

Policy name: Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults at Risk Policy and Procedures
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The purpose and scope of this policy statement

Art Explora is CIO registered with the charities commission, UK Charity No. 1202489.

Art Explora is committed to creating and maintaining the same protection, and safest possible environment for people of all ages, genders, sexual orientation or identity, racial heritage, religious beliefs and cultures, health conditions, those with or without disabilities, and from any model of family life.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect from harm adults at risk who receive Art Explora's services.
- to provide staff and volunteers, as well as adults at risk and their families and carers, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection and safeguarding.

This policy recognises our duty to actively safeguard the welfare of adults at risk and it applies to anyone working on behalf of Art Explora, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students, regardless of whether they have regular contact with children or adults at risk.

This policy acknowledges that abuse exists and can present itself in many different forms including physical, emotional, neglect and sexual and that it can be perpetrated by anyone.

Legal framework

This policy and related procedures are written against the following legal requirements:

- Police Act 1997: Made it a criminal offence for an employer not to take sufficient steps to check an employee.
- Adoption and Children Act 2002: expanded definition of harm to include witnessing domestic abuse.
- Sexual Offences Act 2003: Made the abuse of 'Position of Trust' illegal, also made 'grooming' a criminal offence.
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003: FGM is illegal in England and Wales under this Act. It introduced a mandatory reporting duty to report 'known' cases to the Police in 2015.

- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006: was passed to help avoid harm, or risk of harm, it prevents people who are considered unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable.
- The Care Act 2014: to make provision about safeguarding adults from abuse or neglect; to make provision about care standards

Further information for key legislation and guidance regarding adults at risk protection is available from:

[Safeguarding policy: protecting vulnerable adults - GOV.UK](#)

[Legislation relating to safeguarding adults - SCIE](#)

[Care Act 2014: supporting implementation - GOV.UK](#)

[Care Act 2014](#)

[London-Multi-Agency-Adult-Safeguarding-Policy-Practice-Guidance-and-Procedures-November-2025.pdf](#)

Supporting documents

This policy should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents, including:

- Children and Young People Safeguarding
- Health and Safety
- Data Protection
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We believe that:

- adults at risk should never experience abuse of any kind;
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all adults at risk, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them;
- working in partnership with adults at risk (and their carers) and other agencies is essential in promoting people's welfare;
- all adults at risk, 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;
- some adults at risk are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues;
- extra safeguards may be needed to keep adults at risk who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse.

We will seek to keep vulnerable adults at risk safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them;
- appointing a [Designated Safeguarding Lead ("DSL")] and a lead trustee for safeguarding; who will be responsible for dealing with any concerns around the protection of adults at risk.
- All staff will be selected through our safer recruitment and selection procedures including being interviewed and references taken up, to ensure they do not pose a risk to adults at risk. All staff having contact with adults at risk will be checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

- Volunteers will be checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service when they have completed initial inductions and 3 sessions of delivery. We will ensure volunteers are not left alone with any adults at risk, with support from community partners.
- adopting vulnerable adult protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies and procedures for staff and volunteers; including treating all participants with respect and to act as an appropriate role model.
- providing staff and volunteers with information, (annual) training in safeguarding including what to do if they have concerns about an adult at risk. This will include information on recognizing possible neglect, abuse or other concerns, what to do and where to refer. These will be covered in all volunteer inductions.
- recording and storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance [more information about this is available from the Information Commissioner's Office: ico.org.uk/for-organisations];
- using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, adults at risk, parents, families and carers appropriately;
- ensuring that partner organisations with whom we work have appropriate safeguarding policies in place for the nature of the work and the area they operate in and that their policies are properly implemented in practice and are regularly reviewed;
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately;
- creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment;
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place;
- ensuring that we or our partners provide a safe physical environment for our children, adults at risk, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance;
- building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, adults at risk and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.
- Having a referral flowchart for details of making a referral.

Types and symptoms of possible abuse, including neglect

Who may be at particular risk?

Abuse can happen to anyone, but research shows that some people who have experienced abuse share similar characteristics. This means they may be more vulnerable. Vulnerability factors include: having experienced abuse in the past, domestic violence in the home, carer mental health problems, d/Deafness and disability, carer substance misuse.

