

North York Moors National Park Authority

(Updated October 2018)



SUMMARY of KEY PRINCIPLES of the

Safeguarding Policy for the Protection of Children and Adults at Risk

1. Policy Statement on Safeguarding

The Authority recognises that all children, young people and adults at risk have a right to protection from abuse and it takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard their welfare. The Authority is also aware that staff and team members working with, or in the vicinity of young people, are vulnerable to having allegations of abusive, illegal or improper conduct made against them.

Those staff and team members who do not work directly with children and adults at risk are required to read this summary of the key principles of the policy. The full policy is available on the Authority's intranet and Better Impact (My Volunteering) systems.

Every individual has a responsibility for understanding our policy and implementing our safeguarding approach and to inform the NPA's designated Safeguarding Officer (SO) Heather McNiff or one of the two deputy SOs Jonathan Green or Ian Nicholls of concerns relating to safeguarding children.

If an individual cannot contact the SO or one of their deputies within the NPA they should discuss their concerns with the Director of Park Services, or in their absence another Director or the Chief Executive Officer, and contact the appropriate Safeguarding Children Board or the police directly with the agreement of the Director or CEO.

Definitions

For the purposes of this document:

- Any person(s) under the age of 18 are referred to as 'child' or 'children'. The fact that a child had reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, HM Government).
- The policies in this document also apply for adults at risk. Where 'child' or 'children' is used take this to mean adults at risk as well.
- An "Adult at Risk" is defined as any person aged 18 years and over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental health issues, learning or physical disability, sensory impairment, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.
- 'Teacher' means the responsible adult in charge of a group of children or adults at risk.
- 'Staff' refers to any person employed by the National Park Authority.
- 'Team member' refers to any adult who is commissioned or contracted to work with or on behalf of, children or adults at risk, in either a paid or unpaid capacity, including volunteers by the NPA.
- NPA Assistant Leader refers to a team member without responsibility for leading activities for young people but who is working towards the training requirements as set out in 4.1.

- Loco parentis refers to the legal responsibilities of a person to take on some of the functions and responsibilities of a parent. This will occur when there are no accompanying parents/guardians or other responsible adults (e.g. teachers, grandparents, child minder, baby sitter) and where parental or individual consent forms have been signed.

2. **Definitions of Abuse**

2.1 **What is Abuse and Neglect?**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or a child or children. Types of abuse include:

Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation, Neglect, Extremism

3. **General Guidelines for Working with Children and Adults at Risk**

3.1 **Duty of Care**

Staff and team members have a duty to keep children with whom they come into contact safe and to protect them from harm. They should:

- Always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests.
- Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.
- Apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity.

3.2 **Exercising Professional Judgement**

There could be circumstances where staff and team members have to make decisions or take actions regarding a child where no guidance exists. In these circumstances:

- Act with integrity and maturity and make reasonable judgements to safeguard the welfare of the child at all times.
- Record and discuss the situation and your actions with your line manager or the SO or DSOs.

3.4 **Confidentiality**

The storing and processing of personal information is governed by the Data Protection Act 2018. Staff may have access to confidential information about children which must remain confidential at all times. Records should only be shared with those who have legitimate professional need to see them.

3.5 **Dress and Appearance**

When engaged in professional activity staff and team members should be aware that inappropriate or offensive dress could render them vulnerable to criticism or

allegation. Staff and team members should wear clothing that is appropriate to their role and which:

- Promotes a positive and professional image.
- May not be viewed as offensive, revealing, sexually provocative or discriminatory.
- Is absent of any contentious slogans or images.
- Is culturally sensitive.
- Is identifiable with a name badge and/or National Park uniform.

3.7 Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

Gifts should be treated in accordance with the Authority's Code of Conduct and must always be declared. Rewards/gifts should not be given to any individual child, unless it is associated with an accepted part of the Authority's work for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements (for example, a prize given as part of a competition / activity). Staff and Team members should exercise care when selecting children and/or young people for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Methods and criteria for selection should always be transparent, subject to scrutiny and agreed by more than one member of staff and team members.

3.8 Communication with Children (Including use of Technology)

Communication between children and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, digital cameras, videos, and social media including emails, apps, web-cams, websites and blogs. Staff and team members should not share any personal information with a child. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny. If children locate staff or team members' personal contact details e.g. e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, details of web based identities and attempt to contact or correspond with that staff or team member the adult should not respond and must report the matter to their manager. The child should be firmly and politely informed that this is not acceptable. Facebook – the NPA has closed Facebook pages for the following children's clubs; Explorer Club, Explorer Volunteers and YAC. The Young Rangers page is open but only members may post on it. The administrators for these pages must be DBS checked and have undertaken the Basic Online Awareness of Child Protection every 2 years.

