



WAGGGS

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

WAGGGS policies fall into three main categories.

Constitutional governance policies

Decided by the World Conference: handle fundamental issues of mission, vision, values, strategy and priorities of the Movement.

World Board governance policies

Decided by the World Board: handle the specific governance responsibilities of WAGGGS Global Team and provide guidance for the implementation of the strategy of the organisation. Putting into practice the overall policy and strategy of WAGGGS; connecting and integrating activities and services to achieve the mission, vision and strategy.

Functional policies

Decided by the World Board and/or Chief Executive, as appropriate: handle major functional operations, provide the next level of detail to guide the work and are developed by the relevant groups working in functional areas.

This is a: World Board governance policy and

it applies to: all volunteers, employees, contractors (including subcontractors) or any others working with or on behalf of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts “WAGGGS”

For further information relating to the contents of this document, please email waggs@waggs.org

Previous version approved by the World Board, Sep 2011

This update approved by the World Board, 30 September 2018 (W.Board 4819a)

Amended December 2019 to take account of organisational changes and the July 2019 safeguarding audit

Next review by the World Board – no later than 31 December 2020, or when relevant legislation changes

For clarity, the version of this policy found on the WAGGGS website should be considered the correct version:

[WAGGGS Website](#)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As an international organisation for every girl and any girl, WAGGGS is committed to ensuring the fulfilment of children's rights, including their rights to protection, as articulated in the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).
- 1.2 WAGGGS recognises it has an obligation to put in place all reasonable safeguarding measures to ensure - as far as possible - the safety and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults, including those with whom we work directly and those involved in our work through Member Organisations (MOs).
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy and associated procedures is to provide clarity to all on how they should engage with children, young people and vulnerable adults when working for, on behalf of, or in partnership with WAGGGS. It is also to help us make sure that employees, volunteers and other representatives are protected.
- 1.4 It is intended to help us to have a common understanding of safeguarding issues, develop good practice across the diverse and complex areas in which we operate and thereby increase accountability in this crucial aspect of our work.
- 1.5 This policy constitutes WAGGGS' global policy. Whilst it is recognised that local legislation may vary from country to country, this policy identifies our minimum standards and may exceed the requirements of local legislation.
- 1.6 Any breach of this policy will be treated as a disciplinary matter, which may result in immediate termination of employment or contract, withdrawal of volunteer status, and reporting to the police, relevant regulatory authority or other body.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Safeguarding** is the responsibility that an organisation has to ensure that their employees and volunteers, partners, vendors, operations and programmes do no harm to children, young people or vulnerable adults (together referred to as 'vulnerable people' under this policy); that they do not expose them to the risk of discrimination, neglect, harm and abuse; and that any concerns the organisation has about the safety of vulnerable people within the communities in which they work, are dealt with and reported to the appropriate authorities. Safeguarding is also the responsibility that the organisation has for protecting its employees and volunteers when they are vulnerable, for example, when ill or at risk of harm or abuse.
- 2.2 **Child protection** is a central part of safeguarding. It is the process of protecting individual children identified as either suffering or at risk of significant harm as a result of abuse or programme of work. Child protection also includes measures and structures designed to prevent and respond to abuse.
- 2.3 **Abuse** is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take the form of physical, psychological, financial or sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the health, survival, development or dignity of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

Abuse can be a single act or repeated acts and can be unintentional or deliberate. Abuse often involves criminal acts.
- 2.4 **Discriminatory abuse** is abuse motivated by a vulnerable person's age, race, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or other personal characteristic.
- 2.5 **Financial or material abuse** includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- 2.6 **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a vulnerable person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of his/her health or development. Examples include failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, failure to protect them from physical or psychological harm or danger; failure to ensure

adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a vulnerable person's basic emotional needs.

