

# SAFEGUARDING POLICY

## Document Version Control

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22/10/21	0.1	EME	Draft
14/01/22	1.0	EME	Final

## 1. Scope

- 1.1 As part of its work to inspire the next generation of engineers, the Institution of Mechanical Engineers ("IMechE") carries out educational outreach work, in the course of which, members and staff may come into contact with children and young people. To this end, the IMechE has an arrangement with STEM Learning (stem.org.uk) to ensure volunteers, including but not limited to STEM Ambassadors, receive DBS checks (in England and Wales) or PVG checks (in Scotland).
- 1.2 This policy has been developed to support members and staff and enable them to carry out their roles safely, effectively and within the law.
- 1.3 The IMechE wishes to protect the safety and wellbeing of children. No one should be subjected to harm or abuse. The IMechE has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and other harmful behaviour. We believe everyone has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them. The IMechE will give equal priority to keeping all children and young people safe regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- 1.3 The IMechE is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity, and diversity and inclusion.
- 1.4 Everyone is responsible for safeguarding children, and we are committed to establishing and maintaining a culture that allows staff and volunteers to recognise and report safeguarding concerns.
- 1.5 This policy applies principally to the safeguarding of children, but the same principles will apply in the event of any engagement with vulnerable adults.

## 2. References

The law and regulation that govern safeguarding for children and vulnerable adults include (but are not limited to): The Children Act 2004, The Care Act 2014 and UK Government Guidance on Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees (The Charity Commission). The IMechE has considered applicable laws and guidelines in drafting this policy.

## 3. Terms & Definitions

Title	Definition
IMechE	Institution of Mechanical Engineers
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
PVG	Protecting Vulnerable Groups
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

## 4. Responsibility

- 4.1 We have a trained Safeguarding Officer (safeguarding@imeche.org) with overall responsibility for this Policy. Our Safeguarding Officer has undergone formal training to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to fulfil this role.

- 4.2 Everyone is responsible for safeguarding children, and we are committed to establishing and maintaining a culture that allows staff and volunteers to recognise and report safeguarding concerns.

## 5. Purpose

- 5.1 The IMechE supports members' involvement with educational activities, or directly with children, as part of its activities of promoting STEM subjects and careers in schools and other settings. These activities include:
- 5.1.1 acting as STEM Learning Ambassadors across educational settings.
  - 5.1.2 attending school science fairs.
  - 5.1.3 providing educational materials and attending speaking engagements.
  - 5.1.4 and providing information about careers in engineering.

This policy applies to any activities where children are present, including face-to-face events, online or 'virtual' events, or other means of engagement including, but not limited to: video conferencing; telephone interaction; online messaging; social media platforms; and the exchange of data such as emails, images or other digital files.

- 5.2 The purpose of this policy statement is:
- 5.2.1 To protect children and young people who receive IMechE services.
  - 5.2.2 To provide volunteers and staff with information on the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection and how to deal with any safeguarding concerns they may encounter.
  - 5.2.3 To provide parents, schools and other third parties with the overarching principles that guide IMechE's approach to child protection

## 6. What the Policy Covers

- 6.3 This policy outlines the procedure to follow when you have a safeguarding concern. This policy and any procedure set out within it applies to:
- 6.3.1 All students and prospective students under the age of 18
  - 6.3.2 Current and prospective staff and volunteers (the latter being members or occasionally non-members of the IMechE who volunteer their time and expertise to participate in IMechE activities in an organisational or representative capacity)
  - 6.3.3 External organisations or individuals with whom the IMechE engages.
- 6.4 For the purposes of this policy a child is a person under 18 years of age.
- 6.5 For the purpose of this policy, a vulnerable adult is a person who is 18 years of age or over and who may, for whatever reason, be unable to care or protect themselves against harm or exploitation.
- 6.6 Any IMechE member, volunteer or employee wishing to seek further information and guidance about child protection and safeguarding beyond the scope of this policy is advised to consult guidance issued by the UK Government and Charity Commission guidance for England and Wales (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>) or the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) in Scotland (<https://www.oscr.org.uk/guidance-and-forms/safeguarding-guidance-keeping-vulnerable-beneficiaries-safe/charity-trustees-duties>). Further information is available from the NSPCC ([www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)) and Childline ([www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)).

## 7. Safeguarding Officer

- 7.1 The role of our Safeguarding Officer is to:
- 7.1.1 help to maintain an awareness of safeguarding issues and advise on when and how to refer a matter to the Safeguarding Officer.
  - 7.1.2 provide advice to staff and volunteers on aspects of their day-to-day work in which care and welfare issues may need to be considered.
  - 7.1.3 be the first contact for individuals who receive a disclosure or identify concerns and follow through on all such disclosures and concerns.
  - 7.1.4 keep a confidential record of all concerns raised, of any action taken, and (where no action is taken) of the reason for taking no action.
  - 7.1.5 provide leadership on safeguarding matters and in complying with the safeguarding requirements.
  - 7.1.6 liaise with other agencies to support investigations, court proceedings, and case reviews.
  - 7.1.7 liaise with staff to ensure appropriate support to students and parents.
  - 7.1.8 ensure appropriate support is provided to those reporting concerns or disclosures; and
  - 7.1.9 ensure appropriate measures for the secure storage of information.

## 8. What is Abuse and/or Neglect?

- 8.1 A single definition or label will not adequately describe the abuse or neglect a child may be subjected to. We have set out below some forms of abuse:
- 8.1.1 **Abuse:** is a form of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. A child may be abused by another family member, another child, by those known to them or strangers. As well as through direct / physical encounters, this abuse may be perpetrated online or facilitated by technology.
  - 8.1.2 **Physical abuse:** this form of abuse may involve striking, hitting, throwing, poisoning, scalding or burning, or to otherwise cause physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a person fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
  - 8.1.3 **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment and behaviour that causes severe adverse effects on a child's emotional development. This may involve making a child feel that they are unloved, inadequate, or worthless. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.
  - 8.1.4 **Sexual abuse:** this form of includes forcing or enticing a child to engage in sexual activities. This includes activities not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the victim is aware of what is happening.
  - 8.1.5 **Neglect:** is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical or psychological needs that is likely to result in the serious impairment of their development or health. This may involve failing to provide food, clothing or shelter.
  - 8.1.6 **Financial abuse:** is the use or misuse of money to limit or control a child's current or future actions and freedom of choice.

- 8.1.7 **Domestic abuse:** involves any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, violent behaviour that is perpetrated by a partner or family member.
- 8.1.8 **Modern slavery or human trafficking:** involves the recruitment, movement or receiving of children, women or men by force, coercion or deception for the purpose of exploitation.
- 8.2 Changes in behaviour may signify that a child has been the victim of abuse and/or neglect.

## 9. What to do if you are concerned about the safety or welfare of a child or vulnerable adult

- 9.1 A disclosure of information that raises concerns may occur in a variety of settings including, by posting on a forum or in a written assignment. If you have any concerns about a child's welfare, you should act on this immediately. Individuals who have safeguarding concerns must follow these guidelines:
  - 9.1.1 Listen carefully to what is disclosed.
  - 9.1.2 Reassure the individual that he or she is not to blame.
  - 9.1.3 Do not show disbelief.
  - 9.1.4 Do not make any promises of confidentiality — you must refer any concerns to the Safeguarding Officer (safeguarding@imeche.org).
  - 9.1.5 If someone begins to disclose something but stops once you say that you cannot guarantee confidentiality, you should still inform the Safeguarding Officer.
  - 9.1.6 Avoid persistent questioning.
  - 9.1.7 Ask only 'open' questions, such as 'What happened?'
  - 9.1.8 Make notes on the same day and keep a record.
  - 9.1.9 Refer every concern immediately to the Safeguarding Officer (safeguarding@imeche.org).
  - 9.1.10 If in exceptional circumstances, the Safeguarding Officer (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should consider speaking to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local social services team. In these circumstances, any action taken should be shared with the Safeguarding Officer (or deputy) as soon as is practically possible.
  - 9.1.11 It is not your responsibility to investigate concerns. This will be done by the Safeguarding Officer, Social Services and/or the Police.
- 9.2 A report form is attached as Appendix A to this Policy.
- 9.3 All reports made to the Safeguarding Officer must contain the following information:
  - 9.3.1 Complainant's name, position and contact details
  - 9.3.2 The name of the person you are concerned about
  - 9.3.3 The name of the complainant (if different from above)
  - 9.3.4 Date and time of the disclosure/when the concern arose and the context in which it was made
  - 9.3.5 The place where the alleged abuse happened
  - 9.3.6 Details of the concerns/disclosure (this should be recorded as accurately as possible and in the actual words used of the person making the complaint (where possible), and any questions asked by the reporter)
  - 9.3.7 A description of any injuries or evidence of abuse that you have seen.
  - 9.3.8 Details of any action taken or advice given to the child