3.9 Social Contact

- Do not seek to establish social contact with children for the purpose of pursuing, securing or strengthening a friendship or relationship.
- If social contact occurs coincidentally, exercise professional judgement and be aware that any conduct could be misconstrued.
- Do not give your personal details such as phone number, address or e mail address to children unless the need to do so is agreed with your line manager.
- Report and record any situation which you feel might compromise the Authority or your own professional standing.

3.11 Sexual Contact

Staff and team members should be aware that in England and Wales it is an offence to have sexual relations with a person under the age of 16. It is also an offence for

any adult who holds a position of trust in relation to a person under 18 to engage in sexual activity with that person.

- Do not pursue sexual relationships with children either in or outside of the working environment.
- Avoid any form of communication with a child that could be misinterpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative.

Staff and team members should be aware that it is not uncommon for young people to be strongly attracted to a staff or team members and / or to develop infatuations. Such circumstances have the potential for actions to be misinterpreted and allegations to be made against the staff or team members.

- Report to your line manager or director at the earliest opportunity any indication (verbal, written or physical) that suggests an infatuation.
- Always acknowledge and maintain professional boundaries.

3.13 **One to One Situations**

One to one situations involving a staff or a team member and a child can provide an opportunity for abuse and for allegations to be made. These situations should be avoided wherever possible. Where one to one situations are unavoidable, the NPA will:

- **Ensure that children under the age of 18 are only taken off site by staff and team members who have been DBS checked;**

In one to one situations staff and team members should consider the following:

In an office environment:

- Ensure that there is visual access and/or leave the door open.
- Avoid having 'meeting in progress' or equivalent signs on the door.
- Try to ensure that other staff and team members are close by.

3.15 **Photographs/Other Images of Children**

The NPA has produced a consent form that can be sent to schools, group leaders and parents to request permission to take photos / videos of children. All images of children and details regarding consent must be stored securely, in an accepted NPA filing or data management system. Photographs or video of children must not be taken on staff or team members' personally owned equipment e.g. mobile phones, cameras, tablets. Staff and team members should avoid taking photos / video of a child in a one to one situation.

8 **Procedure Following Suspicion or Allegations of Abuse**

- 8.1 Suspicious or allegations of abuse may arise from a number of sources e.g. an observation, a comment, a complaint or a report from a child, a parent, a member of staff or another adult. The suspicion or allegation may be connected to the NPA activity in which the child is participating or it may be to do with something completely separate to NPA business. There may be a number of reasons why a child displays concerning behaviour or their behaviour changes. It is advisable to discuss concerns with parents, carers or the school (if it is a school group) in the first instance, except where this may place a child at increased risk.

8.2 What to Do If You Suspect Abuse, If You Suspect That a Child:

- Has suffered significant harm and/or;
- Is likely to suffer significant harm and/or;
- Has developmental and welfare needs which are likely only to be met through provision of family support services (with agreement of the child's parent).

Report the incident as soon as possible to your line manager and the SO or Deputy SO's. See named officers at the beginning of this document.

If it is an emergency and none of the SOs can be contacted, then discuss your concerns with a Director or the CEO and contact the appropriate SCB or the police directly, with the agreement of the Director or CEO, using the contacts given below.

It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies. If you feel that the NYMNPA has not responded appropriately to your concerns, or if the SO does not feel confident that the school/group leader/parent/carer will deal with the matter appropriately, or if the school/group leader/parent/carer cannot be contacted, they should pass on the information to statutory authorities directly – see contacts below.

8.3 What to Do if a Child has Talked to you about Abuse:

- Listen carefully to the child. **Do Not** directly question the child.
- Give the child time and attention.
- Allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- Whenever possible use the NPAs disclosure form to make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child's presentation as well as what was said by the child and yourself. Disclosure forms are available from the SO and DSOs and will be kept secure in a password protected electronic folder.
- Use the child's words where possible.
- Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
- Reassure the child that: you are glad they have told you, they have done nothing wrong, what you are going to do next.
- Explain that you will need to get help to keep the child safe.
- Report your discussion as soon as possible to your line manager and SO or DSO.
- The SO must then report the concern to the appropriate Safeguarding Children's Board (SCB) and follow any advice given. On a rare occasion it might be necessary to take immediate action to contact the appropriate SCB and/or the police to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the child so that they do not return home to a potentially abusive situation.

