



*THE SCHOOL OF*  
CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

Adult and Child/Young Person  
**Safeguarding Policy**

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Safer Activities for Everyone CIC is a community interest company registered in England and Wales. Company no: 07855719.  
Registered Office: Unit 10, Progress Way, Mid Suffolk Business Park, Eye, Suffolk, IP23 7HU. T: 01379 871091 E: [help@safecic.co.uk](mailto:help@safecic.co.uk)

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# Safeguarding Policy

## Organisation Name

The School of Contemplative Life ("SoCL").

## Context

- The SoCL is a charity incorporated in England and Wales
- Our charity number is 1195159 and we work in England and Wales
- Our registered office is at 53 Portland Street, Cheltenham, GL52 2NX
- Our purpose is to teach meditation as a spiritual path to peace, community and oneness
- Our aims can be found [here](#)
- We work with the general public (adults)
- At present, we do not employ staff. Approximately 8 volunteers support our mission
- Each week, there are over 150 participants at our online practice sessions and we reach others through our schedule of events and special projects

The SoCL does not run any regulated activity that is primarily for risk groups which may include adults at risk, children and/or young people.

However, from time to time, adults who may be considered vulnerable or at risk may engage with us and our staff may be working in environments where children and young people are present (i.e. a church).

It is possible that, in these circumstances, statements may be made by a child, young person or adult, or questions asked by them, take the form of a disclosure of abuse. Like all organisations, the SoCL has a duty to safeguard any children, young people or adults at risk with whom we have contact. We take our responsibility very seriously and are committed to safeguarding.

If circumstances change, we will review this policy.

In light of the above, elements of this policy that are, at present, not applicable to SoCL include:

- Young people who work in our organisation
- Home visits
- Transport
- Restraint
- PREVENT/FGM training requirements (although we do have awareness of these)

# Statements and Aims

## Policy Statement

We recognise that the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk is paramount and that *all* have equal rights of protection. We have a duty of care whenever they have contact with our organisation, and we will do everything we can to provide a safe environment within which our activities are delivered.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Participant Code of Conduct included as Annex 1.

## Equal Opportunities Statement

We recognise that anyone can become subject to discrimination, harassment or victimisation because of:

- Age
- Culture
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Comments and actions that contribute to discrimination, harassment or victimisation are not acceptable and will be challenged. Such incidents will be recorded and shared with relevant agencies when necessary and appropriate.

### We will:

- Treat everyone with respect
- Carefully recruit and select all staff - whether paid or unpaid
- Respond to concerns and allegations appropriately

**When there are concerns** about the welfare of any child, young person or adult at risk, all responsible adults in our organisation are expected to share those concerns, without delay, with the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding.

**Our policy** is approved by our trustees and will be reviewed and updated annually. We will publish the policy on our website so it is publicly available and promote this policy to all staff (paid or unpaid) through induction, training and supervision.

## Policy Aim

As members of SAFEcic, we aim at all times to attain best safeguarding practice throughout all our activities.

We endeavour to provide a safe and friendly environment. We will achieve this by adhering strictly to this policy, guidance and risk assessments. Our organisation holds current Public Liability Insurance which covers all our activities.

Additionally, no one should come to any harm through their contact with our organisation and, as part of that commitment, we do everything we can to ensure everyone feels safe and protected from any form of harm, abuse and neglect regardless of their role.

## **Safeguarding Personnel**

### **Lead and Deputy for Safeguarding**

Our Lead for Safeguarding is:

Name: Catherine Matlock

Job role: Volunteer

Contact details: 07443 475554 or catherineelizabeth5@yahoo.com

Our Deputy for Safeguarding is:

Name: Rachel Sharpe

Job role: Volunteer

Contact details: 07834 626426 or rachel@schoolofcontemplativelife.com

Their role is to oversee and ensure that our safeguarding policy, which includes Online Safety, is fully implemented and that we attain SAFEcic standards.

Their responsibilities are:

- Monitoring and recording concerns
- Making referrals to social care, or police, as relevant, without delay
- Liaison with other agencies
- Arranging training for all staff and trustees

The Deputy for Safeguarding should be available to support or cover for the Lead. S/he will also handle any complaints or allegations against the Lead for Safeguarding if appropriate. It is important that the Lead and Deputy for Safeguarding are unconnected.

