



Land of Joy

Buddhist Retreat Community

LAND OF JOY SAFEGUARDING POLICY

(Reviewed November 2023)

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PEOPLE DESIGNATED FOR SAFEGUARDING:

- 1) Onsite Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP): Director / Manager of Land of Joy
- 2) Chair of the Board
- 3) Land of Joy Trustees safeguarding team: Shan Tate (Safeguarding Lead)

1. INTRODUCTION

Land of Joy is affiliated to the Foundation of the Preservation of Mahayana Tradition (FPMT Inc.) <https://fpmt.org>

The FPMT Protection from Abuse Policy is incorporated in this Safeguarding Policy. Please note that where the Land of Joy policy refers to Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP), in the FPMT policies, this is synonymous with Designated Protection Person (DPP).

OUR COMMITMENT TO PROTECTING FROM ABUSE AND HARM

Land of Joy is committed to protecting people from harm and abuse. Everyone associated with Land of Joy has a right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse and spiritual abuse.

We will also ensure that all team members work together, in line with this Safeguarding policy, and act promptly when dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

We aim to actively promote equity, respect and celebration of diversity, and inclusion through our generosity model and by our values, our practises, and individual behaviours.

We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and psychological abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse.

SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYBODY’S RESPONSIBILITY

We will work together to prevent and minimise the risk of abuse or harm. If we have concerns that someone is at risk of being abused or harmed, our first duty is to the individual concerned.

DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION

If we know or suspect that someone is at risk, we will respond and ensure our concerns are properly recorded. Our response will be in line with this policy and other Land of Joy procedures.

IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS –

Tell the Designated Safeguarding Person

2. CONFIDENTIALITY

Land of Joy is committed to respecting the right to confidentiality of everyone at the Centre.

Sometimes it is necessary to share information to ensure a person's wellbeing, for example, sometimes practical information needs to be shared with the team. Occasionally, sensitive information may be shared in this way. Such sharing will always be kept to the minimum required. The Land of Joy Confidentiality Policy gives more information on this issue.

Under the Land of Joy Confidentiality Policy, team members and teachers who are informed of an allegation of abuse or are made aware of circumstances in which someone is at risk, may need to share sensitive information in order to take practical steps to protect people as necessary. These circumstances include:

- If the participant is under 18, and if they disclose information that may indicate risk to themselves or other children or young people.
- If an adult discloses past child abuse and it is possible that children or young people are currently at risk from the perpetrator.
- Where there is a risk a person may cause harm to themselves or another.
- If information is given that indicates that a crime has been committed.
- If there is information that indicates possible radicalisation or terrorist threat.

In any of these cases, the person at risk will be informed that the disclosure they are making may not be kept confidential. If a decision needs to be taken to break confidentiality, unless there is an emergency and urgent action is needed, it will be done preferably after consultation with a Designated Safeguarding Person and the Director. Any disclosure will be shared internally or with external agencies as required whilst respecting the person's privacy as much as possible.

3. UNDERSTANDING ABUSE

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other persons or group of people.

Abuse may be single or repeated episodes. It is not only harming somebody; it also includes neglect of their basic needs or failure to protect them from harm.

Examples include:

- **Physical:** for example, hitting, slapping, pushing, restraining. It also includes uninvited touching, female genital mutilation, domestic abuse or intimate partner violence.
- **Psychological and emotional:** for example, shouting, swearing, frightening, blaming, ignoring, or humiliating a person, threats of harm or abandonment, intimidation, verbal abuse, gaslighting, coercive control or forced marriage.
- **Financial:** including the illegal or unauthorised use of a person's property, money or other valuables, and pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance.