- The Safeguarding Officer will respond to concerns raised. Further information may be required and must be provided to the Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible and within 12 hours of receiving a request for further information.
- 9.4 The Safeguarding Officer will record all the relevant information of the case. This will form the basis of any decision to refer and will include the information needed if a referral is made.
- 9.5 Following guidance on reporting issued by the Charity Commission or OSCR, the Safeguarding Officer will decide whether or not a referral to the police, social services, or other third-party organisation is required. If a referral is made, they will endeavour to ask for consent from the young person/vulnerable adult if they have capacity or are deemed competent to give it. Although it is best to have consent to referrals, they will be made without consent where necessary.
- 9.6 The Safeguarding Officer must in appropriate cases and without delay refer disclosures and other protection concerns to appropriate third parties, including educational settings.

## **10. Support for those Reporting Concerns**

- 10.1 We aim to encourage openness and will support individuals who report their concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken. Individuals reporting concerns will not suffer detrimental treatment because of raising a genuine concern.
- 10.2 However, if we conclude that the individual has made false allegations maliciously, they may be subject to disciplinary action, if appropriate.

## **11. Data Protection**

- 11.1 We will comply with our obligations in relation to the processing of personal data pursuant to the General Data Protection Regulations 2016/679 and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 11.2 A copy of the privacy notice detailing how personal data is processed when safeguarding concerns are reported is available at [www.imeche.org/privacy-policy/imeche-privacy-policy](http://www.imeche.org/privacy-policy/imeche-privacy-policy)

## **12. Recruitment, Staffing and Volunteers**

- 12.1 We make all reasonable efforts to ensure that all volunteers and staff who will be involved in specific activities with children are suitable for the position in line with legal requirements.
- 12.2 Although it is the legal responsibility of the educational setting to conduct risk assessments and obtain parental consent for any trip outside of school premises, we encourage STEM ambassadors to undertake their own risk assessments. We require staff and volunteers to undertake a risk assessment when directly organising any IMechE activity at which children will be present. Useful information and templates for events involving children are available on the NSPCC ([nspcc.org.uk](http://nspcc.org.uk)), Resource Centre ([resourcecentre.org.uk](http://resourcecentre.org.uk)) and NCVO ([knoqhow.ncvo.org.uk](http://knoqhow.ncvo.org.uk)) websites.
- 12.3 Staff and volunteers are expected to follow the NSPCC's best practice guidance around photography and the sharing of images of children: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/photography-sharing-images-guidance>. In particular, we require all staff and members to obtain parental consent before publishing a child's image in any material.
- 12.4 All volunteers and staff whose role involves working with children or vulnerable adults, will be required to undergo a Disclosing and Barring Service (DBS) check in England and Wales,

and/or police checks under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (SVG) Act 2006 in Scotland, via STEM Learning. It is an absolute requirement for any person representing the IMechE in this capacity to undertake the necessary checks via STEM Learning (stem.org.uk), and for these checks to be undertaken a minimum of once every three years. Staff or volunteers with DBS/SVG checks older than three years will not be permitted to engage in any outreach activity involving children or vulnerable adults. The required level of checking (if any) will broadly reflect the degree and frequency of unsupervised access to children.

- 12.5 No person on the DBS' or Disclosure Scotland's barred lists will work with children or vulnerable adults in any capacity.
- 12.6 References and identity checks will be sought for any new employees who will be working with children or vulnerable adults, and risk assessments and ongoing performance monitoring also have an important role in safeguarding children.
- 12.7 Regular updates to knowledge and best practice around safeguarding are provided, both via STEM Learning resources and by the IMechE directly (via training and guidance documents), to provide staff and members with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children and vulnerable adults effectively.