- 2.7 **Physical abuse** includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
- 2.8 **Psychological abuse** includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. Examples include not giving a vulnerable person opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a vulnerable person, which may include interactions that are beyond a vulnerable person's developmental capability. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), or the exploitation or corruption of a vulnerable person.
- 2.9 **Sexual abuse** involves forcing, enticing or coercing someone to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the vulnerable person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving a vulnerable person in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse can be carried out by adults or other children.
- 2.10 **Child** – WAGGGS regards a child as anyone under the age of 18 years, irrespective of the age of majority in the country in which the child lives or in their home country. It is widely recognised that children are generally more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation due to factors such as age, gender, social and economic status, developmental stage, and dependence on others.
- 2.11 **Vulnerable person/people** – for the purposes of this policy this is an umbrella term which covers children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- 2.12 **Vulnerable adult** - a person, 18 years and above, who by reason of disability, age, gender, social and economic status, or illness, the context they are in, may be unable to take care of or to protect him or herself against abuse, harm or exploitation.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 WAGGGS has zero tolerance against abuse and exploitation of vulnerable people. WAGGGS also recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that WAGGGS has an obligation to put in place reasonable measures to ensure, as far as possible, the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable people with whom we work.
- 3.2 WAGGGS works to the following key principles to protect vulnerable people:
- 3.2.1 The best interests of the vulnerable person are paramount and shall be the primary consideration in our decision-making.
- 3.2.2 Everyone has an equal right to protection from abuse and exploitation regardless of age, race, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or having a child, gender reassignment, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
- 3.2.3 As an international organisation, we endorse the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) general principle, that all the rights guaranteed by it must be available to all children without discrimination; and article 19 which accords equal rights to protection for children from abuse. Culture must not be used as an excuse to abuse children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- 3.2.4 WAGGGS will take responsibility to meet our obligations regarding our duty of care towards vulnerable people, and take action where we believe that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is at risk or is actually harmed.

- 3.2.5 WAGGGS will ensure that employees and volunteers are introduced to our Safeguarding Code of Conduct (Appendix 1) and trained in our procedures as a key part of the recruitment and induction process.
- 3.2.6 WAGGGS will ensure that all partners are informed of and in compliance with our safeguarding policies and procedures. When working with or through Member Organisations, partners or sub-contractors, WAGGGS will carry out due diligence checks to ensure that their safeguarding procedures are consistent and in line with the principles and approaches set out in this policy.
- 3.2.7 WAGGGS recognises that an element of risk exists, and while we may never be able to totally remove this, we need to do all we can to reduce it or limit its impact.
- 3.2.8 WAGGGS respects confidentiality and has a responsibility to protect sensitive personal data. Information should only be shared and handled on a need-to-know basis, that is, access to the information must be necessary for the conduct of one's official duties. Only individuals who have legitimate reasons to access the information are allowed to receive it. Details can be found in WAGGGS' privacy policy.
- 3.2.9 WAGGGS seeks always to work in ways which are culturally sensitive and that respect the diverse nature of our Movement and the communities in which we work. We recognise that there are many different ways of thinking and taking care of vulnerable people and making sure they are protected. It is acknowledged that protecting these groups of individuals and being culturally sensitive can be a difficult balancing act.
- 3.2.10 WAGGGS commits to monitoring the implementation of the safeguarding policy. This policy will be reviewed annually and earlier if necessary. The World Board will receive quarterly updates on safeguarding issues from the Leadership Team.

4. SCOPE

- 4.1 The responsibilities set out in policy are obligatory for all volunteers, employees, contractors (and sub-contractors) or any others engaged on WAGGGS' business. For clarity, this policy is applicable to all employees and volunteers in Regions, World Centres, as well as those based at the World Bureau, Brussels or working from home.
- 4.2 It also covers Member Organisations that are directly involved in delivering WAGGGS funded programmes or those individuals participating in WAGGGS funded events.
- 4.3 This policy demonstrates how WAGGGS will meet its legal obligations and reassure volunteers, employees, Member Organisations, partners and members of the public:
 - 4.3.1 On what they can expect WAGGGS to do to protect and safeguard vulnerable people.
 - 4.3.2 That they are able to safely voice any concerns through an established procedure.
 - 4.3.3 That all reports of abuse or potential abuse are dealt with in a serious and effective manner.
 - 4.3.4 That there is an efficient recording and monitoring system in place.
 - 4.3.5 That employees, volunteers, contractors, Member Organisations and partners receive appropriate induction on safeguarding.
 - 4.3.6 That a robust 'safe' recruitment procedure is in place.
- 4.4 There are additional procedures in place that apply to those that work or have contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- 4.5 This policy does not cover WAGGGS' role and responsibility for safeguarding issues in Member Organisations that are not directly related to WAGGGS funded programmes. For safeguarding issues outside WAGGGS funded programmes, please refer to *Dealing with Whistleblowing Concerns about Member Organisations*.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 **All** volunteers, employees, contractors, partner organisations (including Member Organisations involved in programmes) and visitors are obliged to follow this policy and maintain an environment that prevents exploitation or abuse and which encourages reporting of breaches of this policy using the appropriate procedures.
- 5.2 **Managers** at all levels are responsible for ensuring employees, volunteers, contractors, visitors and partner organisations (including Member Organisations) are aware of the policy and are supported to implement and work