- **Sexual:** such as forcing a person to take part in any sexual activity without his or her informed and meaningful consent. It can include sexual violence, child sexual abuse or exploitation or knowingly risking infecting someone with a sexually transmitted disease.
- **Discriminatory:** including racist or sexist remarks or disparaging comments based on a person's age, ethnicity, gender, disability, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, medical condition, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment. This also includes stopping someone from being involved in their preferred cultural activities, services or support networks.
- **Modern slavery:** The recruitment, movement, harbouring or receiving of people through the use of force, coercion, abuse of vulnerability, deception or other means for the purpose of exploitation. It may involve trafficking individuals in or out of the UK for a number of reasons including sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude and organ harvesting.
- **Institutional:** the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service, especially to vulnerable people. This includes a failure to ensure the necessary safeguards are in place to protect people and maintain good standards of care in accordance with individual needs, including training of staff, supervision and management, record keeping and liaising with other providers.
- **Misuse of spiritual authority or power.** This can take the form of all the abuses listed above. Furthermore, all forms of abuse have the potential to cause damage to the individual's emergent spirituality. Holding a spiritual position or role involves differing power relationships and imbalances and these need to be recognised to respect the autonomy or rights of the individual.
- Some abuse is *spiritual* abuse because of the context it occurs in or where it invokes status as a teacher or someone of higher spiritual authority or uses religious teachings to coerce or manipulate people into performing behaviours which meet the needs of the abuser rather than those of the individual concerned. In some cases, it may be well intentioned rather than malicious, but nevertheless is harmful, as it overrides respecting an autonomous individual's right to make informed choices regarding their own lives and spiritual practices, for example due to fear, shame, humiliation etc. At the extreme end, this could lead to cult like control where individual autonomy and open inquiry are suppressed. Or it could lead to the creation of actual cults, which are exclusive, secretive, authoritarian, deceptive and exploitative.

4. HOW MIGHT WE NOTICE HARM OR ABUSE?

Concerns about or evidence of abuse or harm can come to us through:

1. A direct disclosure by the person concerned
2. A complaint or expression of concern by a team member, another Centre guest, a carer, a member of the public or relative
3. An observation of the behaviour of the person at risk.

It is important that team members, retreatants and members of the public know who to contact if there are any safeguarding concerns at Land of Joy. How to access relevant information together with who to contact will be available on a notice board on the premises and on the website.

5. OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFE PRACTICE

Land of Joy is committed to:

- Identifying abuse and harm.
- Responding effectively to concerns and formal complaints.
- Creating a safe space for everyone at Land of Joy.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of our policies, procedures and practices for protecting people.
- Ensuring that our policies, procedures and practices stay up to date with good practice and the law in relation to safeguarding.
- Encouraging and supporting all team members to attend available safeguarding training workshops and presentations.

The Centre will use various channels for informing everyone about who are the Designated Safeguarding Persons and how to contact them, along with how to access this policy.

Team members and guests are entitled to respect and protection from harm. We aim to give everyone a positive and rewarding experience.

However, it is important to recognise that retreat can be a powerful experience that brings underlying issues to the surface. The team will aim to respond empathically and offer support in such circumstances. Nevertheless, it is important for both team members and retreatants to appreciate the limits of the team members' role, time, and skills. On some occasions we will suggest that suitable professional support is required. (Please also refer to Getting the Best out of your time at Land of Joy which includes a disclaimer, and our Mental Health Policy.)

Statutory and legal responsibilities

There may be serious incidents, involving children under 18 or 'adults at risk of harm' (previously referred to as 'vulnerable adults'). In these cases, there may be a statutory or legal requirement to inform the local authority and other relevant agencies to ensure protection from significant harm or abuse.

(An adult at risk is defined as a person aged 18 years or over, who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.)

This policy covers not only children and adults at risk, but also *everyone* at Land of Joy. We recognise that everyone can be vulnerable at times, due to life events and circumstances. However, the response to any incident may vary according to the legal and statutory guidance for different groups.

DBS checks and safe recruitment processes will be carried out in line with good practice to protect young people and adults at risk at LoJ.

Regarding the age of consent and a recent change in the law:

In England and Wales, the age of sexual consent is 16 for both men and women. The age of consent is the same regardless of the gender or sexual orientation of a person and whether the sexual activity is between people of the same or different gender.

Under the age of 16, it is technically an offence for anyone to have any sexual activity but Home Office guidance is clear that there is no intention to prosecute teenagers under the age of 16 where both mutually agree and where they are of a similar age.

Children aged 12 and under are legally considered to be incapable of giving consent to any form of sexual activity.

To tackle forced marriage, it is now illegal for those under the age of 18 to get married or enter into a civil partnership.

There has been a fairly recent change in the law that is relevant to faith based organisations. The age of consent has been raised from 16 to 18 years in regard to relationships with persons in 'positions of trust' and since 2022 this now includes faith group leaders.