### **13. Allegations against Volunteers and Staff**

- 13.1 Allegations of abuse raised against a member of the IMechE or a member of staff will always be treated seriously. If a volunteer or member of staff receives such an allegation or has concerns, this must always be reported to the Safeguarding Officer or in his/her absence their deputy.
- 13.2 We understand that an allegation of abuse may be made against a volunteer or member of staff for a variety of reasons and recognise that there may be rare occasions in which false allegations are made. Those who deal with an allegation will do so with an open mind and will ensure a timely and thorough discussion.
- 13.3 The Safeguarding Officer will inform HR Director and/or Member Operations Director as appropriate. The Trustee Board will be informed of any reports, allegations or concerns, and it is the responsibility of the Trustee Board to ensure that appropriate action is taken, and that the IMechE cooperates fully with the relevant authorities. Advice will be sought on whether to suspend a member of staff. Once a referral has been made, any Social Services/Police investigation takes precedence over any IMechE procedure.
- 13.4 The name of an accused person, along with the outcome of any internal investigations, will be referred to the Police, the Disclosure and Barring Service/Disclosure Scotland and any other appropriate third-party organisation in the event that such a referral is judged necessary by the Safeguarding Officer (following guidance issued by the Charity Commission or OSCR), or if the accused person admits to abusive misconduct, or is found guilty of such by a court.
- 13.5 IMechE will review any investigation to ascertain whether lessons can be learned; this review will be reported to the Trustee Board.
- 13.6 If there is an allegation that is proved unfounded, we will:
  - 13.6.1 Inform of HR of this conclusion.
  - 13.6.2 HR will inform the volunteer or member of staff in writing that no further action will be taken.
  - 13.6.3 Inform other appropriate people (for instance student/parents/carers) as necessary of the outcome of the investigation in line with our Data Protection Policy.
- 13.7 Any data collected as part of the referral and/or investigation process will be stored securely by the IMechE on a confidential, need-to-know basis, for a maximum of 6 years.

## **14. Noncompliance**

We take our safeguarding duties seriously and there is no flexibility or exemption to this policy. A failure to comply with this policy and any procedures contained within it will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action, dismissal or revocation of IMechE membership.

## **15. Performance Evaluation**

15.1 We will evaluate and update our procedures from time to time. Any changes to the policy will be communicated to all staff and volunteers.



## Safeguarding – Report Form

To be sent to: [safeguarding@imeche.org](mailto:safeguarding@imeche.org)

### 1. Your details – the Person completing the form

Name	
Position	
Membership No	
Telephone	
Email	

### 2. Details of the person affected

Name	
Address	
Telephone	
Email	
Who reported the incident?	

### 3. Details of the incident or disclosure (please describe in detail using only the facts)

Date(s) and time(s) of any disclosure:	
Location of the incident/disclosure:	

Details of the incident/ disclosure: (record as accurately as you can with the actual words used by the person affected and / or person who reported – continue on a separate sheet if required)

### 4. Other present of potential witnesses

Name	
Position	
Membership No	
Telephone	
Email	

### 5. Additional relevant information (please detail anything else that you believe to be helpful or important)

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Has the incident/disclosure been reported to any external agencies (for instance police or social services)? YES /NO  
 If YES, provide details below

Name of organisation/agency:	Name of organisation/agency:
Contact Person:	Contact Person:
Telephone:	Telephone:
Email:	Email:
Agreed Action or advice given:	Agreed Action or advice given:

**I have completed this form to the best of my knowledge and belief. I have provided information that is factual and does not contain my own views or opinions on the matter.**

Your signature:	
Print Name:	
Date:	

### **For Internal Purposes – to be completed by Safeguarding Officer**

1. Does the incident/ disclosure need to be reported to::

Volunteer Team/ PR/ Legal	No/Yes – Date and Time completed
Other Internal	No/Yes – Date and Time completed
Police	No/Yes – Date and Time completed
Prevent	No/Yes – Date and Time completed
Children/Adult Services	No/Yes – Date and Time completed
Medical Professionals including GP/ CMHT/ CAMHS/ Public Health	No/Yes – Date and Time completed

2) Reason for action (to include any actions agreed with external agencies set out above)

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**I confirm that to the best of my knowledge and belief the information provided is correct and I will be available to answer any further questions on this matter.**

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Signature	
Date	