### **Line of accountability for safeguarding**

The responsibility for safeguarding at board level is shared between members. Safeguarding is on the organisation's risk register.

## **Why do we need a Safeguarding Policy?**

All organisations that work or come into contact with children, young people and/or adults at risk need to have safeguarding policies and procedures in place.

Government guidance is clear that all organisations working with children, young people, adults at risk, parents, carers and/or families have responsibilities for safeguarding. It is important to remember that children, young people and adults at risk can also abuse and that such incidents fall into the remit of this policy.

To undertake these responsibilities, we:

- Have senior staff and trustees committed to safeguarding
- Are clear about peoples' responsibilities and accountability

- Have a culture of listening to everyone who comes into contact with the charity
- Undertake safer recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers
- Have procedures for safeguarding children and young people and adults at risk
- Have procedures for dealing with allegations against, and concerns about, any staff
- Make sure staff, paid and unpaid, have mandatory induction and further safeguarding training, supervision, reviews and support as appropriate
- Have agreements about working with other organisations and agencies

## Definitions

### Definition of a child/young person

There is no single law that defines the age of a child across the UK. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the UK government in 1991, states that a child “means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier” (Article 1, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday (16th in Scotland).

In Scotland, whilst child protection procedures may be considered for a person up to the age of 18, the legal boundaries of childhood and adulthood are variously defined.

### Definition of an adult at risk

There is no single law that defines an adult at risk across the UK. An adult at risk is a person over the age of 18 years (16 in Scotland) and is:

- Having needs for care and support, and
- Experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and neglect and
- As a result of those care needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

## Related Policies

### Data Protection

We will treat any personal information by which an individual can be identified, for example, name, address, and email, in accordance with the provisions of Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018), and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and will not share information with any third party, except where required by law.

### Confidentiality

This policy is in line with government guidance about confidentiality.

We fully endorse the principle of the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, overriding any obligations of confidence we may hold to others. No one working, or involved, with our organisation can promise absolute confidentiality. Individual cases will only be shared or discussed on a “need to know” basis.

### Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is when someone raises a concern externally about a person or practice within the organisation, which will affect others in an illegal and or harmful way.

Our organisation promotes the sharing of any concerns regarding the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk as soon as possible with the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding.

If individuals reporting their concerns within our organisation do not feel they have been acted upon, then we support their right to report these concerns to the Local Authority Designated Office (LADO) (England and Wales only) social care services, the police, and /or the Charity Commission. They can also contact the [NSPCC dedicated helplines](#) and the charity [Protect](#) for advice and support.

**All media enquiries** will be handled by Rachel Sharpe ([rachel@schoolofcontemplativelife.com](mailto:rachel@schoolofcontemplativelife.com)).

## Information Sharing

Timely and accurate written records play an essential role in safeguarding individuals, who may have suffered, are suffering or at significant risk of suffering harm. It is important that records are shared at the appropriate time when necessary. Within our organisation the decision to share written information, and with whom, will be undertaken by the Lead or the Deputy for safeguarding.

## Safer Recruitment

SoCL does not undertake regulated activity. The following principles are applied proportionately and only where relevant to the nature of a role.

Nevertheless, our organisation is committed to safe recruitment in line with the relevant legislation and guidance from government and relevant [Regulatory Authorities](#) for recruiting all staff, paid or unpaid. We do this by:

- Advertising paid vacancies with a clear commitment required to safeguarding
- Assigning all posts detailed job descriptions
- Obtaining full personal details via an application form (not CVs) and, for any future roles that relate to regulated activity (i.e. working in schools) with particular relevance to previous work with children, young people and adults at risk
- When a candidate is selected for interview the relevant criminal declaration form will be sent for completion as set out by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, as amended
- Always taking up two written references, one from the most recent employer or education establishment
- Undertaking all interviews face to face, based on the job description
- Ensuring at least one person on each interview panel will have undertaken Safer Recruitment training, in line with the Charity Commission safe recruitment guidelines.
- Having sound procedures and recording for interviewing to ensure we are satisfied, and can evidence that the applicant is appropriate and suitable

Any appointment will only be confirmed subject to:

- A satisfactory ID and criminal records check at the appropriate level, including [Certificates of Good Conduct](#) for foreign nationals and the [International Child Protection Certificate \(ICPC\)](#) for anyone who works with children and has lived in the UK and also travelled overseas
- A follow up of written references by telephone if relevant to the vacant post
- A check of essential qualifications and any specific professional details
- Confirmation of the [Right to Work in the UK](#) for employed personnel
- Fitness to work as relevant

## Induction and Training

We have a clear induction and training strategy with clear job descriptions and responsibilities and all relevant procedures. All new staff, paid and unpaid, will receive induction training as soon as possible and sign to record they have:

- Received and understood this policy
- Been given any relevant resources
- Understood the commitment to safeguarding training

When needed, staff will receive further safeguarding training, at the appropriate level, as soon as possible. We also agree a probationary period with clear goals and then provide supervision/mentoring and/or appraisals at regular intervals with Rachel Sharpe.

Updated safeguarding training is normally required every 2 years (online) or three years (face to face).

Staff working directly with at risk groups will also undertake the free online government training for [PREVENT Channel](#) and [FGM](#).

## Working Practices

### Consent

When consent is required for any activity we will, unless it is an emergency, obtain consent from the individual if of sufficient age and/or understanding. Where relevant, we will ensure we fulfil our obligations under the Mental Capacity Legislation on supporting, where possible, the individual's right to make their own decisions. Any decisions made should be the least restrictive and recorded.

### Lone and One to One Working

We do not conduct lone or one to one working with children and adults at risk to protect both individuals.

### Residential Retreats and Professional Boundaries

Our safeguarding risk has been significantly reduced by moving away from directly delivering residential retreats and instead partnering with established retreat centres. In these arrangements, retreats are delivered by the host centre, and the SoCL's Founder and Teacher, Chris Whittington, is engaged as a retreat leader. Residential retreat participants therefore enter into a primary relationship with the retreat centre, and responsibility for the overall safeguarding arrangements, pastoral environment, and on-site safety of the retreat rests with that centre. This does not remove or diminish the SoCL's responsibility to deliver its own contribution in a safe, appropriate and professionally bounded way, nor our duty to act on and report any safeguarding concerns that come to our attention, in line with this policy.

To support clarity and an appropriate allocation of responsibility between organisations, the SoCL has put the following measures in place:

- We enter into written terms and conditions with retreat centres which clarify respective roles and responsibilities, including safeguarding expectations.
- Working with the retreat centre, we co-create a bespoke pre-retreat information pack for participants which includes the retreat centre's safeguarding contact details.
- When contributing to retreats, the SoCL ensures that its representatives are never alone with participants. One-to-one conversations between the retreat leader and individual participants are not offered as part of the retreat programme. Instead, opportunities for reflection and discussion are

provided in small group settings. This approach is intended to maintain clear professional boundaries and reduce safeguarding risk.

## **Home Visits**

We do not provide home visits.

## **Young People who work in our Organisation**

No young people under 18 work or volunteer in our organisation.

## **Codes of Conduct**

We aim to provide a safe environment free from discrimination, upholding and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. We undertake to:

- Treat everyone with respect and dignity
- Ensure everyone's welfare and safety is paramount at all times
- Maintain professional boundaries both face to face and when using technology
- Always listen to individuals and take account of their wishes and feelings
- Always act in a professional way and not accept bullying, swearing or other disruptive behaviour
- Only use physical contact if absolutely necessary
- Avoid being alone with children, young people and adults at risk whenever possible
- Listen to, and act upon, any disclosures, allegations, or concerns of abuse
- Participate in approved safeguarding training at appropriate levels
- SoCL does not use restraint. Any situation involving immediate risk of harm would be managed by contacting emergency services or venue staff, as appropriate. All use of restraint will be reported and recorded by the member of staff concerned to the Lead or Deputy for safeguarding and to the relevant manager. Restraint is always a last resort when de-escalation techniques have not sufficed.
- Follow our safeguarding policy at all times
- Maintain professional boundaries both face to face and online
- Always use the organisation's official email system, social media etc when contacting any at risk groups we work with
- Ensure all participants sign up to and adhere to our Participant Code of Conduct and Event Terms and Conditions copies of which are available on our website

## **Recognising Abuse in Children Young People and Adults at Risk**

The following list is for guidance only. It is important to be observant, listen to what is being said and record. (e.g. is what you are observing and being told about an injury consistent with the injury?)

