

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

MATT+FIONA

Contents:

- **Introduction** - page 2
- **MATT+FIONA's Policy Statement** - page 2
- **Aims** - page 3
- **Providing good practice** – page 3
 - o What is good practice
- **Defining Child Abuse** – page 6
 - o Types of Abuse
 - o Indicators of Abuse
- **Responding to Suspicions and Allegations** – page 8
 - o Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse
 - o Recording Information
 - o Reporting the Concern
 - o Concerns outside Design Education CIC (e.g. a parent/guardian or carer)
 - o Confidentiality
 - o Internal Inquiries and Suspension
- **Child Protection Procedures** – page 11
- **Recruiting and Selecting Personnel with Children** – page 18
 - o Controlling Access to Children
 - o Interview and Induction
 - o Training
- **Guidelines for workshops, events and activities** - page 19
- **Summary** – page 20
- **Glossary** – page 20
- **Safeguarding incident, reporting and recording form** – page 22

Introduction

Everyone who participates in events and workshops at MATT+FIONA is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. Matthew Springett and Fiona MacDonald have a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, staff and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

MATT+FIONA is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone involved accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of MATT+FIONA, to skill and empower staff & volunteers to always act in an appropriate way when working with young people, and to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues. The policy has been produced in response to legislation and with particular reference to the major cross-departmental government policy concerning the well-being of children from birth to age 18, including the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004, Working Together 2015, *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)* and Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025.

MATT+FIONA's Policy Statement

MATT+FIONA is committed to the following:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in education workshops and wider activity in a fun and safe environment.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings.
- All suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All MATT+FIONA employees and volunteers who work with children will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and child protection procedures.

- Working in partnership with parents/guardians and children is essential for the protection of children.
- Implementing and monitoring of procedures and addressing gaps and changes in procedures.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to promote good practice in relation to child and vulnerable adults' protection by providing them with appropriate safety and protection while in the care of MATT+FIONA as an organisation; and to enable all facilitators to make safe, informed and confident responses in relation to child protection issues.

The policy and procedures will be reviewed annually by the Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs).

Providing Good Practice

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities at education activities everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework such as the MATT+FIONA Code of Conduct. It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees or participants/volunteers at MATT+FIONA to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child, as explained in section 4.

What is Good Practice?

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action:

- Always work in an open environment (e.g., avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Make the experience of education workshops at MATT+FIONA fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, and confront and deal with bullying.
- Treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity.
- Always put the welfare of the young person first.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with participants (e.g., it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given.
- Request written parental/guardian consent if MATT+FIONA staff are taking young people off site.

- Be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking/vaping or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Secure written parental/guardian consent for MATT+FIONA to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given.

Code of Conduct

All staff are expected to adhere to a code of conduct in respect of their contact with children and vulnerable adults and will be given annual training to ensure familiarity with, and adherence to, good practice and procedures. This can be found on our website.

Designation of Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

Matthew Springett is the primary designated DSO. Their role is to be the point of contact at the organisation in relation to any information or disclosures relating to child and vulnerable adults' protection issues and to pass on this information on to social services and the police when appropriate. MATT+FIONA will ensure that DSOs are given relevant training in relation to their responsibilities in this area and are kept aware of changes to legislation.

Whistleblowing and complaints

MATT+FIONA assures all staff, volunteers and freelance/contract workers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports concerns regarding a colleague's behaviour towards a child or vulnerable adult. The organisation has a grievance procedure that ensures staff are able to share their concerns in confidence. If staff wish to raise any concern about how workplace safeguarding is being handled or have issues with the DSO, MATT+FIONA Directors or other staff related to safeguarding that they don't feel comfortable raising internally they should contact the NSPCC's Whistleblowing Advice Line: 0800 028 0285 (8am - 8pm) or email help@nspcc.org.uk

The organisation takes all complaints seriously. Any complaints made in relation to child protection either by a child or vulnerable adult or by a staff member, volunteer, parent or carer should be reported to the MATT+FIONA's DSO and then acted on, with reference to the Lambeth Safeguarding Children Board referral and assessment team or when not in Lambeth to the local authority where the activity is taking place (or where the child normally lives).

Child supervision and DBS checking

MATT+FIONA activities for children are carried out under the supervision of parents, carers, school teaching staff or community youth workers acting in Loco Parentis. In usual circumstances the organisation does not undertake unsupervised activity for children. In any exceptional circumstances in which unsupervised activity takes place, the organisation will

ensure that appropriate processes, such as DBS checks, are in place in relation to all staff involved.

In addition, under the organisation's recruitment procedures, all staff engaged in education activity – and any other relevant staff - undergo standard police checking procedures, as undertaken by the DBS, and all professional and personal references provided are followed up and recorded. If a DBS disclosure reveals a criminal record this will be dealt with by the directors, Matthew Springett and Fiona MacDonald.

Photographs and video footage

MATT+FIONA endeavours to ensure that any photographs or video footage taken of children and used by the organisation or by a third party, is by written permission of parents, school or other responsible adults as appropriate. The organisation carries out permission procedures where photographs or video footage are taken of children in relation to any activity. This applies to all photographic and video material that may be used in any form of publication or broadcast including leaflets, brochures, websites, social media, film etc.

Any information which could be used to identify or trace a child or adult at risk should be withheld (names of individuals, schools, groups or institutions). Crests, badges and uniforms should not be shown, or the names should be digitally obscured. Where providing the name of an individual, school etc. (e.g. when celebrating an achievement, competition winners etc.) written permission is needed.

Consent can be withdrawn at any time by contacting the DSO. If there is a need to verify the identity of the person in the photograph or the person requesting the withdrawal, the image will be withdrawn in the meantime.

All photographs and videos are stored on a secure server.

Health, safety, accident and injury

MATT+FIONA has a Health & Safety policy in relation to the workshops, tool use, building and its activities. In addition, the organisation undertakes site and project specific health & safety risk assessments in relation to all of its activities for children and vulnerable adults and these are made available to the relevant parties including parents/carers, schools and institutions with which we are collaborating. In situations where MATT+FIONA are acting loco parentis for children or young people, either at their site or at another venue, the organisation holds health, Accident & Emergency contact forms for participating children. H&S risk assessments and emergency contact forms.

Defining Child Abuse

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

There are four main types of abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person.

Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood. Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

Types of Abuse

- **Physical Abuse:** where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse. This category of abuse can also include when a parent/guardians/carer reports non-existent symptoms or illness deliberately causes ill health in a young person they are looking after. This is called Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.
- **Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn. Ill treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.
- **Bullying** may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying. It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).
- **Neglect** occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing,

failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.

- Sexual Abuse occurs when adults (of any gender) use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- the young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person
- unexplained changes in a young person's behaviour e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- inappropriate sexual awareness
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- distrust of adult's, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- difficulty in making friends
- being prevented from socialising with others
- displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite
- losing weight for no apparent reason
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt

Signs of bullying include:

- behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go training or competitions
- an unexplained drop off in performance
- physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes
- a shortage of money or frequents loss of possessions

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is NOT the responsibility of those

working at MATT+FIONA to decide that child abuse is occurring. It IS their responsibility to act on any concerns.

Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

It is not the responsibility of anyone working at MATT+FIONA 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 through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person. This applies BOTH to allegations/suspicions of abuse occurring within MATT+FIONA and to allegations/suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in section 3 of this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person affected. In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately.

If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- **stay calm** so as not to frighten the young person
- **reassure** the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- **listen** to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously
- **keep questions to a minimum** and ask question in a non-leading way so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. **Only ask questions to clarify**
- **inform** the child that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help towards stopping the abuse from continuing
- **safety of the child** is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue
- **record** all information
- **report** the incident to the DSO at MATT+FIONA

In all cases if you are not sure what to do you can gain help from NSPCC 24 hour helpline. On 0800 800 500.

Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's.
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information.
- A description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred.
- Have the parents/guardians been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail.

Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

MATT+FIONA expects its volunteers and staff to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with the DSO and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken. If the DSO (Matthew Springett), co-director (Fiona MacDonald) or the MATT+FIONA project managers are not available you should take responsibility and seek advice from the NSPCC helpline, the duty officer at your local social services department or the police. Telephone numbers can be found in your local directory. Where there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation.

