



Registered charity No. 1074935

Safeguarding policy and procedures

This policy was last updated on August 19, 2021

Our objective:

Friends of the children of Orissa (FoCO) hope to make a positive contribution to a strong and safe community in Odisha (formerly Orissa) and we recognise the right of every individual to stay safe. We have published these procedures to ensure that our trustees, supporters, volunteers and those we support in India are kept safe and not subjected to abuse or exploitation of any kind.

Introduction:

Friends of the children of Orissa do not usually come into contact with children and/or vulnerable adults through their general fundraising activities in the UK.

Trustees, supporters and volunteers representing Friends of the children of Orissa visit India to support our work and come into contact with the children in the following activities:

- Attending school assemblies and/or lessons at PUSS
- Visiting the rehab centre at SOCH
- Taking part in award ceremonies
- Group activities such as sport, counselling sessions or mealtimes
- Photography sessions for trustees, photographs may be taken for fundraising purposes.

The types of contact with children and/or vulnerable adults will always be in accordance with the safeguarding guidelines of SOCH or PUSS (any visitor must check and comply with these rules) and FoCO itself imposes the following limits if these are not already specified:

- Contact with individual children at either SOCH or PUSS without a member of staff present should be avoided unless agreed by a staff member of either organisation.
- Supporters and volunteers should avoid photographing individual children, group photographs of assemblies, etc. are acceptable as a reminder of a visit. All photography should be agreed with staff in advance, do not assume it is OK as there may be reasons why it is not safe to photograph a particular group or child.
- Photographs taken by trustees, supporters or volunteers should not be used on personal social media platforms with any identifying comments or names of specific children.

- Photographs may be used by FoCO in fundraising or promotional literature or on the official FoCO website or official FoCO social media platforms, this will always be without identifying individual children. These photographs will be securely stored.
- In the supporter's newsletter an individual child may be identified using a first name in certain circumstances, upon receiving an award, for example.

This policy seeks to ensure that Friends of the children of Orissa undertakes its responsibilities with regard to the protection of trustees, supporters, children and/or vulnerable adults and will respond to concerns appropriately. The policy establishes a framework to support Trustees, supporters and volunteers in their practices and clarifies the organisation's expectations.

Explanation of terms – regulated and controlled activities.

Regulated activity: This includes specific contact with children and/or vulnerable adults when visiting India; including, but not limited to: attending any lesson, assembly or meeting where children and/or vulnerable adults are present.

Controlled activity: This includes the handling, processing or storage of personal data with specific regard to supporters, trustees and children and/or vulnerable adults.

Legislation

We work hard to ensure that we comply with all relevant legislation, our partners in India have their own safeguarding policies and procedures which comply with state laws in India. Friends of the children of Orissa is a charity registered in England and our fundraising efforts are based in the UK; the principal pieces of legislation governing this policy are:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Children Act 1989 (as amended)
- The Children Act 2004
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Mental Health Act 1983
- Human Rights Act 1998

There are also others worth noting, which have prompted changes to safeguarding requirements over time. This guide references these throughout where relevant:

- GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners 2018.
- Childcare Act 2006 (as amended in 2018).

Key terms used in the document:

PUSS (Palli Unnayan Seva Samiti) - An organisation to further the welfare and education of vulnerable children.
<https://pussindia.org/>

SOCH (Society for children) - An organisation who identify and assist vulnerable children on the railways of Odisha.
<https://sochforchildren.org/>

FoCO (Friends of the children of Orissa) - The UK based charity which raises funds to help support PUSS and SOCH
<https://www.orissa.org.uk/>

Definitions:

Safeguarding is about embedding practices throughout the organisation to ensure the protection of trustees, supporters, volunteers and especially of children and/or vulnerable adults wherever possible. In contrast, child and adult protection is about responding to circumstances that arise.

Abuse is a selfish act of oppression and injustice, exploitation and manipulation of power by those in a position of authority. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture.

It can take a number of forms, including, but not limited to the following:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or Emotional abuse
- Neglect or Omission to act
- Financial or material abuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Modern Slavery
- Domestic Abuse
- Institutional Abuse
- Discriminatory Abuse
- Harassment
- Radicalisation

Definition of a child

A child is under the age of 18 (as defined in the United Nations convention on the Rights of a Child).

Definition of a vulnerable adult

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.

This may include a person who: Is elderly and frail; Has a mental illness including dementia; Has a physical or sensory disability; Has a learning disability; Has a severe physical illness; Is a substance misuser; Is homeless.

Responsibilities

All persons who visit India for or on behalf of *Friends of the children of Orissa* have a responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and any related policies, and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedures.

We expect all trustees and volunteers to promote good practice by being an excellent role model, contribute to discussions about safeguarding and to positively involve people in developing safe practices.

