



# Skimstone Arts



## **Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults POLICY Revised September 2021**

**In ANY case of concern contact the designated safeguarding officers:**

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***Our Mission Statement: Skimstone Arts supports diverse artists and those at risk of isolation to make work with, for and about the world that matters to them.***

**Skimstone Arts is a registered charity. Charity registration number: 1182284**

Charity name: SKIMSTONE ARTS

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## Introduction

This policy applies to the Board of Directors, Artistic Director, Lead Musician, current freelance and volunteer staff, and all of those who become involved in Skimstone Arts' projects and activities including the young people.

***Each of those individuals involved with Skimstone Arts should familiarise themselves with the Skimstone Arts Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy.***

## Responsibilities of Skimstone Arts

The policy outlined here has been specifically designed for Skimstone Arts and in response to Covid-19 pandemic. It is restricted to implementation on all of Skimstone Arts' projects and activities involving children, young people and vulnerable adults. It does not supersede individual organizational policies designed by outside agencies, groups and individuals who become involved in Skimstone Arts' activities.

Skimstone Arts' Board of Directors, Artistic Director and all other company members recognize that the term 'young people' has no legal basis, but employ it to more accurately reflect the ages of a specific age group we work with (16-25).

However, this policy also includes children and vulnerable adults. Skimstone Arts demonstrate a commitment to working with people in this particular age group and feel it is a privilege to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults; it is also a great responsibility. Parents, guardians and carers trust us to look after their children, young people and vulnerable adults, to care for them, empower them, challenge them and ultimately keep them safe. This policy aims to safeguard everyone aged between 16 and 25 who become involved in Skimstone Arts 'activities with Young People's programmes' e.g. Young Artist Collective. Skimstone Arts is, however, an Arts Charity for everybody so work may extend to those who are aged under or over 16 – 25 and this includes children aged 4+ and elderly people ages up to 90+.

Skimstone Arts acknowledges recommendations from the Home Office ("Safe from Harm") and work undertaken by Arts Council England with the NSPCC (National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children) which examines some of the specific issues affecting those who use the arts in their work with young people ("Keeping Arts Safe"). Skimstone Arts is therefore committed to the promotion of children, young people's and vulnerable adults welfare and the prevention of abuse, in various forms, taking place. We

strive for best practice in all activities and work involving children, young people and vulnerable adults, especially as face-to-face work has become restricted and more online connectivity is now ‘the new norm.’

Skimstone Arts therefore recognises a duty of care to all children and young people involved in our work and this also includes those who could be described as vulnerable adults (those adults who may need community care services) by reason of mental or other disability, age and/or illness and who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

Whilst Skimstone Arts recognizes that legal frameworks may differ within other organizations, the spirit of the procedures should be applied in respect of all children, young people and vulnerable adults. There may also be occasions when the duty of care extends to the children, young people and vulnerable adults of those who work with Skimstone Arts.

## **Policy Key Aims**

The key aims of Skimstone Arts’ Safeguarding Policy are as follows:

- To ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults in Skimstone Arts’ care are protected from harm
- To facilitate appropriate response should abuse be discovered, or disclosed. This may include notifying the police immediately and placing alleged victim in a place of safety until the appropriately informed authorities and or parents/ carers arrive.
- To clarify appropriate behavior for company members and provide guidance on avoiding situations where a company member’s actions may be misunderstood (this point covers both the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults and the protection of company members from false allegations).
- To embed regular and updated Safeguarding Training in the company’s projects and for Management and Lead staff to attend external agency training and disseminate critical information.
- It is part of the Artistic Director’s duty of care to ensure that company staff and members are never placed in situations where abuse might be alleged.

***NB: it is not intended that the policy should restrict staff and company members from normal and new Covid-19 ways of working, but company staff and members always need to consider how an action or activity may be perceived as opposed to how it is intended.***

Skimstone Arts’ Board of Directors, Artistic Director, Lead Musician, freelance and volunteer staff strongly support the following key safeguarding statements:

- The welfare of the children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount

- All children, young people and vulnerable adults whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and / or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Artistic Director, Lead Musician and those who become involved in an organisation's activities should be clear on how to respond appropriately e.g. following company procedures where alleged victims are listened to, supported and given a place of safety and security.
- Working in partnership with children, young people and vulnerable adults, their parents, carers and other agencies is key in promoting young people's welfare.

## **Online Behavior And Codes Of Conduct**

Skimstone Arts takes using social media appropriately and safely seriously. We use social media to engage with or contact children and young people and ensure this is done safely and appropriately. We do this by following the policy as set out below.