- **Criminal** in which case the police are immediately involved
- **Child protection** in which case the social services (and possibly) the police will be involved
- **Disciplinary** or misconduct in which case Matthew Springett and Fiona MacDonald will be involved

As mentioned previously in this document MATT+FIONA are not child protection experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection. Social services have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 2004 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by an employee or a volunteer should be reported to the DSO or MATT+FIONA directors, Matthew Springett and Fiona MacDonald who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- MATT+FIONA staff will refer the matter to social services department.
- The parent/guardian/carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- The directors of MATT+FIONA should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings.
- If a member of the MATT+FIONA team is the subject of the suspicion/allegation the report must be made to one of the directors of MATT+FIONA who will refer the matter to social services. If one of the directors is the subject of the allegation, then the report must be made to the other director, or to a third party via the NSPCC's Whistleblowing Advise Line: 0800 028 0285 (8am - 8pm) or email help@nspcc.org.uk

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such an allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to social services. This is because other children may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children.

Concerns outside MATT+FIONA (e.g. a parent/guardian or carer)

- Report your concerns to the DSO or the Directors
- If they are not available, the person being told or discovering the abuse should contact their local social services department or the police immediately.
- Social Services and the directors will decide how to inform the parents/carers.
- The Directors should ascertain whether or not the person/s involved in the incident play a role in the organisation and act accordingly.
- Maintain confidentiality on a need-to-know basis.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The DSO
- The Directors of MATT+FIONA.
- The project manager for the specific project.
- The lead teacher or youth worker for the project (if a school or youth group is involved).
- The parents/guardians of the child.
- The person making the allegation.
- Social Services/police.
- The alleged abuser (and parents/guardians if the alleged abuser is a child).

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser. All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

Internal Inquiries and Suspension

- The Directors at MATT+FIONA will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the Directors at MATT+FIONA will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases the Directors at MATT+FIONA must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Child Protection Procedures

- i. Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

MATT+FIONA's designated Safeguarding Officer is:

Co-Director: Matthew Springett. matt@mattandfiona.org // 07919592421

The DSO's contact details are available to all staff and any concerns or queries regarding child protection issues should be reported to one of the DSOs. NB: the DSO's responsibilities also extend to vulnerable adults if applicable.

MATT+FIONA's other Co-Director is:

Director: Fiona MacDonald. fiona@mattandfiona.org // 07753 104395

ii. Code of Conduct

All MATT+FIONA staff, volunteers, freelance/contract workers in contact with children – particularly those involved in the learning activities for children or vulnerable adults – must adhere to our Code of Conduct that can be accessed on the homepage of our website alongside this Safeguarding Policy. An extract of this is set out below in italics:

MATT+FIONA Code of Conduct for Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

(Aligned with UK Safeguarding Guidance)

1. Scope and Purpose

This Code of Conduct applies to all MATT+FIONA staff, volunteers, and freelance/contract workers who have contact with children and young people, including those involved in design, learning, and construction-based activities. Where matters apply to MATT+FIONA staff only, this is identified.

The purpose of this Code is to:

- *Safeguard and promote the **welfare of children and young people***
- *Clarify **expected standards of professional behaviour***
- *Reduce the risk of harm or allegations by promoting **safer working practice***

All adults working with children are responsible for acting in a way that promotes children's safety, wellbeing, and dignity at all times.

2. Safeguarding Principle

All staff, volunteers, and contractors must:

- ***Have regard to the welfare of children as paramount.***
- ***Act in accordance with MATT+FIONA's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies.***
- ***Understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.***

Children's welfare must take precedence over:

- Project deadlines or outcomes.
 - Organisational or personal interests.
 - Loyalty to colleagues or adults.
-

3. Professional Standards of Conduct

Adults working with children must:

- Treat all children **fairly, equally, and with respect**, recognising their individual needs and abilities.
 - Promote an **inclusive, non-discriminatory environment** and actively challenge discrimination based on race, religion, gender, disability, or social background.
 - Build **positive, professional relationships** with children based on trust, openness, and clear boundaries.
 - Communicate with children in a way that is **age-appropriate, respectful, and supportive**.
 - Encourage children to develop confidence, independence, and responsibility for their own behaviour.
-

4. Safer Working Practice and Supervision

To minimise risk, adults must:

- Maintain appropriate **levels of supervision** at all times.
 - Ensure activities are **properly planned and risk-assessed**, particularly where tools or construction methods are involved (M+F Staff).
 - Never leave a child **unsupervised with tools, equipment, or on a work site**.
 - Ensure that, wherever possible, **two DBS-checked adults are present** when working with children.
 - **Avoid one-to-one situations** in isolated or private spaces, including toilets or enclosed areas.
 - **Remain visible** when working with children, and work in open or observable environments wherever possible.
-

5. Behaviour Management and Role Modelling

All adults must:

- *Be positive role models, demonstrating **appropriate behaviour, language, punctuality, and commitment**.*
- *Promote positive behaviour through encouragement and clear expectations.*
- *Not permit **rough play, unsafe behaviour, bullying, or inappropriate language**.*
- ***Never use humiliation, intimidation, or punitive measures** to manage behaviour.*
Behaviour management is not the responsibility of volunteers or contractors. Volunteers and contractors must report any behavioural issues to a member of the MATT+FIONA team who will manage or escalate to accompanying group responsible adult.
- ***Refrain from smoking, vaping, or consuming alcohol** during activities or in the presence of children.*

6. Physical Contact and Personal Boundaries

Staff, volunteers, and contractors must:

- ***Avoid unnecessary physical contact** with children.*
- *Ensure that any physical contact is **appropriate, proportionate, and in response to the child's needs** (e.g. preventing injury).*
- ***Maintain professional boundaries** at all times.*
- ***Avoid undertaking personal care tasks** for children that they can reasonably do themselves.*

7. Prohibited Conduct

Adults working with children must not:

- *Use **abusive, offensive, sexualised, or discriminatory language**.*
- *Engage in **bullying, threatening, or coercive behaviour**.*
- *Act in a way that is, or could be perceived as, **sexually provocative or inappropriate**.*
- *Shame, humiliate, belittle, or deliberately undermine a child.*
- *Engage in **illegal activity related to children**.*
- *Allow their behaviour to place themselves or others at risk of allegation.*

8. First Aid, Accidents, and Incidents

All staff and volunteers must:

- *Be aware of the **designated first aiders** on site.*
- *Refer **all injuries or incidents**, however minor, for appropriate first aid.*
- *Ensure access to a **telephone for emergency services** at all times.*

- Report all accidents and incidents to a MATT+FIONA member of staff / first aider, in line with MATT+FIONA procedures. MATT+FIONA staff will then record the incident in line with MATT+FIONA procedures.
- Inform the **designated safeguarding lead, director or project manager** as soon as practicable following any incident.

9. Safeguarding Concerns and Reporting

All adults must:

- Be alert to signs of abuse, neglect, or poor practice.
- Never ignore, dismiss, or investigate independently a safeguarding concern.
- Report any concern, disclosure, or allegation immediately to the **designated safeguarding lead** or director or project manager).
- Record concerns accurately and promptly in line with safeguarding procedures.
- Understand that **failure to report concerns is itself a breach of safeguarding duties.**

10. Rights and Support for Staff and Volunteers

MATT+FIONA recognises that staff and volunteers have the right to:

- Receive guidance and support when reporting safeguarding concerns.
- Be treated fairly, consistently, and respectfully.
- Be protected from abuse, intimidation, or harassment by children, adults, or parents/carers.
- Raise concerns about unsafe practice (whistleblowing) without fear of reprisal.

11. Compliance and Breaches

- All staff, volunteers, and contractors are required to comply with this Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy.
- Minor breaches will be addressed promptly by the designated person.
- Serious or persistent breaches will result in removal from projects (everyone) and disciplinary action (M+F Staff only), and or referral to external authorities where appropriate.

iii. Roles and responsibilities relating to suspicions or allegations of child abuse

It is not the responsibility of MATT+FIONA staff to decide whether abuse has taken place or not. All staff must act if there is a cause for concern. Any suspicion, allegation, or incident of abuse must be reported to the DSO.

iv. Responding to allegations of abuse or inappropriate or dangerous behaviour against a member of staff, volunteer or other contracted worker

If the allegation is against a member of staff, volunteer or freelance/contract worker then the concern should be reported in the first instance to a DSO. If a DSO is not available staff members should go to their immediate line manager.

If the allegation is against the staff member's line manager or the DSO (Matthew Springett), then concern should be reported directly to the other Co-Director, Fiona MacDonald. If the allegation is against both Directors, then the staff member should use the NSPCC's Whistleblowing Advise Line: 0800 028 0285 (8am - 8pm) or email help@nspcc.org.uk

Any allegation made against a member of staff should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (formerly abbreviated to LADO) within one working day of the incident. The contact number for the Designated Officer in Lambeth is 020 7926 4679 or 07720 828 700 (ask to speak to the Duty Child Protection Advisor) OR email lado@lambeth.gov.uk and the Integrated Referral Hub on helpandprotection@lambeth.gov.uk, or when not in Lambeth to the local authority where the activity is taking place (or where the child normally lives).