in accordance with it, as well as creating a management culture that encourages a focus on safeguarding. They must ensure that they are responsive, acting immediately if they become aware of any safeguarding concerns, and supportive towards employees or volunteers who complain about breaches in this policy.

5.3 **Designated safeguarding officers** are responsible for handling reports or concerns, about the protection of vulnerable people, appropriately and in accordance with the procedures that underpin this policy (see Appendix 2 - the guide for managing safeguarding concerns).

5.4 The WAGGGS designated safeguarding officers are:

- 5.4.1 Chief Executive Officer
- 5.4.2 Deputy Chief Executive (deputy lead designated safeguarding officer)
- 5.4.3 Head of Finance and Corporate Services (lead designated safeguarding officer)
- 5.4.4 Head of International Operations
- 5.4.5 World Centre Managers (for safeguarding issues at their own World Centre)

5.5 The lead designated safeguarding officer is responsible for:

- 5.5.1 monitoring and recording safeguarding concerns
- 5.5.2 ensuring referrals to the relevant authorities happen without delay
- 5.5.3 updating safeguarding training for all appropriate employees and volunteers
- 5.5.4 ensuring this policy is reviewed every year or earlier if necessary
- 5.5.5 ensuring it is implemented throughout the organisation and safeguarding training given
- 5.5.6 ensuring monitoring and recording procedures are implemented

5.6 The **WAGGGS Leadership Team** is responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of this policy and associated procedures and ensuring that everyone linked with WAGGGS is equipped and supported to meet their responsibilities.

5.7 The **Chief Executive Officer** is responsible for providing regular updates to the World Board on safeguarding issues through the CEO's report or as substantive World Board agenda items as necessary.

5.8 The **World Board** holds ultimate accountability for this policy. As trustees, World Board members are responsible for ensuring that those benefiting from, or working with WAGGGS are not harmed in any way through contact with it. They have a legal duty to act prudently and this means that they must take all reasonable steps within their power to ensure that this does not happen. This includes ensuring compliance with appropriate legislation and where possible adopting sector appropriate best practice. A World Board member should be nominated as trustee safeguarding lead to work with the Leadership Team to provide oversight and support on safeguarding matters.

5.9 The **trustee safeguarding lead** is responsible for holding the lead designated safeguarding officer to account for the day-to-day operation of this policy and associated processes.

6. PROCEDURE OVERVIEW

Recruitment and Selection

- 6.1 Safe recruitment and vetting processes are followed for all volunteers, employees, contractors and any individual who represents WAGGGS (see the employee and volunteer recruitment policies).
- 6.2 In the UK, where a volunteer, employee or other WAGGGS representative (including contractors and sub-contractors) is engaged in 'regulated activity' (direct work with vulnerable individuals), a criminal background check will be undertaken as part of the recruitment process. For clarification on what constitutes a "regulated activity", please contact the Human Resources and Organisational Development team.
- 6.3 Where WAGGGS representatives are based in other countries (for example at World Centres or in roles that have significant direct contact with vulnerable people), equivalent criminal background checks may also be appropriate.

- 6.4 All WAGGGS volunteers, employees and other representatives must sign and abide by this safeguarding policy and the code of conduct (see Appendix 1). The code sets out the standards of practice we expect of all WAGGGS representatives in relation to safeguarding.

