

# Safeguarding Policy

“Action taken to promote the welfare of beneficiary and protect them from harm”

There are four main categories of abuse:

- ❖ **Physical abuse:** When a beneficiary is deliberately hurt, causing injuries such as cuts, bruises, burns and broken bones. It can involve hitting, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or suffocating.  
Signs which *may* raise concerns include:
  - ~Refusal to discuss injuries
  - ~Aggression towards others
  - ~Improbable excuse given to explain injuries
  - ~Fear of parents/carers being approached for an explanation
  - ~Untreated injuries
  - ~Wearing long or extra clothing to hide injuries
  
- ❖ **Neglect:** Persistently failing to meet a beneficiaries basic physical and/or psychological needs usually resulting in serious damage in their health and development. Neglect may involve a parent/carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, ensuring adequate supervision or access to appropriate medical care or treatment.  
Signs which *may* raise concerns include:
  - ~Constant hunger
  - ~Constant tiredness
  - ~Untreated medical problems
  - ~Poor personal hygiene and/or poor state of clothing
  - ~Low self-esteem
  
- ❖ **Sexual abuse:** Forcing or enticing a beneficiary to take part in sexual activities. It doesn't necessarily involve violence and the beneficiary may not be aware that what is happening is abuse. Sexual abuse can involve contact abuse and/or non-contact abuse. Contact abuse happens when the abuser makes physical contact with the beneficiary sexually. Non-contact abuse happens when the beneficiary is exposed to sexually explicit inappropriate language or showing a beneficiary any type of sexual and/or pornographic material.  
Signs which *may* raise concerns include:
  - ~Lack of trust or over familiarity with adults, fear of a particular adult
  - ~Unusual interest in the genitals of adults, children or animals
  - ~Fear of bathrooms, showers or closed doors
  - ~Display of sexual knowledge

- ❖ **Emotional abuse:** Usually persistent and, over time, it severely damages emotional health and development. It can take the form of constantly putting a beneficiary down, shouting at a beneficiary, calling them names, humiliation, persistently ignoring a beneficiary and acting in anyway which is detrimental to the beneficiaries self-esteem.
- Signs which *may* raise concerns include:
- ~Low self-esteem
  - ~Extremes of passivity or aggression
  - ~Significant decline in concentration
  - ~Self-harm or mutilation

**Please take note that this is not an exhaustive list and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place. Any concerns you have about any beneficiary must be handled appropriately.**

Children with additional vulnerabilities

*Disabled persons may be more vulnerable and at greater risk of all forms of abuse. The presence of multiple disabilities increases the risk of both abuse and neglect. Persons with disabilities have the same rights to protection as any other and it is important for all those working in the equestrian industry to ensure that they are aware of the individual needs and the additional vulnerabilities of the beneficiaries that they work with.*

### **Dealing with a disclosure**

All those involved in the sessions must recognise their own responsibility to safeguard beneficiaries and the importance of taking action where a concern about a beneficiary has been raised.

It is not the responsibility of anyone within RDA Singapore to make a judgement on whether or not abuse has taken place; however, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns that are raised.

Those working within RDA may find themselves in a position where a beneficiary makes a disclosure of harm or abuse and if this happens it is important that the appropriate action is taken. Anyone involved in a disclosure are expected to adhere to the following procedures:

- When information about possible abuse comes to light, find time and a suitable place to listen to the beneficiary.
- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock, disbelief or attempting to lead the beneficiary.

- Do not make false promises and do not promise confidentiality. If the beneficiary asks that the information is kept secret, it is important that you tell the beneficiary in a manner appropriate that you cannot promise complete confidentiality-instead you must explain that you need to pass information on to other professionals to help keep the beneficiary, or other persons safe.
- Allow the beneficiary to talk freely. Do not cross examine, interview, probe or ask to see any injury that is not already visible. Listen, only asking non-leading questions when necessary to clarify.
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Reassure the beneficiary that what has happened is not his/her fault.
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell someone.
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.
- Find out *just* enough to be sure of the need to refer.
- Make a record that is factual, accurate and relevant and avoid subjective judgements. It is *not* your responsibility to 'check out' what any beneficiary tells you nor should any alleged abuser be questioned.
- Print, sign and date the record of disclosure and include your designation.

### **Records and confidentiality**

When recording a disclosure, it is important that the information is clear, concise and a true representation of the concerns. In some incidents, it may be necessary for RDA to share information with Social Services or the Police, hence the necessity for making detailed record at the time of the disclosure. Information should be factual and should include the following:

- The facts about the allegation or observation
- A description of any visible injuries or signs
- A beneficiaries account, if this has been disclosed, of what has happened and how any injuries occurred
- Any witnesses to the incident(s)
- Any times, dates or other relevant information
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- Action taken as a result of the concern
- Name, address and date of birth of those involved

*Please note: Where possible you should include the relevant dates. Times, situation, people present and factual information, including the dates, times and designation of the report writer. The record must then be signed with the name and designation clearly beneath.*

## **Safe recruitment**

Anyone undertaking a role that involves contact with or responsibility for children or other vulnerable groups should be taken through a safe recruitment process. It is essential that there are effective recruitment and selection procedures for both paid staff and volunteers. Best practice for safer recruitment procedures include:

- Checking of ID card (NRIC/FIN)
- A clear job role or role description (what tasks will be involved)
- Person specification (what experience or attributes the successful candidate needs in order to carry out the role)
- Advertisements for the post
- Application form to gather relevant information about each applicant
- Require specific written references
- Interviewing of applicant
- Verifying any qualifications or experience
- Recording recruitment decision
- Induction to the role (including safeguarding policies, S.O.Ps and training)

## **Support for those involved**

<https://www.msf.gov.sg>

<https://www.police.gov.sg/>

<http://www.biglove.org.sg/>

<https://www.sos.org.sg/>

<https://www.childrensociety.org.sg/>