



POLICY & PROCEDURE: Child Protection & Safeguarding

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 and other animals 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 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.

Our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is based on the principles outlined within the following legislation:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004 (amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance 2023
- Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidelines 2023
- Online Safety Bill 2023

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 services 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 or via our website <https://sironaequine.org.uk/health-safety/>

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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

Sirona recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people; regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm, and from neglect, bullying and exploitation.

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

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, in addition to undertaking mandatory safeguarding training.

OBJECTIVES

Sirona has a 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 & Safeguarding 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 & Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
3. That all staff/volunteers of Sirona are conversant with the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and ensure these are adhered to.

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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 staff and volunteers complete an induction, which ensures that this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure has been read. In addition, all staff and volunteers read the following;
- Chapter 1 and 3 of the HM Government document, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
 - All staff will read and understand part 1 and Annex A of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.
 - All staff will sign a declaration each year to say that they have reviewed the guidance.
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 principles, Equine-Assisted Learning/Therapy and other activities provided by Sirona Therapeutic Horsemanship CIO, aligned with open communication with parents, carers 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.

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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.
- 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.

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- 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 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);

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- 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.

INDICATORS OF ABUSE, BULLYING AND EXPLOITATION

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.

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- Is prevented from socialising with other children.
- Displays variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite or loses weight for no apparent reason.
- Unexplained acquisition of money, gifts or mobile phones.
- 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.

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.

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ONLINE SAFETY

The online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however, it can also present risks and challenges. Children and young people can be exploited and suffer bullying through their use of modern technology such as the internet, mobile phones and social networking sites.

Whilst Sirona does not provide internet access to participants, we have a duty to ensure that all children, young people and adults involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online. Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare and in helping young people to be responsible in their approach to online safety.

For more information, please see Sirona E-Policy.

PREVENT Duty

We recognise that people we work with may be vulnerable individuals who have the potential to be radicalised or influenced by violent extremism. Keeping children safe at risk of radicalisation should be approached in the same way as safeguarding children from other risks.

For more information, please see Sirona PREVENT Information Sharing Policy.

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PROCEDURE 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 don't interrupt, 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, using the person's own words to record what was said and any actions, 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.
- 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: **KATE FORD**

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

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FURTHER ADVICE AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE:

For Devon County Council: www.devonscp.org.uk

- Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership (Devon SCP) - 01392 386067
- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): 0345 155 1071 or email: mashsecure@devon.gov.uk
- Devon Children's Services Emergency/out of hours: 0345 600 0388
- Devon Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO): 01392 384964 or e-mail: ladosecure-mailbox@devon.gcsx.gov.uk for a notification form.

For Torbay Unitary Authority: <http://www.torbaysafeguarding.org.uk/>

- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): - 01803 208 100 or email: mash@torbay.gov.uk
- Torbay Out of hours MASH – 0300 4564876
- Family Intervention Team/Consultation line (Troubled Families) – 01803 208723
- Torbay Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO): – 01803 208567 or 01803 208541

For Plymouth: <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/adults-and-childrens-social-care>

- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 01752 668000 (or 01752 346984 out of hours)
- Plymouth Designated Officers (LADO) email LADO@plymouth.gov.uk or call 01752 306340

Additional support:

- NSPCC Helpline - 0808 800 5000 <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/nspcc-helpline/>
- Childline - 0800 1111
- Police: 999 or 101 (non-emergency)

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