Induction and Support

- 6.5 Advice, support and training on safeguarding will be provided to all employees, volunteers and others on:
- 6.5.1 What they should do in the event of a disclosure
 - 6.5.2 What to do if they have concerns about the welfare of a child
 - 6.5.3 How to recognise signs of abuse
 - 6.5.4 What to do if they have concerns about a WAGGGS volunteer, employee, or someone in a partner organisation (including an MO that is formally involved in a WAGGGS programme).
 - 6.5.5 Where to go for advice and support within WAGGGS
- 6.6 Ensure that clear processes for reporting and dealing with safeguarding concerns and incidents are widely communicated, regularly reviewed and consistently applied. Where allegations are made about an employee or volunteer, careful consideration must take place about the appropriateness of the person continuing to work with WAGGGS. (For more detailed guidance, refer to the WAGGGS employee and volunteer disciplinary policies.)
- 6.7 For full details on WAGGGS' safeguarding procedures, please refer to Appendix 2 - the guide for managing safeguarding concerns.

Data Privacy

- 6.8 Ensure that personal information is kept confidential unless we have the agreement of the individual and/or their parent/guardian, except where it is necessary to pass this to a specialised child welfare or law enforcement agency in relation to a safeguarding incident. For further information, please see the WAGGGS [Data Privacy Policy](#).

Media

- 6.9 WAGGGS has a guidance document regarding the media and the use of actual names, images, including photographs and recordings (Please refer to *Capturing the voices of young girls*). This should be applied in all situations. Specifically relating to protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults, we will:
- 6.9.1 Use names and images of children, young people or vulnerable adults which are respectful and not expose them to further vulnerability (not degrading or showing sexual images of children naked or partially clothed).
 - 6.9.2 Reproduce images and use any names of children only where we have the written permission of their parents / guardians using an 'image, video and story' consent form. It is also possible for a child / parent to withdraw their consent at any time.
 - 6.9.3 Reproduce images and use names of young people and vulnerable adults only where we have their written permission or that of their parents/guardians, whichever is the most suitable.
 - 6.9.4 Make clear to vulnerable people and their families that agreement to providing information or images is not a condition of involvement in WAGGGS activities and programmes and that they can withdraw their consent at any time.
 - 6.9.5 Inform employees, volunteers and partners about the WAGGGS policy in relation to the use of technology (the email and IT policy), and understand that they must not use this technology for the purpose of accessing, producing or distributing any information or violent or sexual images that are harmful to vulnerable people. This includes adult pornography.
 - 6.9.6 In line with WAGGGS' external communications policy, any employee or volunteer reproducing images and names they have taken for WAGGGS purposes (e.g. to produce a report or poster) must share a copy of the consent form with the communications team and provide a copy of the photograph to be stored in the WAGGGS photo library in line with the WAGGGS [Data Privacy Policy](#).

Age of participants in WAGGGS events

- 6.10 Participants in WAGGGS events must all be 18 or over on the first day of the event or activity, unless the participants are attending the event as part of a group with a leader from their own Member Organisation who is recognised as having responsibility for the group.

Other

- 6.11 Ensure that WAGGGS has a format for carrying out and implementing safeguarding risk assessments at all levels of

the organisation.

- 6.12 Train and support the designated safeguarding officers in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect vulnerable people.
- 6.13 This policy relates to the safeguarding of vulnerable people by WAGGGS representatives. For issues relating to dealing with harassment, bullying and other forms of abuse towards employees and volunteers, please see the appropriate volunteer and employee disciplinary policies.