It is important to remember in the faith-based communities, whilst something may not be illegal, it could nevertheless be an abuse of power and a betrayal of trust and be highly detrimental with serious consequences for someone experiencing this kind of spiritual abuse. It can be helpful to be clear that consent in cases of such power *imbalances is not meaningful consent and should be avoided.*

Because safeguarding responsibility includes a wide number of functions within dharma environments such as Land of Joy, it is important to also be clear when issues that arise are more clearly dealt with under other policies, such as health and safety, volunteer or employment policies, mental wellbeing policies, bullying and harassment, grievances, complaints etc. Good governance is an important way we can care for those who come into contact with our centres and potentially minimise some of the risks and problems that can arise.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FPMT ORGANISATION

Land of Joy is committed to working in partnership with the FPMT organisation to develop good practice for preventing harm and abuse. This includes adopting FPMT Inc. policies and attending training provided by FPMT Inc. (International Office).

- Everyone in positions of authority or leadership and team members at Land of Joy have signed an acknowledgement to abide by the FPMT Ethical Policy and Protecting from Abuse Policy.
- Land of Joy have discussed their local context with the Centre Services Director at FPMT Inc. and have considered where local jurisdiction and practices need to be taken into account and reflected in this Policy.
- Land of Joy will inform the FPMT Inc. Centre Services Director and their local FPMT Regional and/or National Coordinator of any allegations or concerns regarding abuse about a Board member, Director, Spiritual Program Coordinator, or resident teacher, and the action taken.
- Land of Joy will inform the FPMT Inc. Teacher Services Director and their local FPMT Regional and/or National Coordinator of any allegations or concerns regarding abuse about a registered or Tibetan teacher, and the action taken.

- Land of Joy will inform the FPMT International Mahayana Institute (IMI) Director of any allegations or concerns regarding abuse from an ordained person, and the action taken.
- Reporting to the relevant individual within the FPMT organisation will not necessarily indicate failure on the part of Land of Joy. It will indicate vigilance and a commitment to protecting from harm and abuse.

RECRUITMENT OF TEACHERS AND TEAM MEMBERS

Teachers, facilitators, and team members at the Centre are in a position of trust. We recognise that it is important that vetting processes are in place to do our best to ensure that no one who may pose a risk of abuse or harm is put in such a position.

6. CODE OF BEHAVIOUR for team members with respect to all visitors

Avoid:

- ❖ Spending time alone or making unnecessary physical contact with children or adults at risk.
- ❖ Arranging private meetings of retreatants with retreat leaders or visiting teachers anywhere other than in Land of Joy's designated meeting areas.
- ❖ Non-consensual touching in general.
- ❖ Meeting alone with children and adults at risk associated with Land of Joy, outside of the work environment. (This also includes online.)
- ❖ Investigative questioning after an allegation or concern has been raised. Instead, listen with an open mind in a caring manner. Then record the information and report it to the Designated Safeguarding Person, who will notify the appropriate persons and authorities as required.

You should never (even in fun):

- ❖ Initiate or engage in sexually provocative conversations or activity.
- ❖ Allow the use of inappropriate language to go unchallenged.
- ❖ Do things of a personal nature for children or adults at risks that they can do themselves.
- ❖ Trivialise or exaggerate child or adult at risk abuse issues.
- ❖ Allow any allegations made by a child or adults, retreatants or team members, to go without being reported and addressed.
- ❖ Make promises to keep any disclosure confidential from relevant authorities.

Regarding all your relationships within and around Land of Joy:

- ❖ Respect everyone's right to privacy.
- ❖ Report abuse and help create a culture in which retreatants, team members and children feel able to report experiences of harmful, uncomfortable attitudes or behaviour.
- ❖ Be aware of the procedures for reporting concerns or incidents and how to contact the Designated Safeguarding Person.
- ❖ Act with discretion with regards to your personal relationships. Ensure your personal relationships do not undermine harmony or impact on your capacity for impartiality.
- ❖ Be aware that conflicts of interest can arise, leading to misunderstandings. This can happen particularly where there is an imbalance of power or close personal relationship.

Where such potential situations arise, one should discuss this with the Director and sometimes other team members as relevant.

