



Published Jan 2026
To be reviewed Jan 2027

Worcester Film Festival

Safeguarding Policy

1. Policy Statement

Worcester Film Festival (WFF) is committed to creating a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all attendees, volunteers, filmmakers, partners and suppliers. Although the festival primarily engages adults, we recognise that children, young people and vulnerable adults may attend screenings or participate in festival activities.

We acknowledge our duty of care under UK law to protect individuals from abuse, neglect, exploitation, harassment, bullying, discrimination, trafficking, and modern slavery. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all staff and volunteers are expected to uphold this policy.

This policy is informed by the WFF Safeguarding Risk Assessment and aligned with the expectations of partner organisations, including the BFI.

2. Purpose & Scope

This policy covers:

- All WFF activities during the annual festival, including screenings, Q&As, networking events, workshops and online engagements.
- All staff, volunteers, trustees, filmmakers, suppliers and contractors.
- Children, young people and adults at risk who may attend public screenings or interact with festival staff.

While WFF does not run events specifically for unaccompanied children, family-friendly screenings are offered, and safeguarding considerations must always apply.

3. Organisational Context

- WFF is a limited company delivering a public cultural event across multiple city-centre venues.
- All venues have their own safeguarding and health & safety procedures. These must be followed alongside WFF's policy.
- WFF has an appointed Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Volunteers are all aged 18+, receive induction training, and are not required to undergo DBS checks.
- WFF maintains incident logs, including low-level concerns.

4. Definitions

Child/Young Person: Under 18 years of age

Adult at Risk: Adult with care and support needs who may be unable to protect themselves

Abuse/Harm: Physical, emotional, financial or sexual abuse, neglect, harassment, bullying, discrimination, exploitation, grooming, trafficking or modern slavery

Volunteer: Anyone providing their time to support WFF activities

5. Safeguarding Principles

- The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.
 - Safeguarding is a shared responsibility.
 - Concerns should be reported promptly and never ignored.
 - Individuals will be treated with dignity, respect and fairness.
 - WFF works collaboratively with host venues, statutory services and partners.
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6. Key Roles & Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Receives and records safeguarding concerns
- Liaises with venues and statutory services
- Ensures incident logs are maintained
- Delivers safeguarding briefings

Volunteers and Staff

- Attend safeguarding induction
- Follow venue and festival procedures
- Report concerns immediately
- Maintain professional boundaries

Trustees / Festival Leadership

- Oversee annual review
 - Ensure compliance with legal standards and partner expectations
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7. Risk Areas & Controls

Aligned with WFF Safeguarding Risk Assessment .

7.1 Children & Young People

Risks:

- Child separated from guardian
- Inappropriate behaviour from adults
- Exposure to unsuitable content
- Press/photography concerns

Controls:

- Family screenings clearly labelled
 - Robust content warnings
 - Volunteers briefed on lost-child procedures
 - Clear signage regarding photography
 - Escalation to venue security and DSL
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7.2 Vulnerable Adults

Risks:

- Distress due to film content
- Harassment, bullying, discrimination
- Accessibility challenges
- Individuals struggling due to unmet needs

Controls:

- Content warnings and pre-screening notices
 - Zero tolerance for harassment
 - Volunteers aware of accessible routes and facilities
 - Supportive team culture and escalation pathways
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7.3 Volunteers

Risks:

- Limited safeguarding confidence
- Bullying or interpersonal conflict
- Fatigue or stress during operations

Controls:

- Annual safeguarding briefing
 - Anti-bullying policy
 - Breaks encouraged and monitored
 - Safe reporting processes
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7.4 Filmmakers, Partners & Suppliers

Risks:

- Inappropriate conduct
- Misconduct at networking events
- Boundary issues or misuse of platform

Controls:

- Staff/volunteer presence at networking events
 - Speaker/guest behaviour expectations
 - Clear consequences for misconduct
 - Incident logs maintained
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8. Safer Recruitment

- Volunteers aged 18+ only
 - Reference checks conducted
 - Roles assessed for DBS requirement
 - Mandatory induction for all new volunteers
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9. Training & Awareness

- Annual safeguarding briefing for all volunteers
 - DSL receives enhanced training
 - Venue-specific summaries provided
 - “Quick Guide to Safeguarding at WFF” issued to all staff and volunteers
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10. Code of Conduct

All volunteers and staff must:

- Treat everyone with respect
 - Challenge inappropriate behaviour
 - Maintain professional boundaries
 - Not be alone with unaccompanied children
 - Not photograph minors without consent
 - Report concerns immediately
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11. Handling Safeguarding Concerns

Immediate danger: Call 999

Otherwise: Notify the DSL or venue safeguarding contact

Steps:

1. Listen and reassure
 2. Do not investigate
 3. Record facts on WFF Incident Form
 4. DSL logs incident and determines escalation
 5. DSL liaises with venue management and statutory services as needed
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12. Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

- Report immediately to the DSL
 - DSL contacts Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where required
 - Person may be suspended pending investigation
 - All actions recorded and reviewed
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13. Working With Venues

Because WFF operates across multiple venues:

- Volunteers must comply with each venue's safeguarding procedures
 - WFF will maintain a Venue Safeguarding Checklist as recommended in the Risk Assessment
 - Concerns must be shared between venue managers and WFF's DSL
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14. Confidentiality & Record Keeping

- Information is shared on a need-to-know basis only
 - Records stored securely, in line with GDPR
 - Incident logs reviewed annually to identify trends
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15. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually
 - After any major incident
 - In line with updates to legislation or best practice
 - In consultation with partner venues and bodies such as the BFI
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16. Key Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Kirstie Gregory

Deputy DSL: Paul Brewster

Venue Safeguarding Contacts: Listed in volunteer briefing

Police (non-emergency): 101

Emergency: 999

Worcestershire County Council 01905 768020 (adults) – 01905 822666 (children)

Modern Slavery Helpline: 0800 0121 700