7. RAISING AND RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

- 7.1 WAGGGS places a mandatory obligation on all employees, volunteers, contractors and partners to report concerns, suspicions, allegations and incidents which indicate actual or potential abuse or exploitation vulnerable people or which suggests this policy may have in any other way been breached. It is not the responsibility of the WAGGGS representative to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, concerns should be raised to a designated safeguarding officer who will initiate the procedure for dealing with suspected or actual incidents of abuse. (For details, refer to Appendix 2 - the guide for managing safeguarding concerns).
- 7.2 Designated safeguarding officers are responsible for ensuring that the reporting procedure is followed so that suspected or actual cases of abuse are responded to appropriately and consistently, and referred to the relevant statutory authority.
- 7.3 There are separate reporting templates for use if the concern relates to a child or a vulnerable adult. The safeguarding officer should complete the relevant form when a safeguarding concern is raised.
- 7.4 To ensure that all such situations are handled appropriately and effectively:
- 7.4.1 Reports must be made, and decisions and actions taken (for details, refer to Appendix 2 - the guide for managing safeguarding concerns)
 - 7.4.2 WAGGGS is not an investigative authority. It is essential that referrals are made to the relevant law enforcement agency to ensure that appropriate protection and support is given to the vulnerable individual, and that any evidence is collected in accordance with the law.
 - 7.4.3 All sensitive and personal data must be kept confidential (including the names of anyone who makes a report of abuse), and be shared on a strictly 'need to know basis', that is, access must be necessary for the conduct of one's official duties. How data is handled is set out in the WAGGGS [Data Privacy Policy](#).
 - 7.4.4 Where a WAGGGS World Board member is the subject of an investigation, the lead designated safeguarding officer will lead the case, referring it directly to the appropriate statutory authorities.
 - 7.4.5 Where an employee is the subject of the investigation, the case will be handled as set out in the employee disciplinary policy.
 - 7.4.6 Where a volunteer is the subject of the investigation, the case will be handled as set out in the appropriate volunteer policy.
 - 7.4.7 The lead or deputy lead safeguarding officer may decide to seek legal advice if necessary, particularly in relation to complying with the safeguarding legislation and regulation of different countries.
 - 7.4.8 No internal processes against any individual should be initiated until the appropriate statutory authorities (e.g. the LADO in England and Wales) has been informed and provided guidance.
- 7.5 Where an individual is concerned that a safeguarding issue has not been handled appropriately, they should follow the WAGGGS Whistleblowing Policy.

APPENDIX 1 - WAGGGS SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

All WAGGGS volunteers, employees, contractors and others representing WAGGGS have an individual duty and responsibility to comply with the policy and to abide by the Code of Conduct.

1.1 WAGGGS representatives must never:

- 1.1.1 Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse vulnerable people.
- 1.1.2 Develop physical or sexual relationships with vulnerable people.
- 1.1.3 Develop relationships with vulnerable people that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- 1.1.4 Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a vulnerable person at risk of abuse.
- 1.1.5 Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- 1.1.6 Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
- 1.1.7 Have a vulnerable person / people with whom they are working to stay alone overnight at their home unsupervised.
- 1.1.8 Sleep alone in the same room or bed as a vulnerable person with whom they are working.
- 1.1.9 Do things for vulnerable people of a personal nature that they can do for themselves.
- 1.1.10 Condone or participate in behaviours with vulnerable people that are illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- 1.1.11 Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade vulnerable people or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- 1.1.12 Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular vulnerable people to the exclusion of others.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that WAGGGS representatives should avoid actions or behaviour which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.