We expect ALL adults working or volunteering online with children, and from the children and young people themselves to adhere to a code of conduct as follows:

- use accounts that have been authorised by our organisation to communicate with children and young people (never use personal accounts)
- turn on privacy settings on accounts that are used to interact with children and young people
- use an organisational device to communicate with young people (if this isn't possible, senior managers should authorise individual staff and volunteers to use a personal device on a case-by-case basis and keep a record of this authorisation and who can see the communication)
- ensure all communications are relevant to the work of the project and organisation
- use age-appropriate language.
- Staff and volunteers should also be aware of their digital footprint. Children, young people and families may look up the personal social media accounts of people who are working with them so these should be free of inappropriate or harmful content and not provide any personal information such as personal email addresses or phone numbers.
- It's best practice for staff and volunteers not to accept friend requests on their personal accounts from children and families they work with.

## **Procedures To Follow**

Skimstone Arts is committed to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults from physical, sexual or emotional harm. In order to achieve this, pastoral care is offered to ANY person, especially those taking part in our activities, to ensure that they

are heard and respected and have a secure place to share information, feelings or confidential matters in a non-judgmental place of safety.

This pastoral care is primarily undertaken by Artistic Director and Lead Musician. Young people should be sign posted to them immediately if staff or volunteers have any safeguarding concerns.

However, freelance and volunteer staff, company members and all of those who become involved in company activities need to value young people and take time to listen to them when they choose to talk about their experiences and concerns. It is important that company members and all of those involved in company activities know how to respond if abuse is disclosed or suspected:

- Remain calm and in control
- Listen carefully to what has been said and immediately refer the young person to either the Artistic Director or Lead Musician.
- Record and pass on any relevant information to the Artistic Director or Lead Musician.

If in exceptional circumstances the Artistic Director and Lead Musician are engaged with other young people or activity and are not immediately available then staff should follow the following procedure:

- Reassure the child/young person/vulnerable adult that they did the right thing;
- Don't promise to 'keep it a secret';
- Say you will need to share this with Artistic Director/Lead Musician and they may pass this information on if they feel there is a danger to the young person or others;
- Ask questions only for clarification;
- Make sure that the child/young person/vulnerable adult knows how any disclosure will be followed up;
- Make notes at the time if possible or ASAP afterwards using only the child/young person/vulnerable adult's words;
- Pass on all information to the Artistic Director or Lead Musician as soon as possible;
- Seek appropriate support from the Artistic Director or Lead Musician if you have found the incident stressful;

**If neither the Artistic Director or Lead Musician are available and the staff member feels that there is immediate threat or danger to the young person or others, then they should contact the following organisation and follow the advice given:**

**Social Care Direct (Adult Social Care, Newcastle City Council)  
8- 5pm - 0191 278 8377 or 07968 474 891  
or Emergency Duty Team - 0191 278 7878**

**They should then follow up by passing on any information to the Artistic Director or Lead Musician as soon as possible.**

### **Subsequently:**

The Artistic Director is responsible for referring information to the statutory authorities (Social Services or Police or CAHMs team) unless this has been done in an emergency situation by a member of staff in which case they would follow up with the member of staff and relevant authorities. The details of the disclosure or concern must not be discussed with anyone other than the young person, the Artistic Director and the statutory authorities.

If the disclosure, or concern is about a Skimstone Arts freelance or volunteer staff member or company member the person must be suspended from any activities involving young people until the matter has been investigated. In the instance that the disclosure or concern is about the Artistic Director or Lead Musician, a second company member is responsible for referring the matter directly to the statutory authorities and notifying the Chair of the Board of Directors.

### **The Selection Of Freelance And Volunteer Staff And Their Responsibilities:**

Where relevant, Skimstone Arts will recruit all freelance and volunteer staff following appropriate equal opportunity procedures (refer to Skimstone Arts Equal Opportunities Policy) Interviews will be carried out by Artistic Director and a minimum of one other company member and relevant questions regarding work with, experience of and attitudes to children, young people and vulnerable adults will be addressed to all candidates where relevant.

Recent, relevant and reliable references will be sought for all freelance and volunteer staff whenever possible, and wherever applicable until relevant Disclosures from the DBS checks have been seen, freelance and volunteer staff and those who wish to become involved in Skimstone Arts' activities will not have unsupervised direct contact with children , young people and vulnerable adults.

