



## **Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults and Child Protection Procedures**

### *Updates*

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## Purpose

This procedure sits within a suite of arrangements which cover all aspects of safeguarding vulnerable adults and child protection. It should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding vulnerable adults and Child Protection policy, which outlines your responsibilities.

The purpose of this procedure is to document all the processes involved in Safeguarding vulnerable adults and Child Protection, including:

- Provide information to all staff, volunteers, children and their families about what we should all do to prevent and deal with abuse, neglect and bullying.
- Preventing abuse, neglect and bullying from happening between vulnerable adults, children and young people who are part of our organisation or take part in our activities.
- Stopping abuse and bullying as soon as possible and ensuring if it does happen, those involved receive the support they need.
- Ensure the safety and well-being of children, young people, and vulnerable adults when using the Internet, social media, and mobile devices under our control.

The procedure applies to anyone working on behalf of Neroche Woodlanders Limited (NWL) with children, young people, families and vulnerable adults during activities including:

- Woodland Wellbeing work
- Forest school activities
- Woodland management

It reflects the needs of these vulnerable groups and works with and aligns with current safeguarding principles. This procedure has been drawn up based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England and includes:

- Forms of abuse.
- Staff Responsibilities.
- Our Arrangements including:
  - Safer recruitment.
  - Disclosure and Barring Checks.
  - Staff Induction and training.
  - Ratios.
  - Online Abuse/Bullying.
  - Low-Level Concerns.
  - Examples.
  - Safeguarding incident reporting.
  - Allegations against staff/volunteers, including Whistleblowing
  - Relevant contacts.
  - Further guidance.

Separate procedures have been written, and all refer to the Safeguarding procedures.

Code of Conduct, Encouraging Positive Behaviour, Safeguarding, Incident Report form, Photography and Filming procedure, GDPR Policy, and Volunteer/Staff Handbook

## **Abuse**

Abuse, neglect and bullying cause real distress and affect a person's health and development, in some instances causing significant harm. All children (under the age of 18 years) and vulnerable adults regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

Everyone has a role to play in preventing all forms of abuse and bullying (including online; see below) and putting a stop to it.

Abuse is a form of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.

Abuse can also take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse (see below). Children may be abused by an adult(s) or by another child or children (Peer on Peer)

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm to a child under the age of 18 years. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly or by failing to protect a child from harm.

This can also happen to vulnerable adults. The following are some signs often associated with particular types of child abuse and neglect, but can also be seen with vulnerable adults. These types of abuse are more often found in combination than alone.

### **Emotional abuse**

The persistent emotional maltreatment can cause severe and persistent adverse effects on emotional development. It may involve making the person feel that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the person opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

These may include interactions beyond a child's developmental capability, overprotection, limitations in 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 severe bullying (including cyberbullying), causing them frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the

exploitation or corruption of a child/children or vulnerable adult. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment, although it may occur alone.

### **Physical abuse**

It can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child/children or vulnerable adults. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of or deliberately causing ill health.

### **Sexual abuse**

It can involve forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adults to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the person is aware of what is happening. This can involve physical contact, including penetrative (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may include non-contact activities such as showing a child/children or vulnerable adults and getting them involved in pornographic materials, sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate abuse. Adult males do not solely perpetrate sexual abuse; women and other children (peer on peer) can also commit such abuse.

### **Neglect**

Is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. This can also happen to vulnerable adults

Neglect can involve a failure to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Allow access to medical treatment
- Neglect of or unresponsiveness to a person's basic emotional needs.
- Neglect can occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

### **Other Types of Abuse**

#### **Bullying**

Bullying occurs when individuals or groups seek to harm, intimidate, or coerce someone who is perceived to be vulnerable (Oxford English Dictionary, 2021). It can involve people of any age and can happen anywhere—at home, school, or using online platforms and technologies (Cyberbullying). This means it can happen anywhere. Bullying encompasses a range of behaviours that may be combined and may include the behaviours and actions we have set out below.