- Abuse related to faith or belief
- Alcohol and Substance misuse
- Breast Ironing
- Carrying offensive weapons
- Child criminal and sexual exploitation including County Lines
- Child on child abuse, including sexual violence and upskirting
- Concealed pregnancy
- Criminal exploitation
- Discriminatory
- Domestic abuse, including "honour" based abuse
- Emotional
- Exploitive use of technology

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Financial or material abuse
- Forced marriage
- Gangs
- Gambling
- Hate and "mate" crime
- Hazing and initiation rites
- Hoarding
- Modern slavery
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Online safety
- Organisational or institutional
- Psychological
- Physical
- Radicalisation
- Self-neglect
- Sextortion
- Sexual
- Trafficking

## Handling Disclosures

When a disclosure is made by a child, young person or adult at risk it is important to remember to:

- Take what you are being told seriously
- Stay calm and reassure
- Do not investigate
- Do not delay

And always:

- Seek advice from the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding
- Make a careful recording of anything you are told or observe, date and sign.

A disclosure may come from someone telling you:

- They have or are being abused
- They have concerns about someone else
- They are themselves abusing or likely to abuse someone else

# Responding to Concerns

## Safeguarding Referral Flowchart

We ensure and emphasise that everyone in our team understands and knows how to share any concerns immediately with the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding. Everyone, including the Lead, Deputy and Additional Senior Lead for Safeguarding (trustee), will deal with concerns using the following:

### Step One:

**If you are worried a child, young person or adult at risk has been abused because:**

- you have seen something
- someone says they have been abused
- somebody else has told you they are concerned
- there has been an allegation against a colleague
- there has been an anonymous allegation
- an adult has disclosed that they were abused as a child
- a child, young person or adult say they are abusing someone else.

### Step Two:

Check this safeguarding policy for guidance. Talk to the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding without delay. If they are implicated, then call Maggie Farrar (Chair of Trustees) on 07880 956350.

### Step Three:

The Lead, Deputy or Additional Senior Lead should refer the concern to the relevant adult's or children's social care service and/or the Police and follow up the referral in writing within 24 hours.

**For England and Wales**, in cases of allegations against a “person of trust” with a “duty of care” towards a child, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will co-ordinate the next procedural steps.

Under “whistle blowing”, anyone can refer directly to the Police, social care services, the LADO for personnel child abuse allegations (England & Wales only), relevant regulatory authorities, or the NSPCC (child concerns only) and also the charity Protect for support when they are concerned the organisation is not managing safeguarding concerns appropriately.

**Any consultations should not delay a referral.**  
**In an emergency do not delay: dial 999**

**CONSULT,  
MONITOR  
AND RECORD**  
*Sign/Date/Time*  
*Include name and job  
role*

When the concern is about the welfare of a child or adult at risk from schools, colleges, health providers, GP practices, prisons or social care settings, you should refer to that organisation's Lead for Safeguarding in the first instance. Inform the Lead or Deputy of your organisation that you have referred a concern.

## Record Keeping

At all times when required, and especially where there is a safeguarding concern, we are committed to keeping records which are:

- Recorded on a safeguarding incident form
- Of sufficient details of child, young person or adult at risk to identify individual who is subject of concern and any significant others
- Accurate and factual/based on fact, as a true record of:
  - what has been monitored/observed
  - what has been said and by whom
  - what has given cause for concern
  - what action has and/or will be taken including the reason for those actions
  - the reason stated for no action being taken and by whom
- Non judgmental
- Timely (within 24 hours)
- Signed, timed and dated by the author and co- signed by the Lead or Deputy
- Shared as appropriate by the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding
- Stored safely and securely by the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding

## Handling Allegations / Dealing with Complaints / Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures

Our policies and procedures are in line with the statutory guidance, the relevant Regulatory Authorities (see above) our guidelines, disciplinary, complaints and grievance procedures. These will be made available to everyone.

Where a complaint or allegation has been made with regards to any inappropriate behaviour or poor practice relating to a child, young person or adult at risk, the Lead or Deputy will, in all cases, discuss the situation with social care services (the LADO with regards to children England and Wales only) and/or the police before making an open decision about the best way forward.

