Walesby Forest

Safeguarding

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This policy is presented to the Board of Trustees of Walesby Forest (Charity No. 1147348) for review and approval.

This policy and procedures have been agreed and adopted by the Walesby Forest (Charity No 1147348)

Policy on a Page

Safeguarding



What does the policy cover ?

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear framework for safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk across all Walesby Forest activities, services and operations.



Who are the key groups who need to be aware of this policy ?

Trustees, employees, apprentices, volunteers, contractors and other individuals working on behalf of Walesby Forest.

The principles within this policy also apply to anyone using Walesby Forest's facilities, including schools, youth organisations, public visitors, community groups, corporate clients and event organisers.



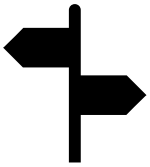
What does it say ?

The policy covers legislation, governance & responsibilities, recognising safeguarding concerns, procedures, reporting, recruitment, managing allegations and training.



What do I need to do ?

Be aware of the contents of this policy. Complete induction and ongoing training. Understand reporting procedures.



Further information.

Children Act 1989	www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026	www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2
Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006	www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47
Care Act 2014	www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23
Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015	www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6
Data Protection Act 2018	www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12
UK GDPR	ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources
Online Safety Act 2023	www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/50

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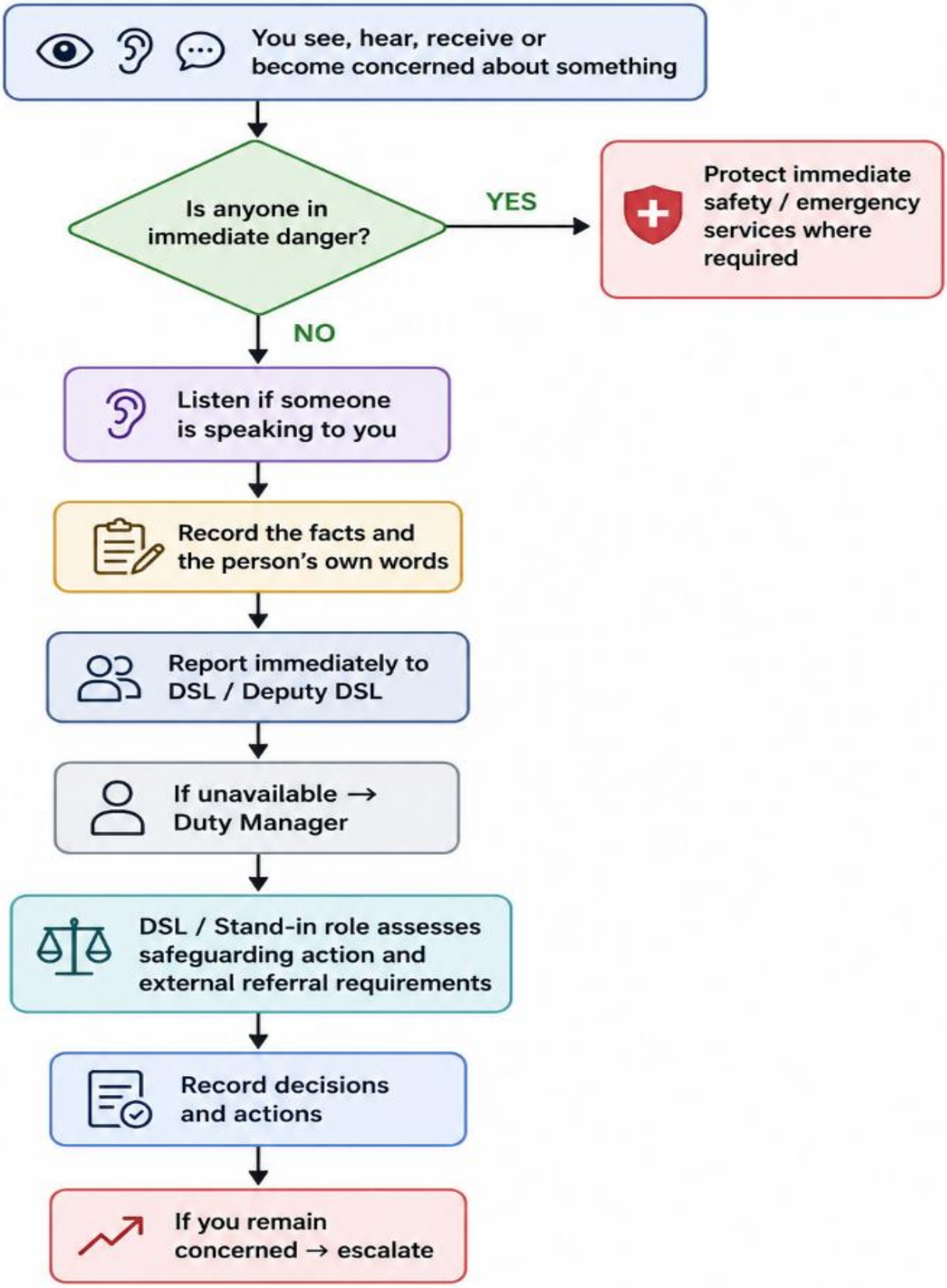
Safeguarding Reporting Flowchart



SECTION 1

WALESBY FOREST SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Introduction

Safeguarding Statement

Safeguarding is fundamental to everything Walesby Forest does.

We believe that every child, young person and adult at risk has the right to feel safe, respected, valued, heard and be treated with dignity and respect whilst visiting, working, volunteering or participating in activities at Walesby Forest.

Our commitment extends to every person who comes onto our site, whether they are attending as part of a school visit, residential stay, Scout or Guide group, youth organisation, Duke of Edinburgh Award, work experience placement, public camping holiday, family activity session, community event, festival or corporate event.

Safeguarding is not the responsibility of one individual or department. It is a shared responsibility which underpins every decision we make, every activity we deliver and every interaction we have.

Every member of staff, volunteer, trustee and contractor working on behalf of Walesby Forest is expected to understand their safeguarding responsibilities and to act immediately where they have concerns that a child, young person or adult at risk may be suffering, or is at risk of suffering, harm.

The welfare of children and adults at risk will always take precedence over organisational, operational or commercial considerations.

1.1 Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear framework for safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk across all Walesby Forest activities, services and operations.

This policy aims to:

- promote a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility;
- ensure that children, young people and adults at risk are protected from harm whilst visiting or engaging with Walesby Forest;
- clearly define safeguarding responsibilities for staff, volunteers, trustees, contractors and visiting organisations;
- establish clear procedures for recognising, responding to, recording and reporting safeguarding concerns;
- support compliance with current safeguarding legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice;
- provide confidence to parents, carers, schools, youth organisations, commissioners and partner agencies that safeguarding is embedded throughout Walesby Forest's operations.

This policy should be read alongside the Walesby Forest safeguarding procedures, staff code of conduct and associated operational guidance.

1.2 Our Commitment

Walesby Forest is committed to creating an environment where:

- children and adults at risk are protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm;
- everyone is treated with dignity, fairness and respect;
- safeguarding concerns are listened to, taken seriously and acted upon without delay;
- concerns can be raised without fear of blame or reprisal;
- staff are appropriately trained and supported;
- safeguarding arrangements are regularly reviewed and continuously improved;
- safeguarding decisions are always centred on the welfare of the individual.

We recognise that safeguarding extends beyond responding to abuse. It includes creating safe environments, promoting positive relationships, managing risks appropriately and fostering a culture where people feel able to speak up when something is wrong.

1.3 Scope

This policy applies to every person working for or on behalf of Walesby Forest, regardless of their role or employment status.

This includes:

- Trustees
- Employees
- Casual workers
- Seasonal staff
- Volunteers
- Work experience placements
- Apprentices
- Contractors
- Freelance instructors
- External activity providers
- Agency staff
- Students
- Anyone delivering services on behalf of Walesby Forest.

The principles within this policy also apply to anyone using Walesby Forest's facilities, including schools, youth organisations, public visitors, community groups, corporate clients and event organisers.

1.4 Walesby Forest's Operating Environment

Walesby Forest is a unique, multi-use outdoor education and visitor destination welcoming a diverse range of users throughout the year.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Schools undertaking educational visits and residential experiences;
- Scouts, Guides and other uniformed organisations;
- Youth groups and community organisations;
- Duke of Edinburgh Award participants;
- Work experience placements and residential volunteers;

- Families attending activities or camping holidays;
- Members of the public using the site and facilities;
- Corporate groups;
- Event organisers and festival attendees.

Because of this diverse operating environment, safeguarding responsibilities differ depending on the nature of the visit and who retains responsibility for supervision.

This policy therefore distinguishes between:

- Walesby Forest's safeguarding responsibilities;
- the supervisory responsibilities of visiting organisations;
- the responsibilities of parents, carers and responsible adults accompanying children.

These responsibilities are explained throughout this policy and should always be clearly understood before activities or visits commence.

1.5 Safeguarding Principles

Everything Walesby Forest does is underpinned by the following principles:

Child-centred

The welfare, safety and best interests of children and adults at risk are paramount.

Shared Responsibility

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every individual working for or on behalf of Walesby Forest has a duty to recognise concerns, respond appropriately and report them without delay.

Prevention

We will actively create environments, systems and practices that reduce opportunities for abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Vigilance

We will maintain professional curiosity, remain alert to concerns and never assume that someone else will take action.

Partnership

Effective safeguarding relies upon working collaboratively with schools, youth organisations, parents, carers, statutory agencies and safeguarding partners.

Accountability

Safeguarding concerns will be appropriately recorded, managed and reviewed to ensure that decisions are transparent, proportionate and defensible.

Respect

Every individual has the right to be treated with dignity, respect and fairness regardless of their age, disability, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, gender identity or sexual orientation.

1.6 Using this Policy

This document provides the overarching safeguarding framework for Walesby Forest.

It should be read alongside supporting procedures, guidance documents and operational instructions which provide more detailed information for specific situations, including:

- reporting safeguarding concerns;
- missing or lost children;
- allegations by / against staff;
- safer recruitment;
- low-level concerns;
- photography and filming;
- online safety;
- residential safeguarding;
- transport of children and young people;
- safeguarding during events and festivals;
- safeguarding adults at risk.

All staff are expected to understand the principles contained within this policy and to follow the associated procedures relevant to their role.

Where there is any uncertainty regarding safeguarding responsibilities or the appropriate course of action, advice must be sought immediately from the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

SECTION 2

Legislative and Regulatory Framework

2.1 Purpose

Walesby Forest is committed to maintaining safeguarding arrangements that reflect current legislation, statutory guidance and recognised sector standards.

This policy has been developed to support the organisation in fulfilling its legal responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, whilst recognising the unique operating environment of a multi-use outdoor education, residential and visitor destination.

The legislation and guidance referenced within this section provide the framework upon which Walesby Forest's safeguarding arrangements are based. They should be considered alongside the organisation's own policies, procedures and risk management arrangements.

As legislation and statutory guidance are periodically updated, Walesby Forest will review this policy at least annually, or sooner where significant legislative, regulatory or operational changes occur.

2.2 Legislative Framework

Walesby Forest's safeguarding arrangements have been developed with reference to the following legislation.

Children Act 1989

The Children Act 1989 establishes that the welfare of the child is paramount and provides the legal framework for protecting children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Children Act 2004

The Children Act 2004 strengthened safeguarding responsibilities across organisations working with children and introduced the statutory duty for agencies to cooperate in promoting children's wellbeing.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

This statutory guidance sets out how organisations and agencies should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Although Walesby Forest is not an education provider, many of the children attending the site do so through schools, youth organisations and other educational settings. Walesby Forest therefore seeks to align its safeguarding arrangements with the principles contained within this guidance where they are relevant to its activities.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

Whilst Walesby Forest is not directly governed by Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), the organisation recognises that schools, colleges and other education providers are required to comply with this statutory guidance.

Where Walesby Forest delivers educational visits, residential experiences or instructor-led activities for schools and colleges, the organisation aims to ensure that its safeguarding arrangements support and complement the safeguarding responsibilities of visiting education providers.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

This Act establishes the framework for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and helps prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children and adults at risk.

Walesby Forest applies safer recruitment principles and undertakes DBS checks where roles meet the relevant eligibility criteria.

Care Act 2014

The Care Act provides the statutory framework for safeguarding adults with care and support needs.

Walesby Forest recognises that safeguarding responsibilities extend beyond children and include adults at risk who may visit, volunteer or participate in activities across the site.

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)

Walesby Forest recognises its responsibility to remain alert to concerns relating to radicalisation and extremism and to respond appropriately where concerns arise.

Safeguarding from radicalisation forms part of the organisation's wider safeguarding responsibilities.

Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

Safeguarding frequently requires the sharing of confidential information.

Walesby Forest will ensure that personal information is handled lawfully, fairly and securely whilst recognising that data protection legislation does not prevent the sharing of information where this is necessary to safeguard children or adults at risk.

Online Safety Act 2023

Walesby Forest recognises the increasing safeguarding risks associated with online activity, including social media, online grooming, image-based abuse, artificial intelligence, gaming platforms and digital communication.

Appropriate measures are taken to minimise these risks within the organisation's areas of responsibility.

2.3 Regulatory, Sector and Local Safeguarding Guidance

In addition to applicable legislation, Walesby Forest has regard to relevant statutory guidance, local safeguarding procedures and recognised sector standards where applicable to its activities and safeguarding responsibilities.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (current edition);
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition), where relevant to educational visits and Walesby Forest's work with schools and education providers;
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance;
- Charity Commission safeguarding guidance;
- Disclosure and Barring Service guidance;
- Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) procedures and guidance;
- Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Board procedures and guidance; and
- relevant recognised safeguarding standards within the outdoor education, activity, youth and residential sectors.

Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Arrangements

Walesby Forest follows the current procedures and guidance of the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) where applicable to its safeguarding responsibilities.

This includes, where relevant:

- the Nottinghamshire Framework for Support;
- local safeguarding referral arrangements;
- the Nottinghamshire Neglect Toolkit; and
- procedures for resolving professional disagreement and escalating safeguarding concerns.

Where a safeguarding concern requires referral, consultation or external safeguarding advice, Walesby Forest will follow the current Nottinghamshire arrangements and thresholds applicable to the circumstances.

Where visiting organisations operate under their own safeguarding requirements, Walesby Forest will work collaboratively to support those arrangements whilst maintaining its own safeguarding responsibilities.

The presence of another organisation's safeguarding procedures does not prevent Walesby Forest from taking action or making an appropriate referral where it identifies a safeguarding concern.

Safeguarding Contact Information

Current operational contact details for relevant external safeguarding services, including Nottinghamshire children's safeguarding referral services and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), will be maintained within the controlled safeguarding contacts appendix to this policy.

These contact details will be checked regularly and whenever Walesby Forest becomes aware of a change to local safeguarding arrangements.

The safeguarding contacts appendix may be updated administratively to maintain accurate operational information without requiring reapproval of the full Safeguarding Policy.

2.4 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the action taken to promote the welfare of children and adults at risk and to protect them from abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm. It includes creating safe environments, preventing harm, responding to concerns and working collaboratively with others to protect those at risk.

Child

A child is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday.

Young Person

For the purposes of this policy, the term young person is used to describe older children who are approaching adulthood and may have increasing levels of independence. In legal terms, a young person under the age of 18 remains a child, and the same safeguarding duties apply.

The term is used throughout this policy to reflect the different ways in which Walesby Forest delivers activities and services to teenagers and older youth groups, including those attending through schools, Scouts, Guides, Duke of Edinburgh Award programmes, work experience placements and other organised groups.

Parent or Responsible Adult

A parent or responsible adult refers to a parent, legal guardian, teacher, group leader, youth leader or any other adult who has accepted responsibility for the supervision and welfare of a child or young person whilst attending Walesby Forest.

The identity of the responsible adult will vary depending on the type of visit and is explained further within Section 4 of this policy.

Adult at Risk

An adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support and who is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and is unable to protect themselves because of those needs.

Child Protection

Child protection forms part of safeguarding and relates specifically to the activity undertaken to protect individual children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Early Help

Early Help describes support provided to children, young people and families as soon as problems begin to emerge, with the aim of improving outcomes and preventing concerns from escalating.

Low-Level Concern

A low-level concern is behaviour by an adult working on behalf of Walesby Forest that is inconsistent with the organisation's Code of Conduct but does not meet the threshold for managing an allegation.

All low-level concerns will be recorded, reviewed and managed appropriately.

2.5 Policy Review

Safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance continue to evolve.

To ensure continued compliance and good governance, this policy will be:

- formally reviewed at least annually;
- reviewed following any significant safeguarding incident;
- reviewed following relevant legislative or regulatory changes;
- amended where operational learning identifies opportunities for improvement.

The Board of Trustees retains overall responsibility for ensuring that appropriate safeguarding governance arrangements remain in place.

SECTION 3

Leadership, Governance and Responsibilities

3.1 Governance and Trustee Safeguarding Oversight

The Board of Trustees has overall accountability for safeguarding across Walesby Forest.

The Board is responsible for ensuring that effective safeguarding governance, leadership, policies, resources and assurance arrangements are in place to protect children, young people and adults at risk who engage with the organisation.

The Board will:

- promote a culture in which safeguarding is recognised as a core organisational responsibility;
- ensure appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and systems are established, implemented and maintained;
- appoint a Trustee with responsibility for safeguarding oversight;
- ensure sufficient resources are available to enable Walesby Forest to fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities;
- receive and scrutinise regular safeguarding assurance information;
- provide appropriate challenge where safeguarding risks, trends, non-compliance or outstanding actions are identified;
- ensure appropriate action is taken in response to significant safeguarding risks or weaknesses; and
- review safeguarding performance, organisational learning and emerging risks as part of its governance responsibilities.

