




giving
nature
a home

RSPB Safeguarding Policy



**Guidance and approaches for our work
with children and vulnerable and
protected adults**

December 2019

Introduction

The RSPB believes that nature should be a part of every child's life – to develop deeply-held feelings and attitudes towards wildlife and the world we all live in.

I was lucky as a child to grow up in a small village in Dorset, where I climbed trees, investigated bird boxes, built dens, caught sticklebacks, followed dry summer river beds to see where they led and swam and fished in rivers and the sea. Newts and cinnabar moth caterpillars filled jam jars and old tanks and I learnt wildflower names from my mother on walks along old Roman roads, talking about the pet owl she had as a child. Then I thought everyone did that. I realise now that not everyone has those same chances.

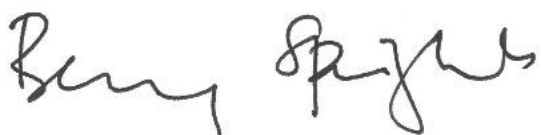
I'm committed to ensuring that the RSPB provides similar experiences and opportunities to bring nature into the lives of children and vulnerable and protected adults. But of course these experiences must be both enjoyable and safe for everyone who takes part, along with providing parents and carers with peace of mind. This Safeguarding Policy is how we will do this and demonstrates our commitment as an organisation to doing so.

Safeguarding is about ensuring every aspect of a child's and a vulnerable and protected adult's welfare. It means protecting them from abuse and neglect, but stretches much further to include all that we can do to support their development and enrich their life experiences.

This Policy and the following 'A Safe Place – The RSPB Safeguarding Approach' are based on the principle of empowering children and vulnerable and protected adults. It is the duty of everyone who has contact with children and vulnerable and protected adults, whatever their role in the RSPB, to protect them from harm as well as to create a positive environment in which they can connect with nature. Based on best practice, the Policy provides information about abuse, advice on identifying problems, as well as policies and approaches for use by those involved in delivering our work.

We want to inspire future generations to care for and love nature. To do that, we need to be sure we keep people free from harm and promote a positive and enriching experience'.

Beccy Speight



Chief Executive

Front Cover and Beccy Speight image:
Ben Andrew rspb-images.com



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Definitions

AccessNI – Northern Ireland

AccessNI's job is to supply certificates that show whether people who want to work in certain types of roles in Northern Ireland, for example with children and or vulnerable and protected adults, have a criminal record or if other important information is known about them. This enables employers to make safer recruitment decisions.

Children

Child means a person under the age of 18 years.

The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, HM Government

Children means more than one child.

In this document, child/children are used generically and **includes vulnerable and protected adults**.

Children's Workforce

All employees and volunteers at the RSPB who work with children are part of the children's workforce.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) – England and Wales

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children.

The DBS runs checks at three different levels providing information on an individual's criminal records in England and Wales.

They are responsible for:

- processing requests for criminal records checks (DBS checks)
- deciding whether it is appropriate for a person to be placed on or removed from a barred list
- placing or removing people from the DBS children's barred list and adults' barred list for England, Wales and Northern Ireland

In loco parentis

We are acting 'in loco parentis' when there are no accompanying parents or other responsible adults (e.g. grandparent, child minder, carer, babysitter) with children and where parental or individual consent forms have been signed.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

LADO Officers provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations that have concerns about a person working or volunteering with children and young people who may have behaved inappropriately or if information has been received that may constitute an allegation.

In **Wales**, the role of the **LADO** is taken up by a 'Designated Senior Manager' in Children's Services/Social Services

In **Scotland**, the role of the LADO is taken by the local Children's Social Work Team Services

In **Northern Ireland**, the role of the LADO is taken by Area Child Protection Committees

Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme - Scotland

The PVG Scheme allows organisations to satisfy themselves that an individual to whom they are offering regulated work in Scotland (paid or unpaid) is not barred from doing that type of regulated work.

The PVG scheme:

- helps to ensure that those who have regular contact with children and protected adults through paid and unpaid work do not have a known history of harmful behaviour.
- strikes a balance between proportionate protection and robust regulation and makes it easier for organisations to determine who they should check to protect their client group.

The PVG Scheme is managed and delivered by Disclosure Scotland.

Regulated Activity

Regulated Activity is activity that you must not do if you are legally barred from working with children or vulnerable or protected adults.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the scope of Regulated Activity for work with children and young people is:

1. Unsupervised activities: teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children, or providing advice/guidance on well-being, or driving a vehicle only for children
2. Work for a limited range of establishments ('specified places'), with opportunity for contact. For example – schools, children's homes, childcare premises (but not work by supervised volunteers)
3. Relevant personal care, for example washing or dressing; or health care by or supervised by a professional, even if done once.
4. Registered childminding and foster-carers

Work under (1) or (2) above is Regulated Activity **only if done regularly**.

In this context, '**regular**' means:

- carried out by the same person frequently (once a week or more often), or
- on 4 or more days in a 30-day period (or in some cases, overnight).