Irrespective of action by Social Services or the police, Senior Management must follow MATT+FIONA's Disciplinary Procedure as appropriate.

v. Responding to an allegation of abuse

Abuse or suspected abuse of a child may present in two ways: a staff member may observe abuse, or a child may confide in a member of staff ('disclosure').

Observation of an abusive incident requires:

- immediate action to protect the child
- immediate medical attention if necessary
- consultation with the DSO who will contact the appropriate services or, if appropriate, call 999.

Disclosure: If a child confides an abusive situation to a member of staff, volunteers, freelance/contract workers, they have placed that person in a position of trust to help them - even if they ask them not to do anything or tell anyone. If such a disclosure occurs, the member should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child
- Take what the child says seriously and record the information as soon as possible and as set out earlier in this document.
- Pass on information to the DSO**

The staff member, volunteer, freelance/contract worker should not:

- Make promises that cannot be kept (such as the ability to stop the abuse)
- Promise confidentiality: Staff members, volunteers, freelance/contract workers have a duty to report any disclosures
- Ask leading questions

If there is a serious and immediate threat to a child, then the police must be contacted immediately.

Children's Social Care should also be contacted. The Lambeth Safeguarding Children's Partnership's telephone number is 020 7926 3100. They can also be contacted by email via saferchildren@lambeth.gov.uk, or when not in Lambeth to the local authority where the activity is taking place (or where the child normally lives).

**It is essential that any disclosure is acted on by the relevant member of staff and reported by MATT+FIONA's DSO to relevant authorities (social services, school or police). It is NOT for the member of staff, volunteer, freelance/contract worker or DSO to make a judgement about the severity, nature or authenticity of the disclosure.

Reporting a disclosure might, for example, provide the information social services needs to build a more complete picture of an 'at risk' child or vulnerable adult.

vi. Recording an allegation of abuse

The member of staff, volunteer or freelance/contract worker who receives a concern or disclosure of abuse should record the incident first hand.

To make an accurate recording of any concerns or disclosures the member of staff should fill out MATT+FIONA's Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form and include the following:

- A timely response, write down the details as soon as possible
- Date and sign the record- if you later recall further information do not change the original record, add as addendum
- Record verbatim notes of what child/ young person says
- The details of the concern: nature of any injury/ abuse

The form can be found at the end of this policy, or the DSO can supply one. It is the DSO's responsibility to pass this on to Children's Social Care.

The completed incident form will be passed on to the Local Authority Designated Officer, or Children's Social Care team, by MATT+FIONA's DSO. All forms are stored electronically with MATT+FIONA until the child is 25 years of age (or for 10 years if the incident involves a vulnerable adult) before being destroyed. Access is strictly controlled to this documentation.

Recruiting and Selecting Personnel to Work with Children

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, both full and part time. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children the following steps should be taken when recruiting.

Controlling Access to Children

- All staff should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about the applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from the applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Two confidential references, ideally including one regarding previous work with children.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo).
- All volunteers should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about the applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Volunteers are not DBS checked BUT:
- Volunteers are never left alone with children or vulnerable adults – under any circumstances. One DBS-checked staff member is present at all times.

Interview and Induction

All employees and volunteers will be required to attend a briefing for the project they are participating in, carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full, including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures.
- They should sign up to MATT+FIONA's Code of Conduct.
- Child Protection Procedures are explained, and training needs identified e.g. basic child protection awareness.

Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child.
- Work safely and effectively with children.

For M+F Staff this includes certified **NSPCC Introduction to safeguarding and child protection training**.

MATT+FIONA requires:

- All staff who have access to children to undergo a DBS check.
- Volunteers never to be left alone with children (two DBS-checked staff members to be present at all times).
- All employees to undertake relevant child protection training or undertake a form of home study, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of positive culture towards good practice and child protection.
- All staff and volunteers to receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.

Guidelines for workshops, events and activities

All staff and volunteers who are leading the workshops are required to:

- Wear name badges at all times so they are easy to identify.
- Ensure children and young people are accompanied around the building and on any trips outside the building.
- Gain signed permission forms from parents/guardians leaving their children in the care of MATT+FIONA agreeing for first aid to be administered on site in case of an accident or emergency.
- Gain signed permission forms from parents/guardians leaving their children in the care of MATT+FIONA agreeing they are happy for their child to be photographed and filmed taking part in the workshops.
- Ensure children are accompanied to the toilet by a DBS checked member of staff if there is the likelihood other adults will be using the same facilities.
- Record any accidents or emergencies with one of the Directors – they will have access to the accidents and emergencies record book and they are a trained First Aider.
- Be aware of the risk assessment that has been completed for the workshop, event or activity and ensure recommended actions before, during and after the session are taken to prevent identified risks.
- Take responsibility of children and young people during fire evacuations.
- Use only tools and equipment appropriate to the skills and experience of the age group attending the workshop, event or activity, or provide adequate training in how to use the equipment safely.