Additional specific responsibilities

Trustees have responsibility to ensure:

- That FoCO safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date and available.
- Any visit to India is agreed, in advance with the relevant team there.
- Any visitors to India on behalf of FoCO are aware of, and comply with the terms of this document.
- Any fundraising activity has a proper risk assessment and that this is documented.
- That all relevant Indian and UK laws are complied with in regard to data protection and safeguarding, both in the UK and India.
- That the activities of PUSS and SOCH are not disrupted by the presence of visitors to India.
- That any concerns regarding a particular individual acting on behalf of FoCO are properly documented and reported.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is ***Dawn Copsey*** (Hon. Secretary)

This person's responsibilities are:

- To ensure that FoCO safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented.
- To ensure that the policy is monitored and reviewed and to implement any changes in a timely manner.
- To ensure all prospective trustees are subject to appropriate scrutiny to ensure they are not disqualified from holding the position.
- To ensure all trustees complete and sign the relevant documentation and that this is regularly updated.
- Receive concerns about safeguarding and respond to all seriously, swiftly and appropriately.
- Keep up to date with UK requirements for safeguarding and DBS

Expectations

Friends of the Children of Orissa are delighted that our trustees, supporters and other friends like to visit India and see for themselves the excellent work of our partners in India. It is very valuable, both for the charity, SOCH and PUSS to receive these visits. It is important for us to facilitate these visits wherever possible, whilst ensuring the protection of the children.

We require that all visitors aged over 18 who will be representing FoCO and staying at PUSS, obtain an enhanced DBS check; prior to their visit.

We use a government approved provider U check (<https://www.ucheck.co.uk/>) to complete checks on our behalf.

Prospective volunteers should contact the safeguarding lead to obtain a log in email which can then be used to apply for the check, the DBS check is provided free for volunteers, U check have a small administration charge (currently around £10) which we ask volunteers to pay themselves to ensure that the charity's funds are not diverted from the children.

Once the online details have been entered the safeguarding lead will need to do an identity check prior to the application being approved.

Volunteers should apply at least 10 weeks prior to travel to allow for the check to be completed.

To ensure the safety of the children we do require all trustees and visitors to India to protect the integrity of themselves and the organisation. Anyone visiting India on behalf of FoCO who is found to be in breach of the terms of this policy may not be allowed to return on our behalf.

This policy is for the guidance of visitors who are representing Friends of the children of Orissa but the rules of either SOCH or PUSS take precedence where there is a conflict, if you are in any doubt please seek guidance from the staff in India or the designated safety lead in the UK.

The following boundaries must be adhered to:

- Do not take photographs of the children without the explicit consent of the staff in India (please note that asking permission only from the children is NOT appropriate)
- Once permission is granted, do not post photographs of the children on personal social media platforms with any identifying comments.
- Take care to avoid any physical contact with the children which could be deemed as inappropriate
- Do not pass on any personal or sensitive information about the children of which you may become aware while you are visiting
- Any concerns regarding the welfare of the children should be raised with the staff in India in the first instance.

Reporting procedures/process

Friends of the Children of Orissa recognises its duty to report concerns or allegations against its trustees or volunteers within the organisation, or by a person representing the organisation.

The process for raising and dealing with allegations is as follows:

1. Any representative of FoCO is required to report any concerns in the first instance to a member of staff in India.
2. A written report must be sent to the designated safeguarding lead as soon as practically possible.
3. Follow the advice provided by the staff or safeguarding lead - if in any doubt, contact the local authority.
4. On return to the UK, you may liaise with the safeguarding lead for a follow up.

Monitoring

The organisation will monitor the following Safeguarding aspects:

- Safe recruitment practices for all new trustees, including seeking references
- Records made and kept of all safeguarding procedures
- Monitoring whether concerns are being reported and actioned
- Checking that policies are up to date and relevant
- Reviewing the current reporting procedure in place
- Presence and action of Designated Safeguarding Lead responsible for Safeguarding is in post

Data protection - GDPR

Information will be gathered, recorded and stored in accordance with The General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679.

All representatives of FoCO must be aware that they have a duty to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. The public interest in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need to know basis only, as judged by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All representatives of FoCO must be aware that they cannot be responsible for what data may have to be shared.

No information regarding safeguarding issues should be shared via social media at any time.

No information regarding safeguarding issues should be shared with anyone outside of FoCO without the knowledge of the safeguarding lead.

Communicating and reviewing the policy

Friends of the Children of Orissa will make all trustees, supporters and visitors aware of the safeguarding policy through the following means:

- A copy will be uploaded in PDF format to the FoCO website.
- Trustees will receive a PDF copy and sign a declaration to confirm their knowledge of and compliance to the policy.
- Visitors to India on behalf of FoCO will receive a PDF copy and must sign a declaration to confirm their knowledge of and compliance to the policy.
- Supporters may ask for a copy to be emailed or posted to them, if required.

This policy will be reviewed by **Dawn Copsey** every 2 years or when there are changes in relevant legislation, whichever is sooner.

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