In the case where the Lead is implicated, the Deputy should be informed. In the exceptional circumstances that both are involved, the person concerned will inform the Senior Lead. If there is a belief that the concern has not been taken seriously or acted upon, then any one can “Whistleblow”.

With regards to disciplinary and grievance procedures, relating to an incident involving a child, young person or adult at risk we will take no steps until we have fully discussed and agreed a strategy with social care services and/or the police, (the LADO, with regards to children England and Wales only). Any investigation will override the need to implement any such procedures. Our management are responsible for making referrals to the relevant:

- Criminal records service
- Regulatory Authority

## Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment

Bullying, harassment and sexual harassment can take many forms and include:

- Physical violence including threats, verbal assaults and taunts, the destruction of property, extortion, unwanted sexual interest or contact
- Indirect forms of bullying including ignoring a person and the withdrawal of friendship, malicious gossip and spreading rumours, abusive or oppressive graffiti, the use of social media, electronic messages and websites.
- Motivation of prejudice against certain groups for example on the grounds of race, religion, gender and disability.

Whether directed at children, young people, adults at risk, staff, volunteers, parent and carers, bullying, harassment and sexual harassment, physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse will not be tolerated. All such behaviour will be treated as a safeguarding concern when aimed at children, young people and or adults at risk. If children, young people and/or adults at risk are engaging in bullying, harassment or sexual harassment it is also a safeguarding concern and should be reported to the Lead or Deputy for safeguarding.

We will:

- Provide a culture of equality and respect for all with zero tolerance to any form of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment
- Report all incidents of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment observed or disclosed, to the Lead or Deputy who will take the appropriate action
- Take immediate steps to stop the behaviour and mitigate the effects of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment
- Record all incidents with observations and witness statements, and action taken, signed, timed and dated

## Online Safety

### Why do we need to include Online Safety?

Modern digital technology has made access to information and communication increasingly easy for everyone. This is especially so for those who cannot always go out to socialise and rely on websites for social networking, watching films, downloading music, shopping etc.

Government guidance is clear, that all organisations working with children, young people adults at risk, families, parents and carers have responsibilities. It is also important to remember, children, young people and adults at risk can also abuse and such incidents fall into the remit of this policy.

### Online Safety Code of Conduct:

We expect everyone in our organisation to agree and sign up to our Online Safety code of conduct to:

- Use the internet and other forms of communication in a sensible and polite way.
- Only access websites, send messages or access and use other resources that will not hurt or upset anybody.
- Seek permission if they want to use personal information or take photographs of other people.
- Report any concerns to the Lead or Deputy.
- Not maintain confidentiality if there is a concern about the welfare of a child, young person or adult at risk.

### What are the Risks?

There are many potential risks including:

- Accessing inappropriate or illegal websites.
- Receiving unwanted or upsetting texts, e-mail messages or images.
- Being “groomed” by another with a view to meeting the child, young person or adult at risk for their own illegal purposes including sex, drugs or crime.
- Sharing nudes or semi nudes.
- Viewing or sending unacceptable material such as inciting hatred or violence.
- Sending bullying messages or posting malicious details about others.
- Ignoring copyright law by downloading e.g. music, videos, homework cheat materials etc.
- Overspending on shopping and gambling sites.
- Being at risk of identity fraud for money transactions.

- Inappropriate relationships or prostitution.

## Social media

The [Online Safety Act 2023](#) and associated government guidance [A Guide to the Online Safety Bill](#) now makes social media companies more responsible for their users' safety on their platforms. This means children and adults will be protected online by making social media platforms:

- Remove illegal content quickly or prevent it from appearing in the first place. This includes removing content promoting self-harm
- Prevent children from accessing harmful and age-inappropriate content
- Enforce age limits and age-checking measures
- Ensure the risks and dangers posed to children on the largest social media platforms are more transparent, including by publishing risk assessments
- Provide parents and children with clear and accessible ways to report problems online when they do arise.

Such content should be reported to the service provider and if they do not respond appropriately the matter can be reported to [Ofcom](#).

### **What do I do if I am concerned?**

If you have any concerns, speak to the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding. Remember:

- Do not delay.
- Do not investigate.
- Seek advice from the Lead or Deputy
- Make careful recording of anything you observe or are told

## Online Safety Referral Flowchart – Child and Adult

Is a crime in progress or is anyone in immediate danger?