1.2 It is important for all WAGGGS representatives in contact with vulnerable people to:

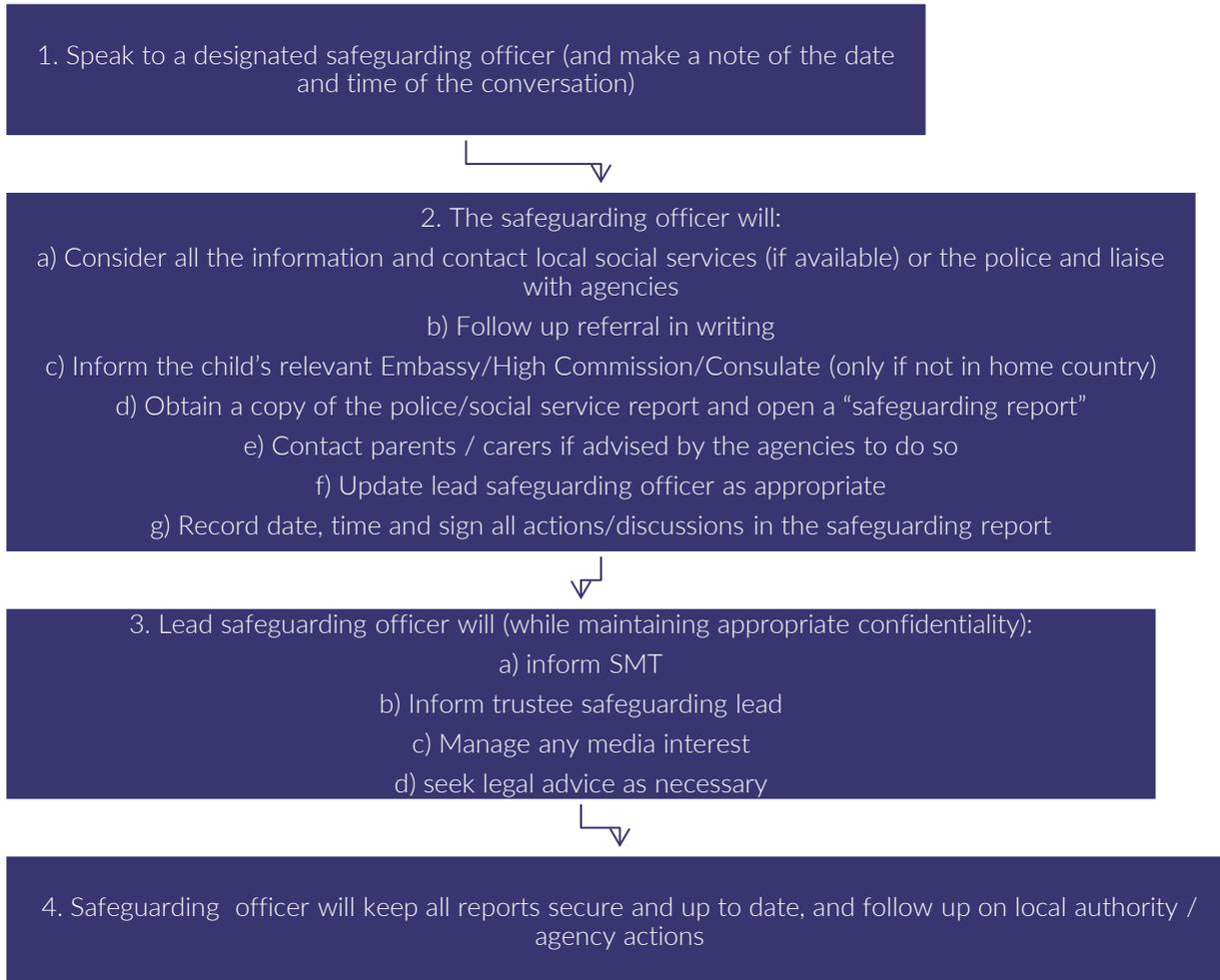
- 1.2.1 Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these.
- 1.2.2 Plan and organise the work and the workplace so as to minimise risks.
- 1.2.3 As far as possible, be visible in working with vulnerable people.
- 1.2.4 Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed.
- 1.2.5 Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between WAGGGS representatives so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged.
- 1.2.6 Talk to children about their contact with WAGGGS representatives and encourage them to raise any concerns.
- 1.2.7 Empower vulnerable people – discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.
- 1.2.8 Report to a designated safeguarding officer any concerns, suspicions, allegations and incidents which indicate actual or potential abuse or exploitation of vulnerable people or which suggests this policy may have in any other way been breached.

APPENDIX 2 - WAGGGS GUIDE TO MANAGING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

Please note that this guidance relates to concerns about a child or vulnerable adult in the care of a WAGGGS volunteer or member of staff at a WAGGGS event or activity. Where the concern relates to a child or vulnerable adult in the care of a Member Organisation, that MO's policy and process should be followed.

Process:

If you have a safeguarding concern about a child or vulnerable adult, you should email safeguarding@waggggs.org or phone +44 (0) 207 4336 491 (and ask for the Safeguarding Lead). The lead and deputy lead safeguarding officers monitor this inbox.



Local authorities

For concerns relating to UK citizens, the relevant 'local authority' will always be the local authority designated officer (LADO) of the borough or county council of the child or vulnerable adult's home address.

For concerns relating to citizens of other countries, the appropriate local authority will vary. The lead or deputy safeguarding officer will seek legal advice if necessary to identify the appropriate authority.

Once the appropriate authorities have been informed, any action taken by WAGGGS' safeguarding officers should be on the advice and direction of those authorities.