Having one or more of these characteristics doesn't automatically mean a person will experience abuse or neglect – and not having any of them isn't a guarantee that a person will never be harmed. These challenges are often interlinked and the more problems a person is, the greater the risk of abuse.

What is abuse?

Abuse is any behaviour, action or inaction which significantly harms the physical and/or emotional wellbeing of a person. Neglect is a type of abuse which causes harm to a person through inaction, whether deliberate or not. A person may also experience self-neglect, in which their own inaction causes harm to themselves. Self-neglect may be deliberate or not. A person may be abused by family, friends, carers or professionals, and abuse can occur in any area of society, regardless of social class or geographical location.

General Indicators of Abuse, including neglect

There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected, these include but are not limited to:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries – or lack of medical attention when an injury is present
- Person has belongings or money going missing
- Person is not attending activities or no longer enjoying themselves
- Someone losing or gaining weight / an unkempt appearance
- A change in the behaviour or confidence of a person
- Depression or withdrawn behaviour
- They may self-harm
- They may have a fear of a particular group or individual
- They may tell you / another person they are being abused – i.e. a disclosure

Other general indicators may include:

- Repeated visits to a GP or an A&E department
- Refusal of support services or help
- A history of unexplained injuries or repeated falls
- Lack of respect for a person in general
- Unwillingness or inability to understand the person's care needs
- Preventing religious observation such as dietary preferences
- Restricting access to the toilet or incontinence aids
- Restricting people's movements
- Inappropriate relationships with staff – for example contact out of work hours

The following are the types of abuse and indicators that abuse may be occurring;

Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, misuse of medication or otherwise causing physical harm to the adult at risk. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in an adult at risk. As well as being the result of a deliberate act, physical abuse can be caused through omission or failure to act to protect.

Some signs of Physical Abuse

- Any unexplained injuries, or injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls or other accidents

- Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips from slapping or pinching
- Cigarette burns, bite marks, broken bones, scalds
- Injuries that have received medical attention
- Significant injuries that have not received medical attention
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains
- Fear of carers being approached for an explanation
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to change or wearing unsuitable clothing

Psychological Abuse

This includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or support networks. It also includes emotional ill-treatment or deliberately ignoring and depriving someone of their basic needs and pleasures.

Signs of Emotional /Psychological Abuse

- The person feels or seems isolated
- Fear of making mistakes
- Fear of carer being approached regarding their behaviour
- Appearing depressed, withdrawn, frightened, agitated, anxious or aggressive
- Lack of eye contact
- Confusion, passivity, uncontrolled/unprovoked crying
- Altered demeanour when a particular person is mentioned
- Refusal to take part in activities or attend places previously viewed positively

Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse refers to rape, sexual assault and / or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting. It includes indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts. Adults at risk can be abused by anyone of any gender. Sexual abuse may also include noncontact activities such as involving them in looking at or in the production of pornographic material, including on-line pornography, watching sexual activity, harassment or the use of sexual language. Sexual Abuse also includes sexual exploitation, where an adult at risk is forced or coerced into sexual activity through threats, bribes or violence.

Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Pain or itching or injury in the genital, anal or abdominal area
- Bruising or bleeding in the genital/anal area
- Sexually transmitted disease or recurrent bouts of cystitis
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down

- Unexplained problems with catheters or Pregnancy, particularly in a person unable to give consent
- Full or partial disclosures – hints about sexual abuse
- Obsession with washing
- Fear of being left with a particular person or group of people
- Having nightmares
- Sexual drawings or language

Neglect and Acts of Omission

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet physical and/or psychological needs likely to result in the serious impairment of health. Neglect can be deliberate or unintentional. It includes ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health social care or educational services, and the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. Neglect also includes a failure to intervene in situations that are dangerous to the person concerned or to others, particularly when the person lacks the mental capacity to assess risk for themselves.

