



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Policy Statement

WPCC recognises that all children, young people and adults have a right to protection from abuse and it takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard their welfare. WPCC is also aware that staff and team members working with or in the vicinity of young people and vulnerable adults are themselves vulnerable to accusations of abusive, illegal or improper conduct.

2. Definitions

A child is defined as any person under the age of 18.

A vulnerable adult is defined as any person aged over 18 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 may be unable to protect him/herself from harm or exploitation.

Guardian is defined as any person who has responsibility for the care and well-being of a child or vulnerable adult, be that a family member, teacher, care worker or other.

Staff, where used in this policy, refers to staff and volunteers (including trustees) working on behalf of WPCC.

3. Guidelines for Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults

3.1 Duty of Care

Staff have a duty to keep children and vulnerable adults 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

3.2 Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

Gifts must not be given to any child or vulnerable adult by a member of staff unless as an accepted part of WPCCC's work (e.g. as a prize in a competition or event).

3.3 Communication (including use of technology)

Communication with children or vulnerable adults must take place within clear boundaries. Staff must limit the sharing of personal information with, or request any personal information from, a child or vulnerable adult to what is reasonably necessary under the circumstances (e.g., name). All communications must be transparent and open to scrutiny. Communications with children or vulnerable adults must always be via their guardians.

In addition:

- Do not seek to establish social contact with a child or vulnerable adult.
- If social contact occurs coincidentally, exercise professional judgement and be aware that contact could be misconstrued.
- Do not give your personal contact details (e.g., phone number, address, email address, social media account details) to a child or vulnerable adult.

3.4 One to One Situations

One to one situations involving a staff and a child or vulnerable adult can provide an opportunity for abuse and for allegations to be made. These situations should be avoided wherever possible. For example:

- Work wherever possible in an open environment and avoid contact in closed spaces where you are not overlooked;
- Do not administer first aid to a child/vulnerable adult unless absolutely necessary and always ensure that a member of staff or a member of the public is present if you do administer first aid;
- If in an emergency you need to make physical contact with a child/vulnerable adult, always explain what you are going to do before you do it and seek their consent;
- Do not invite children/vulnerable adults into the yard or any other premises without an accompanying responsible adult;
- Ensure that you work in pairs when school groups visit and that students are adequately supervised by their own teachers at all times;
- When dealing alone with e.g., a lost child, wherever possible, ask a member of the public to remain with you until a colleague can join you. If available, body worn cameras should be used to provide a record of interactions.

3.5 Sexual Contact

Staff 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.
- Never engage in any rough, physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay with any child/vulnerable adult (or other member of the public).
- Never make any sexually suggestive or comments of a personal nature to a child/vulnerable adult, even in jest.

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.

3.6 Exercising Professional Judgement

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

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

3.7. External Organisations using the Commons

All organisations using the Commons under licence (or other formal agreement with WPCC) and working with children or vulnerable adults will be asked to provide WPCC with a copy of their Safeguarding Policy. WPCC will review these policies to ensure that they are appropriate. These reviews will be carried out by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If staff have safeguarding concerns about the activities of any external users of the Commons, these should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

External organisations must make WPCC aware of any safeguarding incidents that occur during their use of the Commons.

The requirement to provide a copy of an appropriate safeguarding policy and to report any safeguarding incidents will be included in any new licences issued by WPCC for use of the Commons.

3.8 Reporting

- If you witness any behaviour involving a child/vulnerable adult which causes you concern, report this immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or, in their absence, the Chief Executive.
- If you are unavoidably involved in any situation where you feel there was potential for your behaviour may have been misconstrued or misinterpreted, report this immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or in their absence, the Chief Executive.
- Any allegation made by a child/vulnerable adult must be reported immediately to the to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Chief Executive. All allegations relating to safeguarding must be investigated promptly and thoroughly.
- Where there is evidence of criminal activity, this must be reported to the police immediately. Responsibility for reporting lies with the Chief Executive.
- Any serious safeguarding incident on the Commons, must be reported immediately to the Charity Commission. Responsibility for reporting lies with the Chief Executive.

4. Responsibilities

A Designated Safeguarding Lead will be appointed. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be the first point of contact for all matters relating to safeguarding on the Commons. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will have completed Level 3: Safeguarding Children and Level 3: Safeguarding Adults training.

Overall responsibility for safeguarding lies with the Board of Conservators.

5. Review

This policy should be reviewed every three years, or in the event of a safeguarding incident. Responsibility for review lies with the Chief Executive.

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