The roles of all freelance and volunteer staff must be established and clearly explained to them by the Artistic Director. Freelance and volunteer staff and those involved in company activities must not be expected to perform duties for which they are not adequately trained or experienced.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Artistic Director**

The Artistic Director will ensure that:

- When any freelance and volunteer staff or individual involved in Skimstone Arts' activities is required to have unsupervised contact with children and/or young people (for example training, regular mentoring, being in sole charge), they are

required to produce a relevant and recent DBS Disclosure certificate (no more than 1 year old)

- Where possible the relevant level of 'Disclosure' will be sought from the Disclosure and Barring Service. Existing DBS Disclosure certificates will be seen by the Artistic Director and references taken up when appropriate.
- The Artistic Director will issue freelance and volunteer staff and those involved in company activities a copy of the Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy and make themselves available to provide further advice or support if required.
- Any filming or taking photographs of children, young people and vulnerable adults as part of any Skimstone Arts project or activity requires the consent of the child / young person / vulnerable adult and a parent or guardian (if under the age of 18) when relevant. Written consent must be given and a signed consent form returned. This is the responsibility of the Artistic Director, Lead Artist, freelance and volunteer staff and company members.
- Any personal data relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Skimstone Arts' projects and activities must be kept secure and not passed on to an outside party. It must be securely deleted once the project is finished. This is also a shared responsibility of the Lead Artist.

**The Artistic Director and Lead Musician** will also monitor and oversee that all freelance and volunteer staff abide by the following guidelines:

- Ideally at least two freelance and volunteer staff should conduct any young people's/vulnerable adults activity
- As far as possible a freelance and volunteer staff will not be left alone with a young person unless it is in the public studio space with full knowledge of the professional activity e.g. photography overseen by Artistic Director/ Lead Musician who are nearby.
- If privacy or confidentiality is required, Artistic Director/ Lead Musician will inform each other and one of the senior staff will ensure that the young person should be checked on periodically, the young person should be told about this arrangement. This applies to scheduled and spontaneous pastoral care with Artistic Director/ Lead Musician.
- Access to and from any buildings used for project work are safe and well lit
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults are treated with respect and without discrimination
- Be careful with speech, tone of voice and body language
- Respect the privacy of young people (e.g. when changing)
- Avoid games/ exercises whose rules do not prevent the possibility of dignity/ physical aggression, or inappropriate touching
- Refrain from any sexually suggestive comments, ridiculing, or rejection of a young person, even in fun
- Avoid inappropriate touching in any form and exercise caution when comforting a distressed or injured young person
- Avoid all situations where one is alone with a group exclusively of the opposite sex, a second company member of the same sex as the group must be present if possible.
- Not let young people involve him or her in excessively attention seeking behaviour, especially if it is of an overtly sexual or physical nature
- Not invite a young person to his or her home

- Avoid engaging with young people via text/ mobile phone calls/ email/ MSN or equivalent unless absolutely necessary
- Ensure that parents, guardians and carers know where the young people are, obtain written parental consent for non-routine events or visits
- Avoid giving lifts to individual young people, if this is unavoidable make sure they sit in the rear of the car
- Not provide lifts to passengers exclusively of the opposite sex

### **Visits to Toilets**

As the male and female toilets are outside the Skimstone Arts Studio Premises i.e. along the corridor, children, young people and vulnerable adults must ask, for fire and safety reasons to notify a Skimstone Arts member when they are going to the toilet and when they have returned.

### **Good Practice Amongst Freelance And Volunteer Staff**

Freelance and volunteer staff must support each other in their work with young people and encourage the use of the guidelines at all times. If a freelance and volunteer staff has a concern about the behaviour or suitability of another freelance and volunteer staff they must speak, in confidence, to the Artistic Director/ Lead Musician as soon as possible.

Artistic Director/ Lead Musician should take opportunities to observe company members in activities with young people, and discuss what they have observed with the freelance and volunteer staff. Freelance and volunteer staff should accept such observation as part of Skimstone Arts' commitment to safe and good quality activities with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

As part of supervision, Artistic Director should discuss with the freelance and volunteer staff their role, performance and any concerns they have about their work with young people.

### **Safe Touch**

Skimstone Arts recognises that it is advisable to avoid direct physical contact with children and young people to safeguard the young person from possible abuse, and to protect company members from false allegations of abuse. However use of some art forms (dance/ drama etc) may on some occasion necessitate the 'touching' of young people. Relevant freelance and volunteer staff will be expected to familiarise themselves with the concepts of 'safe touch', advice on which can be sought from the Artistic Director and Lead Musician.

Please also be advised that some children/young people/ vulnerable adults with ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) find touch stressful e.g. light touch on the forearm to get their attention. Please be mindful of this and check with appropriateness of what they are comfortable with.