Signs of Neglect

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from others or gorging on food
- Deterioration in appearance or personal hygiene
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- Malnutrition
- Inappropriate dress for conditions, insufficient or dirty clothing
- Rashes, sores and ulcers
- Lack of social stimulation
- Being tired all of the time
- Not requesting medical assistance or missing appointments
- Untreated illness or inadequate access to medical assistance

Self-Neglect

This covers a wide range of behaviour resulting in lack of care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings, and includes behaviour such as hoarding. It is important to consider potential issues of capacity when self-neglect is suspected, remembering also that it is not the role of Art Explora staff or volunteers to determine mental capacity. Also consider how it may impact on other family members and whether this gives rise to a (further) safeguarding concern.

Discriminatory abuse

Discriminatory abuse includes harassment, slurs or similar on grounds of race, gender and/or gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religion, culture, or any other personal characteristic protected by the Equality Act 2010. Discrimination is abuse which centres on a difference, real or perceived. It includes racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist comments or jokes, or comments or jokes based on a person's disability. Someone excluding a person from activities on the basis they are 'not liked' is also discriminatory abuse.

Signs of Discriminatory Abuse

- Harassment including words and deeds, attitude and body language
- Exclusion based on physical attributes, culture, sexuality, background or beliefs
- Isolation from religious or cultural activities
- Isolation due to culture or language barrier
- Being subject to teasing, ridicule, scapegoating or inappropriate comments or jokes
- Lack of respect

Financial or Material Abuse

This includes theft, fraud, exploitation or coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including connections with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits. This can be identified as theft, fraud, forgery or embezzlement. Any level of financial abuse should not be tolerated: it does not have to involve large sums of money as a small amount taken each week can still add up to a significant amount. Abusers sometimes justify taking money saying they have earned it or that adult at risk does not need it as much as they do.

Signs of Financial or Material Abuse

- Lack of money for basic necessities such as food, heating or clothes
- Unexplained bank withdrawals
- Possessions going missing
- Reluctance on the part of carers to pay for food, clothes or furniture
- A person's inability to explain what has happened to their income
- A person living in poorer circumstances than the rest of the family
- A person being encouraged to spend their money on things for others
- A person being expected to provide gifts to staff who care for them

Organisational or Institutional Abuse

This includes neglect and poor care practice within an organisation or specific care setting, including a person's own home if they receive care there. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organization; for example, abuse may happen because of inadequate systems. The type of abuse, including neglect perpetrated in care settings is the same as those listed previously but there is a further issue beyond the behaviour of a particular individual because of the organisational context of the care. Organisations providing care have a responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those they provide care for beyond a general social responsibility.

Signs of Organisational Abuse

- Undue restraint on movement
- Limited access to drinks outside specified times
- Few activities
- Denial of privacy (e.g. lack of screens, leaving the toilet door open or failing to knock)

- Punishment for perceived bad behaviour
- Deteriorating health/ physical appearance and/or frequent accidents
- Staff shortages and lack of sufficient attention
- All attendees having to the same thing regardless of personal preference

Not included in the Care Act 2014 but also relevant are:

Cyber Bullying - cyber bullying occurs when someone repeatedly makes fun of another person online or repeatedly picks on another person through emails or text messages, or uses online forums with the intention of harming, damaging, humiliating or isolating another person. It can be used to carry out many different types of bullying (such as racist bullying, homophobic bullying or bullying related to special educational needs and disabilities) but instead of the perpetrator carrying out the bullying face-to-face, they use technology. Cyber bullying can also involve encouraging others to participate in online bullying of the person, for example on social media.

Mate Crime - a mate crime is when vulnerable people are 'befriended' by others who go on to exploit and take advantage of them. It may not be an illegal act but still has a negative effect on the individual. Mate Crime is carried out by someone the adult knows and often happens in private. In recent years there have been a number of incidents relating to people with a learning disability who were seriously harmed or even murdered by people who purported to be their friend.

Fraud, Scams and Cyber Crime – a vulnerable adult may be a specific, targeted victim of abuse, including neglect as described in the previous pages, but they are also particularly vulnerable to broader instances of fraud, scams or cyber crime. Fraud and scams may be perpetuated through the post, by text or phone call, on the doorstep or through the internet (cyber crime). Cyber Crime may be perpetuated through a number of methods, including contacting a person via email or social media messaging (phishing), or through providing links to fraudulent sites. The aim of all of these crimes is to take money from the vulnerable person.