Quarterly Safeguarding Assurance

The Board will receive a quarterly anonymised safeguarding assurance dashboard.

As a minimum, and where applicable during the reporting period, the dashboard will provide assurance in relation to:

- safeguarding concerns and referrals;
- allegations and contacts or referrals involving the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- low-level concerns;
- missing-person incidents involving children or young people where there was a safeguarding concern;
- child-on-child safeguarding concerns;
- significant online-safety or digital safeguarding incidents;
- safeguarding training compliance;
- safer recruitment and DBS compliance and any identified exceptions;
- safeguarding-related whistleblowing concerns;
- safeguarding-related complaints;
- themes and trends arising from safeguarding information;
- significant or serious safeguarding incidents;
- overdue safeguarding actions; and
- significant lessons learned and resulting improvement actions.

The dashboard will provide sufficient information to enable effective Trustee scrutiny while avoiding unnecessary disclosure of personally identifying or sensitive information.

Significant safeguarding matters will be escalated to the appropriate Trustee or the Board without waiting for the next quarterly reporting cycle where earlier Trustee awareness, oversight or action is required.

Annual Safeguarding Assurance

Walesby Forest will undertake an annual safeguarding audit to assess the effectiveness of its safeguarding arrangements and identify areas requiring improvement.

The findings of the audit will be reported to the Board and, where actions are identified, incorporated into a safeguarding action plan with appropriate responsibilities and timescales.

The Board will receive assurance regarding progress against the action plan and the completion of significant outstanding actions.

Whilst operational safeguarding responsibilities are delegated through the arrangements set out in this policy, overall safeguarding accountability remains with the Board of Trustees.

3.2 Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring safeguarding is embedded throughout every aspect of Walesby Forest's operations and organisational culture.

The Chief Executive Officer will:

- provide strategic leadership for safeguarding;
- ensure safeguarding remains a key organisational priority;
- appoint appropriately trained Designated Safeguarding Leads;
- ensure sufficient resources are available to discharge safeguarding responsibilities;
- ensure safeguarding risks are appropriately managed;
- support the Designated Safeguarding Lead in fulfilling their responsibilities;
- ensure allegations by / against staff are managed appropriately;
- ensure safeguarding learning is used to continuously improve organisational practice.

The Chief Executive Officer remains accountable to the Board of Trustees for the effective implementation of this policy.

3.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for leading and coordinating safeguarding arrangements across Walesby Forest and for providing specialist safeguarding advice and support to the organisation.

The DSL will:

- act as Walesby Forest's principal safeguarding adviser;
- receive, assess and manage safeguarding concerns and disclosures;
- determine and coordinate appropriate safeguarding actions;
- ensure referrals or consultations with statutory safeguarding agencies are made where required;
- liaise, where appropriate, with schools, youth organisations, parents or carers, safeguarding partners and other agencies;
- maintain appropriate confidential safeguarding records;
- support the identification of patterns, themes and emerging safeguarding risks;

- provide advice to employees, volunteers and managers on safeguarding practice and decision-making;
- support the management of allegations and low-level concerns in accordance with this policy;
- contribute to safeguarding training, organisational learning and policy review; and
- provide appropriate safeguarding information and assurance to the CEO.

Walesby Forest and Visiting Organisation Responsibilities

Where Walesby Forest has direct safeguarding responsibility for an individual or situation, the DSL will ensure that the organisation takes appropriate safeguarding action in accordance with this policy and applicable local safeguarding arrangements.

Where a child, young person or adult at risk is attending Walesby Forest as part of a school, Scout or Guide group, youth organisation or other visiting organisation, that organisation ordinarily retains responsibility for its own supervision, pastoral care and safeguarding arrangements.

Walesby Forest will support and cooperate with those arrangements where appropriate. This may include sharing relevant safeguarding information, liaising with the visiting organisation's safeguarding lead and supporting referrals or protective action.

However, the presence of a visiting organisation and its own safeguarding procedures does not remove Walesby Forest's responsibility to act upon safeguarding concerns that come to its attention.

Where Walesby Forest identifies a concern requiring immediate or independent action, the DSL may make or support an appropriate referral or consultation with safeguarding agencies irrespective of whether the visiting organisation has made its own referral.

Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Arrangements

The DSL and Deputy DSL will maintain an appropriate working knowledge of the current safeguarding thresholds, procedures and referral arrangements applicable in Nottinghamshire.

This will include, where relevant:

- the Nottinghamshire Framework for Support;
- children's safeguarding referral arrangements, including the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH);
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) arrangements;
- Early Help and Families First arrangements;
- the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) Neglect Toolkit; and
- relevant local escalation and professional disagreement procedures.

The DSL will ensure that current operational contact details and referral information are accessible through Walesby Forest's controlled safeguarding contacts and supporting procedures.

Immediate Risk and Emergency Action

Where there is an immediate risk of serious harm or danger, protecting the individual takes priority.

Emergency services must be contacted where required, and employees and volunteers do not need to wait for the DSL, complete a safeguarding form or follow an internal reporting process before taking necessary emergency action.

The DSL must be informed as soon as reasonably practicable following such action so that appropriate safeguarding follow-up, referral and recording can take place.

Safeguarding reporting systems, forms and internal procedures must never delay urgent protective action.

3.4 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead supports the Designated Safeguarding Lead and undertakes safeguarding responsibilities whenever the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable.

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will receive appropriate safeguarding training and have sufficient authority to fulfil the responsibilities of the role.

3.5 Duty Managers

Duty Managers provide operational safeguarding leadership whenever the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead are not immediately available.

Duty Managers must:

- take immediate action where there is an imminent safeguarding risk;
- ensure the immediate safety and welfare of those involved;
- contact emergency services where required;
- notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead at the earliest opportunity;
- preserve evidence where appropriate;
- ensure safeguarding concerns are accurately recorded and escalated.

Duty Managers must not delay action whilst attempting to contact senior staff if a child, young person or adult is believed to be at immediate risk of harm.

3.6 Managers

Managers are accountable for promoting and maintaining a positive safeguarding culture within their areas of responsibility.

Managers must:

- ensure employees understand their safeguarding responsibilities;
- promote a culture where safeguarding concerns can be raised openly;
- ensure safeguarding procedures are followed consistently;
- identify safeguarding risks within their operational areas;
- ensure appropriate safeguarding risk assessments are completed where required;
- support employees following safeguarding incidents;
- escalate safeguarding concerns without delay;
- contribute to safeguarding reviews and organisational learning.

Managers must never discourage, delay or prevent the reporting of safeguarding concerns.

3.7 Employees (Including Apprentices)

Every employee has an individual responsibility to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk.

This applies equally to permanent employees, seasonal employees, apprentices, casual workers and agency staff working on behalf of Walesby Forest.

All employees must:

- complete mandatory safeguarding training appropriate to their role;
- understand and comply with this policy and associated procedures;
- remain professionally curious;
- recognise and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns;
- report safeguarding concerns immediately;
- always maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- challenge behaviour that places others at risk where safe to do so;
- cooperate fully with safeguarding enquiries.

Employees must never assume that another person has already reported a safeguarding concern.

Direct Escalation and Referral

Employees, apprentices, agency workers and other individuals working on behalf of Walesby Forest are expected to follow the safeguarding reporting and escalation arrangements set out in this policy wherever practicable.

However, nothing within Walesby Forest's internal reporting arrangements prevents an individual from contacting an appropriate statutory agency directly where they reasonably believe this is necessary to protect a child, young person or adult at risk.

This may include contacting Children's Social Care, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the police, emergency services or another appropriate safeguarding agency, depending upon the circumstances.

Direct contact may be particularly appropriate where:

- there is an immediate risk of harm and urgent protective action is required;
- the individual believes that a safeguarding concern has not been appropriately acted upon or escalated internally;
- the concern relates to a person who would ordinarily receive or manage the internal report; or
- following the normal internal reporting route could delay necessary safeguarding action.

Where there is an immediate risk of serious harm or danger, emergency action must not be delayed while seeking internal authorisation or completing Walesby Forest's reporting processes.

Where an individual makes a direct referral or contacts a statutory agency, they should inform the DSL, Deputy DSL or another appropriate senior manager as soon as reasonably practicable, unless doing so could place someone at further risk, compromise an external safeguarding process, or the concern relates to that individual.

No employee, apprentice, volunteer, agency worker or contractor will be disadvantaged for raising or escalating a safeguarding concern in good faith through an appropriate internal or external safeguarding route.

3.8 Additional Responsibilities When Delivering Activities

Certain employees are authorised to deliver instructor-led activities as part of their role.

Whilst undertaking these duties they have additional safeguarding responsibilities because they work directly with children, young people and adults at risk.

Employees delivering activities must:

- deliver activities safely and in accordance with approved operating procedures;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- remain alert to safeguarding concerns throughout activities;
- respond appropriately to disclosures or welfare concerns;
- report safeguarding concerns immediately;
- stop or suspend an activity where safeguarding or safety concerns require immediate intervention;
- work collaboratively with accompanying teachers, leaders or parents, recognising that responsibility for supervision remains with the visiting organisation or parent/carer unless otherwise agreed.

Employees delivering activities must never ignore safeguarding concerns because another responsible adult is present.

3.9 Volunteers

Volunteers play an important role within Walesby Forest and are expected to uphold the same safeguarding standards appropriate to their role.

Volunteers must:

- complete the safeguarding induction appropriate to their role;
- understand how to report safeguarding concerns;
- work within the limits of their role and competence;
- seek advice whenever unsure;
- always maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

3.10 Contractors and External Providers

Contractors, consultants and external providers working at or on behalf of Walesby Forest must comply with safeguarding requirements proportionate to the nature of their work, their access to the site and the extent to which their activities bring them into contact with children, young people or adults at risk.

All contractors and external providers will be provided with appropriate safeguarding information where relevant to their work and must:

- comply with Walesby Forest's safeguarding and professional conduct requirements whilst on site;
- wear or carry appropriate identification where required;
- work within any access, supervision or safeguarding restrictions applicable to their work;
- avoid unnecessary contact with children, young people and adults at risk;
- report safeguarding concerns without delay through the arrangements communicated to them; and
- cooperate with Walesby Forest in relation to any safeguarding concern arising from their activities or personnel.

External Providers Delivering Services or Activities

Where an external organisation is contracted or authorised to deliver activities, services or other work involving children, young people or adults at risk, Walesby Forest will obtain **proportionate safeguarding assurance before delivery commences**.

This will include, as appropriate to the service being provided, confirmation of:

- the provider's safeguarding arrangements and relevant policies;
- safer recruitment and suitability-checking arrangements for personnel;
- compliance with applicable DBS and regulated-activity requirements;
- safeguarding training appropriate to the roles being undertaken;
- expected standards of staff conduct and professional boundaries;
- arrangements for identifying, reporting and referring safeguarding concerns;
- procedures for managing allegations or concerns involving the provider's personnel;
- appropriate insurance relevant to the activities or services being provided; and
- any additional safeguarding requirements identified through Walesby Forest's risk assessment, procurement or contracting arrangements.

Walesby Forest may require the provider to complete a **safeguarding assurance declaration** or provide equivalent documentary evidence before work or service delivery begins.

Walesby Forest will retain appropriate evidence of the safeguarding assurance obtained.

Safeguarding Concerns Involving Provider Personnel

Any safeguarding concern or allegation involving an employee, volunteer, contractor or other representative of an external provider must be reported immediately through Walesby Forest's safeguarding arrangements.

Walesby Forest will take any immediate action necessary to protect a child, young person or adult at risk and will determine, with the DSL and relevant external safeguarding agencies where appropriate, the action required.

The provider will be expected to cooperate with Walesby Forest and relevant statutory agencies. Responsibility for managing an individual's employment or contractual relationship with the external provider remains with that provider**,** but this will not prevent Walesby Forest from:

- restricting or suspending the individual's access to the site where necessary to manage safeguarding risk;
- making or supporting a referral to an appropriate safeguarding or statutory agency;
- sharing relevant safeguarding information where lawful and necessary; or
- taking appropriate action under its contract or agreement with the provider.

DBS and Suitability Requirements

DBS requirements for contractors and external provider personnel will be determined according to the activities actually undertaken and the applicable legal eligibility requirements**.**

Walesby Forest will not rely solely upon a DBS check as evidence of safeguarding suitability.

3.11 Visiting Organisations and Organised Groups

Schools, Scout and Guide Groups, youth organisations and other organised groups attending Walesby Forest retain responsibility for the supervision, pastoral care, welfare and behaviour of the children and young people attending as part of their group.

Where Walesby Forest employees deliver instructed activities, Walesby Forest is responsible for the safe delivery and management of those activities within the scope of its role. This does not transfer the visiting organisation's wider responsibility for the supervision, pastoral care and welfare of its participants to Walesby Forest.

Visiting organisations must provide supervision appropriate to the age, needs and circumstances of their participants and to the nature of their visit.

Pre-Visit Safeguarding Information Exchange

For organised school, youth and residential visits, appropriate safeguarding information will be exchanged between Walesby Forest and the visiting organisation before the visit.

The visiting organisation will be asked to provide or confirm, as appropriate:

- the name and contact arrangements for the responsible group leader and/or safeguarding contact during the visit;
- an appropriate emergency contact;
- its planned supervision arrangements;
- relevant safeguarding information necessary for Walesby Forest to safely deliver its services or activities;
- relevant SEND, medical, communication, behavioural or other individual support needs that Walesby Forest reasonably needs to know for safe and appropriate delivery;
- any circumstances requiring reasonable adjustments or specific safeguarding arrangements;
- its arrangements for responding to a missing or unaccounted-for child or young person; and
- the agreed route for reporting and escalating safeguarding concerns between the visiting organisation and Walesby Forest.

Only information necessary and proportionate for the safe delivery of the visit and safeguarding of individuals should be shared.

The visiting organisation remains responsible for obtaining any necessary permissions and for ensuring that it is lawfully able to provide relevant personal or safeguarding information to Walesby Forest.

Information Provided by Walesby Forest

Walesby Forest will provide visiting organisations with appropriate safeguarding information relevant to their visit, including:

- how to raise an immediate safeguarding concern while on site;
- Walesby Forest's safeguarding contact and escalation arrangements;
- relevant expectations concerning the conduct and professional boundaries of Walesby Forest employees and volunteers;
- how concerns or allegations involving a Walesby Forest employee, volunteer or other person working on behalf of Walesby Forest should be reported; and
- relevant emergency and missing-person arrangements.

During the Visit

Visiting organisations are expected to:

- maintain appropriate supervision of their participants in accordance with their own responsibilities and the agreed arrangements for the visit;
- ensure an appropriate responsible adult remains available where Walesby Forest employees are delivering activities;
- share relevant new safeguarding or welfare information where this becomes necessary during the visit;
- report safeguarding concerns promptly;
- cooperate with Walesby Forest where safeguarding action is required; and
- comply with reasonable safeguarding and safety instructions issued by Walesby Forest.

Where Walesby Forest becomes aware of a safeguarding concern, it will work collaboratively with the visiting organisation where appropriate. However, Walesby Forest retains the right and responsibility to take safeguarding action or make a referral independently where necessary to protect a child, young person or adult at risk.

3.12 Parents, Guardians and Carers

Parents, guardians and carers attending Walesby Forest remain responsible for the supervision, pastoral care and welfare of children in their care, except where specific responsibility for an activity or service has been expressly accepted by Walesby Forest.

Where Walesby Forest employees are delivering an instructed activity, Walesby Forest is responsible for the safe delivery and management of that activity within the scope of its role. This does not ordinarily transfer wider parental or supervisory responsibility to Walesby Forest.

Parents, guardians and carers are expected to:

- supervise children appropriately in accordance with the arrangements applicable to their visit;
- comply with reasonable Walesby Forest safeguarding and safety instructions;
- provide relevant information necessary for the safe participation of a child in Walesby Forest activities or services;
- report safeguarding or welfare concerns promptly; and
- cooperate with appropriate safeguarding action or enquiries where required.

Access to Safeguarding Information and Raising Concerns

Walesby Forest will make clear safeguarding information reasonably accessible to parents, guardians, carers and visitors.

This will include information about:

- how to raise a safeguarding concern;
- how to contact or obtain access to the appropriate Walesby Forest safeguarding lead or on-duty safeguarding contact;
- how to raise a complaint;
- how concerns about the conduct of a Walesby Forest employee, volunteer, contractor or other person working on behalf of Walesby Forest can be reported;

- what to do where an individual does not believe that their safeguarding concern has been appropriately addressed; and
- how an individual may contact appropriate local safeguarding services or emergency services directly where necessary.

Relevant safeguarding information will be made available through appropriate channels, which may include pre-arrival or booking information, the Walesby Forest website, reception and/or information displayed or provided on site.

No individual is required to raise a safeguarding concern with Walesby Forest before contacting the police, emergency services, Children's Social Care or another appropriate statutory safeguarding service where they believe direct contact is necessary.

3.13 Rights, Voice and Participation of Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

Every child, young person and adult at risk attending Walesby Forest has the right to:

- be safe and feel safe;
- be treated with dignity, respect and fairness;
- be listened to and taken seriously;
- communicate concerns without fear of ridicule, dismissal or inappropriate consequences;
- receive information in a way they can reasonably understand;
- have their individual needs and circumstances appropriately considered; and
- receive an appropriate response where a safeguarding or welfare concern arises.

Child and Young Person's Voice

Safeguarding decisions concerning a child or young person should take account of their views, wishes and feelings where it is appropriate and safe to do so.

The way in which Walesby Forest communicates with and involves a child or young person will take account of relevant factors including their:

- age and level of understanding;
- communication needs;
- SEND or additional needs;
- individual circumstances;
- preferred method of communication where reasonably practicable; and
- immediate safety and welfare.