If you wish to discuss any of the above with Artistic Director then please do so immediately.

Our Board of Directors oversee all our policies and we continue to monitor them on a yearly basis.

## Definitions of Abuse

(as identified by NSPCC [www.learning.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.learning.nspcc.org.uk))

Abuse can be defined as: *An act of omission or commission judged by a mixture of community values and professional expertise to be inappropriate or damaging.*

Included below is a non-exhaustive list of abusive behavior that may be affecting those who Skimstone Arts work with.

**PLEASE NOTE:** *Please be advised that the descriptions of these topics are in depth, and may be distressing to some. If you feel you could be traumatized by these descriptions, please get in touch with Claire Webster Saaremets, or Peter Saaremets (contact details may be found on the front page of this document.)*

### Neglect

Neglect is “the ongoing failure to meet a child’s basic physical and psychological needs” (Department for Education, 2018; Department of Health, 2017; Scottish Government, 2014; Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board, 2019).

The four main types of neglect are:

- physical neglect: not meeting a child’s basic needs, such as food, clothing or shelter; not supervising a child adequately or providing for their safety
- educational neglect: not making sure a child receives an education
- emotional neglect: not meeting a child’s needs for nurture and stimulation, for example by ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating them
- medical neglect: not providing appropriate health care (including dental care), refusing care or ignoring medical recommendations (Horwath, 2007).

### FGM Abuse

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision or cutting. FGM is often performed by someone with no medical training who uses instruments such as a knife, scalpel, scissors, glass or razor blade. Children are rarely given anaesthetic or antiseptic treatment and are often forcibly restrained.

### Sexual Abuse

***Child sexual abuse (CSA) is when a child is forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities. This may involve physical contact or non-contact activities and can happen online or offline (Department for Education, 2018; Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2017; Scottish Government, 2014; Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board, 2019). Children and young people may not always understand that they are being sexually abused.***

Contact abuse involves activities where an abuser makes physical contact with a child. It includes:

- sexual touching of any part of the body, whether the child is wearing clothes or not
- forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity
- making a child take their clothes off or touch someone else's genitals

- rape or penetration by putting an object or body part inside a child's mouth, vagina or anus.

Non-contact abuse involves activities where there is no physical contact. It includes:

- flashing at a child
- encouraging or forcing a child to watch or hear sexual acts
- not taking proper measures to prevent a child being exposed to sexual activities by others
- making a child masturbate while others watch
- persuading a child to make, view or distribute child abuse images (such as performing sexual acts over the internet, sexting or showing pornography to a child)
- making, viewing or distributing child abuse images
- allowing someone else to make, view or distribute child abuse images
- meeting a child following grooming with the intent of abusing them (even if abuse did not take place)
- sexually exploiting a child for money, power or status (child sexual exploitation).

## **Domestic Abuse**

***Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between people who are, or who have been in a relationship, regardless of gender or sexuality. It can include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse.***

***Domestic abuse can include:***

- sexual abuse and rape (including within a relationship)
- punching, kicking, cutting, hitting with an object
- withholding money or preventing someone from earning money
- taking control over aspects of someone's everyday life, which can include where they go and what they wear
- not letting someone leave the house
- reading emails, text messages or letters
- threatening to kill or harm them, a partner, another family member or pet.

## **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is defined as deliberately hurting a child and causing physical harm (Department of Health, 2017; Department for Education, 2018; Scottish Government, 2014; Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board, 2019).

It includes injuries such as:

- bruises
- broken bones
- burns
- cuts.

It may involve:

- hitting; kicking; shaking; throwing; poisoning; burning; scalding; drowning
- any other method of causing non-accidental harm to a child.

## **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is emotional maltreatment of a child, which has a severe and persistent negative effect on the child's emotional development (Department for Education, 20171; Department of Health, 20172; Scottish Government, 20143; Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board, 20194). It's also known as psychological abuse.

Most forms of abuse include an emotional element, but emotional abuse can also happen on its own.

Children can be emotionally abused by anyone:

- parents or carers
- family members
- other adults
- other children.

There are several categories of emotional abuse.

Denying emotional responsiveness (also known as emotional neglect)

- ignoring the child
- not showing affection.

Rejection

- verbal humiliation
- name-calling
- criticism
- physical abandonment
- excluding the child from activities.

Isolating

- putting unreasonable limitations on a
- child's freedom of movement
- restricting social interaction
- not communicating with the child.

Exploiting or corrupting

- encouraging a child to take part in
- criminal activities
- forcing a child to take part in activities
- that are not appropriate for their stage of development.