- ❖ Should you find yourself the subject of inappropriate affection or attention it is essential to share this with a Designated Safeguarding Person.
- ❖ Maintain appropriate boundaries with others at Land of Joy. Be aware of the scope of your role and when necessary, pass information to those whose role it is to deal with specific matters.
- ❖ Be careful not to give personal or Dharma advice to individuals, that goes beyond your expertise or role. Respond with empathy and kindness, rather than being drawn into giving expert advice.
- ❖ If there are concerns that a person might need further help this should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Person or relevant team member.
- ❖ Study, sign and abide by the FPMT Protecting from Abuse Policy and FPMT Ethical Policy. Take up all available opportunities for safeguarding training via FPMT Inc and FPMT UK and other bona fide sources. Trustees have access to Charities Commission resources.

7. PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS AND CONCERNS

Under no circumstances should a team member carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse.

Suspicious must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.

RECEIVING, RESPONDING AND REPORTING AN ALLEGATION OR CONCERN

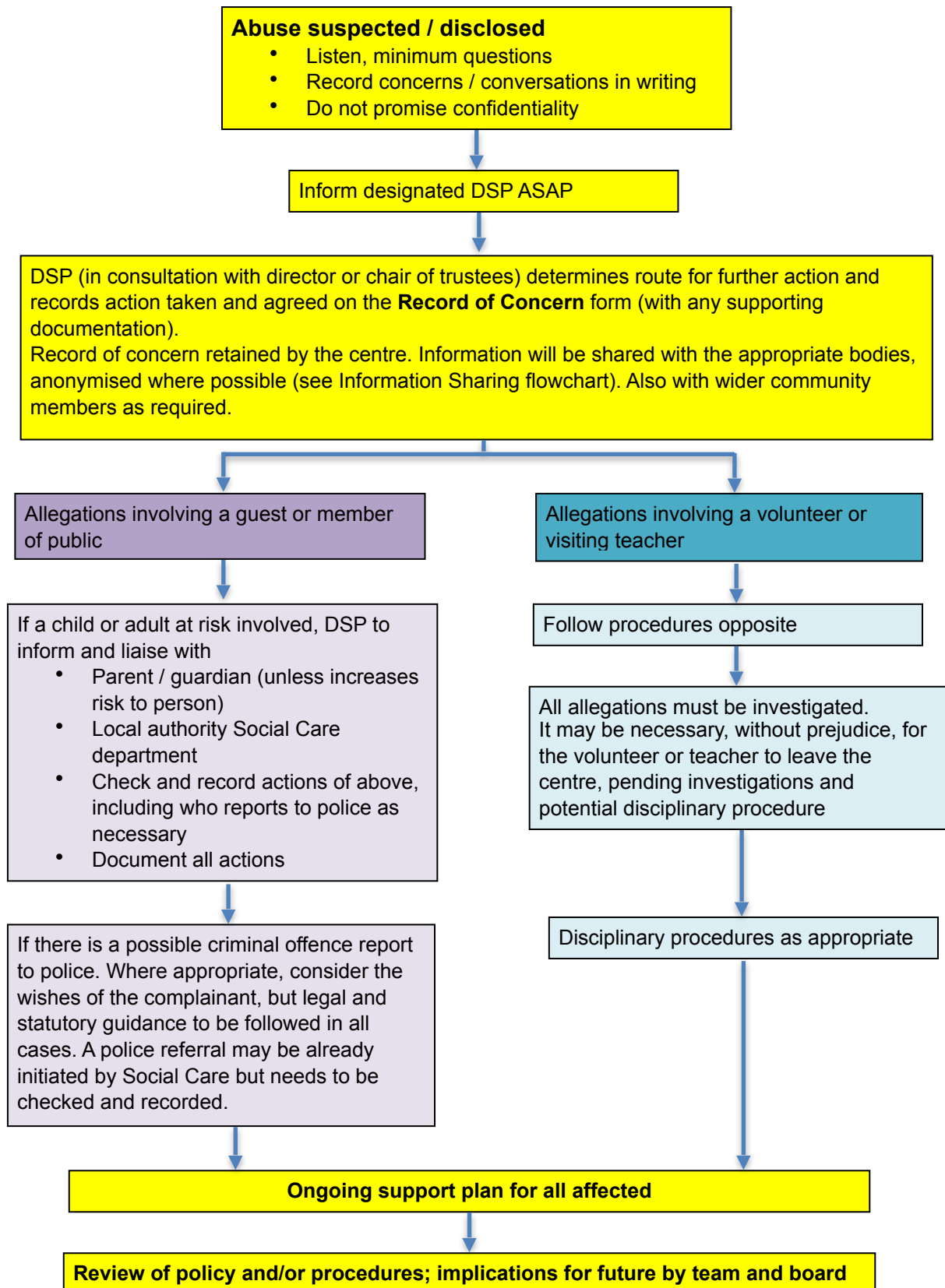
- Never promise unconditional confidentiality.
- Explain that if the person expressing the concern may have been abused or be at risk of abuse you may need to tell someone. Explain the role of the Designated Safeguarding Person.
- Listen very carefully.
- Only ask questions to clarify your understanding.
- Do not ask searching questions – this could compromise a future investigation.
- Offer reassurance and thank the person for telling you.
- Tell the person you will try to get them the help they need.
- Explain what you will do, e.g., tell the Designated Safeguarding Person.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST TEAM MEMBERS