A child's wishes will be taken seriously but **will not prevent necessary safeguarding action** where Walesby Forest believes that the child or another person may be at risk of harm.

Employees and volunteers must never promise a child or young person absolute confidentiality where safeguarding information may need to be shared to protect them or another person.

Helping Children and Young People to Speak Up

Walesby Forest will seek to ensure that children and young people can understand, in an accessible and age-appropriate way, how to seek help or raise a concern while at Walesby Forest.

This may include information provided through:

- arrival or activity briefings;
- appropriate signage or posters;
- child-friendly safeguarding information;
- information provided through visiting schools, groups or organisations; and
- employees and volunteers explaining how a child can obtain help where appropriate.

Children and young people should be encouraged to speak to a trusted adult if something does not feel right, including a parent or carer, teacher or group leader, Walesby Forest employee or another appropriate responsible adult.

Where a child or young person raises a concern directly with Walesby Forest, it will be taken seriously and responded to in accordance with this policy.

Adults at Risk

The same principles of dignity, respect, communication and participation apply to adults at risk.

Where safeguarding decisions concern an adult at risk, Walesby Forest will seek to involve the individual appropriately and have regard to their wishes, capacity, communication needs and individual circumstances, subject to circumstances in which action or information sharing may be necessary to protect them or another person.

3.14 Escalation of Concerns

Every person working on behalf of Walesby Forest has both the authority and the responsibility to report safeguarding concerns.

Where an individual believes that appropriate action has not been taken, they must escalate the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Chief Executive Officer or Chair of Trustees as appropriate.

Safeguarding concerns must never be ignored because they are considered somebody else's responsibility.

3.15 Safeguarding Decision-Making

When faced with a safeguarding concern, employees should consider the following questions:

- Is anyone at immediate risk of harm?
- Does anyone require emergency medical assistance?
- Does this concern need to be reported immediately?
- Have I accurately recorded what I have seen, heard or been told?
- Do I need advice before taking further action?
- Would I be able to explain and justify the decisions I have made?

Where there is any doubt, staff must seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

SECTION 4

Safeguarding in Practice at Walesby Forest

4.1 Our Operating Environment

Walesby Forest is a multi-use outdoor education, residential and visitor destination welcoming a diverse range of visitors throughout the year.

Unlike schools or childcare providers, Walesby Forest operates in a shared environment where educational groups, youth organisations, families, members of the public, volunteers, contractors and commercial event organisers may all be present on site at the same time.

The organisation recognises that safeguarding arrangements must reflect this unique operating environment. Whilst the legal responsibilities of visiting organisations, parents and carers differ, Walesby Forest expects everyone on site to contribute to creating a safe environment for children, young people and adults at risk.

The safeguarding arrangements set out within this policy are therefore designed to clearly define responsibilities, reduce ambiguity and promote effective partnership working.

4.2 Shared Safeguarding Responsibility

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility.

Every organisation, leader, parent, carer and individual working with children, young people and adults at risk has a role to play in protecting their welfare.

Whilst supervision responsibilities may differ depending upon the type of visit, Walesby Forest retains an independent responsibility to:

- provide a safe environment;
- recruit suitable employees and volunteers;
- deliver activities safely;
- respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns;
- report safeguarding concerns where required;
- cooperate with safeguarding partners and statutory agencies.

Safeguarding responsibilities cannot be transferred or delegated to another organisation simply because they are responsible for supervising a group.

4.3 Responsibility for Supervision

Unless specifically agreed in writing before a visit, Walesby Forest does not assume responsibility for the supervision, behaviour or pastoral care of children attending the site.

Responsibility for supervision remains with:

- the visiting school;
- the Scout, Guide or youth organisation;
- the responsible group leader;
- or the child's parent or responsible adult.

During instructor-led activities, Walesby Forest employees take responsibility for delivering the activity safely and managing activity-specific risks.

Responsibility for the supervision, welfare, behaviour and pastoral care of the children, young person or adult at risk remains with the accompanying responsible adults.

Where Walesby Forest believes that adequate supervision is not being maintained, activities may be paused or suspended until appropriate supervision is restored.

4.4 Educational Visits

Schools and other education providers visiting Walesby Forest retain responsibility for the supervision, pastoral care, welfare and behaviour of the children and young people attending as part of their visit.

Schools and education providers remain responsible for:

- appropriate supervision of pupils;
- behaviour management;
- pastoral care and welfare;
- attendance and accounting for pupils;
- management of medical needs and medication;
- providing Walesby Forest with relevant information necessary for safe participation in activities;
- supervision during meal times and free time;
- appropriate overnight supervision during residential stays; and
- maintaining appropriate emergency and safeguarding arrangements for their group.

Walesby Forest is responsible for:

- providing an environment that is appropriately managed within the scope of its operations;
- safely delivering activities and services for which Walesby Forest is responsible;
- providing employees who are appropriately trained and competent for the duties they undertake;
- maintaining its own safeguarding arrangements;
- responding appropriately to safeguarding concerns that come to its attention; and
- making or supporting safeguarding referrals where required.

Pre-Visit Safeguarding Arrangements

Before an educational visit, Walesby Forest and the visiting organisation will complete an appropriate and documented pre-visit safeguarding information exchange**.**

The extent of the information exchange will be proportionate to the nature, duration and complexity of the visit and may be completed through Walesby Forest's booking and pre-arrival arrangements, written correspondence, telephone or online discussion, or a specific pre-visit meeting where this is appropriate.

The arrangements will establish or confirm, as appropriate:

- the school's or education provider's responsible group leader and safeguarding contact;
- Walesby Forest's relevant safeguarding contact and reporting arrangements;
- supervision responsibilities during activities, free time, meal times and other parts of the visit;
- overnight supervision arrangements for residential visits;
- relevant SEND, medical, communication, behavioural or other individual needs that Walesby Forest reasonably needs to know to deliver activities and services safely;

- emergency contact arrangements;
- arrangements for responding to a missing or unaccounted-for child or young person;
- how safeguarding concerns arising during the visit will be communicated and escalated between Walesby Forest and the visiting organisation; and
- any specific safeguarding arrangements arising from the nature of the visit or needs of individual participants.

The purpose of this information exchange is to ensure that responsibilities and safeguarding arrangements are understood before arrival and that relevant information necessary for safe delivery has been shared.

Supervision During Walesby Forest Activities

During Walesby Forest instructor-led activities, Walesby Forest employees are responsible for the safe instruction and management of the activity within the scope of their role.

The presence of a Walesby Forest instructor does not transfer the visiting organisation's wider responsibility for supervision, pastoral care or welfare to Walesby Forest.

Teachers, group leaders or other appropriate accompanying adults should normally remain present or readily available in accordance with the arrangements for the visit.

Where a teacher or accompanying adult needs temporarily to leave an activity, this should be communicated to the instructor and appropriate supervision arrangements maintained.

Walesby Forest employees may temporarily manage an activity group while a teacher or group leader deals with an individual pupil or immediate issue where this can be done safely and appropriately. This does not constitute a transfer of the visiting organisation's wider safeguarding or pastoral responsibilities.

Where Walesby Forest believes that appropriate supervision is not being maintained, it may require the visiting organisation to restore appropriate supervision and may pause, modify or suspend an activity where necessary to protect participants.

Safeguarding Concerns During Educational Visits

Where a safeguarding concern arises during an educational visit, Walesby Forest will normally work collaboratively with the visiting organisation's safeguarding lead or responsible group leader.

However, Walesby Forest will take independent safeguarding action where necessary and may contact Children's Social Care, the LADO, police, emergency services or another appropriate safeguarding agency without waiting for action by the visiting organisation where circumstances require it.

Immediate protective action must never be delayed by uncertainty about whether Walesby Forest or the visiting organisation should make a referral.

4.5 Scouts, Guides and Other Youth Organisations

Scout Groups, Guide Groups and other organised youth organisations remain responsible for the supervision, welfare and behaviour of their members throughout their visit.

The level of direct supervision provided by group leaders may vary depending on the age, maturity, experience and independence of the young people, together with the group's own safeguarding policies and risk assessments.

For younger sections, a responsible adult will normally remain with the group during instructor-led activities.

For older sections, leaders may permit young people to move around the site more independently or supervise from a wider area, provided appropriate supervision arrangements remain in place and leaders remain responsible for the welfare of their members throughout the visit.

Walesby Forest employees remain responsible for:

- delivering activities safely;
- providing activity instruction;
- responding appropriately to safeguarding concerns;
- reporting safeguarding concerns in accordance with this policy.

Where Walesby Forest believes that the level of supervision is insufficient to safely deliver an activity, employees may pause or suspend the activity until appropriate supervision arrangements have been established.

4.6 Public Visitors

Parents, guardians and carers remain responsible for the supervision and welfare of children attending Walesby Forest for camping, activities, events or recreational purposes.

Younger children should remain under the supervision of a parent, guardian or other responsible person. Older children and teenagers may move around the site independently where their parent or carer considers this appropriate. This does not transfer responsibility for their supervision to Walesby Forest.

Walesby Forest employees must not accept responsibility for supervising individual children outside organised activities unless specific arrangements have been formally agreed by the organisation.

Where a child appears lost, vulnerable or at risk, Walesby Forest employees will take appropriate safeguarding action in accordance with the organisation's procedures.

4.7 Work Experience and Residential Placements

Individuals undertaking work experience placements, apprenticeships, volunteering or residential development programmes directly with Walesby Forest form part of the organisation's workforce whilst engaged in their placement.

During these placements, Walesby Forest assumes greater responsibility for their welfare and safeguarding.

Appropriate supervision, accommodation arrangements, welfare support and safeguarding measures will be implemented in accordance with separate operational procedures.

Where placements involve overnight accommodation, additional residential safeguarding arrangements will apply.

4.8 Corporate Groups

Corporate visitors are responsible for their own conduct and welfare whilst attending Walesby Forest.

Where corporate events involve adults with care and support needs, Walesby Forest will work with the organising body to ensure appropriate safeguarding arrangements are agreed before the visit.

4.9 Mixed-Use Site

Walesby Forest is a shared-use site where schools, youth organisations, organised groups, public visitors, campers, volunteers, contractors, corporate and commercial event attendees may be present at the same time.

The organisation recognises that this operating model creates additional safeguarding considerations that differ from those found within schools or single-use educational settings.

To minimise safeguarding risks, Walesby Forest will:

- ensure activities are planned and delivered with appropriate consideration of the wider site environment;
- maintain clear communication with visiting organisations regarding supervision arrangements;
- where applicable, encourage visitors to remain within the areas relevant to their visit, whilst recognising that many shared facilities and outdoor spaces are used by multiple visitor groups;
- ensure contractors work within agreed safeguarding arrangements appropriate to their role and work location;
- remain vigilant to safeguarding concerns arising from interactions between different visitor groups;
- respond promptly to any concerns relating to inappropriate behaviour, unauthorised access or circumstances that may place children, young people or adults at risk.

Where significant events, large visitor numbers or unusual site activities create additional safeguarding risks, Walesby Forest will implement proportionate control measures through event planning, operational risk assessments and additional staffing where appropriate.

All visitors share a responsibility for contributing to a safe and respectful environment. Walesby Forest expects any person who witnesses behaviour that places a child, young person or adult at risk to report their concerns immediately to a member of staff.

4.10 Safeguarding During Activities

Employees delivering activities have an important safeguarding role because they frequently interact directly with children, young people and adults at risk.

Employees delivering activities will:

- maintain professional boundaries;
- remain alert to changes in behaviour or welfare;
- respond appropriately to disclosures;
- stop activities where safeguarding concerns require immediate intervention;
- report safeguarding concerns without delay.

Delivering an activity does not replace the supervisory responsibilities of teachers, leaders, parents, responsible adults and carers.

4.11 Working in Partnership

Effective safeguarding depends upon clear responsibilities, appropriate information sharing and effective partnership working.

Walesby Forest will work collaboratively, where appropriate, with:

- schools and education providers;
- Scout, Guide and other youth organisations;
- organised groups;
- parents and carers;
- local authorities;
- safeguarding partners;
- Children's Social Care;
- the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- police and emergency services;
- health professionals; and
- other relevant agencies and organisations.

Clarity of Safeguarding Responsibilities

Where Walesby Forest and a visiting organisation both have safeguarding responsibilities in relation to a visit, activity or individual, the respective roles and arrangements should be made clear.

Where appropriate, these arrangements will be confirmed through the pre-visit safeguarding information exchange or other relevant written arrangements.

This may include clarification of:

- supervision and pastoral responsibilities;
- responsibility during Walesby Forest-led activities;
- safeguarding contacts and reporting routes;
- relevant information-sharing arrangements;
- emergency and missing-person arrangements;
- how safeguarding concerns will be escalated; and
- any specific safeguarding arrangements required for the visit or activity.

Walesby Forest will seek to work collaboratively with the visiting organisation where a safeguarding concern arises.

However, the existence of a visiting organisation's own safeguarding arrangements does not remove or reduce Walesby Forest's responsibility to act upon a safeguarding concern that is observed, disclosed, reported to, or otherwise comes to the attention of Walesby Forest.

This includes concerns arising in connection with Walesby Forest's:

- employees, volunteers or contractors;
- activities or services;
- premises or facilities; or

- interactions with children, young people or adults at risk.

Where necessary to protect an individual, Walesby Forest may take safeguarding action or contact an appropriate statutory agency independently of the visiting organisation.

Information Sharing

Relevant safeguarding information will be shared with visiting organisations, safeguarding partners and statutory agencies where it is necessary and appropriate to protect a child, young person or adult at risk.

Information sharing will be necessary, proportionate, relevant and limited to what is required for the safeguarding purpose, and will be undertaken in accordance with applicable data protection and confidentiality requirements.

Where there is an immediate risk of harm, uncertainty about information-sharing arrangements must not prevent necessary protective action or contact with emergency or statutory safeguarding services.

4.12 Professional Judgement

No policy can anticipate every safeguarding situation.

Employees and volunteers are expected to apply professional judgement, seek advice where necessary and always act in the best interests of the child, young person or adult at risk.

Where uncertainty exists, employees and volunteers must consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead or appropriate stand in role without delay.

In Practice

Teacher leaves an activity

A teacher advises the Walesby Forest employee that they need to accompany a pupil outside of the designated area.

The activity may continue provided the Walesby Forest employee is satisfied that appropriate supervision remains available, and the temporary absence does not create additional safeguarding or safety risks.

Parent asks Reception to supervise a child

A parent attending the campsite asks Reception to watch their child whilst they return to their tent.

Reception staff politely explain that parents remain responsible for supervising their children and cannot accept responsibility for supervising individuals or groups.

Leader dealing with another incident

A Scout Leader leaves temporarily to deal with a behavioural issue elsewhere on site.

The Walesby Forest employee continues delivering the activity whilst remaining alert to any safeguarding concerns and ensuring another responsible adult remains available where appropriate.

Instructor receives a safeguarding disclosure

Whilst leading an activity, an employee receives a safeguarding disclosure from a young person.

The employee follows Walesby Forest's safeguarding reporting procedures immediately, regardless of who is responsible for supervising the group.

SECTION 5

Recognising Safeguarding Concerns

5.1 Introduction

Every person representing Walesby Forest has a responsibility to remain alert to safeguarding concerns.

Safeguarding concerns may arise at any time and in any area of the organisation. They may be observed directly, disclosed by a child, young person or adult at risk, reported by another person, or identified through changes in behaviour, appearance or circumstances.

Employees and volunteers are not expected to determine whether abuse has occurred or investigate concerns themselves. Their responsibility is to recognise when something may be wrong, respond appropriately and report concerns without delay.

Employees should never dismiss concerns because they appear minor, because there is no obvious evidence, or because they believe somebody else will deal with the situation.

5.2 What is a Safeguarding Concern

A safeguarding concern is any information, observation, behaviour, disclosure or circumstance that causes an individual to believe that a child, young person or adult at risk may be:

- experiencing abuse or neglect;
- at risk of harm;
- being exploited;
- vulnerable due to their circumstances;
- in need of additional support or protection.

Concerns may arise from a single incident or from a combination of smaller observations that, when viewed together, indicate a pattern of concern.

5.3 Recognising Concerns

Safeguarding concerns are not always obvious.

Employees and volunteers should remain professionally curious and be alert to:

- unexplained changes in behaviour;
- unusual emotional responses;
- injuries or physical indicators that cause concern;
- inappropriate interactions between children and adults;
- concerning behaviour between children or young people;
- repeated absences or attempts to isolate an individual;
- concerning online activity or digital communications;
- comments or disclosures that indicate someone may not be safe;
- behaviour that appears inconsistent with an individual's age, needs or usual presentation.

No single indicator confirms abuse or neglect. Employees and volunteers should consider the wider context, and report concerns whenever they believe somebody may be at risk.

5.4 Child-on-Child Abuse

Children and young people can harm, abuse or exploit other children and young people. Child-on-child abuse can occur between individuals of any age or sex and may involve a single incident, repeated behaviour or a pattern of escalating concerns.

It may occur in person or online, during organised activities, residential stays, free time or through interactions that begin or continue outside Walesby Forest.

Child-on-child abuse may include, but is not limited to:

- bullying, including prejudiced, discriminatory or identity-based bullying;
- physical abuse or violence;
- sexual violence, sexual assault or sexual harassment;
- unwanted or inappropriate sexualised behaviour;
- consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude, semi-nude or intimate images or videos;
- the creation, manipulation or sharing of AI-generated intimate or sexualised images, including deepfakes;
- initiation or hazing-type behaviour;
- coercive, controlling, threatening or intimidating behaviour;
- misogynistic, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, racist, ableist or otherwise discriminatory behaviour;
- abuse within children's or young people's intimate or personal relationships;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- online abuse, harassment or exploitation; and
- behaviour intended to humiliate, isolate, frighten, exploit or harm another child or young person.

