



POLICY:

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

FAO: Staff / Volunteers / Participants / Visitors

INTRODUCTION

The aim of Sirona Therapeutic Horsemanship is to provide people of all abilities and needs with the opportunity to participate in educational and therapeutic activities with horses to benefit their health and well-being.

Sirona is committed to providing a safe and enjoyable environment for children and young people. When involved in any activities provided at Sirona, all children and young people have a right to be safe and protected from harm.

There has been an increasing awareness over the last few years that some individuals who want to harm and abuse children and vulnerable adults will use centres that provide services for vulnerable adults and children as a vehicle to gain access to these groups.

Child Protection underpins the following principles:

- 1. A duty of care to safeguard all the children from harm.** All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. (The Children Act 1989 defines a child/young person as under 18.)
- 2. All organisations, which provide for children, should be able to demonstrate the existence, implementation and effectiveness of child protection policies.** Any interested party may obtain a copy of this policy from the office on payment of a reasonable administration charge.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

Sirona recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm, and from neglect and bullying.

Sirona is committed to meeting this obligation by affording the highest level of care for children and young people through its child protection procedures.

Document: SP054	Page: 1 9	Revision / Date: 16.02.22	Authorised: <i>Hannah Burgon</i>
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This policy and its procedures apply to anyone within Sirona whether those persons be in a paid, voluntary capacity, or as part of a supporting group. This also includes any Trustees/Patrons, members of the committee/board and other designated staff/members.

Sirona will ensure that all staff and volunteers who have direct contact with any children and young people attending Sirona complete a robust application procedure and undertake enhanced DBS disclosure checks prior to having contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

OBJECTIVES

Sirona has responsibility to ensure that its activities are free from abuse and to ensure that it has put into place adequate measures to report proper concerns to the appropriate statutory body. This policy sets the following objectives:

1. To ensure that all those who participate in any way whatsoever are aware of the Child protection procedures set out in this policy.
2. To ensure that the Sirona Safeguarding Officer independently seeks appropriate training and guidance on child protection and fully understands the child protection policy and procedures.
3. That all staff/volunteers of Sirona are conversant with the child protection procedures and ensure these are implemented.
4. That Sirona appoints a designated person who will be the Sirona Safeguarding Officer. The Sirona Safeguarding Officer will be responsible for the decision to make a referral to the required statutory body.

The safeguarding officer is: HANNAH BURGON
The Deputy Safeguarding Lead is: KATE FORD

5. That all new volunteers complete an application form which ensures that this Child Protection Policy has been read by the new volunteer.

Document: SP054	Page: 2 9	Revision / Date: 16.02.22	Authorised: <i>Hannah Burgon</i>
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POLICY:

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6. That all paid staff, volunteers and support groups of Sirona are aware of their duty to report any incident of alleged child abuse. This may relate directly to an incident at a Sirona event or it may relate to an alleged incident which has occurred outside of the venues used by Sirona.

CODES OF PRACTICE FOR STAFF, TRAINERS, THERAPISTS, TRUSTEES, PATRONS AND VOLUNTEERS ETC.

Adherence to good Therapeutic Horsemanship, Equine-Assisted Learning/Therapy and other activities provided by Sirona Therapeutic Horsemanship CIO, aligned with open communication with parents and children, should ensure that a safe and enjoyable environment is established and sustained.

The duty of care commences from the point of receipt of the child/young person to the point of return to the parent/guardian/carer and the duty of care is non-transferable.

RECOMMENDED GOOD PRACTICE

- Always be publicly open when working with children/young people and avoid prolonged 1-1 working (unless this is within a designated therapy session with a qualified therapist/counsellor).
- Care should be taken at all times when working with and particularly when manually handling children/young people. Ensure you ask and gain the participant's consent if manual support is required.
- Care should be taken when aiding and assisting a disabled person from a wheelchair.
- Care should be taken when providing manual support such as when helping a rider to mount and dismount the horse or pony. Ensure you ask and gain the rider's consent if manual support is required.



POLICY:

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

FAO: Staff / Volunteers / Participants / Visitors

- Care should be taken when providing manual support to stabilise the rider whilst on the horse, whether the horse is standing or moving. Ensure you ask and gain the rider's consent if manual support is required.
- Care should be taken when manually supporting or aiding a child/participant whilst they are riding/vaulting. Ensure you ask and gain the rider's consent if manual support is required.
- Treat all participants equally with respect and dignity.
- Always place the safety and welfare of the participants as the highest priority.
- Behave in an exemplary manner and be a role model for excellent behaviour.
- Motivate the participants through positive and constructive feedback.
- Create a safe and enjoyable situation.
- Obtain written consent from parents if children/young people are required to be transported by instructors, committee/board members, trustees, helpers or volunteers.
- Maintain a written report of any incident or injury together with any subsequent treatment and immediately complete an accident report form.

