**Child Safeguarding Policy**

# Definitions

**Child:** Anyone under the age of 18.

However, Blossom Trust works with numerous vulnerable individuals over the age of 18, who are included in these safeguarding documents. Therefore, the same rules and policies apply to any individual over the age of 18.

**Child abuse**:

* **Physical Abuse**: The deliberate or non-accidental action of causing risk, harm, injury or suffering to a child.
* **Emotional Abuse**: Harm to a child’s emotional, mental or psychological development. Emotional abuse can be characterised by exposing the child to behaviour resulting in anxiety, depression, stress among others.
* **Neglect Treatment:** The failure to meet the child’s basic rights or needs as per the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights both intentionally as unintentionally.
* **Sexual Exploitation & Abuse**: All forms of sexual violence, coercion, intimidation and manipulations. Sexual exploitation is the attempt or actual abuse of the position of a vulnerable child/individual for sexual purposes.

**Child Data:** All paper or electronic information containing personal identifiable information of the child. This also includes all social media accounts.

**Child Safeguarding:** describes the standards, policies and guidelines within an organization, put in place to protect children and vulnerable individuals from both intentional and unintentional harm, exploitation, or emotional distress. This involves both prevention measures in line with the government policy and our commitment to child safety, and guidelines for members of staff and children for responding to abuse.

# Statement of Intent

At Blossom Trust, child security is particularly relevant to the work we conduct at Dayspring Home, the Creche and to our outreach projects with more vulnerable members of the wider community. As an NGO that works with young people and high-risk groups, every member of the team must understand and complies with the guidelines set out in the policy. This ensures that each child and community member is protected and respectfully represented, as well as protecting the staff and interns. We are committed to ensuring and prioritising child security in all aspects of our work and expect the same commitment from all volunteers and interns that join the organisation.

We will meet our commitment to safeguarding children and vulnerable people by promoting a safe and protective environment in which:

* All children and vulnerable people have equal rights to protection from any form of ill-treatment, abuse, neglect and exploitation.
* All children and vulnerable people should be encouraged to fulfil their potential and inequalities should be challenged.
* Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children and vulnerable people.
* BLOSSOM and its partners have a duty of care and vulnerable people with whom it works.

As we have a designated children's home as part of our trust, interaction with the children is assumed. However, appropriate behaviour and adherence to the code of conduct is paramount. What is considered appropriate and inappropriate behaviour or the expected ‘code of conduct’ is in line with international regulations on child welfare. These should also be common sense for respectful and safe interactions.

**Appropriate behaviour**:

All Blossom staff, associates, volunteers and hers are expected to show common sense and sensitivity when working with children and vulnerable people. These guidelines will clarify which behaviour is considered appropriate.

**Inappropriate behaviour:**

All Blossom staff, associates, volunteers and others are expected to comply with these guidelines. Therefore, any form of abuse and/or non-compliance to these guidelines will be considered inappropriate and will be taken very seriously by Blossom Trust. Both an immediate termination of the collaboration and other legal consequences can be expected.

The community, family and children concerned will be treated with respect at all times by the visitor and vice versa. If there are any concerns about what behaviour is appropriate and whatnot, this should be discussed in advance with Blossom Trust.

**BLOSSOM TRUST HAS A ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY FOR CHILD ABUSE.**

**Education and Training**

BLOSSOM is committed to establishing a working environment that promotes the protection of children and vulnerable people. All staff and associates of BLOSSOM are encouraged to take part in training and learning opportunities to develop and improve organisational systems and procedures which aim to protect children and vulnerable people. Partner organisations are encouraged to establish safe environments for children and vulnerable people within their work and will be assisted by BLOSSOM to establish policies and procedures to support this.

## Staff training

*Blossom Staff/Interns:*

All staff are required to read and sign the Child Protection Manual and/or take part in child protection training at the start of work and undertake a refreshment of training twice a year.

*Volunteers/Associates:*

Volunteers are required to read and sign the Child Protection Policy and all staff should be certified for no criminal convictions. Associates and donors who wish to be involved with the organisation are encouraged to read the policy.

## Staff recruitment

*Blossom Staff*

The executive director is responsible for the requirement of new members of staff. When new local staff joins the Blossom Trust, it is necessary that they comply with the child safeguarding policy and a necessary background check is done. It is essential to do a background check and make sure no prior criminal convictions have occurred.

*Blossom Interns*

Interns are generally responsible for the recruitment of new intern team members and the recruitment of volunteers. When recruiting volunteers who intend to stay and spend time at Dayspring, it is essential to ask for a copy of a certificate/declaration from their home country to ensure that they have no criminal convictions (for example a ‘DBS check’ for UK residents).

# Management Structure

Blossom is a registered charity that complies with the Charities and Companies Acts. It is governed by a Board of Trustees which is responsible for approving all policies and procedures at Blossom. Day to Day responsibilities for the running of the organisation is delegated to the Chief Executive

# Safeguarding in Data & Communications

## Professional Data & Communication

* A large part of the running of the organisation relies on fundraising, social media presence and keeping the website regularly updated. It is, therefore, necessary to keep good photographic evidence for the projects, activities and festivities that occur, both in the wider community and in Dayspring Home. As such, a safeguarding policy for professional data communication has been included to ensure that the photographs and the recorded content is suitable and responsible for the welfare of the individuals involved.

### General consent

**Aim and use must be clear when seeking permission to use photos/reports.**

* For children over 12 years old, permission and care-takers are required and consent forms must be obtained.
* Permission needs to be sought in the native language of the child
* Children should be allowed to stop at any time, and withdraw consent

### Photography

Must comply with the guidelines for safe, anonymous reporting.

* Ensure: no personal identifying details (address, school, etc.)
* The child and legal caretaker should be fully involved in choosing the images, whether to publish them or not and if so, where to publish them.
* Images of extremely vulnerable children (such as children with HIV/AIDS, victims of abuse) should be made unrecognizable, and their name and identity need to be changed.

### Reporting

Reporting must be neutral, honest and representative.

* Children need to fully understand they are talking to a reporter, and what the goal and intended use is of the interview
* The story should be balanced and give an accurate representation of the life and circumstances of a child.
* Children must be represented as human beings with their own identity and dignity preserved, and never stigmatized
* Communication is not allowed to present children solely as victims
* Children should be able to give their account
* When asking questions, avoid leading or biased questions and don’t push children to answer questions

## Personal Data & Communications

We understand that the experience at Dayspring is something that many volunteers and interns wish to share with friends and family. This is also valuable for the organisation profile and to raise awareness. However, the same expectations for conduct apply to personal communications.

### Volunteers and Interns

* Volunteers and interns should not be publishing photos of children / vulnerable people on the internet without permission
* For photos of adults: only if permission is asked, photos may be published on personal accounts.
* Strictly no photos of children when: naked, crying, or in an uncomfortable or compromising situation

# Identification of vulnerable children and individuals

The children we work with, often come are homeless, have lost parents or have otherwise broken homes. As such, care must be taken to ensure that the children are happy and feel safe at Dayspring. In children, you might look for individuals that are unusually withdrawn, sad, quiet, or unusually angry, lashing out or engaging in delinquent behaviour such as bullying, violence, stealing or running away. These may be reasons to flag the issue to senior staff and raise your concerns.

Common sense should be applied to identifying vulnerable individuals, but if in doubt, talk to a senior member of staff and they should be able to inform you as to a child’s personal history and whether the behaviour is characteristic or anomalous and whether it needs to be monitored.

Additionally, each project conducted in the community should be considered for any potentially harmful effects. Attention should particularly be given to any unforeseen harmful consequences, which should also be addressed.

If you have recognised a case of misconduct or a child being harmed, either physically, mentally or emotionally, you should immediately flag the issue and report it to your supervisor or a senior member of staff.

# Recognition and Reporting of Misconduct

## Reporting

Reporting of suspected misconduct or suspected emotional/physical/sexual detriment to children should be immediately flagged. This should firstly be taken to your supervisor or a senior member of staff. For volunteers, concerns should be taken either to the intern supervising you or to Raja. For interns, concerns should be taken to the Executive Director or Child Welfare Officer.

* Executive Director: blossomtrust@gmail.com
* Project Coordinator Intern: [blossom.projectcoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:blossom.projectcoordinator@gmail.com)
* Child Welfare Officer: [blossom.rajasakthivel@gmail.com](mailto:blossom.rajasakthivel@gmail.com) OR +919843417111

## Reacting

If someone has reported suspected misconduct or raised a concern with you, you must treat the report seriously. The next steps are to discuss the report with your senior or with Mercy. Following this, the child in question should be monitored, or taken aside to talk to ascertain whether they can confirm anything. See below for dealing with child reports.

All reports of and reactions to allegations/events should be conducted with the highest discretion and confidentiality, for the individuals involved and for the organisation.

## The Child's Perspective

It is also necessary to have procedures in place so that children or vulnerable adults feel able to report any abuse or harm themselves. It should be made clear to them that they can talk openly with individuals that they trust, whether that is the interns, the volunteers or the warden.

If a child comes to you with a report, the utmost care should be taken to protect the child’s trust and confidentiality. If it can be handled on a small scale, you may give advice or reassurance. If it is something that will require formal action, seek the child’s permission to report the misdemeanour to higher authorities within the organisation. Ultimately the child’s security and safety is the first priority, and there may be occasions where you have to report the story to others to ensure the child’s safety and in their best interests.

**Disciplinary Measures**

All employees of BLOSSOM are subject to the standard terms and conditions of employment which require adherence to all organisational policies and procedures. Any breach of these policies and procedures will result in BLOSSOM’s standard disciplinary procedures being followed. Non-compliance to these policies and procedures will lead to the termination of the contract and the pursuit of any other legal remedies.