Responding to Child-on-Child Concerns

Child-on-child abuse must never be dismissed or minimised as “banter”, “having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or an inevitable part of children's or teenagers' behaviour**.**

Employees and volunteers must respond to concerns in accordance with this policy and must consider the welfare and safeguarding needs of all children involved**,** including the child who may have experienced harm and the child or children whose behaviour has caused concern.

Responses should take account of:

- the nature, seriousness and frequency of the behaviour;
- the ages and developmental understanding of those involved;
- any difference in age, power, vulnerability or influence;
- whether coercion, intimidation, exploitation or discrimination may be present;
- whether the behaviour appears isolated or forms part of a wider pattern;
- any SEND, communication or additional needs relevant to understanding the circumstances; and
- the immediate and ongoing safety of those involved.

Where immediate action is necessary to prevent further harm, Walesby Forest will take proportionate steps to safeguard those involved and will inform the appropriate responsible adults and safeguarding leads as appropriate.

Where children are attending as part of a school, youth organisation or other visiting group, Walesby Forest will normally work with the organisation's responsible or safeguarding lead. This does not prevent Walesby

Forest from taking independent safeguarding action or making an appropriate statutory referral where necessary.

Concerns involving potentially criminal behaviour, significant harm or immediate danger will be escalated to the appropriate statutory or emergency service without delay.

5.5 Professional Curiosity

Professional curiosity is an essential part of effective safeguarding.

Employees should remain inquisitive when something does not feel right, whilst avoiding assumptions or premature conclusions.

Professional curiosity may involve:

- noticing changes in behaviour;
- asking appropriate open questions where it is safe to do so;
- seeking clarification from an appropriate person;
- discussing concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or stand-in role;
- considering whether a series of seemingly minor concerns may indicate a wider safeguarding issue.

Employees and volunteers must not ignore concerns simply because there is no immediate evidence of harm.

5.6 Safeguarding is Broader Than Abuse

Safeguarding extends beyond responding to known or suspected abuse. It includes recognising circumstances, environments, relationships and behaviours that may increase the risk of harm, exploitation or vulnerability.

Employees and volunteers should remain alert to concerns relating to:

- neglect;
- exploitation, including criminal and sexual exploitation;
- inappropriate or harmful relationships;
- child-on-child abuse;
- online safety and online exploitation;
- radicalisation;
- serious violence;
- domestic abuse;
- mental health where this gives rise to a safeguarding concern; and
- adults at risk who may require additional protection.

Contextual Safeguarding

Walesby Forest recognises that children and young people may experience safeguarding risks outside their family or home environment**.**

Such risks may arise through relationships or interactions with:

- peers and friendship groups;
- other children and young people;

- adults outside the family;
- organised groups or communities;
- online spaces, social media and digital communication; and
- other individuals encountered through activities, events or public environments.

The physical and social context in which children and young people spend time can also affect safeguarding risk. At Walesby Forest this may include, where relevant:

- residential accommodation and campsites;
- shared toilets, showers and changing facilities;
- activity areas and areas of the estate away from main buildings;
- woodland and other less visible or isolated locations;
- large events and festivals;
- public camping and mixed-use areas;
- interaction between different groups using the site at the same time; and
- interaction with members of the public, visitors, contractors or other people present on the estate.

Employees and volunteers should therefore consider not only what has happened, but the circumstances and environment in which a concern has arisen, including whether those circumstances create an ongoing or wider risk to the individual or to others.

Relevant contextual information must be recorded and shared with the DSL where it may assist safeguarding assessment or decision-making.

Where appropriate, Walesby Forest will share relevant information and work with visiting organisations, parents or carers, Children's Social Care, police or other safeguarding partners to understand and respond to risks occurring outside the family home.

The existence of a risk outside Walesby Forest does not prevent the organisation from taking safeguarding action where information comes to its attention or where the risk may affect an individual's safety while attending Walesby Forest.

Detailed arrangements for responding to particular safeguarding concerns are set out within the relevant sections of this policy and supporting procedures.

5.7 Additional Vulnerability and Barriers to Recognition or Disclosure

Walesby Forest recognises that some children and young people may experience additional vulnerability to harm or may face greater barriers to communicating that something is wrong.

This may include, but is not limited to, children and young people who:

- have SEND or additional needs;
- have communication difficulties or limited or no verbal communication;
- have learning or physical disabilities;
- have sensory needs;
- are looked after or have previously been looked after;
- are known to Children's Social Care or other support services;
- are experiencing mental health or emotional difficulties;
- experience discrimination, prejudice, bullying or social exclusion;
- have English as an additional language or whose first language is not English; or

- have other individual circumstances that may affect their ability to recognise, communicate or seek help about a safeguarding concern.

The presence of an additional need or vulnerability does not necessarily mean that a child or young person is experiencing harm. Employees and volunteers should, however, remain alert to the possibility that such circumstances may affect how safeguarding concerns present or how an individual communicates distress or disclosure.

Avoiding Assumptions

Employees and volunteers must not automatically attribute changes in behaviour, emotional responses, injuries, distress or other indicators of concern to a child's disability, SEND, communication needs, mental health or other known circumstances.

Where something causes concern, employees and volunteers should remain professionally curious and consider whether there may be an alternative or additional safeguarding explanation.

Similarly, an inability or difficulty in communicating verbally must never be interpreted as an absence of a safeguarding concern**.**

Communication and Reasonable Adjustments

Walesby Forest will make reasonable efforts to support children and young people to communicate, participate and be heard.

Where appropriate, this may include:

- allowing additional time for communication;
- using clear and accessible language;
- adapting the way information or questions are communicated;
- using appropriate visual, written or other communication methods;
- taking account of known communication or sensory needs;
- seeking appropriate support from a parent, carer, teacher, group leader or other person familiar with the individual's communication needs, where doing so is appropriate and does not compromise safeguarding; and
- making reasonable adjustments to enable the individual to participate in safeguarding conversations or processes.

Employees and volunteers should not attempt to undertake specialist assessment or communication techniques outside their competence. Where additional support is required, advice should be sought from the DSL and, where appropriate, the individual's responsible organisation, parent or carer, or relevant professional.

Safeguarding concerns involving a child or young person with additional needs must be reported and responded to through the same safeguarding arrangements as any other concern**,** with appropriate consideration given to the individual's particular communication, support and protection needs.

5.8 Walesby's Operating Environment

Because Walesby Forest is a multi-use outdoor education and visitor site, safeguarding concerns may arise in a variety of settings, including:

- instructor-led activities;
- residential accommodation;
- campsites;
- public areas;
- catering facilities;
- toilet and shower facilities;
- woodland and outdoor spaces;
- car parks;
- site transport;
- large public events;
- interactions between different visitor groups.

Employees and volunteers should remain vigilant regardless of where concerns arise or who has responsibility for supervising the individual involved.

5.9 Listening to Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

Children, young people and adults at risk may choose to speak to any member of staff they trust.

Any disclosure, however minor it may appear, should be taken seriously and responded to in accordance with Section 6 of this policy.

5.10 When in Doubt

Employees and volunteers are not expected to be safeguarding experts.

If something causes concern, however small, it should be discussed as it is always better to seek advice than to ignore a concern.

Where concerns exist, they should proceed in accordance with Section 6.

In Practice

A child suddenly becomes withdrawn

During an activity, a normally confident child becomes unusually quiet, avoids interaction and appears distressed.

The employee does not attempt to determine the cause but records the observations and reports the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or stand-in role.

A parent appears intoxicated

A member of staff observes a parent attempting to supervise young children whilst appearing heavily under the influence of alcohol.

The employee immediately informs the Duty Manager and follows the safeguarding reporting procedure.

A young person makes an off-hand comment

Whilst chatting during an activity, a teenager says:

"I hate going home."

The employee does not dismiss the comment. They listen appropriately, avoid asking leading questions and report the conversation in accordance with the safeguarding procedure.

A contractor notices something concerning

A contractor working on site witnesses' behaviour that causes concern.

Although they are not responsible for supervising children, they immediately report their concerns to the Duty Manager.

SECTION 6

Responding, Recording and Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

6.1 Introduction

Once a safeguarding concern has been identified, it must be responded to promptly, appropriately and without delay.

Employees and volunteers are not responsible for investigating safeguarding concerns or determining whether abuse has occurred. Their responsibility is to take appropriate immediate action where necessary, accurately record the concern and report it through Walesby Forest's safeguarding procedures.

Timely reporting is essential. Delays may place children, young people or adults at risk of further harm.

6.2 Immediate Safety

Where a child, young person or adult at risk is believed to be at immediate risk of harm, protecting their safety must always be the priority.

Employees and volunteers must take appropriate action to reduce the immediate risk, which may include:

- remaining with the individual where appropriate;
- removing them from immediate danger where it is safe to do so;
- requesting assistance from the Duty Manager;
- contacting the emergency services where there is an immediate threat to life or safety;
- notifying the Designated Safeguarding Lead or stand-in role as soon as reasonably practicable.

Immediate action must never be delayed whilst seeking advice if someone is believed to be at immediate risk.

6.3 Receiving a Disclosure

A child, young person or adult at risk may choose to disclose information to any member of staff.

Where a disclosure is made, employees and volunteers must:

- remain calm and listen carefully;
- allow the individual to speak freely without interruption where appropriate;
- take the disclosure seriously;
- reassure the individual that they have done the right thing by speaking up;
- explain that the information cannot be kept confidential and may need to be shared to keep them safe;
- avoid asking leading, probing or investigative questions;
- avoid expressing shock, disbelief or personal judgement;
- record the disclosure as soon as possible using the individual's own words wherever practicable;
- report the concern immediately in accordance with this policy.

Employees and volunteers must never:

- promise to keep the information secret;
- investigate the allegation themselves;

- confront the alleged perpetrator;
- attempt to verify the disclosure;
- delay reporting whilst seeking additional information.

6.4 Responding to Observed Concerns

Not all safeguarding concerns arise through a disclosure.

Where a concern arises from something an employee or volunteer has seen, heard or experienced, they must:

- accurately record what they have personally observed;
- clearly distinguish between fact, observation and opinion;
- avoid making assumptions or drawing conclusions;
- report the concern promptly through the organisation's safeguarding procedures.

6.5 Recording Safeguarding Concerns

Accurate and timely record keeping is essential to effective safeguarding.

All safeguarding records must be:

- factual;
- objective;
- completed as soon as possible after the concern arises;
- signed and dated;
- stored securely;
- shared only with those who have a legitimate safeguarding need to know.

Safeguarding records should include:

- the date and time of the concern;
- the location;
- the people involved;
- factual observations;
- direct quotations where appropriate;
- actions taken;
- who the concern was reported to.

Where professional opinion is included, it should be clearly identified as such.

6.6 Reporting, Assessment and Escalation of Safeguarding Concerns

Safeguarding concerns must be reported without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or, in their absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Where neither is immediately available, the concern must be reported to the Duty Manager or another appropriate senior manager, who will ensure that necessary safeguarding action is taken and that the DSL or Deputy DSL is informed as soon as reasonably practicable.

Employees and volunteers must not delay reporting a concern until the end of their shift, wait for further evidence or attempt to investigate the matter themselves.

Immediate Danger or Risk of Serious Harm

Where a child, young person or adult at risk is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical or protective intervention**,** emergency services must be contacted immediately.

Internal reporting, completion of safeguarding records or attempts to contact the DSL must never delay necessary emergency action**.**

The DSL, Deputy DSL or Duty Manager must be informed as soon as reasonably practicable following emergency action.

Safeguarding Assessment and Referral

Following receipt of a safeguarding concern, the DSL or other appropriately authorised safeguarding lead will consider the information available and determine the appropriate safeguarding response.

For concerns involving children and young people, this will be informed by the current Nottinghamshire safeguarding thresholds, procedures and referral arrangements.

The response may include:

- immediate protective or emergency action;
- consultation with or referral to Nottinghamshire Children's Social Care/MASH;
- consideration of Early Help or other support in accordance with the Nottinghamshire Framework for Support;
- liaison with the safeguarding lead of a visiting school, youth organisation or other responsible organisation where appropriate;
- consultation with or referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where the concern relates to an adult working or volunteering with children;
- contact with police or another appropriate statutory agency;
- continued monitoring and proportionate safeguarding support where a statutory referral threshold is not met; or
- escalation through the relevant Nottinghamshire professional disagreement procedure where there is disagreement or concern about the safeguarding response.

The rationale for significant safeguarding decisions, including decisions to refer, consult, monitor or take no further safeguarding action, must be appropriately recorded.

Concerns About Adults Working with Children

Where a concern or allegation relates to the conduct of an employee, volunteer, contractor, external provider or another adult working with children, it must be reported immediately in accordance with the allegation-management arrangements within this policy.

The DSL and/or CEO, as appropriate to the circumstances, will consider whether consultation with or referral to the Nottinghamshire LADO is required.

Internal disciplinary, HR, complaints or management processes must not be used as a substitute for safeguarding or LADO procedures where those procedures apply.

Escalation and Direct Referral

Where an individual believes that a safeguarding concern has not been appropriately acted upon, has been minimised or remains unresolved, they must escalate the matter through the safeguarding escalation arrangements set out in this policy.

Nothing within Walesby Forest's internal reporting arrangements prevents an employee, apprentice, volunteer, contractor or other person from contacting Children's Social Care, the LADO, police, emergency services or another appropriate statutory safeguarding agency directly where they reasonably believe this is necessary to protect an individual.

No person should assume that somebody else has made, or will make, a necessary safeguarding referral.

6.7 Information Sharing

Effective safeguarding depends upon relevant information being shared with the right people at the right time.

Walesby Forest will share safeguarding information where this is necessary and appropriate to protect a child, young person or adult at risk, support safeguarding decision-making or enable an appropriate safeguarding agency or organisation to fulfil its responsibilities.

Data protection law does not prevent the sharing of information for safeguarding purposes where there is a lawful and necessary basis for doing so.

Employees and volunteers must not allow uncertainty or concerns about data protection or confidentiality to prevent necessary safeguarding information from being reported or shared. Where an individual is unsure, they should seek advice from the DSL or other appropriate senior person, provided that doing so does not delay urgent protective action.

Principles for Safeguarding Information Sharing

Safeguarding information will be shared:

- lawfully and fairly;
- for a clear safeguarding purpose;
- only where relevant and necessary;
- proportionately to the safeguarding concern;
- accurately and, where appropriate, kept up to date;
- securely;
- with individuals or organisations who have a legitimate need to receive it; and
- in accordance with applicable safeguarding, data protection and confidentiality requirements.

Only the information reasonably necessary for the safeguarding purpose should ordinarily be shared.

Consent

Consent should be considered where appropriate, but consent is not always required before safeguarding information can be shared**.**

Information may be shared without consent where there is an appropriate lawful basis and where seeking consent would, for example:

- place a child, young person or adult at risk at increased risk of harm;
- prejudice the prevention, detection or investigation of abuse, neglect or other harm;
- cause an unreasonable delay in taking necessary safeguarding action; or
- otherwise prevent Walesby Forest or another appropriate organisation from fulfilling a safeguarding responsibility.

Where appropriate and safe to do so, individuals should be informed about how relevant safeguarding information may be used or shared.

Recording Information-Sharing Decisions

Significant decisions to share or not share safeguarding information should be recorded as part of the safeguarding record.

The record should include, where appropriate:

- what information was shared or withheld;
- with whom it was shared;
- the reason for the decision;
- whether consent was sought or obtained, where relevant; and
- the rationale where information was shared without consent.

Where there is uncertainty about whether information should be shared, advice should be sought from the DSL and, where necessary, an appropriate safeguarding, legal or data protection professional.

The safety and welfare of the child, young person or adult at risk must remain central to safeguarding information-sharing decisions.

6.8 Confidentiality

Safeguarding information is confidential and must be handled appropriately.

Information should only be shared with individuals who require it to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

Employees and volunteers must not discuss safeguarding concerns with colleagues, friends, family members or other visitors unless authorised to do so as part of the safeguarding process.

6.9 Escalating Concerns

If an Employee or volunteer believes that:

- a safeguarding concern has not been appropriately managed;
- appropriate action has not been taken; or
- a child, young person or adult at risk remains at risk of harm,

they have a responsibility to escalate the concern through the organisation's safeguarding arrangements.

Concerns may be escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Chief Executive Officer or Nominated Safeguarding Trustee, as appropriate.

Employees will not be disadvantaged for escalating a safeguarding concern in good faith.

6.10 Supporting Employees

Managing or responding to a safeguarding concern can be emotionally challenging.

Walesby Forest is committed to supporting employees and volunteers involved in safeguarding incidents by providing appropriate guidance, management support and, where necessary, access to wellbeing resources.

Providing support does not remove the requirement to maintain confidentiality.

6.11 Whistleblowing

Employees or volunteers who believe safeguarding concerns are not being appropriately managed have a responsibility to raise those concerns.

Concerns may be raised through:

- the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- the Chief Executive Officer;
- the Nominated Safeguarding Trustee;
- the Chair of Trustees;
- the organisation's Whistleblowing Policy;
- external safeguarding agencies where appropriate.

No individual will suffer detriment for raising a genuine safeguarding concern in good faith.

In Practice

A child makes a disclosure during an activity

A child tells an employee that they are frightened to go home.

The Employee or volunteer listens carefully, reassures the child that they have done the right thing by speaking up, explains that they cannot keep the information confidential, records the disclosure using the child's own words and reports the concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

An Employee observes an injury

An employee or volunteer notices bruising on a young person's arm that causes concern.

The employee does not attempt to determine the cause or ask investigative questions. They record their observations factually and report the concern in accordance with this policy.