### Verbal Abuse

This includes name-calling and saying nasty things to or about a person or their family. It can involve physical abuse/assault, including hitting or pushing a child. It can also be emotional abuse, making threats, undermining a child, or excluding a child from a friendship group or activities. Or cyberbullying/online bullying – see below;

Bullying can be a form of discrimination, particularly if it is based on a person's disability, race, religion or belief, gender identity or sexuality.

### Online Abuse

Online Abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet, facilitated through technology like computers, tablets, mobile phones and other internet-enabled devices. It can happen anywhere that allows digital communications, such as:

- Social networks
- Text messages and messaging apps
- Email and private messaging
- Online chats
- Comments on live-streaming sites
- Voice chat in games

Children, young people, and vulnerable adults may experience several types of abuse or grooming online:

- Bullying/Cyberbullying
- Emotional Abuse (this includes emotional blackmail, for example, pressuring children and young people to comply with sexual requests via technology)
- Grooming
- Sexting (pressure or coercion to create sexual images)
- Sexual Abuse or Exploitation

### Cyberbullying/online bullying

This is discrimination/bullying behaviour against a person online rather than in person, including:

- Excluding from online games, activities or friendship groups
- Sending threatening, upsetting or abusive messages
- Creating and sharing embarrassing or malicious images or videos "trolling."
- Sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- Voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- Setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child  
Creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a person or cause trouble using their name.

Children, young and vulnerable adults can be victimised (experience further abuse) when abusive content is recorded, uploaded or shared by others online. This can happen even if the original abuse occurred offline.

### Grooming

This is when the perpetrators use online platforms to build a trusting relationship with the child or vulnerable adult in order to abuse them. This abuse may happen online, or the perpetrator may arrange to meet them in person with the intention of abusing them.

## **Staff and Volunteers Responsibility**

You must all recognise the potential for internal and external incidents to our setting and activities, which fall within the safeguarding children and vulnerable adult and child protection procedures. Examples of potential Safeguarding situations are:

- Bullying, physical assault, or abusive practices by other people or staff.
- A child, young person or vulnerable adult attending with unexplained bruising or marks, showing sudden reluctance to return home or to school.
- Allegations made, suspicions held, about any adult involved in the caring process with children and young people.
- Online abuse is also important to recognise.

Any form of bullying or abuse occurring within our premises/activities is unacceptable. Our code of behaviour/conduct sets out how everyone in our organisation should behave during face-to-face contact with participants/clients. Our 4 key principles of looking after yourself; others; nature and things should be discussed with participants at the start of all events. Our regular discussions with staff, volunteers, children, young people, and families will focus on the group members' responsibilities to look after one another and uphold the behaviour code.

Specific responsibilities/actions of all staff and volunteers.

- You should not pass personal phone numbers, your social media details or addresses to participants.
- Attend training when required.
- The Neroche Woodlanders Limited emails are to be used for contact purposes.
- You should not respond to threatening or abusive messages from adults, children or young persons.
- You must report (in writing) anything suspicious that you see or hear using the procedures described below.

### **Other things to consider are:**

- Respect the fact that we are all different including seeking opportunities to celebrate differences.
- Making sure that no one is without friends.
- Dealing with problems in a positive way.

## Arrangements

The following sections outline our arrangements to protection children and vulnerable adults attending our sessions/event and activities.

### Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers – Safer Recruitment Procedure

In order to comply with our safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and child protection procedures the recruitment of the correct staff and volunteers to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults is fundamental. As a general rule, new recruits are known to at least one of the members of staff or volunteers and they will have experience of working with children.

If Neroche Woodlanders need to advertise for new staff or volunteers the NSPCC Safer recruitment process will be followed.