If an allegation is made against a team member whilst following the procedure outlined above, this must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Person (unless they are the subject of the allegation) and the Director (unless they are the subject of the allegation).

All allegations or concerns regarding the Director, Spiritual Program Coordinator, and resident and/or registered teacher/s must be reported to the FPMT Centre Services or Teacher Services Director as appropriate at International Office and to the local FPMT Regional and/or National coordinator.

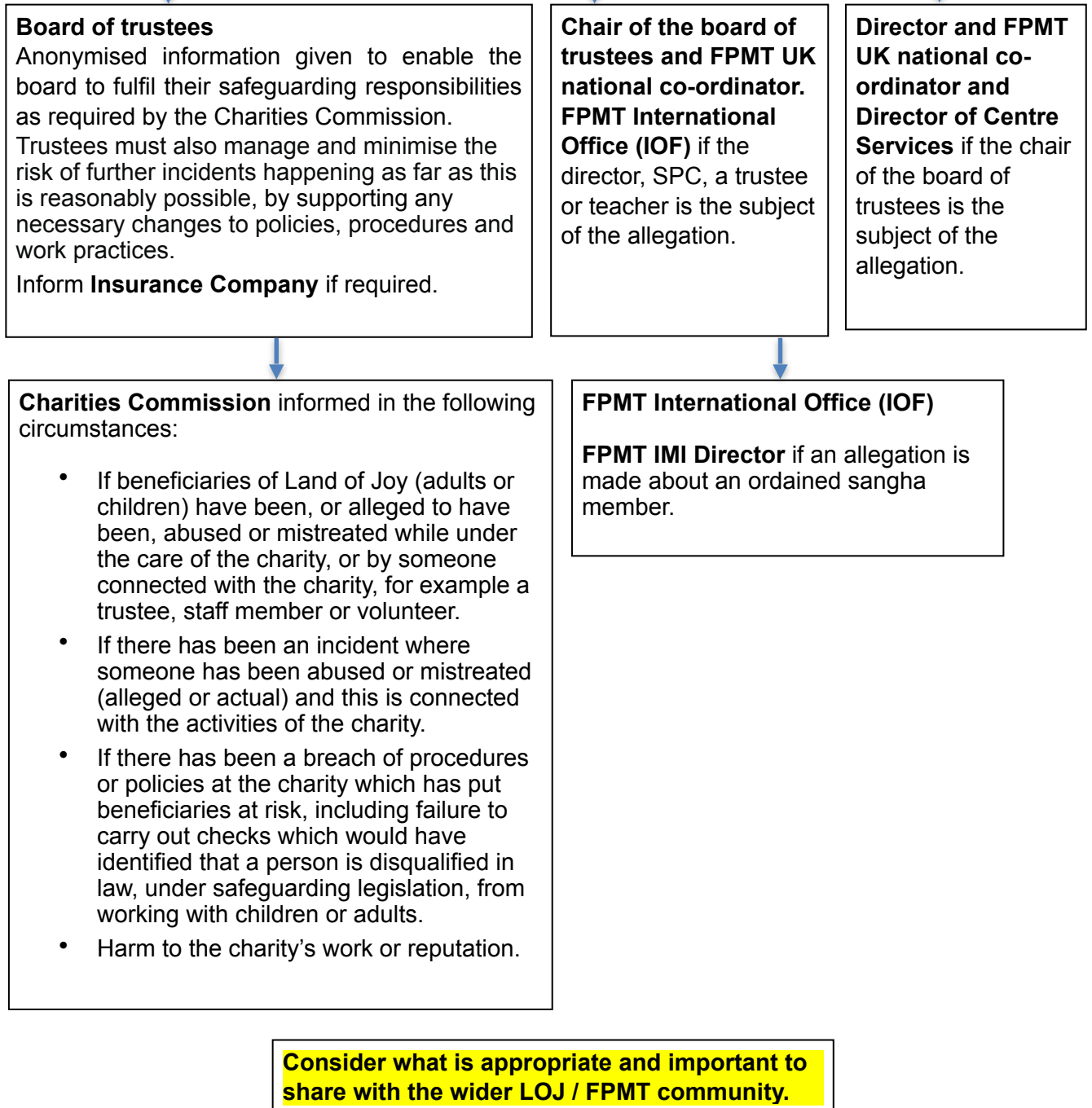
8. PROCEDURES FLOWCHART



9. INFORMATION SHARING DURING / FOLLOWING AN INVESTIGATION

DSP shares information as soon as possible in conjunction with Director

- If it is the Director who is the subject of the allegation, this responsibility passes to the Chair of Board of Trustees.
- Action is taken to fulfil legal and statutory requirements and to protect anyone who may be at risk of being harmed.



10. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CARE AND SUPPORT

Land of Joy is committed to offering care and support (within its capacity and availability), working with statutory agencies as appropriate, to all those who have been affected by abuse in connection with the retreat centre. This may include the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator. Support may be needed for the team and wider community also.

- Prioritise the wellbeing and safety of all who reside, visit or come into contact with the Centre.
- Never promise to keep anything reported confidential. It should be explained at the outset that any disclosure will be shared internally or with external agencies as required. However, the person's privacy will be respected as much as possible.
- For the purposes of accurately passing on and recording relevant information, it is important to listen. Questions, however, should be kept to the minimum necessary to understand what is being alleged, and leading questions avoided to prevent difficulties in any future investigation.
- All those involved should take great care in reaching conclusions and making decisions. Regarding sharing information within the Centre, confidentiality, and privacy of all the individuals concerned should be protected as appropriate and feasible. When the process is complete, and it is deemed necessary, consideration should be given to what is appropriately shared with the wider Land of Joy community.
- Whatever action you may have to take, and even if the authorities are involved, don't lose sight of the person or persons at the centre of the concern.
