

STEPHEN SPENDER TRUST

Child Safeguarding Policy

1) Our Mission

The Stephen Spender Trust (SST) was established in 1997 to honour Stephen Spender's achievements as poet and translator of poetry, and as champion of the rights of creative artists and writers to free expression. Inspired by Stephen Spender's literary interests and achievements, the Stephen Spender Trust aims to widen appreciation of the literary legacy of Stephen Spender and his contemporaries and to promote literary translation.

2) Introduction

Our work very often involves children, and as well as wanting them to feel safe, confident, respected and valued, we have a legal obligation to ensure adequate protection for them. People who are under the age of 18 are protected in law by the Children Act. This document therefore lays out the details of our legal obligations and procedures, in order to ensure an organisational culture promoting a positive safe environment for all children.

Given that we are expanding our work into new schools and other learning communities across the UK, clear procedures and communication channels around safeguarding are therefore very important to the organisation and everyone involved with it.

All staff, board directors, freelancers, consultants and volunteers must be committed to working to the policy and principles established in this document and must also be familiar with the procedures to be followed in the event of any concern about child abuse (including bullying) or neglect. This policy applies to all paid staff, freelancers, volunteers, interns or anyone working on behalf of SST. For the purposes of this policy, the term 'staff' will include all the groups mentioned above. Through this policy we intend to confirm our commitment to safeguarding and ensure a framework for staff in their dealings with children. Where appropriate we will share this policy with individuals and groups who are not employees but may be working closely with young people.

All staff must read and sign this document before working for SST in any capacity.

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Saskia Spender
Tim Supple

*Also a Trustee

3) Definitions

We define **children** as anyone under the age of 18, and this policy focuses on this age range.

We define as **safeguarding** any preventative measure or incident procedure intended to ensure children are safe from harm and their values and opinions respected.

We define as **harm** any form of physical or emotional abuse and neglect by anyone else whether an adult or another child.

4) Values

The values underpinning this policy are:

- That we will work to ensure the conditions where our contributors and collaborators will thrive creatively by promoting dignity and respect
- That all children will be treated equally and their background and culture will be valued and respected.
- That the welfare of children and young people is of paramount importance

5) DBS Checks & Safe Recruitment

DBS stands for Disclosure and Barring Service, which is an executive non-departmental public body through which companies and organisations, where appropriate and according to legislation, can request criminal record checks on individuals which they intend to hire or

contract for work (including volunteering) with children.

Individuals and the self-employed cannot apply for a check directly to the DBS.

DBS checks have clear eligibility criteria:

- **Standard** – can be requested for paid or unpaid individuals in roles with access to sensitive personal information about children, including legal, medical and financial.
- **Enhanced** (excl. barred list check) – can be requested for individuals who work with children supervised (paid or unpaid) at least once a week or more, or four days in any thirty-day period, or overnight; who work in a specified place or in a specified role (defined as ‘regulated activity’), incl. caring, teaching, training, providing advice/guidance or therapy/treatment, transporting; or who are in positions of responsibility, such as staff in children’s charities or school governors.
- **Enhanced** (incl. barred list check) – can be requested for individuals who work unsupervised with children in regulated activities (see above) and a small number of positions listed in Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) regulations; to be eligible, unsupervised contact must be at least once a week or more, or four days in any thirty-day period, or overnight.

In light of this, freelance individuals and consultants we work with who are in contact with children on our behalf on an infrequent basis and never unsupervised, are not eligible for standard or enhanced DBS checks; during one-off visits we contractually require all partner schools to ensure there is a teacher or DBS checked adult present at all times. Where we employ facilitators who deliver intensive (at least four whole days in any given month) or repeat (at least once per week) activities for children we will require them to possess a current enhanced DBS check (within the last two years), or undergo a check through us.

SST sometimes contracts photographers or filmmakers to document activities involving children; we will only work with individuals that have been DBS checked, either through us or another organisation within the last 2 years, as these individuals will have unsupervised access to filmic or photographic material that depicts children.

We also require all individuals or organisations delivering events and activities commissioned by SST outside of schools to implement event-specific child safeguarding procedures.

In our **recruitment procedures**, we will take all practical measures to ensure that people unsuitable for working with children are not recruited to positions where they will have direct or indirect contact with children during the course of their work. In respect of all applicants:

- They will be asked to account for gaps in employment history.
- Two references from non-family members will be checked before new members of staff begin work.
- Referees will specifically be asked to state whether concerns of any kind have been raised about the candidate's relationships and work with children.
- All applicants are made aware of our Policy for the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders and a copy of this policy, and our Equal Opportunities Policy, is available upon request.
- All new staff must undertake a DBS check as individuals in positions of responsibility without regular unsupervised contact with children (see above); they will be subscribed to the automatic update service, which lets them keep their certificates up to date online and allows SST to check it online annually, when contracts are renewed. SST will pay the DBS subscription for as long as an individual is employed with us.
- Once appointed, they will be inducted in the safeguarding procedures and additional training in child protection will be arranged if required.
- Information on enhanced DBS checks will be stored in accordance with our data protection policy and the 1998 Data Protection Act.