In Scotland the scope of Regulated Activity for work with children and young people is:

1. Interaction with children (under 18yrs old) or protected adults.
2. Carrying out **activities** working in any of the **establishments** listed below.
 - a. Teaching, instructing, training or supervising children
 - b. Being in sole charge of children
 - c. Unsupervised contact with children
 - d. Providing advice or guidance to children which relates to physical or emotional well-being, education or training
 - e. Moderating a public electronic interactive communication service (e.g. Facebook) for children
3. Directly managing or supervising someone who carries out any of the activities (above) or works in any of the establishments listed below:
 - a. An institution exclusively or mainly for the detention of children
 - b. A hospital exclusively or mainly for the reception and treatment of children
 - c. A school
 - d. A further education institution
 - e. A hostel used mainly by pupils of a school or other institution
 - f. A home which is exclusively or mainly for children
4. Interaction with children or protected adults is a part of the **normal duties** of the role.

'**Normal Duties**' can be considered as something the individual might be expected to do as part of their post on an ongoing basis. It **excludes** one-off occurrences and unforeseeable events. An activity or work is **likely** to be 'normal duties' when:

- It appears in the individual's job description or contract;
- It can reasonably be anticipated; or
- It occurs regularly.

An activity or work is **unlikely** to be 'normal duties' when:

- It is done in response to an emergency
- It is arranged at the last minute to stand in for sickness etc.
- It is done as a one-off activity of short duration which is not part of the individual's normal routine

An activity is **likely** to be incidental when:

- Open to all;
- Attractive to a wide cross-section of society; or
- Attendance is discretionary.

An activity is **unlikely** to be incidental when:

- Targeted at children or protected adults;

It is more attractive to children or protected adults than others; or attendance is mandatory.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is defined in '*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*' as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health and development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances

Charities which work with vulnerable groups, including children, must always act in their best interests and ensure they take all reasonable steps to prevent harm to them

RSPB Safeguarding Group

The role of RSPB Safeguarding Group is to provide safeguarding strategy, policies, procedures and training that enable families, children and vulnerable and protected adults to engage with the RSPB free from harm/abuse, intimidation and bullying, where their dignity is respected. Through doing this we will also protect our staff from potential allegations of abuse/inappropriate behaviour.

Safeguarding Advisers

The RSPB Safeguarding Group is supported in its role by a team of Safeguarding Advisers, with at least one in each country. The role of these advisers is to provide staff with training and advice on all matters connected with safeguarding families, children and vulnerable and protected adults.

Safeguarding Team

The Safeguarding Team consists of the RSPB Safeguarding Group and the Safeguarding Advisers. Their contact details can be found on the Intranet under Safeguarding.

Overall responsibility for Safeguarding within the RSPB rests with the People Director who is the RSPB's Designated Safeguarding Officer supported by the Safeguarding Team.

Staff

A generic term used throughout this document to refer to **employees and volunteers**.

Vulnerable adult (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

A vulnerable adult is a person over 18 who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or is unable to protect themselves from significant harm or serious exploitation.

A person's vulnerability will depend on their circumstances and environment, and each case must be considered individually.

Protected adult (Scotland)

A protected adult is an individual aged 16 or over who is provided with (and thus receives) a type of care, support or welfare service.

RSPB's Safeguarding Policy

The RSPB recognises that children (and vulnerable and protected adults)¹ and the decisions they make in the future are vital to the sustainability of our environment. We want to encourage their interest in and understanding of nature conservation issues, and help them to connect to and take action for nature in the following ways:

- Through membership of RSPB Wildlife Explorers and RSPB Phoenix, individually or as families
- Through visits to nature reserves
- Through schools' outreach
- Through volunteering
- By participating in RSPB activities for children and families.

We want children to enjoy their involvement with the RSPB, and must operate safely, with safeguarding as the top priority. We also recognise that we may have incidental or targeted interaction with vulnerable and protected adults and their carers and need to act and be seen to act appropriately at all times.

We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable and protected adults. They are entitled to protection from physical, sexual and emotional harm and have the right to a safe, positive and enjoyable environment when involved with the RSPB.

This Safeguarding Policy is based on the following key principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children will have a positive, enjoyable and safe experience with the RSPB
- All allegations, suspicions of harm or abuse and concerns will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately
- Everyone will work in partnership to promote the welfare, health and development of children
- Our safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and regulatory requirements wherever we operate as a charity
- In line with our **Diversity Policy** we aim to ensure that all staff ², partners, clients, contractors, members and the public are treated fairly. Unless it can be shown to be justified, this will be regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, marital or civil partnership status, race (including colour, nationality, ethnicity, or national origin), disability, medical status, age, religion or belief, political opinion, social or economic status, or ex-offender status.

¹ Throughout this document, child/children are used generically and includes [vulnerable and protected adults](#).

² Throughout this document, staff is used generically and includes, [all staff, including senior leadership team, board of trustees, employees, volunteers, seasonal workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of RSPB](#).