A concern arises during an evening event

Whilst working during an evening event, an employee or volunteer becomes concerned about the welfare of a child.

The employee or volunteer immediately informs the Duty Manager, who takes appropriate action to ensure the child's immediate safety and contacts the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable

A safeguarding concern arises outside normal office hours.

The employee reports the concern to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or Duty Manager, who implements immediate safeguarding measures where required and ensures the concern is escalated through Walesby Forest's safeguarding arrangements at the earliest opportunity.

SECTION 7

Residential Safeguarding

7.1 Introduction

Residential visits provide valuable opportunities for learning, personal development and adventure. They also present additional safeguarding responsibilities because children, young people and adults at risk remain on site for extended periods and may access accommodation, welfare facilities and shared outdoor spaces.

Walesby Forest is committed to providing a safe residential environment whilst recognising that responsibility for the supervision and pastoral care of organised groups remains with the visiting organisation unless alternative arrangements have been agreed in writing.

Additional operational procedures support this section of the policy and should be followed by employees and volunteers involved in residential activities.

7.2 Responsibility During Residential Visits

For organised residential groups, the visiting organisation remains responsible for:

- supervision of participants;
- overnight supervision;
- behaviour management;
- welfare and pastoral care;
- administration of medication;
- supervision during free time;
- supervision within accommodation.

Walesby Forest remains responsible for:

- providing accommodation that is safe and suitable for its intended use;
- maintaining residential facilities;
- ensuring employees and volunteers understand their safeguarding responsibilities;
- responding appropriately to safeguarding concerns;
- taking immediate action where a child, young person or adult is believed to be at risk of harm.]

7.3 Residential Accommodation

Residential accommodation includes buildings, cabins, camping areas, pods and other overnight facilities operated by Walesby Forest.

Accommodation will be managed to promote privacy, dignity and safety.

Employees and volunteers must respect the privacy of guests and should only enter accommodation where there is a legitimate operational, welfare or emergency reason for doing so.

Where entry is required, employees and volunteers should, wherever practicable:

- announce their presence before entering;
- seek permission to enter where appropriate;
- avoid entering occupied accommodation alone where this can reasonably be avoided.

7.4 Toilets, Showers and Changing Facilities

Walesby Forest provides a combination of private and shared toilet, shower and changing facilities across the site.

Safeguarding arrangements for these facilities must seek to protect the **safety, privacy and dignity of all users**, taking account of the nature of the facility, the individuals using it and any identified safeguarding or additional needs.

Employees and volunteers working within these areas must recognise that users have a reasonable expectation of privacy and dignity.

Safe and Respectful Use of Facilities

Employees and volunteers must:

- treat all users with dignity and respect;
- be alert to bullying, harassment, intimidation, inappropriate behaviour or other safeguarding concerns within or around toilet, shower and changing facilities;
- take concerns about privacy or safety seriously;
- avoid unnecessary interaction with individuals who are changing, showering or using private facilities;
- respect individual communication, disability, sensory and additional needs;
- report safeguarding concerns without delay in accordance with this policy; and
- seek management or safeguarding advice where an individual's needs cannot safely or appropriately be accommodated through the usual arrangements.

Visiting organisations, parents and carers retain responsibility for appropriate supervision and support of children and young people in their care, including any individual assistance or personal care arrangements required.

Individual Privacy or Safeguarding Needs

Where a child or young person has complex privacy, dignity or safeguarding needs in relation to the use of toilets, showers or changing facilities**,** Walesby Forest will seek an individual and proportionate solution rather than relying upon assumptions or an ad-hoc decision by an individual employee.

This may include circumstances involving:

- SEND, disability or additional support needs;
- communication or sensory needs;
- previous or current safeguarding concerns;
- concerns about bullying, harassment or intimidation;
- significant privacy or dignity concerns; or
- a child or young person who is questioning their gender or where gender-related circumstances give rise to particular privacy or safeguarding considerations.

Where such circumstances require additional arrangements, the matter should be referred to the Duty Manager and, where there is a safeguarding issue, the DSL or Deputy DSL.

An appropriate individual assessment will consider the child's or young person's safety, dignity, privacy, wishes and individual circumstances, together with the safety, dignity and privacy of other users.

Where appropriate and safe to do so, Walesby Forest will liaise with the child's parent or carer and/or responsible visiting organisation when agreeing arrangements.

Any additional arrangement should be necessary, proportionate and practical, and should avoid unnecessary disclosure of sensitive personal information.

Employees and volunteers must not question a child or young person unnecessarily about private personal matters or attempt to make safeguarding, medical or other assessments outside their role or competence.

Cleaning, Maintenance and Inspection

Cleaning, maintenance and inspection of toilets, showers and changing facilities forms part of the normal operation of Walesby Forest and may need to take place while facilities remain open to guests.

Employees and volunteers undertaking these duties must:

- announce their presence before entering where appropriate;
- be mindful that individuals may be changing or using facilities;
- minimise unnecessary interaction while carrying out their duties;
- temporarily step away where reasonably necessary to protect an individual's privacy or dignity; and
- report anything observed that gives rise to a safeguarding concern.

Where cleaning or maintenance requires access to an enclosed cubicle, private shower area or other space in which an individual would reasonably expect complete privacy, reasonable steps should be taken to establish that the space is vacant before entering.

Where work cannot safely or appropriately be completed while an area is occupied, the relevant area may be temporarily closed or access appropriately controlled while the work is undertaken.

7.5 Housekeeping, Maintenance and Bar Assistants

Housekeeping, maintenance, bar assistants and volunteers play an important role in maintaining a safe, clean and welcoming environment for all visitors.

As part of their normal duties, they may require access to accommodation, shared facilities and operational areas whilst guests are present on site.

Employees and volunteers must:

- always wear uniform to identify themselves;
- always respect the privacy and dignity of others;
- agree with teachers and group leaders how work will be conducted in their private accommodation;
- announce their presence before entering private accommodation where appropriate;
- minimise unnecessary interaction whilst undertaking their duties;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- report any safeguarding concerns immediately.

Employees and volunteers should only enter occupied accommodation where there is a legitimate operational, welfare or emergency reason for doing so.

Requested cleaning of occupied accommodation should only take place with the knowledge or agreement of the occupants or the responsible group leader.

7.6 Residential Behaviour and Welfare

Employees and volunteers may become aware of behaviour or circumstances that raise safeguarding concerns during residential visits.

Examples may include:

- a child appearing distressed or isolated;
- concerning behaviour between young people;
- inappropriate behaviour by adults;
- safeguarding concerns arising during evening activities;
- concerns relating to visitors or members of the public.

Employees and volunteers must respond in accordance with Section 6 of this policy.

Employees and volunteers should not attempt to manage safeguarding concerns independently unless immediate action is required to protect someone from harm.

7.7 Mixed Residential Environment

Walesby Forest may accommodate multiple residential groups and members of the public at the same time.

Appropriate planning and operational arrangements will be implemented to minimise safeguarding risks associated with shared use of the site.

These may include:

- allocating accommodation appropriately;
- managing activity schedules;
- implementing additional supervision during busy periods;
- restricting access or designating facilities where necessary;
- implementing additional safeguarding measures during large events.

7.8 Work Experience

Individuals undertaking residential work experience placements directly with Walesby Forest require additional safeguarding arrangements.

These arrangements will include:

- appropriate induction;

- welfare support;
- suitable accommodation arrangements;
- appropriate supervision;
- clear reporting routes for safeguarding concerns.

7.9 Concerns Arising Overnight

Safeguarding concerns may arise outside normal working hours.

Walesby Forest maintains arrangements to ensure concerns can be responded to promptly at any time. Employees and volunteers must respond in accordance with Section 6 of this policy.

7.10 Residential Safeguarding Principles

All employees involved in residential operations must:

- respect privacy and dignity;
- maintain professional boundaries;
- avoid unnecessary one-to-one situations;
- remain alert to safeguarding concerns;
- report concerns immediately;
- act in the best interests of children, young people and adults at risk at all times.

In Practice

Housekeeping discovers a child alone in a shower block

A member of the housekeeping team enters a shower block after following the agreed entry procedure and discovers a child who appears distressed and unaccompanied.

The employee checks on the child's immediate welfare, avoids asking investigative questions, contacts the Duty Manager and reports the concern in accordance with Section 6.

Employee required to enter accommodation

An employee needs to enter accommodation to investigate a maintenance issue.

Where practicable, the employee announces their presence, seeks permission to enter and avoids entering occupied accommodation alone.

Safeguarding concern during an evening activity

Whilst supervising an evening activity, an employee becomes concerned about the interaction between two young people.

The employee takes appropriate immediate action if required, reports the concern to the Duty Manager and records the incident in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

SECTION 8

Transporting Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

8.1 Introduction

From time to time, Walesby Forest employees may need to transport children, young people or adults at risk in connection with the safe operation of the site. This may include transportation within the estate using authorised site vehicles or, in exceptional circumstances, transportation away from the site, for example to obtain medical treatment.

Transporting children presents additional safeguarding responsibilities and must only take place where there is a legitimate operational or welfare reason for doing so.

All transport must be carried out in a manner that protects the safety, dignity and welfare of the child, young person or adult at risk whilst also protecting employees from situations that could lead to misunderstandings or allegations.

Separate operational procedures provide detailed guidance for employees involved in transporting children and young people.

8.2 General Principles

Transporting a child, young person of adult at risk should always be the exception rather than the routine.

Where transport is necessary, Walesby Forest will ensure that:

- the reason for transport is legitimate, necessary and proportionate;
- appropriate authorisation has been obtained wherever practicable;
- their safety and welfare remain the primary consideration;
- journeys are undertaken using authorised vehicles operated by authorised drivers;
- safeguarding considerations are taken into account before, during and after the journey.

8.3 Responsibility

For organised groups, responsibility for the supervision, welfare and pastoral care of the child, young person or adult at risk remains with the visiting school, youth organisation or group leader throughout their visit.

Where Walesby Forest provides transport for an individual on behalf of an organised group, the normal safeguarding arrangement is for a responsible adult from the visiting organisation to accompany the child.

The provision of transport by Walesby Forest does not transfer responsibility for the individual's supervision or pastoral care from the visiting organisation.

8.4 Accompanying Adults

Walesby Forest will seek to avoid situations where an employee transports an individual child, young person or adult at risk alone.

For planned or non-emergency transport involving an individual, the normal arrangement will be for two adults to be present at all times. This will ordinarily comprise:

- one authorised Walesby Forest employee driving the vehicle; and
- a teacher, group leader, parent, guardian or other appropriate adult accompanying the child, young person or adult at risk.

This provides an expected ratio of 2:1 when Walesby Forest transports an individual.

Where an unforeseen emergency makes this arrangement impossible, the immediate safety and welfare of the child will take priority. Any departure from the normal arrangement must be reported to the appropriate persons as soon as reasonably practicable.

8.5 Transport Within the Walesby Forest Site

Authorised site vehicles may be used to transport a child, young person or adult at risk around the site where there is a legitimate operational, medical or welfare reason.

Examples may include:

- transporting an injured participant;
- transporting a participant who is unable to continue an activity;
- transporting a late arrival to join their group;
- transporting a participant for welfare reasons agreed with the responsible organisation;
- transporting a lost, missing or found individual.

Employees operating site vehicles must:

- hold any required authorisation to drive the vehicle;
- ensure passengers travel safely;
- comply with site traffic management arrangements;
- report any safeguarding concerns arising during transport.

Where an individual child is transported, the arrangements set out within Section 8.4 will normally apply.

Where possible, these arrangements should be anticipated and communicated by the visiting organisation so that an appropriate responsible adult is available to accompany the individual.

8.6 Hospital and Medical Transport

The visiting organisation remains responsible for making arrangements for a child, young person or adult at risk requiring non-emergency transportation to hospital or another healthcare setting.

Responsible adults are encouraged to have appropriate transport arrangements available for this purpose during their visit.

Where emergency medical assistance is required, the emergency services should be contacted.

In exceptional circumstances, where an ambulance is not required and the visiting organisation cannot reasonably provide transport, Walesby Forest may agree to transport an individual to an appropriate healthcare setting.

Where Walesby Forest provides this transport:

- the journey must be authorised by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Safeguarding Lead or Duty Manager;
- a teacher or responsible group leader must accompany the individual;
- the Walesby Forest employee will drive the vehicle;
- the normal 2:1 safeguarding arrangement will apply;
- the journey and circumstances must be appropriately recorded.

8.7 Late Arrivals

Where a child, young person or adult at risk arrives after their organised group has moved away from the main arrival area, the visiting organisation remains responsible for arranging for the individual to join their group wherever reasonably possible.

Where Walesby Forest is asked to transport the child, young person or adult at risk:

- agreement must be obtained from the individuals parent/guardian and the visiting organisation;
- the destination and receiving responsible adult must be confirmed;
- two adults must normally accompany the individual, one of whom may be the individual's parent/guardian;
- the Walesby Forest employee must be authorised to operate the vehicle;
- the individual must be transferred directly into the care of the agreed responsible adult on arrival.

8.8 Early Collection

Where a parent / guardian needs to collect an individual from an organised visit before the planned departure time, Walesby Forest will support the collection arrangements once notified.

The visiting organisation remains responsible for the individual and for arranging for them to be brought to the agreed collection point.

For school, youth and organised groups, the normal arrangement is for the leader or teacher to arrange for an appropriate member of organisation to accompany the child to meeting point.

Walesby Forest employees should not ordinarily transport an individual to for early collection unless arrangements are made in accordance with the arrangements set out within Section 8.4 of this framework.

Responsibility for verifying that the individual may be released to the collecting adult remains with the visiting organisation.

8.9 Emergency Exceptions

There may be exceptional circumstances where following the normal transport arrangements would create a greater risk to the child, young person or adult at risk than departing from them.

Where immediate action is required to preserve life, prevent serious injury or protect an individual from immediate harm, employees must prioritise the individual's safety.

Any departure from the normal safeguarding arrangements must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy Safeguarding Lead or stand-in role and recorded, including the reason why the alternative action was considered necessary.

8.10 Professional Boundaries

Employees must maintain appropriate professional boundaries throughout any journey involving a child, young person or adult at risk.

Employees must:

- always remain professional;
- avoid unnecessary conversation of a personal nature;
- avoid physical contact unless required for safety or first aid;
- report any safeguarding concerns arising during transport.

8.11 Record Keeping

Where transport is undertaken outside routine operational arrangements, an appropriate record should be made in the liaison record sheet.

The record should include:

- the reason for the journey;
- the date and time;
- the individuals involved;
- who authorised the transport;
- any safeguarding considerations;
- any significant events during the journey.

In Practice

Late arrival

A pupil arrives after their school group has already travelled to the activity area.

Where transport is required, Walesby Forest confirms the arrangements with the school and ensures that another authorised adult such as a parent / guardian accompanies the journey.

Transport to hospital

A participant requires hospital treatment following an accident.

An ambulance is requested where appropriate. If transport by Walesby Forest is necessary, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or stand-in role authorises the journey and arrangements are made for a responsible adult from the visiting organisation to accompany the individual.

Welfare transport

An individual needs transport to the lake as they are unable to walk the distance due to an injury.

The responsible teacher or group leader makes contact to request transportation; assistance is agreed with the provision that the responsible adult from the visiting organisation is to accompany the individual.

SECTION 9

Missing, Lost and Found Persons

9.1 Introduction

Walesby Forest is committed to responding promptly, proportionately and effectively whenever a child, young person or adult at risk is believed to be lost, separated from their responsible adult or missing.

The safety and welfare of the individual will always be the primary consideration. Employees and volunteers must act without delay whenever they believe an individual may be at risk.

Detailed operational procedures support this section of the policy and provide guidance on searching, escalation, contacting emergency services and recording incidents.

9.2 Responsibility

For organised visits, responsibility for supervising children, young persons and adults at risk remain with the visiting organisation.

For public visitors, responsibility remains with the individual's parent, guardian or responsible adult.

However, where Walesby Forest employees and volunteers become aware that an individual may be lost, separated or missing, the organisation will take appropriate action to safeguard the child whilst working alongside the responsible adult or organisation.

Safeguarding responsibilities apply regardless of who retains overall supervision.

9.3 Lost and Found Child, Young Person or Adult at Risk

A lost or found child, young person or adult at risk in an individual who has become separated from their parent, responsible adult or organised group leader, but whose whereabouts are believed to be within the Walesby Forest site.

Employees and volunteers must:

- remain calm;
- reassure the individual where appropriate;
- notify the Duty Manager immediately;
- establish the child's name and, where possible, the group or responsible adult;
- remain in the area where the individual was located for 15 minutes with the individual before considering transferring them to another location
- ensure a second Walesby Forest employee provides a ratio of 2:1 until responsibility has been safely transferred;
- if after 15 minutes the individual has not been reunited with the group or responsible adult, transportation to Reception should be undertaken in accordance with section 8 of this policy.

Employees must never leave a lost child unattended and/or leave volunteers to remain with the individual without a Walesby Forest employee present.

9.4 Missing Child, Young Person or Adult at Risk

A person will be treated as missing where their whereabouts are unknown and the circumstances give rise to concern for their safety or welfare.

A report that a child, young person or adult at risk may be missing must be taken seriously and acted upon without delay. Employees and volunteers must not assume that the individual will return, that somebody else is dealing with the matter, or that responsibility rests solely with a visiting organisation, parent or carer.

Where an individual is believed to be missing, Walesby Forest will:

- notify the Duty Manager immediately;
- establish the information reasonably available about the individual, their last known location and the circumstances in which they became missing;
- work collaboratively with the responsible visiting organisation, parent or carer where applicable;
- implement the Missing, Lost and Found Person Procedure;
- consider any known factors that may increase the individual's vulnerability or the urgency of the response;
- notify the DSL or Deputy DSL where the circumstances give rise to a safeguarding concern;
- contact the police or emergency services without delay where the circumstances require it; and
- maintain an accurate record of decisions and actions taken.

Known vulnerabilities or circumstances affecting the response may include, but are not limited to:

- age and level of independence;
- SEND, disability or communication needs;
- medical or mental-health needs;
- previous or current safeguarding concerns;
- known risks of exploitation, self-harm or other harm;
- environmental conditions;
- proximity to water, woodland, roads or other hazards;
- weather, temperature and hours of darkness; and
- the length of time the individual has been unaccounted for.

The existence of a visiting organisation's, parent's or carer's supervisory responsibility does not prevent Walesby Forest from taking immediate action where it becomes aware that an individual may be at risk.

9.5 Immediate Action and Escalation

The Duty Manager will coordinate Walesby Forest's immediate operational response in accordance with the Missing, Lost and Found Person Procedure and ensure that appropriate safeguarding and senior management escalation takes place.

The response must be proportionate to the circumstances and assessed risk, but uncertainty about organisational responsibility must never delay action necessary to protect an individual.

The police or other emergency services must be contacted without delay where there is an immediate or significant concern for the individual's safety, including where the known circumstances or vulnerabilities indicate that waiting or continuing an internal search could place the individual at increased risk.

Where there is immediate danger to life or a serious and immediate threat to safety, 999 must be called.

Where the circumstances indicate a safeguarding concern, the DSL or Deputy DSL must be informed and consideration given to whether a safeguarding referral or other external safeguarding action is required in accordance with Section 6.

The responsible visiting organisation, parent or carer should be informed promptly and involved in the response where appropriate. However, their involvement must not delay necessary protective action or contact with the emergency services.

The separate Missing, Lost and Found Person Procedure will define the operational arrangements, including:

- who leads and coordinates a search;
- immediate search and communication arrangements;
- escalation triggers;
- responsibilities of Walesby Forest and the visiting organisation, parent or carer;
- when and how the police or emergency services are contacted;
- management of known vulnerabilities and higher-risk circumstances;
- safeguarding escalation and referral;
- actions when the individual is located; and
- incident recording, debrief and review.

9.6 Communication

Effective communication is essential during any incident involving a lost or missing person.

Employees must ensure relevant information is communicated promptly to:

- the Duty Manager;
- the Designated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy Safeguarding Lead where appropriate;
- the responsible teacher, leader or parent/guardian;
- emergency services where required.

Relevant safeguarding information may be shared with emergency services, statutory safeguarding agencies and other appropriate organisations by the DSL, Deputy DSL, Duty Manager, CEO or other authorised person where necessary in accordance with this policy.

Any communication with the media or public statement concerning a safeguarding incident must be authorised by the CEO or, where appropriate, the Chair of Trustees.

9.7 Recording

All incidents involving lost, found or missing persons must be recorded.

Records should include:

- date and time;
- location;
- people involved;
- actions taken;
- key decisions;
- outcome;
- any learning identified following the incident.

Records will be retained in accordance with Walesby Forest's safeguarding record retention arrangements.

9.8 Learning and Review

Following any significant incident involving a missing person, Walesby Forest will review the circumstances to identify any learning that may improve future safeguarding arrangements.

Where appropriate, this may include reviewing:

- operational procedures;
- communication arrangements;
- supervision;
- site management;
- risk assessments;
- employee and volunteering training.

In Practice

Child separated from school group

An employee is approached by a child who cannot find their teacher.

The employee reassures the child, contacts the Duty Manager, gains support from a second employee to ensure a ratio of 2:1 and remains with the child whilst the teacher is located.

Young child wandering alone

A member of the housekeeping team notices a young child walking alone across the campsite during a public camping period.

The employee calmly approaches the child, establishes that they cannot find their parent and contacts the Duty Manager whilst remaining with the child. A second employee arrives to ensure a ratio of 2:1 whilst additional team members are deployed to locate the patent/guardian.

Missing residential participant

A school reports that a pupil has not returned to their accommodation after an evening activity.

The Duty Manager immediately implements the Missing, Lost and Found Person Procedure, works alongside the school and escalates the situation to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

SECTION 10

Professional Conduct and Safeguarding Practice

10.1 Introduction

Professional conduct is fundamental to creating and maintaining a safe environment for children, young people and adults at risk.

All employees and volunteers are expected to behave in a manner that promotes trust, maintains appropriate professional boundaries and protects both visitors and themselves from situations that may give rise to safeguarding concerns or allegations.

Professional conduct always applies whilst undertaking duties on behalf of Walesby Forest, including during activities, residential visits, public events and whilst interacting with all visitors across the site.

10.2 Professional Boundaries and Staff Code of Conduct

The maintenance of appropriate professional boundaries is a core safeguarding requirement at Walesby Forest.

All employees and volunteers must comply with this Safeguarding Policy and the Walesby Forest Staff Code of Conduct, which forms an important part of the organisation's safeguarding arrangements.

Employees and volunteers must:

- act professionally, respectfully and appropriately;
- maintain relationships with children, young people and adults at risk that are appropriate to their role;
- avoid behaviour that could reasonably be misinterpreted or undermine trust;
- treat individuals fairly and consistently;
- avoid favouritism or inappropriate personal relationships;
- maintain appropriate language and behaviour;
- never make sexualised, discriminatory, degrading or otherwise inappropriate comments;
- never use a position of trust or authority for personal advantage or to establish an inappropriate relationship;
- challenge inappropriate behaviour where safe and appropriate to do so; and
- report concerns about the conduct of another employee, volunteer, contractor or other person in accordance with this policy, including the arrangements for allegations and low-level concerns.

The Staff Code of Conduct must support and be consistent with this policy and set clear expectations concerning professional conduct, including where relevant:

- one-to-one contact;
- physical contact;
- toilets, showers and changing areas;
- access to guest and residential accommodation;
- personal devices and photography;
- gifts and favouritism;
- social media and private communication;
- transport;
- alcohol and substance use;

- positions of trust;
- sexualised or inappropriate comments and behaviour; and
- raising and reporting concerns about colleagues.

Employees and volunteers must receive the Staff Code of Conduct as part of their induction and must confirm that they have read, understood and agree to comply with it.

Failure to comply with safeguarding requirements or the Staff Code of Conduct may result in action under Walesby Forest's relevant employment, disciplinary, volunteer management or safeguarding procedures, as appropriate.

10.3 One-to-One Situations

Walesby Forest seeks to avoid unnecessary one-to-one situations between employees or volunteers and children, young people or adults at risk.

One-to-one contact may nevertheless be necessary for legitimate operational, safety or safeguarding reasons, including first aid, immediate welfare needs, responding to a disclosure, transport, disability or individual support needs, or other circumstances where appropriate assistance is required.

Where one-to-one interaction is necessary, it must be proportionate to the circumstances and the individual's safety, welfare, privacy and dignity must be appropriately safeguarded.

Where reasonably practicable:

- the interaction should take place in an open, observable or otherwise interruptible environment;
- the employee or volunteer should notify another member of staff of the situation and, where appropriate, their location;
- a radio should be available and used to request support where required;
- where the situation requires closer or continued one-to-one support, a second employee or other appropriate responsible adult should attend so that a 2:1 adult-to-child arrangement can be established; and
- the interaction should last no longer than is reasonably necessary.

Where an immediate safety, first-aid, welfare or safeguarding concern means that an employee or volunteer is temporarily alone with a child or young person, the need to protect the individual must take priority over maintaining the preferred 2:1 arrangement**.** The employee or volunteer must maintain appropriate professional boundaries and request additional support as soon as reasonably practicable.

Where privacy is required for a welfare or safeguarding conversation, reasonable steps should be taken to balance confidentiality with the safety of both the individual and the employee or volunteer. This may include remaining within sight of others, using an appropriate room in which the interaction can be interrupted, keeping a door open where appropriate, notifying another employee of the location and maintaining radio contact.

Where a one-to-one interaction is unusual, significant, gives rise to a safeguarding concern or departs from normal working arrangements, it should be reported and recorded as appropriate to the circumstances.

One-to-one working arrangements must never prevent or delay an employee or volunteer from providing immediate assistance where somebody's safety or welfare is at risk

10.4 Physical Contact

There may be occasions where appropriate physical contact is necessary, for example:

- to ensure safety during an activity;
- to prevent injury;
- to provide emergency first aid;
- to assist an individual during an emergency.

Any physical contact must:

- be appropriate to the circumstances;
- be proportionate;
- be the least intrusive option available;
- respect the dignity of the individual;
- cease as soon as it is no longer necessary.

Physical contact must never be used as a form of personal reassurance.

10.5 Behaviour and Language

Employees and volunteers are expected to demonstrate behaviour that reflects the values of Walesby Forest.

This includes:

- communicating respectfully;
- using language appropriate to the age and understanding of the individual;
- remaining calm during challenging situations;
- avoiding behaviour and language that may intimidate, embarrass or humiliate others.

Discriminatory, abusive, sexually inappropriate or offensive language or behaviour will not be tolerated.

10.6 Photography and Filming

Photography and filming may take place during activities, events and other Walesby Forest operations for legitimate purposes, including promoting Walesby Forest and celebrating participants' experiences.

All photography and filming must be lawful, appropriate and respectful of the privacy, dignity and safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk.

Employees and volunteers must:

- comply with Walesby Forest's Photography and Privacy procedures;
- respect consent arrangements and photography restrictions communicated by visiting organisations, parents or carers;
- use authorised equipment for work-related photography or filming;
- ensure images obtained for Walesby Forest purposes are stored, used and shared only through authorised arrangements;
- avoid taking photographs or footage which could reasonably cause embarrassment, compromise dignity or create a safeguarding risk; and

- immediately report concerns about inappropriate photography, filming, possession, creation, alteration, use or sharing of images.

Employees and volunteers must not use personal devices to photograph or film children, young people or adults at risk for work purposes unless specifically authorised by Walesby Forest.

Private and Sensitive Areas

Photography or filming of individuals is prohibited in toilets, showers and changing facilities except where specifically required for an authorised and legitimate safeguarding, emergency or evidential purpose and appropriately managed.

Photography or filming must not take place in sleeping accommodation or other private areas in circumstances where an individual has a reasonable expectation of privacy, particularly where somebody is changing, undressed, sleeping or otherwise in a private or vulnerable situation.

This does not prevent appropriately authorised photography of unoccupied accommodation or facilities for legitimate operational, maintenance or promotional purposes.

Image-Based Abuse and Manipulated Imagery

Any concern involving the taking, creation, possession, alteration, sharing or threatened sharing of sexualised, nude, semi-nude or otherwise intimate images of a child or young person must be treated as a safeguarding concern and reported immediately in accordance with this policy.

This includes:

- consensual or non-consensual sharing of intimate images;
- taking or sharing images without the individual's knowledge or permission;
- coercing, pressuring or threatening somebody to create or share an image;
- threatening to distribute an intimate image;
- image-based bullying, harassment or exploitation; and
- digitally manipulated or AI-generated sexualised or intimate imagery, including so-called deepfakes.

Employees and volunteers must not forward, copy, download or unnecessarily view suspected intimate imagery in an attempt to investigate the matter. The concern must instead be preserved and reported in accordance with Walesby Forest's safeguarding arrangements so that appropriate advice and action can be taken.

Any photography or filming concern involving a child, young person or adult at risk must be considered not only as a potential breach of photography or privacy requirements but also for any wider safeguarding implications.

10.7 Gifts, Favouritism and Personal Relationships

Employees and volunteers must maintain impartial and professional relationships with visitors.

They must not:

- show favouritism towards individuals;
- accept personal gifts or hospitality from individual children, young people or adults at risk;
- give personal gifts to children, young people or adults at risk;

- establish relationships that extend beyond appropriate professional boundaries.

Any concerns relating to professional boundaries should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

10.8 Social Media and Personal Communication

Employees and volunteers must maintain appropriate professional boundaries when using social media and electronic communication.

They must not:

- communicate privately with children, young people or adults at risk through personal social media accounts or messaging platforms;
- share personal contact details unless authorised as part of their role;
- engage in online behaviour that could undermine professional trust or bring Walesby Forest into disrepute.

Where digital communication forms part of an organised programme or activity, it must take place through approved organisational channels.

10.9 Visitors' Behaviour

All visitors are expected to contribute to a safe, respectful and inclusive environment.

Walesby Forest reserves the right to challenge or take appropriate action where the behaviour of any visitor places others at risk or is inconsistent with maintaining a safe and respectful environment.

Serious concerns may result in individuals being asked to leave the site and, where appropriate, referral to statutory agencies.

10.10 Concerns About Professional Conduct

Any concerns regarding the conduct of an employee, volunteer, contractor or other adult working on behalf of Walesby Forest must be reported immediately in accordance with Section 6 and Section 14 of this policy.

Low-level concerns, allegations and breaches of professional boundaries will be managed fairly, proportionately and in accordance with the organisation's safeguarding procedures.

In Practice

Appropriate physical contact

An instructor provides physical support to a participant during a climbing activity to ensure their safety.

The contact is proportionate, appropriate to the activity and ceases as soon as it is no longer required.

One-to-one conversation

A young person on a school residential trip becomes upset during an activity and asks to speak privately.

The employee raises the concern to the teacher so they can support the child.

Personal social media request

A young person sends a friend request to an employee following a residential visit.

The employee does not accept the request and maintains professional boundaries.

Inappropriate photography

An employee observes a visitor taking photographs that cause concern.

The employee reports the matter to the Duty Manager, who assesses the situation and takes appropriate action in accordance with Walesby Forest procedures.

SECTION 11

Online Safety and Digital Communication

11.1 Introduction

Technology plays an important role in the planning of activities, communication and promotion at Walesby Forest. It also presents safeguarding risks that require appropriate management.

Walesby Forest is committed to promoting the safe, lawful and responsible use of technology whilst protecting the privacy, dignity and wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk.

11.2 Online Safety

Children, young people and adults at risk may be exposed to online safeguarding risks before, during and after their visit to Walesby Forest.

Online safety risks may arise through an individual's own devices, social media and online platforms, communication with other people, connected devices and, where available, networks accessed while at Walesby Forest.

Walesby Forest recognises that online safeguarding risks can broadly relate to content, contact, conduct and commerce, and that these risks can overlap with safeguarding concerns occurring offline.

Employees and volunteers should remain alert to concerns including:

- cyberbullying, harassment and discriminatory abuse;
- online grooming;
- sexual or criminal exploitation;
- radicalisation and extremist content;
- harmful, inappropriate or age-inappropriate content;
- inappropriate or abusive online relationships;
- coercive, controlling or threatening online behaviour;
- sexual harassment and sexualised communication;
- image-based abuse, including the creation, possession, sharing or threatened sharing of intimate imagery;
- manipulated, AI-generated or deepfake images or other content used to abuse, humiliate, exploit or harass;
- impersonation or misuse of another person's identity;
- harmful activity through gaming, messaging, social-media or other online platforms; and
- financial exploitation, scams or other online activity which creates a safeguarding risk.

Online behaviour must not be dismissed as less serious simply because it occurs digitally. An online concern may form part of a wider pattern of abuse, exploitation, bullying, harassment or other safeguarding risk.

Where an employee or volunteer becomes aware of an online-safety concern involving a child, young person or adult at risk, they must report it in accordance with Section 6 of this policy.

Employees and volunteers should not attempt to investigate online safeguarding concerns themselves by accessing accounts, searching devices, forwarding material or unnecessarily viewing harmful or intimate

content. Relevant information should be preserved and referred through Walesby Forest's safeguarding arrangements so that appropriate action can be determined.

Where an online concern indicates that an individual may be in immediate danger, urgent protective action must not be delayed while internal safeguarding processes are followed.

Walesby Forest Network Access

Where Walesby Forest provides internet or Wi-Fi access to guests, employees, volunteers or other users, appropriate technical and organisational measures will be maintained proportionate to the nature of the service, the users and the safeguarding risks identified.

Any safeguarding concern identified through the operation or use of Walesby Forest's networks must be escalated through the organisation's safeguarding arrangements.

11.3 Use of Personal Devices

Employees and volunteers should use organisational equipment where photography or digital communication forms part of their role.

Personal devices must not be used to:

- photograph or film children or young people for work purposes without authorisation;
- store safeguarding information;
- communicate privately with children or young people in connection with Walesby Forest activities.

Any exceptional use must be authorised and managed in accordance with organisational procedures.

11.4 Digital Communication

Communication with schools, youth organisations, parents and participants should take place through approved organisational channels.

Employees and volunteers must not:

- communicate privately with children or young people using personal messaging applications;
- use personal social media accounts for work-related communication with participants;
- share contact details unless authorised as part of their role.

Professional boundaries apply equally to digital and face-to-face communication.

11.5 Social Media

Employees and volunteers should ensure that their use of social media maintains public confidence in Walesby Forest.

They must not:

- publish information that could identify or place visitors at risk;
- share safeguarding information;
- engage in online behaviour that undermines professional boundaries;

- post images of children, young people or adults at risk obtained through their work.

Concerns relating to online conduct should be reported in accordance with section 6 of this policy.

11.6 Artificial Intelligence and Digital Content

The increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI), image-manipulation technologies and other digital tools creates safeguarding risks which must be treated as seriously as equivalent behaviour involving genuine images or traditional forms of communication.

Employees and volunteers should remain alert to concerns involving:

- manipulated or AI-generated images, video, audio or other content;
- AI-generated sexualised, nude, semi-nude or intimate imagery;
- manipulated photographs and deepfake imagery;
- the creation, possession, sharing or threatened sharing of intimate or sexualised images;
- image-based abuse, harassment, bullying or exploitation;
- impersonation or the creation of false identities or communications;
- the use of AI or digital technology to groom, coerce, threaten, humiliate, exploit, harass or deceive an individual;
- online scams or financial exploitation targeting children, young people or adults at risk; and
- other uses of AI or digital technologies which give rise to a safeguarding concern.

The fact that an image, recording or other material has been digitally manipulated or artificially generated does not reduce the seriousness of the safeguarding concern. The impact upon the individual and the circumstances in which the material is created, possessed, used, shared or threatened to be shared must be considered.

Any concern involving sexualised or intimate imagery of a child or young person, including manipulated, AI-generated or deepfake material, must be treated as a safeguarding concern and reported without delay in accordance with this policy.

Employees and volunteers must not attempt to investigate such concerns themselves by unnecessarily viewing, copying, downloading, forwarding or sharing suspected intimate or harmful material. The concern should be reported through Walesby Forest's safeguarding arrangements so that appropriate action can be determined.

Where AI-generated or digital content forms part of bullying, harassment, exploitation, coercive behaviour, sexual abuse or another safeguarding concern, it must be considered within the wider circumstances and pattern of behaviour, rather than treated solely as a technology issue.

11.7 CCTV

Walesby Forest operates CCTV in parts of the site to support safety, security and safeguarding.

CCTV is managed in accordance with data protection legislation and organisational procedures.

CCTV may assist safeguarding investigations but does not replace the responsibility of employees and volunteers to recognise, report and respond to safeguarding concerns.

11.8 Information Security

Safeguarding information must be always handled securely.

Employees and volunteers must:

- protect confidential information;
- ensure safeguarding records are stored securely;
- only share information with authorised individuals;
- report any suspected data breach immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

11.9 Concerns Relating to Digital Safety

Any concerns regarding online activity, digital communication, photography, filming or the misuse of technology must be reported in accordance with section 6 of this policy.

Where criminal offences are suspected, the matter will be referred to the appropriate authorities.

In Practice

Photography during an activity

An employee notices that a visiting school has advised that several pupils must not be photographed.

The employee ensures that this information is communicated to anyone undertaking authorised photography on behalf of Walesby Forest and that those restrictions are respected.

Concern regarding a visitor

A volunteer becomes concerned that a visitor is taking photographs of children who are unknown to them.

The concern is reported immediately to the Duty Manager, who assesses the circumstances and takes appropriate action.

Online disclosure

A young person contacts Walesby Forest through an official communication channel following a residential visit and makes a safeguarding disclosure.

The employee receiving the message follows the organisation's safeguarding reporting procedure in section 6 in the same way as they would for a face-to-face disclosure.

SECTION 12

Safeguarding Adults at Risk

12.1 Introduction

Walesby Forest's safeguarding responsibilities extend to adults at risk who visit, work, volunteer or participate in activities at the site.

An adult at risk may attend Walesby Forest independently, with family or carers, as part of an organised group, through a volunteering or work placement, or as a participant in an event or activity.

Walesby Forest will promote the safety, dignity, wellbeing and rights of adults at risk and will respond appropriately where concerns arise.

12.2 Responsibility for Adults at Risk

Where an adult at risk attends Walesby Forest as part of an organised group, the visiting organisation remains responsible for any agreed care, support and supervision arrangements.

Where an adult attends with a carer or support worker, responsibility for providing their assessed care and support remains with that individual or their employing organisation.

Walesby Forest does not assume responsibility for personal care, medication or specialist support unless this forms part of a separately agreed and appropriately assessed arrangement.

This does not remove Walesby Forest's responsibility to recognise, respond to and report safeguarding concerns.

12.3 Recognising Concerns

Safeguarding concerns relating to adults at risk may arise through:

- direct disclosure;
- observation of concerning behaviour;
- unexplained injuries or changes in presentation;
- neglect or apparent failure to meet care needs;
- inappropriate relationships or interactions;
- financial or material exploitation;
- coercion or controlling behaviour;
- discriminatory treatment;
- organisational or institutional practices;
- concerns regarding a carer, family member, employee or other person.

Employees and volunteers are not responsible for determining whether abuse has occurred.

Concerns must be managed in accordance with Sections 5 and 6 of this policy.

12.4 Choice, Capacity and Consent

Adults should be supported to make their own decisions wherever they have capacity to do so.

An adult making a decision that others consider unwise does not, by itself, mean that the person lacks capacity.

Where concerns exist regarding an adult's ability to understand or make a particular decision, employees must seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead rather than making assumptions about the person's capacity.

Where an adult at risk is in immediate danger, action may be necessary to protect them regardless of whether consent to share information has been obtained.

12.5 Dignity and Independence

Adults at risk must be treated with dignity and respect.

Where reasonably practicable, Walesby Forest will support individuals to participate in activities and use facilities in a manner that promotes independence and avoids unnecessary restrictions.

Safeguarding arrangements should be proportionate to the individual and the circumstances rather than based solely upon disability, age, diagnosis or appearance.

12.6 Reporting Concerns

Concerns regarding an adult at risk must be reported through the safeguarding arrangements set out in Section 6.

Where appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider whether information should be shared with:

- the relevant local authority safeguarding adult's service;
- emergency services;
- health professionals;
- the organisation responsible for the adult's care or support;
- other relevant statutory agencies.

Where immediate danger exists, protecting the individual from harm takes priority.

In Practice

Concern about a carer

An employee observes a carer repeatedly speaking aggressively to an adult they are supporting and becomes concerned about the individual's welfare.

The employee does not confront or investigate the situation independently. The observations are recorded and reported in accordance with Section 6.

Adult discloses a concern

An adult participating in an activity tells an employee that someone is taking money from them without permission.

The employee listens, records what has been said and reports the concern in accordance with Section 6.

SECTION 13

Safer Recruitment, Suitability and DBS

13.1 Introduction

Walesby Forest recognises that safer recruitment is an essential part of safeguarding.

The organisation will take reasonable and proportionate steps to prevent unsuitable individuals from obtaining roles that provide inappropriate access to children, young people or adults at risk.

Safer recruitment applies not only at the point of appointment but throughout an individual's employment, volunteering or engagement with Walesby Forest.

13.2 Safer Recruitment

Recruitment and selection arrangements will be proportionate to the nature of the role and the level of safeguarding responsibility or contact associated with it.

For roles involving contact with children, young people or adults at risk, or access to environments in which they are present, Walesby Forest will apply appropriate safer recruitment controls. These will include, where relevant to the role:

- clear job descriptions and person specifications;
- identification of safeguarding responsibilities within role information;
- scrutiny of the applicant's employment history, including appropriate consideration of unexplained or significant gaps;
- safeguarding-related questions as part of the interview and selection process;
- verification of identity and right to work;
- verification of qualifications, licences or professional competencies required for the role;
- obtaining and appropriately verifying references;
- completion of the appropriate DBS and, where legally eligible or required, Barred List checks;
- recording relevant safer recruitment decisions; and
- safeguarding induction before or at the commencement of duties.

References required as part of the safer recruitment process should normally be obtained directly from the referee or independently verified where their authenticity cannot otherwise be established.

Where agency workers, contractors, self-employed personnel or external providers undertake work involving safeguarding responsibilities or relevant access to children, young people or adults at risk, Walesby Forest will obtain proportionate assurance that appropriate recruitment, suitability and safeguarding checks have been completed.

Required safeguarding and suitability checks should be completed before an individual undertakes regulated activity or other duties requiring those checks. Any exceptional arrangement permitting duties to commence before completion of a particular check must be lawful, specifically authorised, risk assessed and subject to appropriate safeguards.

Safeguarding suitability will form part of recruitment decision-making and will continue to be considered throughout an individual's employment, volunteering or engagement with Walesby Forest.

13.3 Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

Walesby Forest operates in an environment where children and young people are routinely present. Appropriate DBS checks therefore form an important part of the organisation's safer recruitment arrangements.

Walesby Forest will require employees and volunteers to undergo an appropriate level of DBS check having regard to the nature of their duties and the level of contact they may have with children, young people or adults at risk.

Walesby Forest's normal organisational practice is to obtain Enhanced DBS checks for employees where the duties of the role make the individual legally eligible for that level of check. Where an Enhanced DBS check is not legally available for a particular role, Walesby Forest will obtain the appropriate level of check for which the role is eligible.

Volunteers will normally be subject to a Basic DBS check unless their duties make them eligible for, and require, a higher level of check.

Where a role involves regulated activity with children or adults, Walesby Forest will obtain the appropriate Enhanced DBS check and relevant Barred List check where legally permitted and required.

The appropriate level of DBS check will be determined by the actual duties undertaken rather than job title alone, taking account of current DBS eligibility and regulated-activity requirements.

DBS requirements will be reviewed where a role or an individual's duties materially change, or where relevant legislation or DBS eligibility requirements change.

DBS information will be handled confidentially and in accordance with data-protection requirements. The existence of criminal-record information will not automatically prevent appointment. Any information disclosed will be considered fairly and proportionately in relation to the role and associated safeguarding risk.

DBS checking forms only one part of Walesby Forest's safer recruitment and ongoing safeguarding arrangements.

DBS checking forms only one part of Walesby Forest's safer recruitment arrangements and does not replace appropriate recruitment, references, induction, training, professional boundaries, supervision or ongoing assessment of suitability.

13.4 Employees and Apprentices

Employees and apprentices whose roles involve working with or around children, young people or adults at risk will be subject to Walesby Forest's appropriate safer recruitment arrangements.

Safeguarding expectations form part of employment from induction onwards and continue throughout the individual's employment.

13.5 Volunteers

Volunteer safeguarding arrangements will reflect the nature, frequency and level of contact associated with the volunteering role.

Volunteers must receive appropriate safeguarding information and understand:

- expected standards of conduct;
- professional boundaries;
- how to recognise concerns;
- how and to whom concerns must be reported.

All volunteer roles are eligible for a basic DBS check prior to commencing their role.

13.6 Contractors and External Providers

Walesby Forest will consider safeguarding as part of the appointment and management of contractors and external providers.

The safeguards required will depend upon:

- the work being undertaken;
- the location of the work;
- the frequency and duration of access;
- the likelihood of contact with children or adults at risk;
- whether the work constitutes regulated activity.

A DBS check will not be treated as a substitute for appropriate supervision, site controls or professional conduct.

13.7 Induction and Ongoing Suitability

Safer recruitment does not end when an individual starts work.

Employees and volunteers must receive appropriate safeguarding induction and training and remain subject to Walesby Forest's expected standards of conduct throughout their engagement.

Managers must respond appropriately to information or behaviour that raises concerns about an individual's continuing suitability to work with children, young people or adults at risk.

Such concerns must be managed in accordance with Section 14.

13.8 Recruitment Records

Recruitment and safeguarding records will be maintained securely and retained in accordance with applicable legal, regulatory and organisational requirements.

Access will be restricted to those with a legitimate need to know.

SECTION 14

Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns

14.1 Introduction

Walesby Forest takes all concerns regarding the conduct of employees, apprentices, volunteers, contractors and other adults working on behalf of the organisation seriously.

Concerns may range from behaviour that is inconsistent with expected professional standards to allegations that an individual has harmed, or may pose a risk of harm to, a child or adult at risk.

Concerns must be reported promptly and managed fairly, objectively and in accordance with Section 6.

14.2 Allegations Against Adults Working on Behalf of Walesby Forest

Walesby Forest will take seriously any allegation or safeguarding concern relating to an adult working or volunteering on behalf of the organisation.

This applies to employees, casual and agency staff, apprentices, instructors, volunteers, contractors, freelancers, consultants, external providers and any other person undertaking work or activities on behalf of Walesby Forest.

An allegation concerning an adult working with children requires formal safeguarding consideration where that individual may have:

- harmed a child or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved, or may have behaved, in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

These criteria apply regardless of whether the alleged behaviour occurred at Walesby Forest, during working hours or in the individual's private life, where the information may indicate a safeguarding risk or raise concerns about their suitability to work with children.

Concerns or allegations relating to the abuse, neglect or mistreatment of an adult at risk will be managed in accordance with the adult safeguarding provisions of this policy and the relevant local safeguarding arrangements.

Employees and volunteers must not attempt to determine whether an allegation is true before reporting it. The responsibility of the person receiving or becoming aware of an allegation is to **protect, report, record and preserve**, not to investigate.

14.3 Immediate Reporting and Initial Action

Any allegation or serious safeguarding concern regarding a person working or volunteering on behalf of Walesby Forest must be reported immediately in accordance with Section 6 of this policy.

The following principles will apply:

Protect – immediate action must be taken where necessary to protect a child, young person, adult at risk or any other person from harm. Where there is immediate danger or a need for urgent medical or police assistance, emergency services must be contacted without delay.

Report and escalate – the concern must be reported immediately to the appropriate senior safeguarding lead. Escalation must not be delayed while further information is sought or an attempt is made to establish whether the allegation is true.

Record – an accurate and contemporaneous record must be created, including what was seen, heard, disclosed or reported, using the individual's own words where appropriate and distinguishing fact from opinion.

Preserve evidence – relevant information, records, documents, CCTV or other potential evidence must be preserved where reasonably practicable. Employees must not undertake searches, questioning or other actions that could interfere with or compromise potential evidence.

The person receiving the allegation should obtain only the information reasonably necessary to establish the immediate circumstances, protect those involved and enable appropriate safeguarding escalation.

They must not:

- conduct a substantive internal investigation;
- interview the person who is the subject of the allegation;
- seek detailed explanations or admissions;
- unnecessarily question witnesses or the child, young person or adult at risk;
- seek access to personal telephones, devices, accounts or private communications without appropriate lawful authority; or
- take any other action that could compromise a safeguarding, regulatory or criminal investigation.

The subject of an allegation must not be confronted or informed of the allegation by an employee or volunteer unless this has been authorised as part of the agreed management of the allegation.

14.4 External Safeguarding Advice, LADO and Statutory Agencies

Where an allegation concerning a person working or volunteering with children meets, or **may meet**, the harm threshold set out in Section 14.2, Walesby Forest will seek advice from the Nottinghamshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in accordance with current local procedures.

Where the circumstances indicate that a child may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, Children's Social Care will be contacted in accordance with current Nottinghamshire safeguarding arrangements.

Where a criminal offence may have been committed, or where police involvement is otherwise required, Walesby Forest will seek appropriate police advice or make a referral without delay.

Where there is immediate danger, emergency services must be contacted first. Internal reporting arrangements must never delay urgent protective action.

Where an allegation or concern relates to an adult at risk, Walesby Forest will follow the appropriate adult safeguarding referral and escalation arrangements and involve the police or other statutory agencies where required.

Walesby Forest will cooperate fully with the LADO, Children's Social Care, adult safeguarding services, police, local authority and other relevant statutory agencies.

Where external safeguarding or police involvement is required or may be required, Walesby Forest will obtain appropriate advice **before commencing a substantive internal investigation** that could compromise or prejudice those processes.

Internal HR, disciplinary or investigation processes will therefore commence or continue only when appropriate, having regard to safeguarding and statutory-agency advice and the need to avoid interference with external enquiries.

Nothing within this section prevents Walesby Forest from taking immediate and proportionate action necessary to protect an individual, secure the environment or preserve relevant evidence.

14.5 Allegations Involving Senior Safeguarding Personnel

Safeguarding concerns must be capable of being reported and escalated regardless of the seniority or position of the individual concerned.

Where an allegation concerns the Designated Safeguarding Lead, it must be reported directly to the Chief Executive Officer.

Where an allegation concerns the Chief Executive Officer, it must be reported directly to the Chair of Trustees.

Where an allegation concerns the Chair of Trustees, or where circumstances create a conflict of interest or reasonable concern that the matter cannot be managed appropriately through the normal internal reporting route, the concern must be escalated to an appropriate alternative trustee or senior safeguarding contact and external safeguarding advice sought as necessary.

Nothing within Walesby Forest's internal reporting arrangements prevents an employee, apprentice, volunteer, contractor or other individual from making a direct referral to the LADO, Children's Social Care, adult safeguarding services, police or another appropriate statutory agency where they believe this is necessary to protect an individual, particularly where they believe appropriate action has not otherwise been taken.

No individual must be disadvantaged, discouraged or subjected to retaliation for raising a safeguarding concern in good faith or making an appropriate safeguarding referral.

14.6 Immediate Protective Measures

Following an allegation or serious safeguarding concern, Walesby Forest will consider without delay whether interim protective measures are necessary while the matter is assessed.

The purpose of any interim measure is to protect children, young people, adults at risk, employees and other individuals, preserve the integrity of any investigation and manage safeguarding risk. Interim measures must not automatically be treated as disciplinary sanctions or as indicating that an allegation has been substantiated.

Depending upon the circumstances and any advice received from the LADO, police, local authority or other relevant safeguarding agency, measures may include:

- increased supervision;
- temporary changes to duties or responsibilities;
- restricting or removing unsupervised contact with children, young people or adults at risk;
- temporary changes to working arrangements;
- restricting access to particular areas, systems, records or facilities;
- temporary redeployment;
- measures to preserve information or evidence; or
- suspension where this is considered necessary and proportionate.

Suspension will not be automatic following an allegation. It will be considered on the individual circumstances, taking account of safeguarding risk, available alternatives, relevant employment procedures and any external safeguarding advice.

Protective measures will be kept under review and adjusted where circumstances, risk or external advice change.

Where the individual concerned is employed or supplied by an external organisation, agency, contractor or provider, Walesby Forest will take immediate action necessary to safeguard individuals within its own activities and premises and will liaise with the employing or responsible organisation and relevant safeguarding agencies as appropriate.

14.7 Low-Level Concerns

A low-level concern is behaviour by an individual working on behalf of Walesby Forest that is inconsistent with expected professional conduct but does not, on the information currently available, meet the threshold for an allegation.

The term "low-level" does not mean that the concern is insignificant.

Examples may include:

- favouritism or overly familiar behaviour;
- boundary concerns;
- communication concerns

Low-level concerns should be reported, And dealt with rather than dismissed.

14.8 Recording and Reviewing Low-Level Concerns

Low-level concerns will be recorded appropriately and retained in accordance with Walesby Forest's safeguarding and information-management arrangements.

Individual concerns must not be considered only in isolation. Recorded low-level concerns will be reviewed collectively and periodically to identify patterns, trends or repeated behaviours involving an individual, team, activity or working environment.

This review will enable Walesby Forest to:

- identify patterns or escalation in behaviour;
- identify whether separate concerns, when considered together, indicate a more significant safeguarding or conduct concern;
- identify environmental, cultural or operational factors that may be contributing to concerns;

- identify supervision, training or management needs;
- consider whether risk assessments or safeguarding controls require amendment;
- inform safer recruitment and ongoing suitability considerations where relevant; and
- determine whether further safeguarding, management, disciplinary or other proportionate action is required.

Emerging patterns or significant themes will be considered by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, where appropriate, the Chief Executive Officer.

Where the review indicates that the harm threshold may be met, the matter must no longer be managed solely as a low-level concern and must be escalated in accordance with Sections 14.2–14.4.

Relevant themes and organisational learning may be reflected, where appropriate and without unnecessarily identifying individuals, within safeguarding assurance provided to the Board of Trustees.

Employees and volunteers are not expected to decide whether a concern is sufficiently serious, or whether it forms part of a wider pattern, before reporting it. Concerns should be reported so that Walesby Forest can consider them individually and collectively.

14.9 Malicious or Unsubstantiated Allegations

The fact that an allegation is subsequently found to be unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious does not mean that it was inappropriate to report the concern.

Individuals must be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of disadvantage.

Where there is evidence that an allegation has been deliberately fabricated or made maliciously, the circumstances may require separate consideration and action.

14.10 Support and Confidentiality

Allegations can be distressing for everyone involved. Information will be handled sensitively and shared only where necessary.

Appropriate support will be considered for:

- the child, young person or adult at risk;
- the individual raising the concern;
- the employee, volunteer or other person who is the subject of the allegation;
- other employees affected by the circumstances.

The need to provide support must not compromise safeguarding enquiries or confidentiality.

14.11 DBS and Regulatory Referrals

Where the legal criteria are met, Walesby Forest will make appropriate referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service and any other relevant regulatory or professional body.

Such referrals will be considered independently of whether an individual resigns or otherwise ceases working for Walesby Forest.

14.12 Whistleblowing

Where an individual believes an allegation or safeguarding concern has not been handled appropriately, they may escalate the matter through Walesby Forest's Whistleblowing Policy or directly to an appropriate external safeguarding body.

No individual will suffer detriment for raising a genuine safeguarding concern in good faith.

In Practice

Boundary concern

An employee observes a colleague behaving in an unusually familiar way with a young visitor.

The employee does not need to decide whether abuse has occurred. The concern is reported so that the behaviour can be appropriately recorded and assessed.

Allegation during an activity

A visiting teacher reports an allegation concerning the conduct of a Walesby Forest employee taking pictures on a personal mobile phone during an activity section.

The concern is immediately escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or stand-in role. Walesby Forest undertakes an immediate investigation and asks the employee to provide an explanation and access to their mobile phone before determining the appropriate safeguarding response and obtaining external advice where required.

SECTION 15

15.1 Introduction

Effective safeguarding depends upon individuals understanding their responsibilities and having the confidence and competence to act when concerns arise.

Walesby Forest will maintain a safeguarding training, assurance and review programme appropriate to the nature of its activities and operating environment.

15.2 Safeguarding Induction

All employees and volunteers must complete safeguarding induction appropriate to their role before undertaking unsupervised duties at Walesby Forest.

Until the required safeguarding induction has been completed, the individual must work under appropriate supervision and must not undertake duties that would place them in an unsupervised safeguarding situation.

Safeguarding induction will include, as appropriate to the individual's role:

- Walesby Forest's safeguarding principles and individual safeguarding responsibilities;
- how to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns and disclosures;
- Walesby Forest's internal safeguarding reporting and escalation arrangements;
- the relevant Nottinghamshire safeguarding referral pathway and local safeguarding arrangements;
- the identity and contact arrangements for the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and other relevant safeguarding contacts;
- the Staff Code of Conduct and expected standards of behaviour;
- professional boundaries, including one-to-one situations and Walesby Forest's safeguarding arrangements for seeking additional support;
- allegations and low-level concerns involving employees, volunteers or other adults working on behalf of Walesby Forest;
- whistleblowing and how to escalate a concern where an individual believes it has not been appropriately addressed;
- online safety, photography, digital communication and the use of personal devices; and
- safeguarding procedures and operational arrangements relevant to the individual's particular role.

Individuals must understand how to raise a safeguarding concern and how to obtain immediate safeguarding support before undertaking unsupervised duties.

Completion of safeguarding induction must be recorded centrally, with records maintained to demonstrate that the individual has completed the required induction before being permitted to work unsupervised.

Where an individual's role or responsibilities change, additional safeguarding induction or briefing will be provided where the change introduces new safeguarding responsibilities or risks.

15.3 Safeguarding Training and Refresher Requirements

Safeguarding training will be proportionate to the responsibilities, level of contact and safeguarding risks associated with the individual's role.

As a minimum, Walesby Forest will maintain the following training expectations:

- all employees and volunteers will receive a safeguarding update at least annually;
- employees and volunteers will receive additional safeguarding briefings during the year where changes in legislation, guidance, local safeguarding arrangements, organisational procedures, emerging risks or learning from incidents make this necessary;
- managers and Duty Managers will receive training appropriate to their responsibilities for receiving, responding to and escalating safeguarding concerns;
- the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will undertake enhanced safeguarding training appropriate to their responsibilities and will complete refresher training at appropriate intervals;
- the CEO and Trustees, including any Trustee with designated safeguarding oversight, will receive safeguarding training appropriate to their governance and oversight responsibilities; and
- employees involved in recruitment for roles with safeguarding responsibilities will receive safer recruitment training appropriate to their role in the recruitment and selection process.

Training will be supplemented by Walesby Forest-specific briefings and scenario-based learning where appropriate, particularly where operational experience, safeguarding concerns, incidents or changes in practice identify a need for additional learning.

Training Records and Monitoring

Walesby Forest will maintain a **central safeguarding training matrix** to provide assurance that required safeguarding training remains current.

The training matrix will record, as appropriate:

- the individual's name and role;
- required safeguarding training;
- date of completion;
- refresher or renewal requirements;
- renewal or review date; and
- any additional role-specific safeguarding training required.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that employees and volunteers within their areas complete required training. Overall compliance with safeguarding training requirements will be monitored through Walesby Forest's safeguarding assurance arrangements.

Where required safeguarding training has expired or has not been completed, appropriate interim arrangements will be put in place until the training requirement has been addressed.

15.4 Walesby-Specific Training

Safeguarding training will reflect the environment in which Walesby Forest operates rather than relying solely upon generic safeguarding training.

Training should include practical scenarios relevant to:

- educational visits;
- Scout, Guide and youth groups;
- public visitors and families;
- residential stays;

- shared toilets and shower facilities;
- activities;
- mixed-use periods;
- transport;
- lost, missing and found children;
- large events;
- concerns involving employees or volunteers.

Scenario-based training will be used where appropriate to help employees apply safeguarding principles to real situations.

15.5 Manager Responsibilities

Managers must reinforce safeguarding expectations within their teams and ensure that individuals complete required training.

Managers should be confident in:

- receiving safeguarding concerns;
- taking immediate protective action where required;
- escalating concerns appropriately;
- preserving confidentiality;
- supporting employees following safeguarding incidents.

Managers must not undertake safeguarding investigations unless specifically authorised to do so.

15.6 Designated Safeguarding Lead Training

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will undertake appropriate enhanced safeguarding training relevant to their responsibilities.

Their knowledge will be maintained through appropriate refresher training, professional updates and engagement with current safeguarding guidance and local safeguarding arrangements.

15.7 CEO and Trustee Safeguarding Oversight

The Board of Trustees is responsible for maintaining appropriate oversight of Walesby Forest's safeguarding arrangements and for obtaining assurance that safeguarding risks are being appropriately identified, managed and reviewed.

The CEO will ensure that sufficient safeguarding information is provided to the Board to enable it to fulfil this oversight responsibility.

Safeguarding assurance reporting to the Board will include, as a minimum and where applicable during the reporting period:

- safeguarding concerns and incidents, including relevant themes and trends;
- allegations concerning employees, volunteers, contractors or other adults working on behalf of Walesby Forest;
- low-level concerns and any identified patterns or themes;
- referrals, consultations or contacts with external safeguarding agencies, including the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);

- missing, lost or found child and young person incidents where there was a safeguarding concern;
- child-on-child safeguarding concerns;
- significant online safety or digital safeguarding incidents;
- safeguarding training compliance, overdue training and identified training requirements;
- safer recruitment compliance and any identified recruitment or DBS exceptions;
- safeguarding-related complaints and whistleblowing concerns;
- significant safeguarding risks and changes to the organisational safeguarding risk profile;
- overdue or outstanding safeguarding actions;
- significant learning arising from safeguarding incidents, concerns, complaints or reviews;
- progress against previously identified safeguarding actions;
- relevant changes to legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements or organisational procedures; and
- any other matter requiring Trustee awareness, assurance, challenge or decision.

Periodic Review and Assurance

Safeguarding information will be reviewed periodically to identify patterns, recurring issues and emerging risks rather than considering incidents solely in isolation.

This will include consideration of whether:

- similar concerns are occurring repeatedly;
- concerns relate to particular activities, locations, operating periods or circumstances;
- low-level concerns collectively indicate a more significant issue;
- safeguarding controls or procedures require amendment;
- additional training, supervision or management action is required; and
- actions arising from previous safeguarding matters have been completed and have been effective.

Significant safeguarding matters will be escalated to the appropriate Trustee or the Board without waiting for the next scheduled assurance report where the nature or seriousness of the concern requires earlier oversight or action.

Confidentiality and Information Provided to Trustees

Safeguarding assurance reporting will provide sufficient information for effective governance and scrutiny without unnecessarily disclosing personally identifying or sensitive information.

Individual names and identifying details will not ordinarily be included in routine safeguarding assurance reporting unless there is a legitimate safeguarding, legal or governance reason for Trustees to receive that information.

Safeguarding information provided to Trustees will be handled in accordance with Walesby Forest's confidentiality, safeguarding and data protection requirements.

15.8 Learning from Incidents, Concerns and Complaints

Safeguarding incidents, concerns, near misses and complaints provide important opportunities to identify risks, strengthen organisational practice and improve safeguarding arrangements.

Walesby Forest will ensure that safeguarding considerations are identified and addressed regardless of the route through which information is received.

Safeguarding Concerns Raised Through Complaints

Complaints will be managed in accordance with the Walesby Forest Complaints Policy**.** However, where a complaint includes information relating to:

- the welfare or safety of a child, young person or adult at risk;
- the conduct of an employee, volunteer, contractor or other adult working on behalf of Walesby Forest;
- an allegation or low-level concern;
- inappropriate professional boundaries;
- possible abuse, neglect, exploitation or other safeguarding harm; or
- any other matter that may constitute a safeguarding concern,

the safeguarding element of the complaint must be identified and triaged without delay**.**

Where safeguarding procedures apply, the matter will be referred through the appropriate safeguarding or allegation-management process and will not be managed solely through the ordinary complaints procedure.

The fact that a matter has initially been raised as a complaint does not reduce or alter Walesby Forest's safeguarding responsibilities.

Where appropriate, the complaints process may continue alongside safeguarding procedures, provided that doing so does not compromise or prejudice safeguarding enquiries, external agency involvement or any investigation.

Organisational Learning

Walesby Forest will use learning arising from safeguarding incidents, concerns, near misses, complaints and reviews to consider whether improvements are required to:

- safeguarding procedures and operational practices;
- risk assessments and control measures;
- training and staff briefings;
- staffing, supervision or management arrangements;
- communication and information provided to employees, visiting organisations and visitors;
- physical environments or site arrangements;
- partnership and contractor arrangements; and
- relevant policies and supporting procedures.

Learning will consider both individual incidents and wider patterns or themes.

Where actions are identified, responsibility and appropriate timescales for completion will be established and progress will be monitored through Walesby Forest's safeguarding assurance arrangements.

15.9 Monitoring

Safeguarding arrangements will be monitored through appropriate organisational assurance mechanisms.

These may include:

- training records;
- safeguarding record reviews;

- management assurance;
- audits;
- incident reviews;
- feedback from visiting organisations;
- Trustee oversight.

Patterns and emerging risks will be considered rather than safeguarding concerns being viewed solely as isolated incidents.

15.10 Policy Review

This policy will be formally reviewed at least annually.

An earlier review will take place where:

- legislation or statutory safeguarding guidance changes;
- significant organisational changes occur;
- a serious safeguarding incident identifies a need for review;
- operational learning demonstrates that existing arrangements require amendment;
- relevant local safeguarding arrangements change.

Material amendments will be approved through Walesby Forest's governance arrangements.

15.11 Safeguarding Culture

Safeguarding is not achieved through policy and training alone.

Walesby Forest is committed to maintaining a culture in which:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility;
- concerns are welcomed and taken seriously;
- employees feel confident to speak up;
- professional challenge is encouraged;
- mistakes and incidents are used to improve practice;
- the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk remains central to decision-making.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Safeguarding Contacts

This appendix should be maintained separately so that contact details can be updated without requiring the entire policy to be reapproved.

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Carl Whitehead	07940421718	Carl.Whitehead@walesbyforest.org.uk
Deputy Safeguarding Lead	Beth Levene	07860640801	Beth.Levene@walesbyforest.org.uk
CEO	Charlotte Stokes	07712419213	Charlotte.stokes@walesbyforest.org.uk
Safeguarding Trustee	Sarah Baker	01623 860202	Safeguarding@walesbyforest.org.uk
Chair of Trustees	Alistar Bow	01623 860202	Chair@walesbyforest.org.uk

External safeguarding contacts

Organisation / Contact	Purpose	Contact details
Emergency Services	Immediate danger, risk to life or emergency	**999**
Police – Non-Emergency	Non-emergency police assistance or reporting a crime	**101**
Nottinghamshire MASH – Children's Safeguarding	Child protection referrals by professionals/practitioners	**0300 500 80 90**
Nottinghamshire MASH – Public	Members of the public reporting concerns about a child	**0300 500 80 80**
Emergency Duty Team	Urgent safeguarding concerns outside normal office hours	**0300 456 4546**
Nottinghamshire LADO	Allegations/concerns about an adult working or volunteering with children	**New referrals: Nottinghamshire LADO online contact form Email:** LADO@nottscc.gov.uk **Safeguarding Independent Review:** 0115 804 1272
Nottinghamshire Adult Safeguarding	Reporting safeguarding concerns about an adult at risk	**0300 500 80 80**
Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP)	Local safeguarding procedures, guidance and professional safeguarding information	**0115 977 3935 Email:** info.nscp@nottscc.gov.uk

Safeguarding contact and referral information will be checked at least annually and whenever Walesby Forest becomes aware of a change. Appendix A may be updated administratively to maintain accurate operational contact information without requiring reapproval of the substantive policy.

Appendix B – Immediate Safeguarding Decision Guide

When faced with a safeguarding concern, consider:

1. Is anyone in immediate danger?
2. Does anyone require urgent medical assistance?
3. What have I actually seen, heard or been told?
4. Have I avoided investigating or asking leading questions?
5. Have I listened to what is being communicated?
6. Have I reported the concern promptly?
7. Have I recorded facts accurately?
8. If I remain concerned, have I escalated it?

Appendix C – Related Walesby Forest Policies and Procedures

This policy forms part of Walesby Forest's wider safeguarding and organisational control framework and should be read alongside relevant supporting policies, procedures, guidance and operational instructions, where applicable. Supporting documents may be reviewed, developed or updated as required to ensure continued alignment with this policy.

- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Recruitment and Selection Policy;
- DBS / Safer Recruitment Procedure;
- Safeguarding Concern Reporting and Recording Procedure;
- Low-Level Concerns Procedure;
- Managing Safeguarding Allegations Against Adults Procedure;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- Dignity at Work / Anti-Harassment Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- First Aid Procedures;
- Lone Working Policy;
- Data Protection Policy;
- CCTV Policy;
- Social Media Policy;
- Online Safety Procedure / Guidance;
- Photography and Filming Procedures;
- Complaints Policy;
- Disciplinary Procedure;
- Transport Procedure;
- Missing Person Procedure;
- Residential Safeguarding Procedures;
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk Procedure / Guidance;
- Visiting Organisation / Group Safeguarding Guidance;
- Contractor and External Provider Safeguarding Procedure / Guidance; and
- Event Management and Emergency Procedures.

The absence of a separate procedure does not remove the safeguarding responsibilities contained within this policy.

Appendix D – Safeguarding at a Glance

If something does not feel right:

Recognise it - Do not dismiss a concern because you are unsure whether it is safeguarding.

Respond appropriately - Protect immediate safety. Listen. Remain calm.

Do not investigate - Do not ask leading questions, confront anyone or attempt to establish whether an allegation is true.

Do not promise confidentiality - Explain that information may need to be shared to keep somebody safe.

Record facts - Record what you saw, heard or were told as soon as possible. Use the individual's own words where appropriate.

Report it - Report safeguarding concerns immediately through Walesby Forest's safeguarding arrangements.

Escalate if necessary - If you believe a concern has not been appropriately addressed, raise it again.

Remember - Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If in doubt, report the concern and seek advice.

This policy was approved at the Board of Trustees Meeting on 12.11.2026.