- Ensure that there is someone to whom they can turn for support after any allegation or investigation. If they give further information, then go through the process of listening and recording as already described and signpost on to any other available sources of support.
- When dealing with adults at risk, their wishes, feelings and mental capacity must be taken into account and people should be supported to make their own decisions and encouraged to give informed consent when possible and safety considerations permit.
- Be aware that although the particular individual that has disclosed abuse may now be safe and protected, it is important to think about the potential risk to others from the alleged perpetrator. If the matter is serious, inform the appropriate agencies as required, but also pass information to those who may need be aware in order to protect others within FPMT and other Centre Directors where relevant.
- It is important to think carefully how best to maximise everyone's rights to privacy as much as is feasible. There will be people with whom information needs to be shared. In many cases this could be anonymised, and the person's name only be shared with those where this is essential. Consider carefully what is shared by email, particularly bearing in mind GDPR considerations, and again anonymise where feasible or encrypt and password protect documents with names of alleged perpetrators and those who have been harmed.
- The Centre needs to make clear decisions to promote wellbeing and safety of all they come into contact with. However, it is important to maintain equanimity towards all those involved in any allegation and at the same time ensure robust safeguarding procedures. Respect and compassion need to be shown to both the person harmed and the alleged perpetrator, and where appropriate and feasible, care and support given.

11. USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

FPMT Policies and Guidelines are required to be followed. Links to relevant documents can be found on the FPMT website:

<https://fpmt.org/fpmt/problem-solving/> and <https://fpmt.org/affiliates/> FPMT center, project and service directors, spiritual program coordinators and board members; FPMT registered teachers; and study group and regional and national coordinators

NATIONAL CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

Thirtyone:eight <https://thirtyoneeight.org/>

PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ:

Helpline: 0303 003 11 11

Email: info@thirtyoneeight.org

Thirtyone:eight formerly known as CCPAS is consulted by churches and other organisations. They also advise other faith groups and a wide variety of statutory and third sector organisations with safeguarding concerns. Land of Joy is a member and they have a 24-hour advice helpline and also offer training and other resources.