Yes  
➔



**Dial 999 Immediately**

No  
↓

Inform the Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding who will take the following steps, if not available, you must take action:

Is the concern about child sexual content anywhere in the world?

No  
➔

Yes  
↓



Contact the IWF  
(Internet Watch Foundation)  
[www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)

Is the concern about a person communicating with a child or adult for sexual reasons?

No  
➔

Yes, Child  
↓

Yes, Adult  
➔



Contact CEOP  
(Child Exploitation and Online  
Protection Centre)  
[www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

Is the concern about a known person, non-sexual harassment or other potential crime?

Yes  
↓



Contact the local police

Record the concern and the Lead/Deputy for Safeguarding will liaise, await response, advise you and review Online Safety arrangements as necessary.

# Safeguarding Practical Guidance

## Photography & Filming Guidance

We do not take photos of children, young people or adults at risk.

## Transport

We do not provide or organise transport.

## Activities, Events and Visiting Speakers/Activity Leaders

We will always ensure visitors and activities undertaken are risk assessed and we are committed to:

- Ensuring that those who run activities have the expertise, knowledge and skills to do so properly
- Completing a risk assessment which involves identifying risks and the means of reducing or eliminating those risks for all activities or events
- Risk assessing any changes being made to activities or events
- Having a written plan in place if the event or activity has to be cancelled
- Having a written plan in place in case of emergency including contact numbers
- Implementing the required actions identified by the risk assessment process and reviewing the effectiveness of these on a regular basis

## Adult goes Missing

This scenario is unlikely within SoCL's activities but is included for completeness. However, if an adult at risk goes missing from the group or organisation it should be reported to the police. Use 999 where there is a concern that they cannot be found or are vulnerable.

A missing person may be assessed as 'at risk' if they fit one or more of the following categories.

- is under 16
- has expressed feelings of suicide
- has dementia
- has been acting totally out of character
- has mental health issues
- is under increased stress
- has an illness or a physical disability
- has a learning disability
- is in need of regular medication/care

The Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding should be informed as soon as possible, and all details and actions recorded, signed, timed and dated.

## First Aid

The venues we hire have their own first aid arrangements.

## Buildings and Venues

Safeguarding risk assessments will be carried out on all building and venues used by our organisation.

The safeguarding risk assessment should cover:

- Access especially how people enter and leave the building
- Signing in protocol
- Use of keys
- Toilets and changing rooms
- Any outside space
- Car parks
- First Aid arrangements
- Any other relevant issues

## SAFEcic Recommendations

In order to attain the highest standards of safeguarding practice, everybody needs to be vigilant in adhering to this policy and also assessing the risks of their own work and activities. These risk assessments will be carried out annually by the Lead and/or Deputy. However, it is the responsibility of everyone to draw attention to practices and procedures that they are unhappy or uncomfortable with.

It is only through adopting SAFEcic policies and practices that we can all be confident we have done everything we can to safeguard the children, young people and adults at risk in our care.

## Policy Date

This policy was agreed and uploaded onto our website on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024. It is reviewed annually, or when there are substantial organisational changes, or when legislation or good practice changes.

**Last Policy Amendment Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026

<p><b>Signed:</b></p> 	<p><b>Signed:</b></p> 
<p>Catherine Matlock Lead for Safeguarding</p>	<p>Rachel Sharpe Deputy for Safeguarding</p>
<p><b>Date:</b> 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026</p>	<p><b>Date:</b> 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026</p>

**Date of next review:** January 2027

# Annex 1 – Participant Code of Conduct

The School of Contemplative Life (SoCL) hosts spaces where people can come together to learn more about and practice Christian meditation.

We require all participants in our activities to be aged 18 or over and to conduct themselves in a safe and appropriate manner, helping to create a positive experience for all, free from discrimination, and supportive of equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Code of Conduct applies to events held in person and online and for the whole duration of an event that a participant is attending. All event participants (including members of the public, staff, volunteers and teachers) must read and adhere to the Code of Conduct.

By attending an event, a participant automatically agrees to our [Event Terms and Conditions](#), [Privacy Notice](#) and this Code of Conduct.

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## 1. COMMITMENTS

**Respect the dignity of every person.** We request that all participants treat others with gentleness of spirit, and respect, regardless of background, beliefs, or life experience. All forms of harassment, bullying, victimisation are prohibited.