PRACTICE TO BE AVOIDED

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children and young people away from others.
- Taking children and young people to your home where they will be alone with you.

The above should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable they should occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the organisation and/or the child's parents, e.g. a child/young person sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a



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Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

FAO: Staff / Volunteers / Participants / Visitors

parent/carer fails to arrive to pick up a child/young person at the end of a session.

PRACTICE WHICH SHOULD NEVER BE CONDONED

You should never:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games;
- share a room with a child/young person;
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching;
- make sexually suggestive remarks to a child/young person—even in fun;
- allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- allow allegations made by a child/young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- do things of a personal nature for a child/young person if they can do it for themselves, unless you have been requested to do so by the parents/carers (do so with the utmost discretion);
- never depart from the premises until you have supervised the safe dispersal of the children/young persons;
- abuse your privileged position of power or trust with children or young people;
- cause a participant to lose self-esteem by embarrassing, humiliating or undermining the individual;
- have favourites.



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Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

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Indicators of Abuse and Bullying

Indications that a child may be being abused include the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them.
- Someone else (a child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. Becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper).
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour.
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Difficulty in making friends.
- Is prevented from socialising with other children.
- Displays variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite.
- Loses weight for no apparent reason.
- Becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place.



POLICY:

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

FAO: Staff / Volunteers / Participants / Visitors

It is NOT the responsibility of those working at Sirona to decide that child abuse is occurring but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns and inform the designated Safeguarding Officer.

SAFE PRACTICE IN UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

If any of the following incidents should occur, you should report them immediately to another colleague and make a written note of the event, signed and dated. Parents and/or carers should also be informed of the incident:

- if you accidentally hurt a child/young person;
- if a child/young person misinterprets something you have done;
- if you have to restrain a child/young person (please note: minimum force must only be used and see Sirona’s restraint/touch policy).

It is impossible to establish guidelines for every situation which may become evident at Sirona; common sense should be used at all times.

PROCESS FOR DOCUMENTING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

If you are made aware of any allegations or suspicions of harm to a child, you should report your concerns immediately to the Safeguarding Officer at Sirona. When working through the process it is recommended that you:

- Remain calm and reassure the person that they have done the right thing by speaking up.
- Listen carefully and give the person time to speak.
- Explain that only the professionals who need to know will be informed, but never promise confidentiality.
- Act immediately, and do not try to address the issue yourself.
- Write a statement giving as much detail as possible; date & time, what was said, how you acted, any names / parties mentioned. Sirona has a designated safeguarding incident report form to use for this purpose.
- Report to the Sirona Safeguarding Officer or line manager who is then responsible for contacting the LSO. It is the duty of anyone working with children to report disclosure or harm.

Document: SP054	Page: 7 9	Revision / Date: 16.02.22	Authorised: <i>Hannah Burgon</i>
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POLICY:

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

FAO: Staff / Volunteers / Participants / Visitors

- Remember that it is not for you to decide whether or not a suspicion or claim is true; all instances must be taken seriously.

Contact details for the person responsible for the Sirona Safeguarding Office can be obtained from the main office and on the door in the classroom / tack room. The Sirona Safeguarding Officer is happy to discuss any queries regarding referrals, training matters or issues of concern.

The Designated Sirona Safeguarding Officers are:

Nominated Safeguarding Lead: HANNAH BURGON
Deputy Safeguarding Officer: ANGIE WHITEHEAD

01803 868779 or 07958 356114 or hannah@sironaequine.org.uk

FURTHER ADVICE AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE FROM:

For Devon County Council:

Devon Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) 01392 386067

Devon Children and Young Person’s Referral via the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): 0345 1551071

Devon Children’s Services Emergency/out of hours: 08456 000388

Devon Local Safeguarding Board Business Manager, Julie Mitchell:
07581 621981

Devon Local Authority Designated Officers: 01392 384964

Local police, central referral unit:101

Document: SP054	Page: 8 9	Revision / Date: 16.02.22	Authorised: <i>Hannah Burgon</i>
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Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

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For Torbay Unitary Authority:

- Children's Social Care - 01803 208100 and MASH
- Out of hours service - 01803 524519
- Family Intervention Team/Consultation line (Troubled Families)- 01803 208525
- Out of hours MASH – 0300 4564876
- On Duty LADO – 01803 208567 or 01803 208541
- Police - 08452 777444 or 101
- NSPCC Helpline - 0808 800 5000
- Childline - 0800 1111