Terrorising

- threatening violence
- bullying
- deliberately frightening a child

## **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (Department for Education, 2017; Nidirect, 2018; Scottish Government, 2018; Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board, 2019).

Children and young people in sexually exploitative situations and relationships are persuaded or forced to perform sexual activities or have sexual activities performed on them in return for gifts, drugs, money or affection.

CSE can take place in person, online, or using a combination of both.

Perpetrators of CSE use a power imbalance to exploit children and young people. This may arise from a range of factors including:

- age
- gender
- sexual identity
- cognitive ability
- physical strength
- status
- access to economic or other resources (Department of Education, 2017)

## **Bullying and Cyberbullying**

***Bullying is when individuals or groups seek to harm, intimidate or coerce someone who is perceived to be vulnerable (Oxford English Dictionary, 2018).***

It can involve people of any age, and can happen anywhere – at home, school or using digital technologies (cyberbullying). This means it can happen at any time. Bullying encompasses a range of behaviours which are often combined.

Verbal abuse:

- name-calling
- saying nasty things to or about the person

Physical abuse:

- hitting
- pushing a child
- physical assault

Emotional abuse:

- making threats
- undermining a child
- excluding a child from a friendship group or activities

Cyberbullying/online bullying:

- excluding a child from online games, activities or friendship groups
- sending threatening, upsetting or abusive messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing or malicious images or videos

- 'trolling' - sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- encouraging young people to self-harm
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name

### **Discriminatory Abuse**

Including racial or sexual harassment and also abusive treatment based on a child's, young person's or vulnerable adult's disability.

Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence and ignorance. It may be perpetrated by a wide range of people including family members, trusted adults, friends, peers, neighbours, people in positions of power and authority and volunteers as well as by strangers. There is particular concern when abuse is perpetrated by someone in power or authority who use their position to the detriment of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

Freelance and volunteer staff and company members should always be alert to situations where they may be witnessing 'ABUSE OF TRUST'. This must be brought to the attention of the Artistic Director immediately.

### **Online Abuse**

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet, facilitated through technology like computers, tablets, mobile phones and other internet-enabled devices (Department for Education, 2018; Department of Health, 2017; Scottish Government, 2014; Welsh Assembly Government, 2018).

It can happen anywhere online that allows digital communication, such as:

- social networks
- text messages and messaging apps
- email and private messaging
- online chats
- comments on live streaming sites
- voice chat in games

Children and young people can be revictimised (experience further abuse) when abusive content is recorded, uploaded or shared by others online. This can happen if the original abuse happened online or offline.

Children and young people may experience several types of abuse online:

- bullying/cyberbullying
- emotional abuse (this includes emotional blackmail, for example pressuring children and young people to comply with sexual requests via technology)
- sexting (pressure or coercion to create sexual images)
- sexual abuse
- sexual exploitation.

## Online risks

Children may be exposed to upsetting or inappropriate content online, particularly if the platform you're using doesn't have robust privacy and security settings or if you're not checking posts. This content might be sexually explicit or it might be harmful in other ways, such as [radicalisation](#), [bullying](#), or content that's upsetting.

Children may be at risk of being [groomed](#) if they have an online profile that means they can be contacted privately.

Children's posts or profile information may expose personal information and put them at risk. For example, they may talk about their home life, feelings, or thoughts they've been having. There may be information that makes them identifiable such as locations of events they are taking part in or visual clues in photographs. Perpetrators may use this information to groom, abuse or exploit children.

Perpetrators of abuse may create fake profiles to try to contact children and young people through the platform you're using, for example an adult posing as a child. They may also create anonymous accounts and engage in cyberbullying or trolling. People known to a child can also perpetrate abuse.

On many platforms, children can be contacted anywhere and at any time through private messaging or notification alerts. This means it's harder for them to escape from abusive messages or upsetting content that they are tagged in.

## A List Of Useful Phone Numbers

NSPCC	0808 800 5000
Childline	0800 1111
Samaritans	116 123
Drinkline	0300 123 1110
Talk to Frank	0300 123 6600
National Domestic Abuse Helpline	0808 2000 247
Cruse Bereavement Care	0808 808 1677
Age UK	0800 169 2081
Emergency food Bank	0300 330 9055
Non Emergencies services	101
Emergency services	999
Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI)	0191 233 6161
Newcastle Dental Hospital	0191 233 6161
National Power grid	0800 668877

Skimstone Arts, Skimstone Studios, 2nd Floor, i4 Quayside,  
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