Radicalisation - the aim of radicalisation is to attract people to a person's or group's extremist point of view, inspire new recruits, embed their extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals of the legitimacy of their cause. This may be direct through an interpersonal relationship, or through online means such as social media content.

CONTEST strategy can be found at www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Dissemination

We will make this Safeguarding Policy available to all trustees, staff, freelancers and volunteers. It should be made clear that failure to conform to the policy could result in disciplinary action and possible exclusion from the organisation.

All new trustees, staff and freelancers will be required to read and agree they understand this policy and abide by it.

We will ensure all participants and volunteers in our activities understand and are aware of the importance of safeguarding and Art Explora's commitment to ensuring their welfare and safety is central to their engagement with us.

When we are working in partnership with another organisation or agency (e.g. a museum, school, community group, hirer), they will be made aware that this policy is in place and sent a copy with any contract or partnership agreement.

This policy will be available to all Art Explora trustees, staff, volunteers and any outside organisations or individuals.

Requests for copies of the documents should be submitted to the Safeguarding Lead or any DSO.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

This organisation will have a Designate Safeguarding Lead to take responsibility for safeguarding matters.

Currently Stephanie O'Neill-Winbow is the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Relevant training has been undertaken by all individuals.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead's role is to:

- Ensure the organisation's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are followed, including staff and volunteer training.
- Ensure they have contact with Social Services Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Team and the local police in order to deal with safeguarding concerns, both during and out of office hours.
- Report any concerns to Social Services or police. (N.B. Urgent concerns should be reported immediately by those aware of them if the designated person or alerting manager is not available.)
- Keep up to date on safeguarding issue and act as a source of advice on all safeguarding matters, seeking guidance from local statutory agencies as required.
- Ensure that a record is kept of any concerns and any referrals made to statutory agencies.

Safeguarding Contact Details:

Stephanie O'Neill-Winbow
Telephone number: 0776 2145 683
Email: stephanie.oneill@artexplora.org

Social Services Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Westminster: 020 7641 2176
Adultsocialcare@westminster.gov.uk

The overall responsibility for safeguarding lies with Jemima Montagu, Director, and with the trustees of Art Explora.

Responsibility and review

Art Explora will ensure all participants understand and are aware of the importance of safeguarding and Art Explora's commitment to ensuring their welfare and safety is central to their engagement with us.

It is possible that a vulnerable adult who is suffering, or who has suffered, abuse, including neglect will confide in us. This is something that must be handled carefully.

The following actions are meant as a guide should the situation arise:

We will

- Stay calm and reassure them that they were right to tell
- Make it clear that they are not to blame
- Allow them to use their own words and go at their own pace
- Use open questions to elicit enough information to know what to do next (eg. 'Where were you?', 'When was this?', 'What happened then?', etc.)
- Not gather information beyond what we need to know in order to respond
- Make a full, accurate record of what has been said at the earliest opportunity
- Act quickly and proportionately, in collaboration with the Line Manager/ Designated Safeguarding Lead

We will not

- Promise to keep secrets
- Ask in detail about the abuse, including neglect – this is for the appropriate agencies (Police & Social Care)
- Put pressure on them if they are reluctant to speak
- Attempt to offer any physical reassurance, such as a hug

We will speak to our line manager / the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