Summary

This Child & Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy and guidance confirms MATT+FIONA's commitment to promote the welfare and safety of all visitors and participants and to those engaged in its activities. All staff members, volunteers, freelance/contract workers will be supported in relation to promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults by being made aware of the procedures outlined in this document and via annual training. All staff, volunteers, freelance/contract workers will be expected to read this policy, sign an agreement to comply with it, and apply the procedures in practice.

Glossary

Child/Children

In keeping with 'Every Child Matters', the Children's Act 2004, 'child' or 'children' refers to young people up to 18 years of age

Vulnerable adults

This might include adults with learning or physical disabilities, asylum seekers or refugees

Abuse

A form of maltreatment of a child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (as contained in Working Together 2013). They can also be abused by other children.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. It replaces the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). DBS is an executive non-departmental public body of the Home Office.

In Loco Parentis (person acting)

A person who has been given explicit permission to assume parental responsibility for a child by a parent or legal guardian.

Last reviewed by: Matthew Springett February 2026

Next due for review: February 2027



MATT+FIONA Safeguarding Incident Reporting and Recording Form

Date and time of the incident or disclosure:

Date and time of this report:

Person who observed the incident or the disclosure was revealed to

Name:

Email:

Phone number:

Person completing this report (if different to above)

Name:

Phone number:

Email address:

Child/young person/vulnerable adult who is the subject of the incident

Name:

Home address:

Phone number:

School:

Names of all persons involved in the incident, including any witnesses

Other information ascertained about the child who is the subject of the incident, including parents, siblings, carers:

Complete the following (if known)

Preferred language:

Disability:

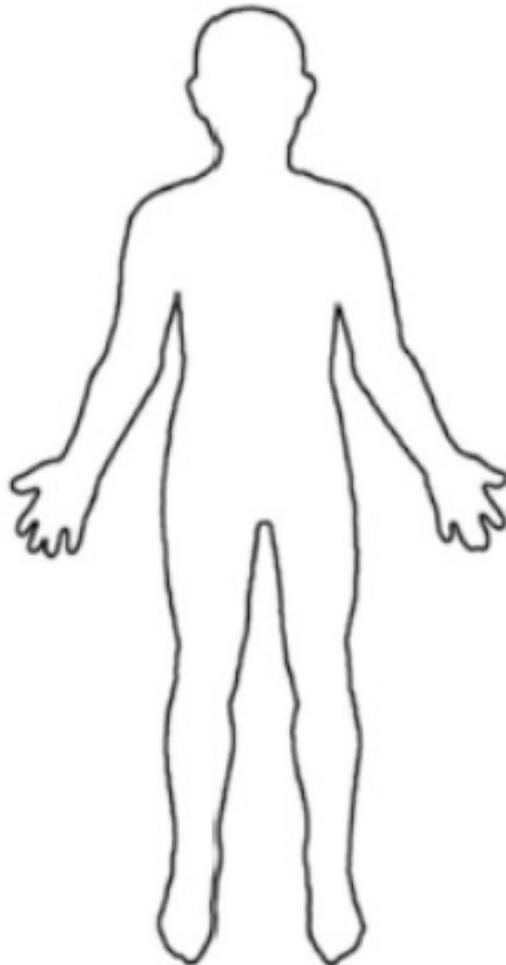
Ethnic Origin:

Religion:

Details of concern – include where incident occurred, who witnessed it, date, time, etc.

Physical appearance/ behaviour of child.

Use the diagram below if it helps to more accurately record your observations.



If a phone call was made, who reviewed the call? Please include the date, time, what was said and what actions will be taken.

Has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said? Please record this as accurately as you can remember it. Use the exact words the child or vulnerable adult used:

Professional opinion should be set aside from factual observations and should be labelled as such.

Who has discussed this or been consulted at MATT+FIONA about this concern?

What action is MATT+FIONA's Designated Safeguarding Officer taking?

Recorded by

Name:

Job Title:

Contact Details:

Date:

Signature: