

Safeguarding: Summary Procedure for Retreat Teams

Updated Nov 2025 SN

This guide is to be used in association with the Safeguarding Policy, available [here](#).

It does not replace that document. It is a quick action summary, tailored to the needs of retreat teams at Dhanakosa.

It includes concerns about abuse and inappropriate behaviour. In summary:

1. Be aware of the range of issues that may fall under this procedure
2. Know how to identify an appropriate context for sharing your concern
3. Know when and how to widen the scope of consultation and identify appropriate actions

1. What is the range of issues we are talking about

If you identify or suspect any of the following you should consider it a concern:

- Believe someone to be vulnerable
- Witness or have reported to you something that could be considered abuse (occurring either at Dhanakosa or elsewhere)
- Witness or have reported to you something that could be considered inappropriate behaviour
- Become concerned that you could be accused of abuse or inappropriate behaviour
- Or, suspect someone on retreat to be under 18

For guidance as to what constitutes a vulnerable adult, abuse, or inappropriate behaviour see the full protection policy [here](#).

It is important at this stage that you are not judging the information you have been given or the situation you have witnessed. Take what you have been told or witnessed seriously but do not jump to conclusions. It is best to share the information or observations objectively in an appropriate context (step 2).

2. Know how to identify an appropriate context for sharing your concern

It is important that you share your observations and / or the information you have been given.

- With the retreat team, if the situation involves a retreatant
- With the Centre Director or another senior member of centre staff or a trustee, if the situation involves a retreat team or support team member, or a guest.

The purpose of this discussion is to develop a consensus as to the content of the concern and the objective facts surrounding it. And, to agree what next steps, if any, are required. It will be the job of the most senior person in the grouping you have taken the concern to steer the process.

It is important not to allow concerns about confidentiality to prevent you from sharing important information (see the *Confidentiality Guidance Note*). Equally, it is important that sensitive information is handled appropriately and respectfully. It is also important not to discount information or observations because of a belief that “they would never do that”.

If you believe you have been given important information, or witnessed a significant incident but others disagree with you, even if they are senior and experienced, you should report it to the Safeguarding Officer (Subhanaya).

3. Know when and how to widen the scope of consultation and identify appropriate actions

Where it appears to the group assessing the situation that the concern / incident was based on misunderstanding and it is clear that no ongoing management of the situation is required it may be that no follow up is required (but the Safeguarding Officer / Centre Director should still be informed and may want a written note*).

Where there is significant concern; as to the appropriateness of someone’s presence on retreat, the possible existence of abuse, the appropriateness of someone’s behaviour, or that a situation may require further intervention or management, then it is essential that the Safeguarding Officer / Centre Director is involved in the discussion and identification of next steps (if absent this can be delegated to the Chair of Trustees or another senior Order Member should be involved in the process, and the Centre Director updated on their return) and a written note will be required*.

If criminal activity is suspected it is essential that the Safeguarding Officer is informed and it is their job to decide whether or not to involve the police. If there is imminent danger, the police can be called on 999 or 901.

*Written notes should include:

- Who was involved in the discussion
- What was said (and by whom), and what was seen (and by whom)
- Report objective facts and peoples experience / subjective response, but try to differentiate between them
- What follow up conversations were had
- Where possible report both sides of incidents.
- Report what further actions were considered necessary, or “no further action considered necessary”

Subhanaya
Dhanakosa Safeguarding officer