- All recruitment procedures must comply with our safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and child protection procedures. This applies to the recruitment of all staff and volunteers who are to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- All new recruits will be interviewed by at least one but preferably two Directors and shown around the Young Wood main camp, if this is not possible then an online interview is acceptable, with two directors. One of the directors in the interview must have completed Safer Recruitment training.
- During the interview the directors will confirm that the individual is willing to work with the Forest School approach and the Neroche Woodlanders Limited Code of Conduct.
- Any concerns about the interviewee will be investigated. If necessary, evidence of past experience and qualifications will be checked.
- DBS clearance must be obtained, if photo identification can be obtained. In addition, the ID checks require support the DBS process will be obtained.

Applicants will be rejected if they cannot comply with background checks or answer safer recruitment questions.

New recruits will then be invited to attend a session as a volunteer so that both parties can confirm that this is right for them.

### Disclosure and Barring Checks (DBS)

All adults (paid staff and volunteers) who have regular contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults, must have completed a Disclosure and Barring check (DBS), in line with current UK legislation. These checks should be updated in line with current UK legislation .

All session leaders must hold an enhanced disclosure certificate.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will ensure that no member of staff will work with children, young people and vulnerable adults without an up to date DBS clearance. These are updated every three years. If they are signed up for the Disclosure and Barring updates service subscription, we will check annually.

All DBS certificates will be held in secure records on Dropbox.

### Staff Inductions and Training

The DSL will have the appropriate lead training, which is current as legislation requires. In addition, the DSL will attend any Somerset-specific training and pass any key points onto the remaining staff/volunteers. The DSL can also cascade all basic safeguarding to Neroche Woodlanders staff and volunteers.

All staff and volunteers are to have an awareness of and basic understanding of the child protection and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults process. This will be done through regular training. Everyone will sign to say they have read and understood the Safeguarding policy and associated procedures. Records of all staff inductions and training will be retained on Dropbox. In addition, there will be regular discussions with staff and volunteers about bullying and abuse and how to prevent/identify it. This discussion will include providing support to all staff and volunteers dealing with any safeguarding issues.

### Relationships and Sex Education

We are introducing age limits in line with the DoF guidance. This is to ensure staff and volunteers are aware of sensitive and complex subjects before children are ready to understand them fully.

What are the age limits? In primary school, subjects such as the risks about online gaming, social media and scams should not be taught before year 3.

Puberty should not be taught before year 4, whilst sex education should not be taught before year 5, in line with what pupils learn about conception and birth as part of the national curriculum for science.

In secondary school, issues regarding sexual harassment should not be taught before year 7, direct references to suicide before year 8 and any explicit discussion of sexual activity before year 9.

### Ratios

There should always be at least two of you together with any clients when working away from the main camp. You must not put yourself at risk from any situations when working with potentially vulnerable children and adults. The Session Leader is responsible for ensuring there



are sufficient trained staff/volunteers. Other ratios will be determined based on the activities and participants involved.

### Online Abuse/Bullying

The online world provides everyone with many opportunities, including education and personal development. However, it can also present risks and challenges – many of which are identified above. We have a duty to ensure that everyone (regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation) involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Providing clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on how to behave online through our Code of Conduct.
- We should support and encouraging the young people using our service to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others.
- We should also support and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online
- Reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly, ensuring that user names, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively
- Ensuring personal information about the adults and children who are involved in our organisation is held securely and shared only as appropriate
- Ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given – see photography and filming procedure;
- Providing supervision, support and training for staff and volunteers about online safety
- Examining and risk assessing any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation.

If online abuse occurs, we will report this in the same way as other safeguarding issues.

### Low Level Concerns

Low-level concerns in safeguarding are concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a child that do not meet the threshold for harm. They can include any behaviour that is inconsistent with our code of conduct. Examples of low-level concerns are:

- Being over-friendly with children
- Taking photos of children on a personal device
- Using inappropriate language
- Intimidating or humiliating a child
- Inappropriate touching or hugging
- Showing favouritism
- Engaging with a child in a secluded area

A Low Level concern should be reported but may not warrant progressing onwards.

#### Examples

Example scenarios have been produced and are available for use in role playing or as discussion tools.