

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Read With Me

Registered company number 12594043

1. Introduction

Read With Me is a Community Interest Company managed by three Directors Linda Thomas (also known as Linda Cohen), Rachel Corcoran and Rosaline Hilton and is based at 4/5 Little Acre, Wotton-under-Edge GL12 7DU.

The company has adopted this Safeguarding Children Policy and expects every adult working or helping at Read With Me to support it and comply with it. Consequently, this policy shall apply to all staff and volunteers working on behalf of Read With Me.

2. Policy Statement

This policy is intended to protect children and young people who receive any service from the organisation, including those who are the children of adults who may receive services from Read With Me. As an organisation we believe that no child or young person should experience abuse or harm and are committed to the protection of children and young people and this policy is intended to provide guidance and overarching principles to those who represent us as volunteers or staff, to guide our approach to child protection and safeguarding.

Children are defined as:

The Children Act 1989 definition of a child is: anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, even if they are living independently, are a member of the armed forces or is in hospital.

Safeguarding children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Legal Framework

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

Read With Me will have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

The Prevent duty

Some organisations in England, Scotland and Wales have a duty, as a specified authority under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, to identify vulnerable children and young people and prevent them from being drawn into terrorism. This is known as the Prevent duty. These organisations include:

- Schools

Policy date: April 2024

Policy review date: September 2026

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Read With Me

Registered company number 12594043

- Registered childcare providers
- Local authorities
- Police
- Prisons and probation services
- NHS trusts and foundations.
- Other organisations may also have Prevent duties if they perform delegated local authority functions

Children can be exposed to different views and receive information from various sources. Some of these views may be considered radical or extreme. Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies. It can result in a person becoming drawn into terrorism and is a form of harm. Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

3. Child Abuse

Forms of Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused by those who know them or by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or by another child or children. There are 4 main categories of abuse, which are: sexual, physical, emotional abuse, and neglect -

• **physical abuse**, for example shaking, beating or punching, scalding, drowning or suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child

• **emotional abuse** (the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development), for example rejection and denial of affection, interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning. It may also include seeing the ill treatment of another and/or causing children to feel frightened. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone

• **sexual abuse** (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), for example sexual assault or encouraging a child to view pornographic material. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as peer on peer or child on child abuse)

• **neglect** (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 or development), for example failure to provide appropriate care including food, clothing, shelter and/or medical attention. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

Staff and volunteers should be aware that abuse is rarely a standalone event that can be covered by one definition. Children may be abused by adults or other children. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as banter or part of growing up.

Policy date: April 2024

Policy review date: September 2026

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Read With Me

Registered company number 12594043

Peer on peer abuse may include:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- physical abuse
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos
- up skirting, which is now a criminal offence and typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

Staff and volunteers should recognise that some types of abuse may be more prevalent for girls (such as sexual assaults) and others types for boys (such as physical violence).

Signs/Indicators of abuse

Possible signs of abuse include (but are not limited to):

- the child says that they have been abused or asks a question which gives rise to that inference
- there is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a child's injury; the injury is unusual in kind or location; there have been a number of injuries; there is a pattern to the injuries
- the child's behaviour stands out from the group as either being extreme model behaviour or extremely challenging behaviour; or there is a sudden change in the child's behaviour
- the child is displaying sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that expected for his/her age
- the child appears neglected, eg. dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed
- the child is reluctant to go home

4. Recruitment and selection

4.1 Volunteers

The organisation recognises the importance of following a strict recruitment process for those volunteering in schools. The recruitment and validation process are laid out as shown in **Appendix A**

4.2 Staff

It is also recognised that staff working for the organisation also must comply with the Safeguarding Children Policy and the steps of the recruitment and selection process are laid out below

- Job specification reviewed and updated where required
- Advert issued with appropriate closing date

Policy date: April 2024

Policy review date: September 2026

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Read With Me

Registered company number 12594043

- Selection panel and interview dates organised
- Interviews take place and successful candidate identified
- References from two referees requested
- Offer made subject to references and DBS checks
- Successful candidate completes all appropriate Safeguarding training for role

5. Training and induction

5.1 Initial training and induction

As laid out in **Appendix A** before a volunteer can be allocated to a school, they must complete the Read With Me on-line safeguarding training and have full DBS certification. Only volunteers who have full DBS certification can be unaccompanied in the presence of any child or walk-through common areas in school. Our volunteers hear children read in school both in the classroom and in open spaces, meeting rooms and the school library. This may be in the company of another volunteer, teacher or only with the child present.

Every volunteer will also receive an email containing their starter information and this will include a link to access the following:

- Safeguarding Children policy
- Social Media policy
- Code of Conduct policy

Volunteers must also have confirmed they have read and will comply with the above referenced policies.

5.2 Volunteers awaiting DBS

Non-certified volunteers, undergoing taster sessions must always be accompanied by a DBS certified volunteer or a member of staff. This is for the protection of the child and the volunteer.

5.3 Refresher training

Volunteers with Read With Me will be expected to complete refresher safeguarding training as required following their initial training, it will be the responsibility of the Volunteer Liaison Manager and Training Manager to monitor the status of training and ensure that volunteers complete the refresher training within the timescales required, failure to do will invalidate their ability to go into schools for Read With Me.

6. Safeguarding children at events/activities

Alongside the main activity of hearing children read in the school setting by adult volunteers Read With Me also host book clubs during school holidays at community venues. These events are open to three groups:

- those open to children of all ages
- those for children accompanied by a parent/carer
- those for unaccompanied children, which are sometimes run alongside other events/activities

Policy date: April 2024

Policy review date: September 2026

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Read With Me

Registered company number 12594043

6.1 At events and activities open to all ages

Children under 16 must be accompanied throughout by an adult over the age of 18 who not only brings the child but also takes the child home again afterwards. Young people aged 16 or 17 may attend unaccompanied if they bring the written consent and mobile telephone number of one of their parent/carers.

6.2 At events and activities for children accompanied by a parent/carer

Children under 16 must be supervised throughout the event by an adult over the age of 18 who not only brings the child to the event but also takes the child home again afterwards. If a lone adult brings more than one child, then the children will have to stay together, so that the one adult can supervise them. Young people aged 16 or 17 may attend unaccompanied if they bring the written consent and mobile telephone number of one of their parent/carers.

6.3 At events and activities for unaccompanied children

Children under the age of 16 must be enrolled by a responsible adult before being left with the event leader. The enrolment must record the child's name, age and address and the names and addresses of the child's parent/carer, plus the parent/carers' mobile telephone numbers. Young people aged 16 or 17 may attend unaccompanied if they bring the written consent and mobile telephone number of one of their parent/carers.

7. Behaviour Issues

This section covers behaviours that may occur whilst a Read With Me activity may be taking place as covered in section 6 above.

7.1 Prevention of bullying

We will not tolerate the bullying of children either by adults or by other children. If any incident of child-on-child bullying should arise at a Read With Me event, those involved will be separated immediately and the parents of the children involved will be asked to deal with the matter. The Directors will review all incidents of child-on-child bullying and assess the likely future risk to children. If appropriate, the Directors will consider banning a child from future events, but only in full accordance with the rules and procedures of Read With Me

7.2 Managing behaviour, discipline, and acceptable restraint

7.2.1 Adults supervising children at Read With Me events must never use any form of corporal punishment. If physical restraint is necessary to prevent injury to any person or to prevent serious damage to property, then the minimum necessary restraint may be used — but for that purpose only.

7.2.2 Unacceptable behaviours at Read With Me events for unaccompanied children will generally be stopped by separating the children from each other and from the group.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Read With Me

Registered company number 12594043

Those involved will be suitably supervised and will be returned as soon as possible to the care of their parent/carers.

7.2.3 Read With Me may apply a further disciplinary sanction; namely the barring of the child from one or more future events over the following 18 months. Any such sanction would be determined and applied by the Senior Lead for Safeguarding.

7.2.4 Any parent/carer who is aggrieved by the above action may appeal to Read With Me who will hear the views of all relevant persons. The decision on the appeal following a review of the evidence by Read With Me is then final.

Both event and activities are to be defined broadly to include any occasions where Read With Me will be providing a service.

8. Health and safety aspects of safeguarding children

Before commencing any event for unaccompanied children, the organisation will carry out a risk assessment and then take steps to minimise all risks to health and safety. Parents and children will be made aware of any risks and of the steps to be taken to minimise those risks. The organisation will keep a record of all risk assessments.

Sufficient adults must be present at any event for unaccompanied children to enable one adult to deal with any emergency while another adult supervises the children not directly affected by the emergency.

9. Staff responsibilities

Safeguarding of children is of paramount importance to Read With Me. There are two nominated persons within the organisation who have responsibility for safeguarding

Senior Lead for Safeguarding (SLS)

Name: Linda Cohen

Email address: linda@readwithme.org.uk

Telephone number: 07791 110906

Deputy Senior Lead for Safeguarding (DSL)

Name: Rachel Corcoran

Email address: rachel@readwithme.org.uk

Telephone number: 07791 110910

If anyone working within the organisation encounters a safeguarding issue, they should follow the following reporting procedure dependant on in which setting they encounter the issue outlined out in section 10. If it is deemed inappropriate to report the issue to the appointed SLS/DSL due to a conflict of interest them it should be reported to the nominated Independent Safeguarding Lead, contact details in **Appendix B**.

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Policy date: April 2024

Policy review date: September 2026

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

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10. Reporting procedures

A member of staff or volunteer from Read With Me suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse:

- must listen carefully to the child and keep an open mind.
- must not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer.
- must reassure the child that the allegation or complaint will be taken seriously, but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff/volunteer should explain that they need to pass the information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead within the school or local authority if not in a school setting, who will ensure that the correct action is taken.
- If the complaint is made within a school setting the staff/volunteer should report the issue **immediately** to the Designated Safeguarding Lead within the school and inform the Volunteer Liaison Manager at Read With Me.
- The Volunteer Liaison Manager at Read With Me should record that a complaint has been referred to the school DSL for action, noting the date/time/location of the complaint and the name of whom it was reported.

