

Child Protection Policy

Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out the commitment of Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust (SFCT) to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people who engage with the Trust through:

- Use of SFCT-owned and/or managed community buildings,
- Participation in community events organised or supported by the Trust,
- Membership in the SFCT Junior Membership Scheme (ages 12–17).

The policy applies to:

- All SFCT staff, trustees, and volunteers,
- Contractors, partners, and event organisers acting on behalf of the Trust,
- Anyone using SFCT facilities or representing the Trust in a role that involves contact with children or young people.

Policy Statement

SFCT believes that:

- All children and young people have the right to be protected from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or background, should be treated equally and with respect.

SFCT is committed to creating a safe, positive environment where young people can engage in community life, develop skills, and participate meaningfully in Trust activities.

Legal and Policy Framework

This policy is informed by:

- **Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014**
- **Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007**
- **National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021)**
- **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**
- **Disclosure Scotland and PVG Scheme** requirements

Responsibilities

Trustees

- Ensure the Trust has effective safeguarding arrangements and regularly reviews this policy.
- Appoint a **Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO)**.

Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO)

- Acts as the first point of contact for any child protection concerns.
- Ensures all safeguarding concerns are recorded, reported, and handled appropriately.
- Liaises with statutory services (e.g., Highland Council Social Work, Police Scotland) when necessary.
- Ensures relevant training for staff and volunteers.

Staff and Volunteers

- Must be aware of and follow this policy.
- Must report any concerns about a child's welfare immediately to the DCPO.
- Should never promise confidentiality to a child if there is a safeguarding concern.

Recruitment and Training

- All staff and volunteers who work directly with children or young people must be members of the PVG Scheme (Protection of Vulnerable Groups).
- Recruitment will follow safe recruitment principles, including references and interviews.
- All relevant personnel will receive basic child protection awareness training.
- Training will be refreshed every three years or as required.

Code of Conduct for Working with Young People

All staff, volunteers, and members must:

- Treat all children and young people with dignity and respect.
- Avoid being alone with a child where possible.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries; avoid physical contact unless necessary for safety reasons.
- Listen to and value children's opinions.
- Never use offensive, discriminatory, or inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Report any concerns or incidents promptly.

Junior Membership (Ages 12–17)

- Junior Members are welcome to participate in SFCT activities and contribute ideas and feedback.
- Parental/guardian consent is required for all memberships under 16.
- Junior Members will not have voting rights in governance matters but may participate in youth advisory roles or projects.
- Communication with Junior Members (e.g., about events) will be conducted through appropriate channels, ideally via parents/guardians for under 16s.
- No staff or volunteers will engage in one-to-one electronic communication with a Junior Member unless authorised and recorded for safeguarding purposes.

Community Events and Use of Facilities

- All events involving children will include a risk assessment addressing safeguarding and supervision.

- Adequate adult supervision ratios will be maintained (recommended: 1 adult per 10 children aged 12–17).
- External groups hiring SFCT facilities must have their own safeguarding policies and insurance, which the Trust may request sight of.
- Any lost child, injury, or welfare incident must be recorded and reported to the DCPO as soon as possible.

Responding to Concerns or Allegations

If anyone has a concern that a child or young person may be at risk of harm, they must:

1. **Act immediately.**
2. **Report to the DCPO** (or a Director if the DCPO is unavailable).
3. **Record the details** (date, time, who was involved, what was said/observed).
4. **Do not investigate** or question the child further.
5. If a child is in immediate danger, **call Police Scotland (999) or Highland Council Social Work Emergency Line (01349 886690).**

The DCPO will then follow local safeguarding procedures and make referrals as appropriate.

Confidentiality and Record Keeping

- All information relating to child protection concerns will be handled sensitively and stored securely.
- Information will be shared only with those who need to know, in line with data protection and safeguarding law.

Monitoring and Review

- The Trust will review this policy annually or after any significant safeguarding incident.
- Lessons learned will be incorporated into future training and practice.
- Feedback from young people and parents will be sought to improve safeguarding arrangements.

Key Contacts

Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO): Jewels Lang, ceo@sfctrust.org.uk, Emergency phone no - 07949 916947

Highland Council Social Work (Child Protection): out of hours contact no - 0808 175 3646 or see <https://hcpc.scot/help-advice-numbers/> for help and advice numbers

Police Scotland (non-emergency): 101 **Emergency:** 999

This policy was last reviewed on 1 December 2025 and will be reviewed every year.