Children should not be required to provide multiple accounts of events within the organisation

8.5 Observations/Allegations Against Staff or Team Members

The SO will consult with the Head of Corporate Services, or in his/her absence the Director of Park Services, and consider whether a child or children may have suffered or be at risk of harm and / or if a criminal act may have been committed or if staff, team member behaviour may warrant investigation under disciplinary or competency procedures.

If yes, the SO and Head of Corporate Services (or in his/her absence the Director of Park Services) will make an immediate assessment of whether it is safe for the staff or team member to continue their duties. They will then follow NPA staff disciplinary procedures and report the matter to the LADO within one working day using the LADO Referral Form. The relevant Director should be made aware of the situation at the earliest opportunity and any possible evidence e.g. mobile phone/computer, should be preserved and secured.

Completed LADO Referral Forms should be emailed using secure mail (e.g. gcsx, pnn, cjsm, etc.) to safeguardingunit@northyorks.gcsx.gov.uk. **If we do not have secure email then contact 01609 532477 within office hours.** Where there is an immediate threat to a child contact the Police or the contact the Emergency Duty Team (if outside office hours) on 01609 534527. **To contact the Duty LADO call 01609 532477.**

8.7 Confidentiality

Information regarding child protection issues is confidential and should not be discussed or passed on to anyone other than the appropriate staff or professionals. Investigation of allegations is likely to be undertaken by the relevant LEA and / or statutory authorities and / or police and the NPA's response should be conducted so as not to undermine those investigations.

9. Lost and Found Children

If a child is reported lost

- Remain calm. Get as much information from the parents/guardians as possible; at the least, name, address, description, colour of clothes, where the child was last seen and a photo if they have one.
- Reassure the parents and ask them to stay put at the lost child point (if there are two people, one could accompany you on the search).
- Explain that you know the area well and can organise a systematic search. Call on colleagues to help search.
- Ask the parents what they would have expected the child to do on their own (e.g. phone you, go to the car or shop).
- Should the search prove unsuccessful after no longer than 30 minutes – call the police.
- Write up detailed notes of what happened, when and who was involved immediately. Tell your line manager about the incident. If the police were called, you must also inform your local safeguarding Adviser or the SO or a DSO.

If you find a lost child

- Get down to the child's height. Show the youngster your name badge and tell them you work there. Ask them their name or check a jacket for a nametag.
- Carry out a brief search of the immediate area with the child. Usually 'lost' children are near their family.
- Take the child to the lost child point if the site has one or somewhere obvious and well populated. Notify other staff members that you have found them, stay with them in an open area and calming words. Avoid 1:1 situations.
- Confirm the identity of anyone claiming the child and make sure the child can identify them. Do not release the child to anyone under 16. If in doubt call the police.
- If the child is not collected or claimed within 30 minutes, inform the police giving them as much detail as possible.

- Write up detailed notes of what happened, when and who was involved immediately and tell your line manager about the incident. If the police were called you must inform the SO or DSO.

10. **Contacts For Local Safeguarding Boards**

North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board

www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk

Tel: 01609 780780 Mon- Fri 8.00am to 5.30pm, Sat 9am to 5pm
Emergency Duty Team (out of above hours) 01609 780780

For allegations against staff or team members contact LADO: Emergency Duty Team (if outside office hours) on 01609 534527.

To contact the Duty LADO call 01609 532477.

Redcar & Cleveland Safeguarding Children Board

Tel: (01642) 771500

Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team - Tel: (08702) 402994

[https://www.redcar-](https://www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/SafeguardingChildrenBoard/ChildrenAndYoungPeople/Pages/default.aspx)

[cleveland.gov.uk/SafeguardingChildrenBoard/ChildrenAndYoungPeople/Pages/default.aspx](https://www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/SafeguardingChildrenBoard/ChildrenAndYoungPeople/Pages/default.aspx) firstcontact@redcar-cleveland.gcsx.gov.uk

Middlesbrough Safeguarding Children Board

<http://www.teescpp.org.uk/contact-middlesbrough-council>

Tel: 01642 726004

Monday to Thursday 8.30 am – 5.00 pm, Friday 8.30 am – 4.30 pm

Out of hours emergency duty team: 08702 402994

Email firstcontact@middlesbrough.gcsx.gov.uk

Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Board

Tel: (01642) 130080

Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team – Tel: (01642) 524552

<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/stockton-on-tees-local-safeguarding-children-board-slscb/>

Guidance prepared by NYMNPA with assistance from the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board.

Policy reviewed September 2018. Next review September 2019.

Full policy available upon request from the Education Service please email education@northyorkmoors.org.uk or telephone 01439 772700