

# SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Updated 01 December 2025

## Policy Statement

Stoke Lane Stables accepts fully that we have a duty of care to children, young people and adults-at-risk participating in equestrian activities on our premises or at events organised by us. We believe that we have a responsibility to promote their welfare, to keep them safe and to practice in a way that protects them, and that this duty of care applies to all that are involved in our activities, whether they are riders, associates<sup>1</sup>, volunteers<sup>2</sup> or spectators.

We accept that we have a legal obligation to safeguard their welfare, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, parental or marital status, pregnancy, religion or belief, creed, sexual orientation and gender reassignment. We recognise that some individuals, for example from minority ethnic groups or disabled people, may face additional the barriers with communication or the impact of discrimination.

A child/young person is defined (the Children Act 1989) as a person under the age of 18

An adult-at-risk is defined (the Care Act 2014) as a person who:

- Needs care and support.
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and is unable to protect themselves from either the risk, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

Stoke Lane Stables adopted fully the Safeguarding Policy of the Association of British Riding Schools (ABRS+).

We expect that all individuals involved with the Stoke Lane Stables, no matter what their role, must adhere to this Safeguarding Policy.

## Our Commitment

Stoke Lane Stables is committed, through its Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, to:

- Ensuring robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation to provide children, young people and adults-at-risk with appropriate safety and protection while on our premises or participating in events organised by us

- Taking all reasonable, practical steps to protect children, young people and adults-at-risk from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- Ensuring that associates understand their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and are provided with appropriate learning opportunities that will enable them to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and/or other safeguarding concerns
- Ensuring appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and provide support to the individual(s) who raised or disclosed the concern. All concerns or allegations of poor practice or abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. It is the responsibility of child protection and other experts to determine whether or not abuse has taken place but it is everyone's responsibility to report it
- Ensuring that confidential, detailed and accurate records of safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored
- Maintaining high standards of behaviour and good practice through compliance with ABRS Codes of Conduct produced for instructors, coaches, parents/guardians and riders.

The policy and procedures are mandatory for everyone involved with Stoke Lane Stables. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the Stoke Lane Stables.

The policy will be reviewed every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- As required by the Local Authority, the ABRS and/or the BEF
- As a result of any other significant change or event

## Human Welfare Officer

Stoke Lane Stables has appointed a Human Welfare Officer (HWO): **Mrs Kimberley Couzens**

The role of the HWO is to:

- Work with associates, volunteers, parents and carers to ensure that the environment at the Stoke Lane Stables is appropriate, positive and embracing
- Ensure that children, young people and adults at risk and their parents and carers are aware of this policy
- Ensure that associates and volunteers are aware of this policy and of any

associated procedures and guidelines

- Ensure that ABRS Codes of Conduct are available for associates, volunteers, parents and carers
- Promote, provide and/or undertake the training of associates and volunteers
- Receive queries and offer support regarding safeguarding concerns or issues
- Ensure confidentiality is maintained and information is only shared to those that have a need to know
- Respond to any allegations or complaints made from within Stoke Lane Stables
- Communicate with Stoke Lane Stables' Proprietor regarding concerns or issues
- Maintain contact details for the Local Authority and Police

## Dealing with a Disclosure

It is not the role of the HWO to be a Child Protection expert or to determine whether or not a serious incident has taken place, rather to record the details and seek guidance. Stoke Lane Stables will adhere to the following procedures if a child, young person or adult at risk discloses that they have been abused; we will:

- Find time and a suitable place to listen to the individual when information about possible abuse comes to light. We will do so without displaying shock, disbelief or attempting to lead
- Allow the individual to talk freely, and not cross examine, interview, probe or ask to see any injury that is not visible
- Find out just enough to be sure of the need to refer
- Not make false promises and not promise confidentiality, explaining that the information may need to be passed on to other professionals
- Reassure, stress that it was the right thing to tell someone, and explain what has to be done next and who has to be told
- Not criticise or question the alleged perpetrator

Stoke Lane Stables will make records that are factual, accurate and relevant and that avoid subjective judgements. We will record the following information:

- The facts about the allegation or observation
- A description of any visible injuries or signs
- The individual's account, if this has been disclosed, of what has happened and how any injuries occurred
- Any witnesses to the incident(s)

- Any times, dates or other relevant information
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- A record of any non-verbal behaviours
- Action taken as a result of the concern
- The name, address and date of birth of those involved

Stoke Lane Stables' HWO will report disclosures of abuse to the Local Authority, the Police and the ABRS' Safeguarding Officer.

## Appointing Associates

Stoke Lane Stables will ensure, when appointing associates, that:

- Associates and volunteers are appointed safely and fairly, and that the safety of children, young people and adults at risk is considered at every stage of this process
- For any role that involves working with children, young people or adults at risk, the role description and person specification will highlight the importance of understanding safeguarding issues
- Associates and volunteers, who might work with children, young people and/or adults- at-risk, will have been subject to a criminal records check and hold a current certificate issued by the Disclosure and Barring Service, Disclosure Scotland or Access NI as appropriate
- Certificates are renewed every three years

## Training Associates

Stoke Lane Stables will ensure that associates and volunteers working with children, young people and adults at risk undertake BEF-approved:

- Face-to-face safeguarding training (or a recognised equivalent) course within the last 3 years. This will be undertaken as part of their induction unless they can evidence that they have undertaken the course with another BEF member body in the last three years.
- Online refresher training every three years or a further face-to-face course.

## Use of Photographs and Films

Stoke Lane Stables will wish to share photographs and films of our activities can help us celebrate the successes and achievements of our children, young people and adults at risk.

We recognise, however, that children, young people and adults at risk, together with their parents and carers, have a right to decide whether their images are taken and how these may be used.

We will seek to keep children, young people and adults at risk safe by:

- Always checking for consent via registration before taking and using an image
- Always explaining what images will be used for, how they will be stored and what are the potential risks
- Making it clear that if an image has already been shared with consent, it may not be possible to delete images that have already been shared or published
- Never publishing personal information about individuals and disguising any identifying information
- Being clear about how images of children will be securely stored and for how long
- Using images that positively reflect an individual's involvement in an activity

## Commitment to Communicate

Stoke Lane Stables will make available its Safeguarding Policy and Procedures to associates, volunteers, parents and carers and to publishing these on our website.

Stoke Lane Stables will publish the name and number of the Human Welfare Officer within our Emergency Contacts which are displayed on Notice Boards.

Local Authorities publish details on how to report a safeguarding concern on their websites.

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<sup>1</sup> **Associate** - A self-employed individual engaged by Stoke Lane Stables to provide professional services, including instructors. Associates are not employees, and this term does not create an employment relationship.

<sup>2</sup> **Volunteer** - Any individual who freely offers their time and services to Stoke Lane Stables without receiving payment or remuneration. Volunteers carry out activities in support of the operations or events of Stoke Lane Stables and are not employees or associates.