6) Code of Conduct for Working with Children

Please read the following carefully to confirm you will abide by SST's code of conduct:

As SST staff you may encounter children who may be vulnerable in a range of situations and locations. For the avoidance of any doubt, the principles of behaviour set out below should be applied in all situations.

When working with young people staff should be mindful of professional boundaries and careful not to engender or give the impression of inviting personal dependency. In particular, staff should avoid behaviours which could be misconstrued.

Avoid:

- spending time with individual, or small groups of children unobserved; ensure a teacher/DBS checked adult is always in the room; even if you are DBS checked, avoid – wherever possible – unsupervised contact.

If it is absolutely necessary to be alone with a child:

- Make sure another adult knows where you are and how long you will be;
- Invite the child to bring a friend;
- Leave the door open of the room you are in;
- Move into the centre of the room so you are in plain view

You must:

- Treat all children with respect
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow
- Ensure that, whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others
- Respect a child's right to personal privacy
- Always maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Avoid physical contact with children unless it is necessary for a particular activity or if a child has been, or is about to be, injured. If contact is initiated by the children themselves, and in an open space, this is not a safeguarding issue. If physical contact cannot be avoided, seek permission of the child first and ensure they are comfortable with what you are going to do.
- Encourage children and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions no matter how well intentioned
- Be aware that physical contact with a child may be misinterpreted
- Recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children
- Operate within the organisation's principles, procedures and guidance, and any specific procedures
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse

You must not:

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children, or develop social or sexual relationships with them
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour
- Make suggestive or derogatory remarks in front of children
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking the facts
- Either exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues
- Show favouritism to any individual
- Rely on your good name or that of the organisation to protect you
- Believe 'it could never happen to me'
- Take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another prudent approach
- take pictures of children or young people, unless previously agreed with an SST employee and the teacher or parent; this is only permissible for official use, never for private purposes
- Offer to give lifts to a child in your vehicle
- Give gifts or money to children, unless as previously agreed reward or prize relating to a project-related activity. Gifts must be given openly and not based on favouritism.
- Hit or strike a child
- Verbally abuse (including shouting or swearing at) a child, or using foul language in front of a child
- Humiliate or undermine a child
- Encourage or knowingly be involved in a child committing a crime
- Commit any form of sexual misconduct towards a child whether verbal, physical or implied.

Always consider:

The acceptability of 'out of professional role contact' i.e. socialising with children either in person or via mobile phones, email or social networking.

Staff breaching these standards of behaviour will face disciplinary action.

Any individual acting for or on behalf of SST who suspects or is aware of a colleague behaving in any of the above ways should immediately inform SST's Designated Safeguarding Officer.

7) Awareness of abuse

Awareness of the possibility of a child being abused or neglected might be raised in a number of different ways:

- A child may disclose abuse or give reason to suspect that they or another child are being abused or at risk of significant harm
- A parent or other adult may raise a concern about either their own or another child
- A member of staff or volunteer may be suspected of abusing a child.

A child may seek you out to share information about abuse or neglect, or talk spontaneously individually or in groups when you are present. In these situations you must:

- Listen carefully and do not directly question them
- Give them time and attention
- Allow them to give a spontaneous account; do not stop them when 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, their 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: do not offer false confidentiality.
- Reassure the child that:
 - they have done the right thing in telling you;
 - they have not done anything wrong;
- Tell the child what you are going to do next and explain that you will need to get help to keep him/her safe.
- Do not ask the child to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.
- Contact SST's Safeguarding Officer immediately.

8) Referral Procedure

All staff have a responsibility to act on concerns they may have in relation to the safeguarding of children. If you are concerned about a child in any way you should raise this with the Safeguarding Officer in the first instance. This includes concerns or suspicions you have about abuse or risk of abuse, as well as allegations or disclosures which have come to your attention.

A Safeguarding concern is likely to relate to the possibility of harm or exploitation. **Please see Appendix 1 to identify signs of neglect or abuse.** Individual staff must not investigate and are not required to substantiate concerns, but must refer their concerns in all cases. The Safeguarding Officer will request a written or if necessary, a verbal description (with the Officer transcribing) of the incident and both signatures will be taken.

Any records made in relation to a referral or incident will be kept confidentially and in a secure place.

If the activity is in partnership with a host organisation, the next call of action is for the Safeguarding Officer to alert the host's designated Safeguarding Officer, teacher, or case worker. If the concern is ongoing, SST will request the host contact social services.