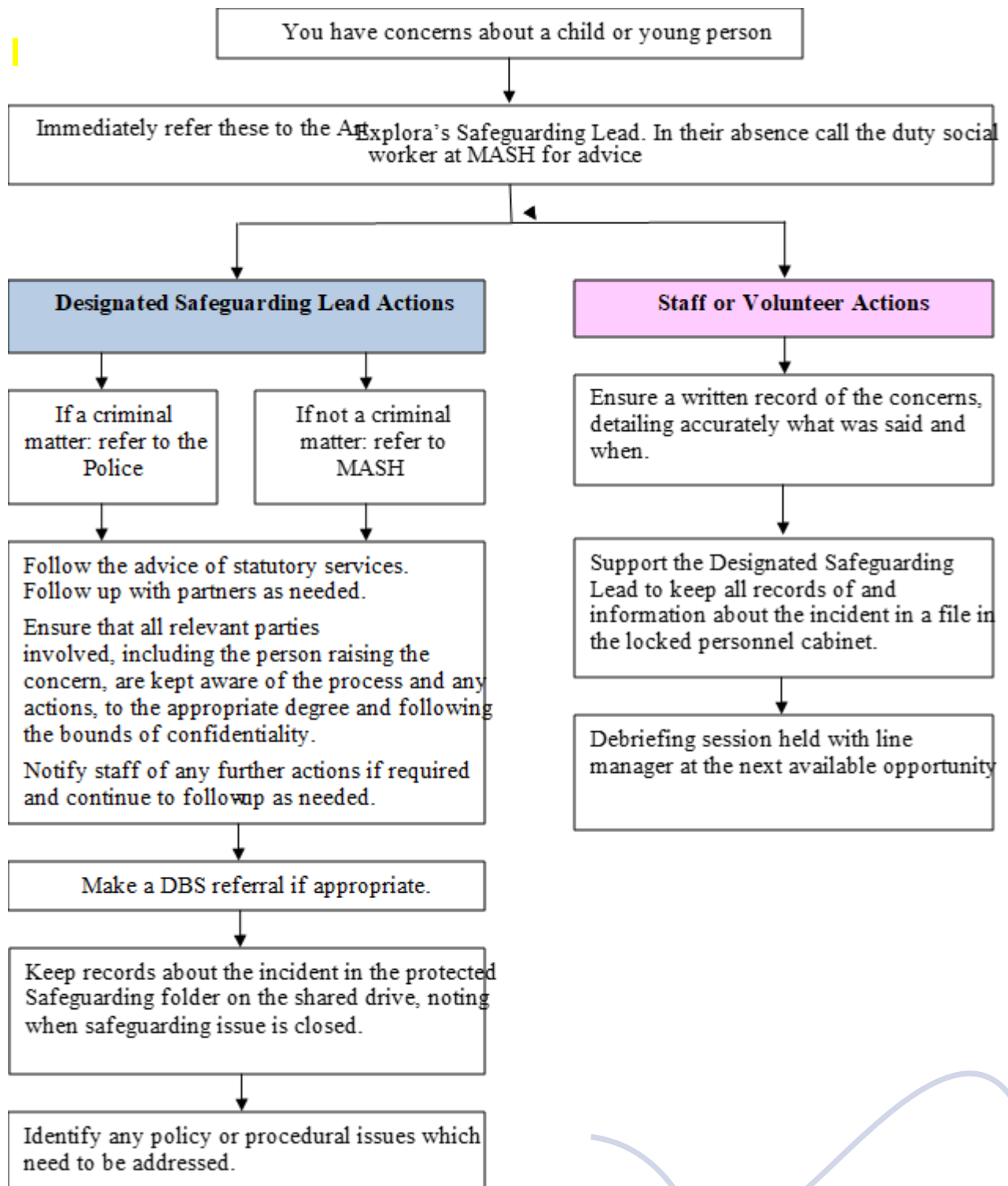
We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed February 2026. It will be reviewed again in February 2027.

Appendix 1

REFERRAL FLOW CHART

It is essential that nothing is done to investigate the concern before informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead, MASH or Police as appropriate as this can contaminate evidence prior to any investigation, if later required.



Appendix 2

INCIDENT REPORT FORM template

[Art Explora Safe guarding Incident Reporting form 2026.docx](#)

Art Explora Incident Report Form – 2026

Name of Child/ Vulnerable Beneficiary	
Date of Birth/ Approximate Age	
Name and role of staff member completing form	
Date the incident took place:	
Approximate Time:	
Where did the incident take place?	
Who else was involved/witnessed the incident	
Details: TELL, EXPLAIN, DESCRIBE Please provide a statement of fact and record	
Please provide a statement of fact and record the exact wording.	
Action taken and external agencies contacted	
Parents/relatives informed?	
Signature of staff member reporting incident	
Signature of Designated Person	
Date	