

## **Reach Outdoors Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy**

### **Child and vulnerable groups Protection**

The policies and guidelines referenced within this document are those of Reach Outdoors Ltd. The principles of both the policy and the Guidance documents are based on our moral and ethical duty to ensure children and vulnerable groups can enjoy our activities in a safe environment. This document reflects the current best practice as outlined by the National Governing Bodies to which Reach Outdoors adhere to and highlights the latest version of [Keeping Children Safe in Education - Part 1](#)

#### **1- Duty of Care**

Reach Outdoors is committed to ensuring that all those taking part in activities are able to do so protected and kept safe from harm while they are with instructors, volunteers and / or staff. This is particularly true in respect of children and vulnerable groups.

We all have a duty with respect to Safeguarding and Protecting Children to ensure children can participate and enjoy our activities with the highest possible standards of care. These standards apply also to vulnerable groups. All instructors should have a clear understanding of operating within an appropriate code of ethics, aware of what their 'duty of care' is and how this relates to their position in providing activities and being responsible for others.

As the organisers of activity, there is a possibility 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 or the reputation of the industry and Reach Outdoors itself.

A good definition of 'duty of care' is:

"The duty which rests upon an individual or organisation to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of any person involved in any activity for which that individual or organisation is responsible"

In an activity, 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 activity have a duty to their neighbours, in organised activity 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. Trainers, coaches, referees, officials or administrators should all take 'reasonable' steps to safeguard those directly taking part in activities and at any time they may be deemed responsible for those in their charge - in vehicles, during journey's to and from the activity, during events, team training events and camps etc.

The content of this document provides specific information in respect of child protection and the protection of vulnerable groups in order that everyone can appreciate their 'duty of care' with regard to these issues, risk assess their positions and support and advise those at risk.

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#### **2- Vulnerable Group Definition**

“A person who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation”.

We believe that everyone has a moral responsibility and therefore a part to play in looking after the children and vulnerable groups with whom we are working.

These child protection procedures stem from the following principles:

the child's welfare is paramount.

anyone under the age of 18 is classed as a child.

All children, regardless of age, any disability they have, gender, racial origin, religious belief and sexual identity and/or social/economic status have a right to be protected from abuse.

To respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of young people in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Instructors need to be provided with advice to raise awareness of best practice and guidance and support should they become involved in an abuse situation.

### **3- Good Practice Guidelines**

By following these guidelines you will help to protect both the children/vulnerable groups in our sport and our coaches/helpers from wrongful allegations.

Avoid situations where you are alone with one child/vulnerable person wherever possible. Reach Outdoors acknowledges that occasionally there may be no alternative, for example, where a child/vulnerable person has a specific 1-2-1 education provision. In such circumstances the Reach Outdoors Lone Working Policy should be adhered to.

If any form of physical support is required ask the individuals permission, explain what you are doing and why to both the child/vulnerable person and their parents/carers.

Where possible ask parents/carers to be responsible for children/vulnerable groups in changing rooms. Always ensure that whoever supervises young people work in pairs.

Where there are mixed teams/groups away from home, they should always be accompanied by an adult male and female instructor/helper.

Do not allow physically rough or sexually provocative games, or inappropriate talking or touching.

If it is necessary to do things of a personal nature for a child/vulnerable adult, make sure you have another adult accompanying you. Get the consent of the parent/carer and if possible the child/vulnerable person. Let them know what you are doing and why.

Ensure that any claims of abuse by a child/vulnerable person are taken seriously and that it is dealt with by people who know what to do.

Ensure that the nature and intensity of training does not exceed the capacity of a child's/vulnerable person's immature growing body and ability.

Follow the recognised guidelines for photography and video.

What if you accidentally hurt a child? - You should report such an incident immediately using the standard incident reporting procedures and inform a senior member of Reach Outdoors. You should also inform the child's parents/carers, preferably in person.

Is touching OK? If a coaching technique would benefit from physical contact or support then first asks the individuals permission (e.g. would you mind if I held your shoulders to show you what I mean?) It is useful to take time to explain why and how this is used to the paddler and their parent or carer. Touching can be OK and appropriate as long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing or for the wrong reason.

#### **4- Definitions of abuse**

It's generally acknowledged that there are four main types of abuse - Physical, Sexual, Emotional and Neglect.

##### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is just what the term implies - hurting or injuring a child/vulnerable person e.g. by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning or biting them. In sport this might result if the nature or intensity of training is inappropriate for the capacity of the performer or where drugs are tolerated or advocated. Bullying is likely to come into this category - see below.

##### **Sexual Abuse**

Where young people/ vulnerable groups are used by adults to meet their own sexual needs. It could range from sexually suggestive comments to full intercourse and includes the use of pornographic material.

##### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse occurs when a child/vulnerable person is not given love, help and encouragement and is constantly derided or ridiculed e.g. racial or sexual remarks.

It can also occur if a child/vulnerable person is over protected. Abuse can occur where a parent or coach has unrealistic expectations over what a child/vulnerable person can achieve.

##### **Neglect**

Failing to meet children'/vulnerable groups' basic needs such as food, warmth, adequate clothing, and medical attention or constantly leaving them alone. It could also mean failing to ensure they are safe or exposing them to harm or injury.

##### **Bullying**

A bully can be an adult - the parent/carer who pushes too hard, the coach who adopts a win-at-all-costs philosophy or adults who attempt to assert unacceptable behaviour on young people to make them unwelcome. Bullying can also occur between young people.

#### **Indications of Abuse**

There are physical and behavioural signs that might raise your concern about the welfare or safety of a child/vulnerable person. They are only indicators – not confirmation. Some examples are: Where the child(s) /vulnerable person(s)

Say that she or he is being abused, or another person says they believe (or actually know) that abuse is occurring.

Has an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.

Behaviour changes, either over time or quite suddenly, becoming aggressive, withdrawn or unhappy.

Appears not to trust adults, e.g. a 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.

Bear in mind that physically disabled children, children with learning difficulties and vulnerable groups are particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have added difficulties in communicating what is happening to them.

**If you have concerns about the welfare of a child/vulnerable adult** Please remember the golden rule –

**It is not your responsibility to decide whether a child / vulnerable adult is being abused - but it is your responsibility to pass the information on to the appropriate person.**

Make a detailed note of what you have seen or heard but do not delay passing on the information.

See separate Reach Outdoors policies: Child Sexual Exploitation; FGM; Peer on Peer Abuse.

## **5- Dealing with Disclosures or Discovery of Abuse**

Any person working for Reach Outdoors whether in a paid or voluntary position that is aware of or suspects harm to a child or vulnerable person should inform the appointed Child Protection Officer Richard Hanbury or another senior member of staff immediately.

The nominated person responsible for child protection at Reach Outdoors can:

- Talk to the child's parents/carers about the concerns if there may be an obvious explanation such as a bereavement or pressure from their studies/exams.
- If urgent advice is needed, contact the MASH or if not satisfied with the response from MASH then escalate to the NSPCC Child Protection 24 hours Help Line. If necessary contact your local Social Services Department or in an emergency the Police.
- Contact Torbay Children's Service and/or MASH  
[MASH@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:MASH@torbay.gov.uk) or phone [01803 208100](tel:01803208100) for young people that reside in Torbay LA or NSPCC Child Protection 24 hours Help Line for young people that reside outside of Torbay LA

### **Line of Communication**

#### **A member of staff has a concern about a child's welfare**

Staff should always be alert to signs of abuse and question unusual behaviour.

#### **The child is judged to be in real and immediate danger:**

- Dial 999 and ask for Police assistance.

**Discuss concerns with the Designated/Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DSL/DDSL).**

- The DSL at Reach Outdoors is Richard Hanbury. The DDSL is Rachel Mayhew-Edwards
- If the matter involves the DSL, it should be brought to the attention of Ashley Hone. (*Director Operations*)
- A written record of the concern will be kept in the Child Protection section of the child's file.
- A member of staff should contact Children's Social Care directly only in exceptional circumstances and are asked to advise the DSL or Deputy DSL that they have done so.

**Where a young person alleges or appears to be the victim of abuse or neglect**

- Listen to the child. Take their allegations seriously.
- Reassure the child that you will take action to keep them safe
- Do not promise to keep secrets.
- Make a written record of what the child tells you.
- Explain to the child what you are going to do next.
- Do not question the child further or attempt to question the alleged abuser.

**There is not a safeguarding concern:**

- The DSL will carefully consider if the child/family has any further needs which ought to be addressed.
- The DSL will consult with family and relevant agencies and undertake a Targeted Help referral if required.
- The member of staff who made the referral will be informed of the outcome.

**There is a safeguarding concern: the matter should be referred to Children's Social Care**

- During Office Hours: contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 01803 208100
- Out of Hours: contact the Emergency Duty Team on 0300 456 4876
- Non emergency police :101

**Children's Social Care will:**

- Acknowledge receipt of the referral
- Decide (within 24 hours) on next steps
- Inform the referrer of the course of action

### **Immediate risk or danger**

If an individual is at immediate risk, or in situations where there is forensic evidence, then the police and, if appropriate, other emergency services must be contacted immediately. In such cases the emergency services should be called before informing the DSL.

### **If a child/vulnerable person makes a disclosure**

- The child's welfare and interests must be the paramount consideration at all times.
- **Stay calm** and reassure the child that they have done the right thing in talking to you.
- **Listen carefully** and actively to the child. At this stage there is no necessity to ask questions. Let the child guide the pace.
- **Do not show shock** - this could discourage the child from talking
- **Do not investigate** - If you need to clarify ask open questions (what, when, who, how, where, do you want to tell me anything else? etc.) Avoid the question 'why?'
- **Never promise confidentiality** - You have a duty to ensure the information is passed on to DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) who may pass it on to other agencies such as Torbay Children's Service and MASH in order to keep the child safe. Make sure the child understands what will happen next with their information.
- **Record** – make detailed notes (as soon as possible) of exactly what the child has told you or what you have observed. Do not speculate or try to interpretate the child's account as this could lead to inadmissible evidence. Ensure records include the date, time, place of disclosure, behaviour and words used by the child.
- If you have seen bruising or an injury, use a body map to record details. Ensure that the map is dated and attached to information relating to the child's comments about the injury.
- **Report** – pass on the information to the DSL as soon as possible. Keep the disclosure confidential to other people – the DSL will decide who to pass this information on to on a 'need to know' basis.

The DSL should discuss their concerns, in full, with all parents/carers and then seek their consent for a MASH contact. You should not seek consent if you believe that to do so would increase the risk of harm to the child.

- **Support** - ensure you have support for yourself in managing the information that you have received.

NOTE: Disclosures relating to allegations against colleagues and members of staff should be treated in the same way. If the DSL is involved pass on the disclosure on to the deputy DSL (Rachel Mayhew-Edwards), Ashley Hone (Director Operations) or escalate to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer).

### **In Summary:**

1. Stay calm and listen
2. Go slowly
3. Reassure them that they have not done anything wrong
4. Be supportive
5. Gather essential facts

6. 6. Tell what will happen next
7. 7. Make notes
8. 8. Report

## **6 Whistle Blowing**

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues, poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the organisations safeguarding arrangements. If it becomes necessary to consult outside the school, they should speak in the first instance, to the LADO following the (Reach Outdoors Whistleblowing Policy).

The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

## **7 Safer Recruitment / Safer Staff**

**Reach Outdoors will carry out the following to ensure that the young/vulnerable groups it works with are protected:**

- screening of all employees and volunteers (see below DBS and Safer Recruitment Policy)
- induction procedures for all staff whether employed, voluntary or freelance
- establishing clear roles and a staff code of conduct (see Code of Conduct Policy)
- regular checks or supervision of helpers
- information to clients about rules / operating procedures
- systems for feedback and support
- support training of helpers and instructors in child protection/vulnerable group issues
- provide a nominated person for child protection (Richard Hanbury), the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## **8 - DBS**

All members of staff that have contact with the clients of Reach Outdoors must have a Criminals Record Bureau Disclosure (soon to be Disclosure and Barring service check)

Employees of Reach Outdoors must have DBS disclosures conducted prior to commencing employment. Volunteers for Reach Outdoors must have DBS disclosures prior to commencing their placement. Freelance instructors must produce a valid (within 36 months) DBS disclosure to Reach Outdoors prior to commencing work with Reach Outdoors, or provide a link to their update service profile. A DBS disclosure should be updated after 36 months from date of issue.

## **9 - Lone Working Policy**

Lone Workers, as defined by the Health and Safety Executive, are, “those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision.”

### **Examples of Lone Working at Reach Outdoors:**

1. Staff that are required to work alone for all or most of the time, such as staff supervising the Parkfield Climbing wall or working with 1:1 Alternative Provision students
2. Staff staying on to finish urgent work after others have left, or those who regularly work late or start early, before anyone else gets into the building.
3. Staff who are key-holders or who are left to turn out the lights and lock up the premises after everyone else has gone home.
5. Staff that work at home.

### **Staff Responsibilities:**

#### **Lone working staff must:**

- Be aware and follow all policies or procedures.
- Always plan ahead.
- Be fully aware of the risks when working alone.
- Not put themselves in potential danger.
- Ensure that they have made themselves aware of the nearest place of safety.
- Be aware of the on-site security procedures.
- Ensure that access is available to radios, mobile phones or some form of personal communication.
- Ensure that the site is secure (all external gates and doors locked and closed).
- Use the phone-in system to confirm safety.
- When working alone in the centre make sure that you have your mobile telephone with you at all times.

### **Manager Duties:**

- Provide safe systems of work for all staff.
- Ensure that there are appropriate security systems in place to secure the Centre.
- Carry out personal risk assessments for all staff working alone.
- Carry out and regularly review risk assessments for lone working with any AP students.
- Identify any training needs and ensure these are met.
- Ensure that the staff members are suitable to be left working alone.
- Ensure premises and buildings are secure.
- Hazardous jobs (e.g. working at height, using power tools, hazardous or flammable liquids) not to be undertaken. This list is not exhaustive. All jobs should be assessed for dangers and a decision made as to their suitability for lone-working.

- Use phone-in system as detailed in Emergency Procedures and late back policy
- Mobile phones and contact for Centre staff and Duty manager to be kept on person at all times.
- Ensure all staff have left the building before locking and securing the premises.
- If cleaning or locking up alone, ensure that phone-in system above is used and tasks undertaken are not hazardous.

#### **Procedures for home visits by Instructional staff:**

- Consider paired working.
- Agree visit with Line Manager.
- Mobile phone to be kept with member of staff at all times.
- Leave timings, address and contact details with a named person in office.
- Phone office to confirm safe arrival.
- Use agreed password if situation is unsafe.
- Office to telephone police if safe arrival call is not made or staff does not arrive back at Centre at the expected time.
- Risk assess each visit and situation. Always leave the home and telephone the office with the agreed password if there is any risk. Phone 999 for serious risk.

#### **Remote Lone Working:**

Some activities may require staff to lone work in remote locations. Often (but not exclusively) these will be with Alternative Curriculum students as part of a 1-2-1 programme. Individual activity procedures should be considered to see if Lone working is permitted within the staffing ratio section. Lone working in remote locations does come with additional risks for both staff and client and so extra consideration should be given to the appropriateness of the location choice in relation to the ability, behaviour and comprehension of the client and the environmental conditions. The following points should be considered before a Senior Instructor or Director deploy staff to lone work in remote locations.

- What are the Communication options? Is there mobile phone signal, VHF signal, does a PLB need to be carried?
- Is there an appropriately qualified staff member available to assist if late back emergency procedures need to be implemented?
- Does the client have the comprehension to be able to make an emergency call with minimal training should the staff member become injured or ill?
- Does the client have the required behaviour to be able to follow simple safety instructions?
- Are the environmental conditions of the location going to place the client in danger should the staff member become injured or ill?

If following all of these considerations it is deemed appropriate to deploy, it is imperative that the late back procedure is strictly adhered to.

#### **10 – No Restraint Policy**

Reach Outdoors operates a no restraint policy. In the instance where a young person is referred to us that has highlighted risks associated with the need for physical restraint it will be deemed necessary for that young person to be assisted by an external support worker / parent or carer who is suitably trained in physical restraint.

If a young person is in immediate risk of harm to themselves or others then appropriate restraint would be acceptable to prevent this from occurring. The member of staff should always consider their own personal safety as a priority before intervening and the following steps should be considered:

1. Immediately remove any other participants from the area where the participant is displaying potentially dangerous/violent behaviour.
2. Contact the support worker/carer responsible for the young person to return to Reach Outdoors immediately.
3. Use all de-escalating/calming methods known to calm the participant. Allow the participant to leave the activity site if this is necessary to deescalate the behaviour, but ensure a member of staff follows at a safe distance and keep in mobile phone contact with office/the participant's carer/referrer.
4. If none of the above is successful and the situation is escalating call 999.
5. A post-incident review to be undertaken following any safety incidents with all parties concerned. This is to outline any future recommendations and revised risk assessment.

## **11 – Allegations against staff**

### **Introduction**

Reach Outdoors takes its responsibility of care for its clients seriously and fully endorses the principles and practice of Every Child Matters. We recognise that any possibility that a member of staff may have hurt a student must be investigated thoroughly, but in a way that does not prejudice either the student or the member of staff. Any investigation of an allegation of abuse against a member of staff must follow the objective, professional standards and routines described here.

### **Initial Allegation**

Any allegation of abuse by a staff member on a client must be reported to the Safeguarding Officer. Should the initial allegation first be made to any other member of staff then that member of staff must either request the person raising the allegation to report it to the Safeguarding Officer or if that is not possible to pass details of the allegation to the Safeguarding Officer immediately.

Should the allegation be made against the Safeguarding Officer then this should be brought to the attention of another Director or Centre Manager immediately.

Should the allegation meet any of the following criteria then the Safeguarding Officer should report the allegation to the Leader of the visiting group and if appropriate the local authority designated officer the same day that the allegation is received:

A member of staff (including a volunteer) involved directly in the delivery of Reach Outdoors Services to Children and Vulnerable Adults (VA) has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or VA, or may have harmed a child or VA;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or VA; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children and VA's.

### **Initial Consideration**

The Safeguarding Officer will discuss the matter with the Leader of the visiting group and the local authority designated officer and provide any further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The Safeguarding officer should not investigate the allegation at this stage. The discussion will also consider whether there is evidence or information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded.

If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child or VA is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the local authority designated officer will immediately refer to children's social care and ask for a strategy discussion in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children to be convened straight away. In those circumstances the strategy discussion should include the local authority designated officer and the principal.

If there is not cause to suspect that "significant harm" is an issue, but a criminal offence might have been committed, the local authority designated officer should immediately inform the police and convene a similar discussion to decide whether a police investigation is needed. That discussion will also involve the Company and any other agencies involved with the child.

Where it is deemed by the Safeguarding officer that there is sufficient cause for concern or that further investigation is needed the member of staff with which the allegation relates should be placed on amended duties (not working with Children or VA's). If deemed necessary the member of staff should be suspended from all duties pending the outcome of any investigation in order to protect all parties involved.

### **Action following initial consideration**

Where the initial consideration decides that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence it will be for the Safeguarding Officer to deal with it. In such cases, if the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the Safeguarding Officer should institute appropriate action within three working days. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, the hearing should be held within 15 working days.

Where further investigation is required to inform consideration of disciplinary action the Safeguarding Officer should discuss who will undertake that with the local authority designated officer.

The investigating officer should aim to provide a report to the Directors within 10 working days.

On receipt of the report of the disciplinary investigation, the Safeguarding Officer & Directors should consult the local authority designated officer, and decide whether a disciplinary hearing is needed within two working days. If a hearing is needed it should be held within 15 working days.

In any case in which children's social care has undertaken enquiries to determine whether the child or children are in need of protection, the Safeguarding Officer & Directors should take account of any relevant information obtained in the course of those enquiries when considering disciplinary action.

The local authority designated officer should continue to liaise with the Company to monitor progress of the case and provide advice or support when required or requested.

### **Case subject to police investigation**

If the police and/or CPS decide not to charge the individual with an offence, or decide to administer a caution, or the person is acquitted by a Court, the police should wherever possible aim to pass all information they have which may be relevant to a disciplinary case to the Safeguarding Officer within three working days of the decision. In those circumstances the Safeguarding Officer and the local authority designated officer should proceed as described above.

In any case in which children's social care has undertaken enquiries to determine whether the child or children are in need of protection, any information obtained in the course of those enquiries which is relevant to a disciplinary case should also be passed to the Company and the Directors should request this information.

## **12 - Anti bullying policy**

What is bullying?

"Bullying and harassment is behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated or offended. Harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010." <https://www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harassment>

Bullying can happen in the workplace in many ways physically, socially and mentally:

- . face-to-face or behind someone's back
- . email and letter
- . phone and text
- . social media and other internet resources
- . etc...

What is the Law?

Bullying itself is not against the law, but harassment is. This is when the unwanted behaviour is related to one of the following:

- . age
- . sex
- . disability
- . gender reassignment
- . marriage and civil partnership
- . pregnancy and maternity

- · race
- · religion or belief
- · sexual orientation <https://www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harassment>

#### Disciplinary procedure

Reach Outdoors is committed to providing a workplace where employees are treated with respect and without discrimination.

Any form of harassment or bullying will not be tolerated and will be dealt with under Reach Outdoors disciplinary procedure and could lead to suspension or dismissal.

Some bullying or harassment will constitute unlawful discrimination and could amount to a civil offence under the Equality Act 2010.

#### Responsibilities

Issues should be raised and dealt with promptly by employees and employers.

If the problem cannot be solved internally then the individual/s can make a formal complaint through the grievance/appeals procedure (section 7 disciplinary procedure).

If they are still being harassed, they can call the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) helpline for advice – 0300 123 1100 and could take legal action at employment tribunal.