

Safeguarding Statement

We exist to change children's life stories through the joy of reading. We partner with schools to develop whole school reading cultures, and to provide one-to-one reading support.

Bookmark is committed to safeguarding and promoting the well-being and welfare of children and young people, and all others who come into contact with the Charity. Bookmark requires all individuals who are involved or associated with the Charity - including trustees, employees, contractors, and volunteers - to share this commitment. This is a key governance priority for the trustees of Bookmark.

We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and that the well-being and welfare of children and young people is paramount in all circumstances. Every child and young person, without exception, has the right to protection from abuse regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or age.

Bookmark is committed to ensuring its safeguarding policies, procedures and practice reflect and comply with legislative and statutory requirements, government and Charity Commission guidance, and best practice.

Bookmark is committed to safer recruitment selection, vetting and other background checks, as outlined in its [Safer Recruitment Policy](#). All our trustees, employees and reading volunteers are required to complete mandatory safeguarding induction training regardless of whether they work directly with children and young people. Regular mandatory update training is required for all of our trustees, employees and volunteers in accordance with the relevant statutory guidance, and within the context of their own roles and responsibilities. Evidence of appropriate safeguarding training is also required for all others involved or associated with the Charity, where they work directly with children and young people.

Bookmark has a suite of safeguarding policies, procedures, and practice guidance for all individuals who are involved or associated with the Charity, to ensure that adequate systems are in place to:

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of every child and young person
- manage reports of any safeguarding concerns or allegations
- identify and manage risk including, where necessary, making reports to and liaising with the police, social care services, schools and other agencies, including the Charity Commission as a serious incident report, whilst ensuring that Bookmark does not undermine the work of investigating authorities, and
- record and store reports securely and in accordance with relevant legislation.

Bookmark's safeguarding policies and procedures will be published on its website so that they are made freely available to all those involved or associated with the Charity, including schools, children, young people and their parents/carers (amongst others). Failure by anyone who is involved or associated with the Charity to adhere to Bookmark's safeguarding policies and procedures will be dealt with as a very serious matter.

All our trustees, employees and volunteers will:

- be trained to identify potential indicators of abuse or neglect

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- have read, be familiar with, and be required to comply with Bookmark's safeguarding policies and procedures
- understand their role and responsibilities
- know how to respond to, record, and report any safeguarding concerns and allegations
- be required to keep information about children confidential
- be required not to make promises of secrecy or confidentiality to children and young people if they are made aware of a safeguarding concern or allegation by them and to instead explain that it may be necessary to tell someone else in order to keep them and others safe, and
- be required to report any safeguarding concerns and allegations in accordance with Bookmark's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which will be used in conjunction with the relevant Local Safeguarding Children's Board's (LSCB) safeguarding policy and procedures.

Every child and young person who comes into contact with Bookmark will:

- be treated with dignity and respect
- be listened to and taken seriously, and
- have their privacy respected, in so far as possible, at all times and in all places.

We want everyone who is supported by and involved or associated with the Charity, and the public to have confidence in the work we do for the children and young people in our society. Ensuring safeguarding is at the heart of all that we do is part of securing and building that confidence.

Any safeguarding concerns or allegations should be raised in accordance with Bookmark's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and should be made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

Bookmark Safeguarding Line

020 3995 7970

For safeguarding contact details please refer to our website

However, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police (on 999) immediately. Anyone can make a referral. Where referrals are not made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed as soon as possible that a referral has been made. The following link will provide the relevant local children's social care contact number: Reporting child abuse to your local council (<https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>).

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Where a trustee, employee or volunteer feels unable to raise an issue with the Charity, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them:

- General guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: [Advice on Whistleblowing](#); and
- The [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](#) is available as an alternative route for those who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled.