



Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Policy Statement

The Valley Adventure Team will take all reasonable steps to protect children and vulnerable adults from physical, sexual, and emotional harm, and harm through neglect, while taking part in activities.

Next revision date April 2022

Child Protection Policy

Valley Adventure Centre wishes to ensure that all those taking part in activities are able to do so, protected and safe from harm while they are with staff of the Company. This is particularly true in respect of children and vulnerable adults.

All staff must have a clear understanding of how we must operate within an appropriate code of conduct, aware of what their 'duty of care' is and how this relates to their position in providing activities and being responsible for others.

There is always the risk of someone being harmed. In a small percentage of cases action may be taken against you if the person decides to make a claim. This action may result in financial losses but can also harm your reputation, your career or the reputation of the Company.

In all outdoor activities safety and keeping people safe is all about risk assessment and minimising the risks involved at all levels of participation.

While all taking part in an activity have a duty to their fellow participants, in organised activities we all have a heightened duty of care and as such we should be aware that the principal risks extend to the quality of control exercised by those in charge. All staff should take reasonable steps to safeguard those directly taking part in activities and at any time that they may be deemed responsible for those in their charge.

Be Safe

The Valley Adventure Team believes that the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting children/vulnerable adults from abuse i.e. – clients, employees, parents, friends and children themselves.

Nowadays we appreciate that abuse can happen wherever there are children – at home, at school, in the park, at the Company. Sadly there are some people who will seek to be where children are, simply in order to abuse them.

Everyone in the Company has a moral responsibility and therefore a part to play in looking after children and vulnerable adults with whom they are working. By following our good practice guidelines, all staff will help to protect both the children and our staff and clients from wrongful allegations.

Our Guidelines are based on the following principles:

- The child's welfare is paramount.
- Anyone under 18 is classed as a child.
- All children regardless of age, any disability, gender, racial origin, religious beliefs and sexual identity have a right to be protected from abuse.
- All suspicions of, and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously, and responded to

swiftly and appropriately.

Following these principles the Company will issue these guidelines and arrange training as part of its staff development scheme. **It is strongly recommended that all staff undertake a UKCC child protection training course or similar training.**

This policy will cover:

- The main forms of abuse and their indicators.
- Listening to children and record keeping.
- Appropriate response to suspicions or allegations of child abuse.
- Good practice in working with young people with special reference to situations likely to arise in our activities.

Our Child Protection Policy and procedures can:

- Offer safeguards to both the children and adults.
- Help to maintain the standards of practice expected from members of the local community.

In order to protect the rights and welfare of all:

- All staff are required to sign a declaration that they have read and agree to abide by the Child Protection Policy document.
- Any staff under the age of 18 years will be required to complete a registration form detailing personal details regarding address, contact numbers, name of doctor, allergies, medication, etc. The Company will hold this on file.
- All existing employees and any prospective employees will be asked to give their consent to a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check or produce evidence of a valid Criminal Records bureau check.

Valley Adventure Child Protection Guidelines

The Valley Adventure Team has a duty of care to safeguard all children and vulnerable adults involved in our activities from harm. The following guidelines have been devised not just to protect children and vulnerable adults, but also to provide appropriate guidance and therefore protection for staff.

All staff must demonstrate appropriate behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations.

The following bullet points constitute 'good' practice:

General

- Staff must treat all young people equally – with respect and dignity.
- Respect an individual's right to personal privacy.
- Provide an example that you wish others to follow.
- Plan activities that involve more than one other adult being present or at least are within sight or hearing of another adult when working with young people or vulnerable adults. At times there may be no alternative, e.g. when a child is hurt. However, no regular one to one contact should happen.

- Any claims of abuse will be taken seriously and should be dealt with in accordance with the Company's reporting procedure. All staff should be aware of what to do should they be told of an allegation of abuse.
- All staff should be provided with advice to raise awareness of best practice, guidance and support should they become involved in a situation in which there is concern that abuse may be occurring.
- The Company should foster an environment in which children and adults feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes and behaviour that they do not like

Follow the guidelines for photography and video use (see Appendix 4)

- Never hit a child whatever the provocation.
- Never make suggestive, sexual remarks or gestures, even in fun.
- Never promise to keep a secret.
- Staff should not invite or allow children to stay with them at their home unsupervised.
- Do not have any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others. There may be times when either for coaching or safety when physical contact is required, wherever possible this should be preceded by an explanation of why it would be necessary and permission given, (e.g. would you mind if I held your shoulders to show you what I mean?) Where possible work alongside another colleague and if appropriate involve the parent's / carers, or ask their permission. (What you may interpret as acceptable touch may not be construed in the same light by others).
- Avoid situations that compromise your relationship with young people and are unacceptable within a relationship of trust (e.g. a sexual relationship between an adult and a youth member over the age of consent).
- Coaches and members should not engage in physically rough or sexually provocative 'games'. Inappropriate talking or touching must be avoided and sexually suggestive comments must not be made, even in a light hearted manner. Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned.

Transport

- Staff should avoid taking and dropping off a child to an event, except in emergencies. In case of injury an ambulance should be called. If the need should arise, the lift should only be undertaken with the full knowledge and consent of the child's parents / carers.

Rescues/ emergencies.

- The first priority in a rescue is to get the child safe as quickly as possible, therefore the closest employee to the person who is able to effect a rescue (male or female) must carry it out.
- If the rescuer deems it necessary to physically aid the rescuee, they should aim to do so by grasping the harness. If this is not possible, or in the case that the rescuee is physically incapable (through exhaustion / loss of consciousness, lack of fitness) then it should be recognised that other physical contact will be necessary.

However, this should be kept to a practical minimum and in this case it is likely that another adult would be assisting the rescue.

Recruitment of staff

Where the Company does not previously know a new member of staff, the Company will seek to obtain at least two references, one regarding previous work with children (if possible).

New staff will be monitored working within the Company by management (Ben Girdwood, Rob Le Monnier or another agreed senior member of staff) when they begin in order to observe safe working practices and good relationships with clients/other staff.

Any serious concerns resulting from this observation any serious concerns should be documented and reported to Ben Girdwood.

Supervision of staff awaiting a CRB check to be completed.

Due to the often long delay in the processing of a CRB form staff may be employed pending receipt of the report. In this case they must not work with children unsupervised and only with staff who have a valid CRB check completed.

In any situation where they may have contact with young people they must only work under the direct supervision of a member of staff who has undergone child protection training and has a valid CRB check.

CRB Check Procedure.

What is a CRB Disclosure?

A CRB Disclosure is a document that contains information held by police and government department that can be used by employers and voluntary organisations to make recruitment decisions.

A CRB Disclosure offers the Company the means to check the background of applicants to ensure that they do not have a history that would make them unsuitable for posts.

A CRB Disclosure will provide details of a person's criminal record including convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings held on the Police National Computer.

Who will receive my Disclosure?

You (the applicant) will receive your Disclosure form in the post once the check has been completed. You must provide the report to the Company where it will be kept on file. ‘

How long will my Disclosure be valid?

A Disclosure is only valid on the day that it is issued, unless enlisted on the Update Service. If you remain with the Company you will not need another CRB check for another 3 years.

- A decision not to allow a person to coach/work with children or vulnerable adults following a CRB disclosure may not necessarily preclude an adult from working for the Company. CRB checks are designed to identify people who may pose a risk to children and vulnerable adults.

Confidentiality

Child abuse situations are highly sensitive and the aspect of confidentiality in these matters must be considered at all times.

The concerns that have been identified or actions intended should not be the subject of any conversations outside the group of people who have appropriate and proper interest in the particular situation. In the Company this would normally be the person reporting the situation. The implications of casual comment expressed within the Company or within the local neighbourhood are profound.

Written information will be maintained in a locked cabinet with restricted access. Details of concerns or involvement, or letters and reports in connection with such, will not be maintained on a computer database.

Dealing with Allegations against yourself.

If as a coach you have had allegations made against you and you wish to discuss the matter with someone from the Company please make it known to Ben Girdwood.

Dealing with Allegations

- If you are working with a school – inform the Head Teacher.

If a disclosure has been made:

- As soon as possible record the child’s account. Try to include the words the young person used, particularly if descriptions of parts of the body or sexual or violent acts have been given.
- Try to include details of any questions asked for clarification. Try to avoid asking *closed* questions i.e. which have a yes / no answer. Starting questions with *Who? What? How? When* and *where* is advisable.

- It is important that you do not lead or prompt the child into saying things about the nature of abuse as this may affect the nature of any further investigation.
- Try to get a second witness.

Remember it is not your position to conduct an investigation, merely to listen to the young person and pass the information on to experts who are well trained to assess and investigate.

Information to be passed on should include:

- The nature of the allegation.
- A description of any indicators that support suspicions of abuse.
- The date, time, place and recipient of the disclosure.
- An opinion of the extent to which the young person would be seriously at risk of further abuse if they left the Company's care.
- The child's name, address, d.o.b.
- Details of other members of the family if known
- The name and address of the family member
- Any other relevant information

Ben Girdwood should then:

- Contact the Children Service child protection team for advice, who may well then take over.
- In an emergency contact the Police Station on 612612, ask to speak to the Duty Childcare Officer and / or leave a number where you can be contacted. There is no need to tell the police why you are calling – the Duty Childcare Officer will call you back.

Allegations of abuse against another Company member

Remember that the child's welfare is of paramount importance. Follow the following guidelines:

- Stay calm
- Do not promise to keep it a secret
- Listen to what the child says and take it seriously.
- Only ask questions if you need to identify what the child is telling you – don't ask the child explicit details.
- It is important that you do not lead or prompt the child into saying things about the nature of abuse as this may affect the nature of any further investigation.
- Make a detailed note of what the child has told you. Pass the information to Ben Girdwood as soon as possible. If the allegation is about Ben Girdwood then pass the information to Roger Le Maistre.

Appendix 1

REPORT FORM FOR RECORDING CONCERNS AND REFERRALS

Complete as much information as possible. If the information relates to one child, fill in as below.

If it refers to more than one child, give as much information as you can about each child.

PERSON/S AGAINST WHOM ALLEGATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE

Full name:

Age:

Address:

Phone numbers:

Company:

Position in Company:

CHILD INVOLVED ((PLEASE COMPLETE SEPARATE FORMS FOR EACH CHILD))

Full name:

Age/date of birth:

Gender:

Ethnicity:

Parent or carer name(s):

Address:

Phone numbers:

Child's relationship with the Company:

YOUR DETAILS

Full name:

Position in Company:

Address:

Phone numbers:

PROVIDE THE DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT OR CONCERNS THAT YOU HAVE, INCLUDING DATES, TIME AND VENUE: DETAIL EXACTLY WHAT WAS SAID, IF YOUR CONCERNS ARE THE RESULT OF A CHILD SPEAKING TO YOU, INCLUDE DATE, TIME AND VENUE

HAVE YOU SPOKEN TO THE PARENTS? Yes / No

If yes, provide details of what was said:

HAVE YOU SPOKEN TO THE CHILD? Yes / No

If yes, provide details of what was said:

HAVE YOU SPOKEN TO THE PERSON THE ALLEGATIONS ARE BEING MADE AGAINST?

Yes / No

If yes, provide details of what was said:

PROVIDE DETAILS OF FURTHER ACTION TAKEN TO DATE:

HAVE YOU INFORMED THE STATUTORY AGENCIES?

Name of person you spoke to: Incident Number:

Police Yes / No _____

Children's Social Care Yes / No _____

PROVIDE THE NAME OF THE PERSON YOU HAVE SPOKEN TO AND THEIR CONTACT DETAILS:

WERE THERE ANY WITNESSES TO THE INCIDENT OR CAUSE FOR CONCERN? Yes / No

If yes, provide their name, role, relationship (if any) to the child or others involved and contact details.

Appendix 2

What is Child Abuse (Overview)

It is generally acknowledged that there are 4 types of abuse:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect

It can be mild, serious or fatal, inflicted or knowingly not prevented, by any person having care of that child – parents, siblings, other relatives, friends, teachers, coaches or by someone whom is not known to the child.

Physical Abuse

This is just what the term implies – hurting or injuring a child e.g. by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning or biting them. In sport this may be if the nature and intensity of training is inappropriate for the capacity of the performer or where drugs are tolerated.

Bullying is linked. This could be carried out by an adult – the parent who pushes too hard, the coach who adopts a win at all costs philosophy or adult paddlers who attempt to assert unacceptable behaviour on younger paddlers to intimidate, to make them unwelcome, etc. Bullying can also occur between younger people.

Sexual Abuse

Where adults to meet their own sexual needs use young people. It can range from sexually suggestive comments to full intercourse and includes use of pornographic material.

Emotional Abuse

This occurs when a child is not given love, help and encouragement and is constantly derided or ridiculed, e.g. racial or sexual remarks.

Neglect

Failing to meet children's basic needs such as food, warmth, adequate clothing, medical attention or constantly leaving them on their own. **It could also mean failing to ensure that they are safe or exposing them to harm or injury**

Indications of Child Abuse

There are physical and behavioural signs that might raise your concern about the welfare or safety of a child. They are only indicators – NOT CONFIRMATION.

Some examples are:

Where the child

- Says that he or she is being abused, or another person says that they believe (or actually know) that abuse is occurring.
- Has an injury for which an explanation is inconsistent.
- Displays behaviour changes, either over time or quite suddenly, becoming aggressive, withdrawn or unhappy.

- Appears not to trust adults e.g. parent or coach with whom she / he would be expected to have, or once had, a close relationship.
- Shows inappropriate sexual awareness for his / her age and sometimes behaves in a sexually explicit way.
- Becomes increasingly neglected—looking in appearance, or loses or puts on weight for no apparent reason.

Physically disabled and children with learning difficulties are particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have added difficulties in communicating what is happening to them.

If you have concerns or suspicions...

Suspicion of abuse may be aroused in a variety of ways – observations of behaviour, mood changes or physical marks or signs of discomfort, or an awareness of comments made by others, directly or indirectly.

Please remember that it is not your responsibility to decide whether a child is being abused but the Company is asking you to fulfil your moral requirements and act on your own concerns. Make a detailed note of what you've seen or heard and don't delay in passing on the information.

Appendix 4

Guidelines for use of Photographic and Filming Equipment

The key concerns regarding the use of images of children/young people relate to:

- The possible identification of children when a photograph is accompanied by personal information.
- The inappropriate use, adaptation or copying of images for use on child pornography or illegal website.
- The taking of inappropriate photographs or recorded images of children
- Ensure parents/guardian/young person have granted their consent for the taking and publication of photographic images.
- All children featured in recordings must be appropriately dressed with outer clothing garments covering torso from at least the bottom of their neck to their thighs (i.e. a minimum of vest/shirt and shorts).
- The photograph or recording should focus on the activity rather than a particular young person and personal details, which might make the young person vulnerable, such as their exact address, should not be revealed.
- You should not use any images of a child or young persons if you are aware that they are the subject of any court order or who has denied you their consent.
- Parents and spectators taking photographs/recordings should be prepared to identify themselves if requested and state their purpose for photography/filming.

Guidelines for Publishing Photographic/Recorded Images

- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the child by using their first name only. Personal details of children such as an email address, home address and telephone numbers should never be revealed on a website or in print.
- Think about the level of consideration that you give to the use of images in all publications, for example the process used in choosing photographs for a publicity brochure for the Company. Apply an increased level of consideration to the images of children used on websites

Ben Girdwood
Centre Manager
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