Should the activity be conducted solely under the responsibility of SST, the Safeguarding Officer will contact social services directly (See Appendix 3), by telephone in the first instance, followed by a written record within 48 hours which will accurately record the action agreed or that no further action is to be taken and the reasons for that decision.

In the case of allegations against any member of staff, the designated trustee has the duty to report this to the charity commission and the appropriate Safeguarding Children Board of the borough or county in which the incident took place. SST will ensure that the SST Board of Trustees Safeguarding Lead undergoes training every two years.

Safeguarding will be a regular agenda item at Board meetings, and as such this policy will be kept under review and updated on an annual basis in line with changes to legislation and/or our operational arrangements.

9) Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

SST's Designated Safeguarding Officer is:

Charlotte Ryland

Charlotte@stephen-spender.org

07967 033514

It is not the role of the DSO – or of SST as an organisation – to decide whether a child or young person has been abused or neglected. This is the task of each Local Authority's social care services, which have overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in their area. They have a number of statutory functions under the 1989 and 2004 Children Acts, including the implementation of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB) in each local authority and a mandatory system of Safeguarding Children leads in every school.

DSO responsibilities are:

- to make aware all individuals and organisations we work with of the policies and procedures for keeping children safe, including our practical Code of Conduct;
- to respond appropriately to disclosures by children, relating to abuse, neglect, or other forms of harm by implementing the necessary procedures;
- to respond appropriately and swiftly to allegations of abuse or neglect against our own staff, freelancers or volunteers; and to share relevant information with involved organisations, schools, social care services, and police as appropriate;

- to always remain up to date with and consult all staff re. current legislation and good practice, suggesting changes to existing procedures where necessary.

At board level, the Non-Executive Director responsible for leading on child safeguarding is Elisabeth Attwood, and she will be informed by the DSO if any issues are raised relating to the conduct of SST staff, or anyone acting on our behalf. It is also under her lead that the Child Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually.

If a claim needs to be filed against the Safeguarding Officer, it is essential that you contact the designated SST Board of Trustees Safeguarding Lead.

Contact Details:

Ms Elisabeth Attwood

libbyattwood@hotmail.com

07799 892760

Endorsement:

This policy was approved by the Board of Trustees in November 2020

Last updated: November 2020

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, please email info@stephen-spender.org.

Signed by:

Charlotte Ryland

Director, Stephen Spender Trust

on 12. November 2020

I declare I have read, understood, and will abide by the SST Child Safeguarding Policy.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Appendix 1

Types of Abuse and Neglect

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is deliberately causing physical harm to a child or adult. This might involve punching, kicking, biting, burning, scalding, shaking, throwing or beating with objects such as belts, whips, or sticks. It also includes poisoning, giving a child alcohol or illegal drugs, drowning or suffocation. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of illness in a child. In pregnancy an unborn child can be harmed by domestic violence.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is where repeated verbal threats, criticism, ridicule, shouting, lack of love and affection causes a severe adverse effect on a child's emotional development. It includes conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Emotional abuse may include not giving a child or adult opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child, overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child or adult from taking part in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of children, or it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may involve physical contact including penetrative sex, oral sex, masturbation, kissing, rubbing, or touching outside of clothing, or it may involve non-contact activities such as involving children in watching sexual activities, producing or looking at sexual images, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Abusers can be men, women or other children.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect is when a parent or carer fails to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter

(including exclusion from home or abandonment), medical care, or protection from physical and emotional harm or danger. It also includes failure to ensure access to education or to look after a child because the carer is under the influence of alcohol or drugs. In pregnancy neglect may occur as a result of misusing alcohol or drugs.

Spotting Signs of Abuse and Neglect

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered. It is not for SST staff to assess whether abuse or neglect has taken place. This is a matter for professional social services (see Appendix 3). It is however the duty of SST staff to contact the Safeguarding Officer if they spot any of the below signs of abuse and neglect in anyone they are working or come in contact with through SST activity.

Signs of possible physical abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls or rough games
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- The child gives inconsistent accounts for the cause of injuries
- Frozen watchfulness

Signs of possible sexual abuse

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- A child has an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour for their age, or regularly engages in sexual play inappropriate for their age
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- The child is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares which sometimes have overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia.

Signs of possible emotional abuse

- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety, changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden underachievement or lack of concentration
- In children: seeking adult attention and not mixing well with other children
- Sleep or speech disorders
- Negative statements about self
- Highly aggressive or cruel to others

- Extreme shyness or passivity
- Running away, stealing and lying

Signs of possible neglect

- Dirty skin, body odour, unwashed, uncombed hair and untreated lice
- Clothing that is dirty, too big or small, or inappropriate for weather conditions
- Frequently left unsupervised or alone
- Frequent tiredness
- Untreated illnesses, infected cuts or physical complaints which the carer does not respond to
- Frequently hungry
- Overeating junk food