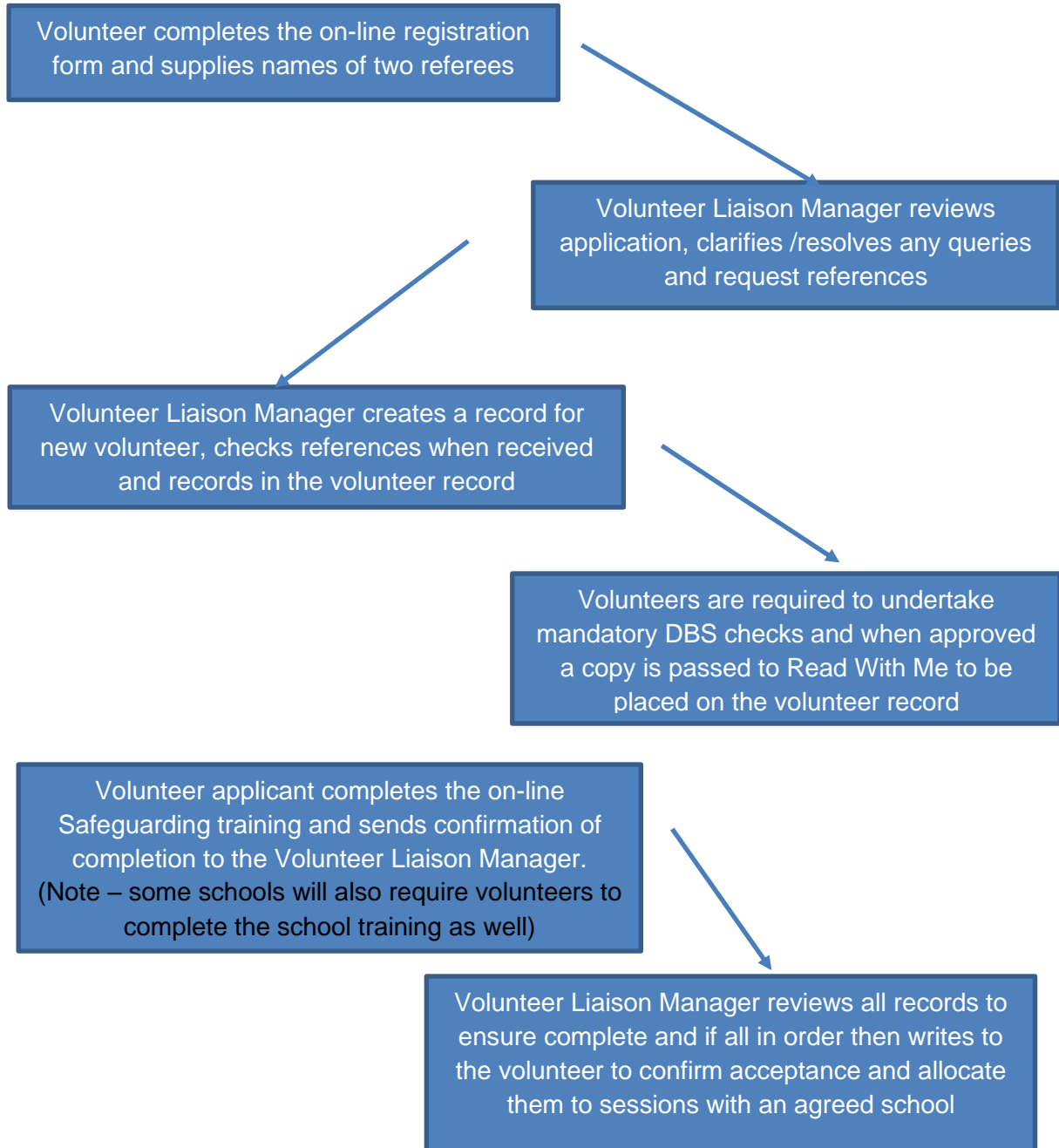
If a Read With Me member of staff or volunteer has a concern about another Read With Me member of staff or volunteer regarding safeguarding of children, then they should inform the Senior Lead for Safeguarding at Read With Me.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Read With Me

Registered company number 12594043

Appendix A – Volunteer Recruitment Process



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Read With Me

Registered company number 12594043

Appendix B – Useful Contacts

Read With Me Senior Lead for Safeguarding

Name: Linda Cohen

Email address: linda@readwithme.org.uk

Telephone number: 07791 110906

Read With Me Deputy Senior Lead for Safeguarding

Name: Rachel Corcoran

Email address: rachel@readwithme.org.uk

Telephone number: 07791 110910

Independent Safeguarding Lead

Name: Nigel Hatton – Local Authority Designated Officer

Email address: nigel.hatton@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Telephone number: 01452 426320

Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board

If you are worried or concerned about anyone under 18, who you think is being abused or neglected, contact the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board (GSCB). They understand:

- that you may only be raising a concern
- that you may be worried how this may impact you
- that you may be worried how this may impact the child you are worried about

The contact numbers are:

- Gloucestershire Children and Families Help Desk: 01452 426565 (Mon – Fri 8am - 5pm)
- Gloucestershire Child Protection Unit: 0845 0901234

Other useful contact numbers:

- South Gloucestershire Children and Families Help Desk: (01454) 868700
- NSPCC child protection helpline: 0808 800 5000

Police

Emergency – 999

Non-emergency – 101

Policy date: April 2024

Policy review date: September 2026