



Protection of Children Policy and Procedure

Approved: July 2025

Next review: July 2026

This document is the protection of children policy statement of Shallal, Registered Charity No:1166404

Introduction

Through its work, Shallal comes into contact with many children and young people, including those who may be at risk of harm. Shallal is committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment for everyone involved in its activities, which cover a wide range of dance, theatre, public performance, visual arts and other creative opportunities where Shallal staff freelancers and volunteers are responsible for the safeguarding of children and young people at risk of harm.

We know that children and young people are vulnerable to abuse by adults. The purpose of this policy and procedure is to make sure that the actions of any adults in the context of work carried out by Shallal are transparent and safeguard and promote the welfare of all young people.

We believe that children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind and that we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe, and practise in a way that protects them.

Abuse can be caused by those inflicting harm and also, by us failing to act to prevent harm.

We believe that the welfare of children and young people is paramount in all the work we do and in:

- the decisions we take
- how we work in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers
- how we work with other agencies in safeguarding and promoting young people's welfare

- our belief that all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- our understanding that some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences
- our understanding the impact of children and young people's experiences, level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- our understanding that extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse

Safeguarding is about embedding practice and behaviours throughout our organisation to ensure the protection of children and young people wherever possible and to ensure that we respond effectively to circumstances that may arise.

This policy and procedure will be followed by trustees, all members of staff, freelancers and volunteers, and will be both followed and promoted by those in a position of leadership within the charity.

Legal and Organisational Context

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from [nspcc.org.uk/childprotection](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/childprotection).

This policy statement is supported by our other organisational documentation.

Recognition of Abuse or Neglect

Abuse or neglect of a child is caused by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms, or, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as, fabricated illness by proxy or Munchausen Syndrome by proxy.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of children though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (eg rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. This may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at or in the production of pornographic material, or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and/or development. It may involve a parent/carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children and young people who receive Shallal's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services
- to provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Shallal, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, paid freelancers, volunteers and students.

Principles upon which this Child Protection Policy is based:

- The welfare of a child or young person will always be paramount
- The welfare of families will be promoted
- The rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their families will be respected and listened to
- Those people in positions of responsibility within the organisation will work in accordance with the interests of children and young people and follow the policy outlined below

Those people in positions of responsibility within the organisation will ensure that the same opportunities are available to everyone and that all differences between individuals are treated with respect.

Recruitment and training

- All facilitators and volunteers will be required to complete an enhanced DBS application form.
- Any applicant found to be listed on the Disqualified From Working With Children's list will not be appointed to work in a paid or unpaid position.
- All staff and volunteers must agree to, and sign up to, this child protection policy and procedures.

- All trustees, staff and freelancers must commit to understanding and following our safeguarding policies and procedures and are required to confirm that they are up to date with our policy and procedures annually

CODE OF CONDUCT AND PROCEDURE

To protect children and young people and minimise the risk of abuse, the following code of conduct will be adhered to by all people engaging with children and young people who are working with Shallal in any capacity.

Following this code will:

- Help us all to understand what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour when interacting with children and young people
- Enable us to protect children and young people at risk of harm from abuse
- Help staff, freelancers, trustees and volunteers to maintain the standard of behaviour expected of them
- Reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations of inappropriate behaviour or abuse being made

When working with children and young people, all staff, trustees, volunteers and freelancers are acting in a position of trust. It is important that we are all aware that we may be seen as role models and must act in an appropriate manner at all times.

We Do:

- Act inclusively and considerately, welcoming and supporting people of all backgrounds, abilities and identities
- Choose our words carefully to ensure we are being inclusive and considerate
- Always aim to be great ambassadors for Shallal's values of equity, inclusion and understanding
- Welcome, involve and respect everyone
- Listen to children and young people at risk of harm at all times
- Challenge all discriminatory or inappropriate language or behaviour and report all allegations/suspensions of inappropriate conduct or abuse to the Creative Director within the same working day
- Ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during all activities. If this isn't possible, we will ensure that facilitators are within sight or hearing of other adults. If in any doubt, consult the Creative Director
- Always ensure that equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose
- Recognise that special caution and a balanced approach is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with adults at risk of harm.

We Do Not:

- Make personal comments or gestures to any person, or about any person, which could be unwelcome e.g. about their appearance
- Touch anyone or invade their personal physical space without their express permission e.g during a dance, unless it is to protect them from imminent danger
- Make any comments which are discriminatory in terms of race, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, size, appearance or gender

- Put staff or volunteers in a position where they are in a private space e.g. working or travelling alone with a child or young person, unless they have been DBS checked and have a specific Shallal purpose for doing so
- Communicate personally with any child or young person, whether by email, telephone, WhatsApp, post or in person (etc) without permission except for purposes of Shallal business by trustees, staff and freelancers who have been DBS checked
- Give children and young people our own personal contact details e.g. mobile number or address without prior permission from their parent, carer or support worker
- Allow allegations of inappropriate behaviour to go unreported
- Make inappropriate comments or gestures to, or in front of, children and young people
- Publish anything online about children and young people e.g. via the website or social media, without the appropriate permission of parents, support workers or carers.

Trustees, staff, freelancers and volunteers who fail to comply with this code of behaviour may be subject to Shallal's disciplinary procedures. Any breach of the code involving a volunteer, contracted freelancer or member of staff from another organisation will result in them being asked to leave. Serious breaches may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency.

If you are in doubt about any aspect of this Code of Conduct, or are aware of anyone behaving in a way that is likely to break the code of conduct, please do not hesitate to consult the nominated member of staff or nominated trustee.

Procedure for dealing with Child Protection issues

Individuals within the organisation need to be alert to the potential abuse of children both within their families and also from other sources including abuse by members of that organisation.

If any parent, carer or young person/child has any concerns about the conduct of any member of the organisation, this should be raised in the first instance with the designated child protection person which is Jo Willis, Creative Director.

Immediate action may be necessary at any stage in involvement with children and families. In all cases it is vital to take whatever action is needed to safeguard children

If emergency medical attention is required this can be secured by calling an ambulance (dial 999) or by taking a child to the nearest accident and emergency department.

If a child is in immediate danger the police should be contacted (dial 999) as they alone have the power to remove a child immediately if protection is necessary, via Police Protection Order.

The organisation should know how to recognise and act upon indicators of abuse or potential abuse involving children. There is an expected responsibility for all members of the charity to respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child in accordance with these procedures.

It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns. However you must not discuss your concerns with parents/carers in the following circumstances:

- Where sexual abuse is suspected
- Where organised and multiple abuse is suspected
- Where fictitious illness by proxy is suspected
- Where contacting parents/carers would place a child, yourself or others at immediate risk.

What to do if a child talks to you about abuse or neglect

It is recognised that a child may seek out to share information about abuse or neglect, or talk spontaneously individually or in groups when you are present. In these situations you must:

- Listen carefully to the child. Do not directly question the child.
- Give the child time and attention.
- Allow the child to give a spontaneous account: do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed as evidence.
- Use the child's own words where possible
- Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information that they have shared.
- Reassure the child that you are glad they have told you, that they have not done anything wrong and tell them what you are going to do next.
- Explain that you will need to get help to keep the child safe.
- Do NOT ask the child to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.

Consulting a child about safeguarding concerns

The purpose of this consultation is to discuss your concerns in relation to a child and decide what action is necessary. You may become concerned about a child who has not spoken to you, because of your observations of, or information about that child.

It is good practice to ask a child why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused or respond to a child wanting to talk to you. This practice can help clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action.

If you are concerned about a child you must share your concerns, initially you should talk to one of the people designated as responsible for child protection within your organisation.

In this organisation the designated person is: Jo Willis

Telephone number: 01326 375867 07505 983710

If one of those people is implicated in the concerns, you should discuss your concerns directly with Social Services tel: 0300 123 1116.

You should consult externally with your local Social Services Department in the following circumstances:

- **When you remain unsure after internal consultation as to whether child protection concerns exist.**
- **When there is disagreement as to whether child protection concerns exist.**
- **When you are unable to consult promptly or at all with your designated internal contact for child protection.**
- **When the concerns relate to any member of the organising committee.**

Consultation is not the same as making a referral but should enable a decision to be made as to whether a referral to social services or the Police should progress.

Making a referral

A referral involves giving social services or the police information about concerns relating to an individual or family in order that enquiries can be undertaken by the appropriate agency followed by any necessary action. In certain cases, the level of concern will lead straight to a referral without external consultation being necessary.

If your concern is about abuse or risk of abuse from someone not known to the child or the child's family, you should make a telephone referral directly to the police and consult with parents.

Information required

Be prepared to give as much of the following information as possible. Unavailability of some information should not stop you making a referral.

- **Your name, telephone number, position and request the same of the person to whom you are speaking.**
- **Full name and address, telephone number of family, date of birth of child and siblings**
- **Gender, ethnicity, first language, any special needs.**
- **Names, dates of birth and relationship of household members or significant others.**
- **The names of professionals known to be involved with the child/family**
- **The nature of the concern and foundation for them.**
- **An opinion on whether the child may need urgent action to make them safe**
- **Your view of what appears to be the needs of the child and family**
- **Whether the consent of a parent with parental responsibility has been given to the referral being made. Action to be taken following the referral**
- **Ensure that you keep an accurate record of your concerns made at the time.**
- **Put your concerns in writing to social services following the referral (within 48 hours)**

- **Accurately record the action agreed or that no further action is to be taken and the reason for this decision.**

Confidentiality

The organisation should ensure that any records made in relation to a referral are kept confidentially and in a secure place.

Information in relation to child protection concerns should be shared on a need-to-know basis. However, the sharing of information is vital to child protection and therefore the issue of confidentiality is secondary to a child's need for protection.

If in doubt, consult.

Nominated primary contact: **Creative Director/Lead Facilitator Either: Jo Willis**

Telephone number: 01326 375867 Mobile Number 07505 983710

Or: Colin Curbishley

Telephone number: 01736 350106 Mobile number: 07747 543300

Nominated trustee: **Nick Fripp** Mobile number: 07532 116126

This policy is due for review in **July 2026**

Shallal

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