**Communicate with care.** In both spoken and written contributions, we request that participants choose language that is appropriate, thoughtful, and relevant to the gathering. Always avoid comments that may cause distress, disruption, or division. This includes the appropriate use of digital forms of communication including any online chat function.

**Respect boundaries - your own and those of others’.** Participants should always engage in a way that is appropriate to the space. Always maintain appropriate boundaries in digital and in-person settings. There is no expectation to disclose personal information beyond what feels appropriate.

**Stay within the spirit of the event.** Our events are contemplative rather than therapeutic; for personal or clinical concerns, participants are encouraged to seek appropriate professional support. Any conversations or small group discussions are peer spaces and are not therapy, spiritual direction, or counselling. Participants should not offer clinical advice.

**Respect Confidentiality.** We host safe spaces in which participants can meditate together, offer reflections, ask questions, learn about and discuss the practice. Confidentiality will be respected, except in the very rare circumstances when we are concerned about your safety and welfare; in which case we will discuss our concerns with you in the first instance (although there may be exceptional circumstances in which this may not be appropriate e.g. when we have concerns about the safety or security of any child, young person, or adult at risk that you live or have contact with);

**Protect the integrity of the space.** Do not make recordings (audio, video, or images) of any part of an event or of fellow participants. Please also refrain from posting promotional material or unrelated content in group settings. You also agree not to pass on personal information or identifiable stories shared by others without their explicit consent. Any private contact between participants outside organised sessions is undertaken at your own discretion; SoCL cannot be responsible for interactions that occur outside our events.

**Protect the safety of all participants.** If you feel uncomfortable or witness behaviour that concerns you during an event — whether in person or online — please inform an SoCL representative immediately (for example, by speaking to a member of the team in person, sending a private message to the host online, or calling the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy using the details provided in section 4 of this document).

Any safeguarding concern or disclosure will be handled sensitively and in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy. Please note that where there is a risk of harm, we may need to share information with appropriate authorities. Any form of harassment, manipulation or abuse (physical, verbal, psychological, sexual or otherwise) will not be tolerated and may result in immediate removal from the event and, where appropriate, referral to the relevant authority.

**Be mindful of your condition.** If attending in person, please do not come if you are unwell, particularly with symptoms that may affect others. Do not attend or participate in sessions while under the influence of alcohol or drugs in a way that impairs your ability to engage safely and respectfully. Where events are held at venues that permit alcohol, participants are expected to follow venue guidance and act responsibly at all times.

In small group settings, participants are expected to:

- Speak from personal experience rather than debate or persuade.
- Allow space for others to contribute without interruption.
- Avoid offering advice, spiritual direction, or counselling to other participants.
- Respect the facilitator's role in gently guiding discussion and keeping the group aligned with the purpose of the gathering.
- Avoid sharing confidential information (about yourself or others) in a public group setting.

## 2. ADDITIONAL IN-PERSON GUIDELINES

- Please let us know in good time before the start of the event if there is a chance you will arrive after the time specified so we can make the necessary arrangements.
- Take care of your belongings; SoCL and our partners cannot be held responsible for lost items.
- Follow any venue requests (e.g., keeping areas tidy, observing photo restrictions).
- Smoking and the use of tobacco or e-cigarettes are not permitted inside venues.

## 3. PLEASE ALSO NOTE

Failure to observe this Code of Conduct may result in being asked to leave an event or being removed from an online session. In such cases, any costs incurred (e.g., travel) will be your responsibility. Serious or repeated breaches may result in exclusion from future events, and in some cases may require referral to the relevant authority.

#### 4. SAFEGUARDING CONTACTS

Please do not hesitate to report any concern you have that may endanger the health, safety, or well-being of yourself or anyone else. Note if someone is in immediate danger, please first call 999 for the police or emergency services.

If your concerns relate to any vulnerable individuals (children, young people or adults at risk), it is essential that you inform a representative of the SoCL at your event who will, in turn, contact our Safeguarding Lead or Deputy. Alternatively, you are free to contact our Safeguarding Lead or Deputy directly on the numbers: **Catherine Matlock** (Lead) – 07443 475554 and **Rachel Sharpe** (Deputy) – 07834 626426.

**5. LAST UPDATED** This document was last updated on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026.