencyreferralunit@cornwall.gcsx.gov.uk

(MARU) provides a multi-disciplinary response to concerns about the welfare or safety of a child in line with the LSCB guidance on interagency thresholds/continuum of need.

Model 3 – Responding to a child making an allegation of abuse

- ❖ Stay calm
- ❖ Listen carefully to what is said
- ❖ Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets
- ❖ Allow the child to continue at his/her own pace.
- ❖ Do not stop the children from speaking, or ask them to repeat what they have said unnecessarily.
- ❖ Ask questions for clarification only and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer
- ❖ Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you
- ❖ Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared
- ❖ Record in writing what was said using the child's own words immediately – note date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.
- ❖ Refer the case to the school's designated child safeguarding officer and The Writers' Block Director as soon as possible.
- ❖ Ensure the written account is given to the school's designated child safeguarding officer and The Writers' Block Director within 24 hours.

REMEMBER:

It is important that everyone in The Writers' Block is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies following a referral to them of concern about a child.

Model 4 – Checklist for reporting suspected abuse

This form is to help you to describe the information you have, you are not required to seek further information from any parties. This is the responsibility of Social Services should an investigation arise.

Name of child:

Age:

Home address and home number (if known):

Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? Give details.

Brief description of what has prompted the concerns: include dates, times etc of any specific incidents.

Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?

Have you spoken to the child? If so, what was said?

(If the child has not spoken to you of their own volition, do not seek to investigate the issue with the child yourself)

Have you consulted anybody else? Give details.

Your name and role

To whom reported and date of reporting

Your signature Today's date

If you are a freelance artist or practitioner working on behalf of The Writers' Block or a member of The Writers' Block's staff, you should refer this to the school's designated child protection officer and The Writers' Block Designated Safeguarding Lead. You should take no action yourself.

Model 5 – Flowchart : Reporting child protection concerns

