



Child protection policy

This policy applies to all members and leaders of SGI-UK. It also applies to staff, the board of trustees, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of SGI-UK, whether paid or not.

SGI-UK is committed to safeguarding children and young people who engage in its activities, ensuring their well-being.

Definition of 'child'

In the United Kingdom a 'child' is a person who has not yet passed their 18th birthday. In this policy, reference is made to 'young people'. This term is used to embrace teenagers, but it is important to note that anyone under 18 is a child in the eyes of the law, and will be considered as a child by SGI-UK in its safeguarding procedures.

This policy seeks to:

- Provide the necessary framework to protect children who are involved in SGI-UK activities.
- Provide volunteers (members) and staff with the overarching principles that guide our approach to protecting children who engage with SGI-UK activities.

SGI-UK Statement on safeguarding

SGI-UK believes that no one should experience abuse. The trustees of SGI-UK recognise their responsibility to protect children and adults at risk who engage with activities either locally (e.g. within the setting of a district) or at one of our national centres.

We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of children, and to keep them safe. We are committed to operating in a way that protects them. Seeking to stay at the forefront of best practice, SGI-UK works closely with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and with Thirtyone:eight, an independent religious safeguarding charity advising faith communities.

Our activities as an organisation are centred on supporting current members and interested individuals in their practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, a humanistic philosophy of infinite respect for the sanctity of life. We carry out activities for children as a way for them to make a connection with the life-affirming philosophy underpinning SGI-UK.

'Future Division activities' – a definition

In SGI-UK, the term 'Future Division' is used to refer to children aged from 7 to 18 who are engaging in our activities. 'Future Division activities' within SGI-UK include local and national activities, summer courses and, as appropriate, faith support for children in the four groups within the SGI-UK Future Division. These four groups are Mimosas (girls aged 7 to 10), Young Eagles (boys aged 7 to 10), Rising Phoenix (children aged 11 to 14) and Indigo Group (children aged 15 to 18).

We do not hold designated activities for children under seven. Guidelines on running safe activities that include under-7s are given in the Child protection procedures.

Legal and local authority framework

SGI-UK recognises its responsibilities under the terms of the Children Act 1989 and 2004, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015, Children and Social Work Act 2017 and other relevant legislation, to make arrangements for ensuring that it safeguards and promotes the welfare of children. As SGI-UK has a national remit within the United Kingdom, it operates and adapts its procedures in relation to the relevant legislations of each of the devolved governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

SGI-UK acknowledges the passing into law of the extension of positions of trust in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. This makes it illegal for religious leaders to engage in sexual activity with 16- and 17-year olds in England and Wales, as called for by the NSPCC's Close the Loophole campaign.

As SGI-UK is a religious charity with its headquarters in Buckinghamshire, this policy has been developed in the context of guidelines from the Charity Commission Guidelines and the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989.
- All children, regardless of age, dis/ability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs and/or other issues.
- Working in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other agencies, is essential in promoting their welfare.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Adopting child protection guidelines and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers who work with children in SGI-UK safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

We will seek to keep children safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer for children and adults at risk, a safeguarding team and a lead trustee for safeguarding.

- Adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures.
- Safely recruiting staff and volunteers who have access to children, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely, and sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with adults at risk, children, their families, staff and volunteers.
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving adults at risk, children, young people, parents, families, and carers appropriately.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against trustees, staff and volunteers appropriately.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

What to do if you have a concern

All concerns must be taken seriously. Everyone in SGI-UK has a responsibility to report any concerns.

If a child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999.

If you have any safeguarding concerns please consult with the lead safeguarding supervisor of volunteers and report them using the online reporting form on the SGI-UK members' website at this address <https://bit.ly/sgiuksafeguarding> or via this QR code



Useful contacts

Police: Emergency (immediate danger), call 999

Police: Non-emergency (advice), call 101

Thirtyone:eight helpline 0303 003 1111

NSPCC helpline 0808 800 5000

SGI-UK Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), Sanda McWilliam **01628 591208**

SGI-UK Deputy DSO, Manny Fernandez **01628 591232**

Safeguarding@sgi-uk.org

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