An Olive Branch www.an-olive-branch.org

An Olive Branch was formed in 2011 as a project of the Zen Centre of Pittsburgh. Growing out of the need for greater understanding and reduction of ethical misconduct on the part of religious leaders, they provide services to organisations in conflict after a teacher has been accused of misconduct. In the USA they promote understanding and healing and work to strengthen organisations' boards and policies to reduce the likelihood of future misconduct. They also have some information and resources available on their website.

NSPCC <https://www.nspcc.org.uk>

Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH

Help for children/young people: 0800 1111

Help for adults concerned about a child: 0808 800 5000

ChildLine <https://www.childline.org.uk>

Free and confidential number: 0800 1111

Childline helps anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they're going through.

[Disclosure and Barring Service](https://www.db.gov.uk/customerservices)
customerservices@db.gov.uk

Charity Commission <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>

0300 066 9197 or email directly via the contact link on their website.

LOCAL CONTACTS FOR REPORTING ABUSE IF NECESSARY:

Safeguarding children in Northumberland

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Safeguarding.aspx>

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Safeguarding/What-can-I-do-if-I-suspect-a-child-or-young-person.aspx>

If you have concerns about the safety of welfare of a child, contact the local authority via the above links or by telephone.

You should always call 999 in an emergency, if the person is not in immediate danger, contact the police via 101.

If the person you are concerned about resides in Northumbria, you can report abuse and neglect by completing the forms via the links on the website above, or you can contact 24/7 **Northumbria Social Care on Onecall: 01670 536 400**

There are also online forms as well as the number below available for reporting abuse and neglect, hate crimes, domestic abuse or anti-social behaviour if the matter is not urgent.

Non-emergency: If this is a new contact then please ring **Onecall: 01670 536 400** or follow the links above.

If the person you are concerned about is not resident or currently staying in Northumbria, you can contact the Local Authority Social Care department in their locality.

Alternatively, regarding all the above concerns, call the **NSPCC 24-hour child protection helpline** on 0808 800 5000

Safeguarding Adults in Northumberland

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Care/Support/Safeguarding.aspx>

For reporting a case, general information and enquiries :

Northumberland Adult Safeguarding

Onecall: 01670 536 400

safeguardingreferrals@northumberland.gov.uk

POLICE CONTACT INFORMATION

https://www.northumbria.police.uk/contact_us/

If somebody's life is in danger or a crime is taking place, call 999.
If you need a non-emergency police response, call 101.

FPMT CONTACTS:

National coordinator

<https://fpmt.org.uk>

FPMT UK National Co-ordinator

Ven. Barbara Shannon

fpmtukcoordinator@gmail.com

FPMT Centre Services director

Claire Isitt

claire@fpmt.org

FPMT Teacher Services director

Francois Lecointre

francois@fpmt.org

IMI director

Ven. Tendar (Losang Tendar/ Simon de Boer)

director@imisangha.org

LAND OF JOY CONTACT DETAILS

Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP)

Name: Director

Phone/email: 01434 240 412 / director@landofjoy.co.uk

Designated Safeguarding Person/lead

safeguarding@landofjoy.co.uk

Chair of Land of Joy

Name: Laura Watson

Phone/email: 07717 569 618 / chair@landofjoy.co.uk

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually. This policy was last reviewed on November 2023

12. RECORD OF CONCERN (to be printed on two sides, and if additional pages are required they should be securely attached)

Name of the subject of the report	
Contact information	
Person initiating concern	
Concern or incident (information received)	
Date, time and location	

Any relevant additional information	
Action taken immediately (to be completed by designated safeguarding person to whom the report was made)	

<p>Follow-up plan (by both designated safeguarding people including the director)</p>	
<p>State clearly if other agencies were required to be contacted and dates when this was done</p>	
<p>Name: [print]</p> <p>Signature:</p> <p>Date:</p>	

One copy retained confidentially by the centre: duration according to legal advice.

Anonymised copy created by removing identifying details sent to chair of centre board to confidentially share with the trustees.