RSPB acknowledges that some children, including those who are disabled can be particularly vulnerable to abuse, and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

All staff regardless of their role (or anyone working on behalf of the RSPB) have a responsibility for understanding our policy and implementing our safeguarding approach.

'Everyone has a responsibility to keep children and young people safe.'

All organisations that come into contact with children should have specific safeguarding policies and procedures in place.'

NSPCC

As part of our Safeguarding Policy RSPB:

- Promotes and prioritises the safety and well-being of children
- Ensures everyone working with children clearly understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and vulnerable and protected adults
- Ensures appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support is provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern
- Ensures that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored
- Prevents the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals to roles involving working with children
- Ensures robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation
- Has a Safeguarding Group chaired by the People Director that meets bi-monthly. The purpose of the group is to provide an overview and strategic direction for RSPB policies and procedures to protect children
- We have a team of 'Safeguarding Advisers' across the organisation whose role is to provide staff with training and advice on all matters connected with safeguarding children
- Offers opportunities for children and parents/guardians to contact us with their concerns on a dedicated safeguarding hotline

The purpose of our Safeguarding Policy is:

- To provide protection for the children who undertake activities with the RSPB
- To provide staff with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm

The policy applies to all staff, including senior leadership team, board of trustees, employees, volunteers, seasonal workers, agency staff, students, or anyone working on behalf of RSPB.

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved with the RSPB. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

We seek to safeguard children by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting child protection and vulnerable and protected adult guidelines through appropriate procedures and a code of conduct for staff
- Recruiting staff safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, parents, carers and staff
- Sharing information about concerns with appropriate agencies who need to know, and involving carers, parents and children appropriately
- Providing effective leadership and management for staff working with children through supervision, support and training

Monitoring our approach to safeguarding

Our Safeguarding Policy is reviewed regularly by our Safeguarding Group. Our Safeguarding Policy may also be reviewed in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance in England & Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland
- As required by the Disclosure & Barring Service, Disclosure Scotland and Access NI or other appropriate regulatory bodies
- As a result of changes in policy or guidance issued for Charities by the Charity Commission for England and Wales, Scottish Charity Regulator or Charity Commission for Northern Ireland
- As a result of any other significant change or event.

Prevention of bullying, harassment and abuse

RSPB will not tolerate any form of bullying, harassment or sexually abusive or exploitative acts against adults or children being perpetrated by our employees, volunteers or anyone associated with the delivery of our programmes. Volunteers, employees and managers are bound to report people or incidents that they believe cause concern directly via their line manager.

RSPB managers have a duty to ensure that allegations are investigated in line with our safeguarding related policies including our **Bullying and Harassment Policy** and that appropriate disciplinary measures are taken in line with our **Disciplinary (Conduct) Policy and Procedure**.

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

At the RSPB we believe all people have a right to live their lives free from sexual violence.

We recognise that there are unequal power dynamics across the organisation and that we face an inherent risk of some staff exploiting their position of power for personal gain

Safeguarding & Our Supporters

RSPB fundraising is carried out in line with the latest guidance provided in the Institute of Fundraising Guide – ‘*Treating Donors Fairly – Fundraising with people in vulnerable circumstances*’ covering:

- **Always be respectful**
- **Treat your donors fairly**
- **Respond appropriately to the individual needs of your donors**
- **Take responsibility for your actions, ensuring that your fundraising is carried out in line with the Code of Fundraising Practice**
-

The IOF Guide is found here:

<http://www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk/library/treatingdonorsfairly/>

We provide training for our face to face fundraising and Supporter Services staff regarding vulnerable people or those in vulnerable circumstance.

We ensure that we do not send fundraising asks to donors that have been identified as vulnerable or in vulnerable circumstance. We always offer a refund to a donor that is either found to be or reports themselves that they are vulnerable or in vulnerable circumstance.

We ensure that agencies working on our behalf have a policy and training in place regarding vulnerable donors and donors in vulnerable circumstance.

Working Together

Only through the following groups of people working together can we deliver our Safeguarding Policy and ensure the safety and welfare of children across the RSPB.

RSPB Safeguarding Group

The RSPB Safeguarding Group sets policy and standards for safeguarding across the Society and provides direction and support to the Safeguarding Advisers. The Group is chaired by the People Director who is responsible to RSPB Board of Directors and Council for all safeguarding matters.

The RSPB Safeguarding Group exists:

- To ensure RSPB has effective, up to date and clear policies and procedures for safeguarding
- To ensure appropriate health & safety arrangements are in place for families, children and vulnerable and protected adults
- To keep RSPB Board of Directors and Council informed
- To ensure that recruitment and performance management policies are in place for all staff working with children, families and vulnerable and protected adults
- To ensure staff working with children, families and vulnerable and protected adults are suitably vetted in line with appropriate guidance in Scotland, England & Wales and Northern Ireland
- To ensure RSPB provides appropriate training for staff working with children, families and vulnerable and protected adults
- To promote awareness of safeguarding amongst all RSPB staff
- To generate confidence in families and individuals that the RSPB is an organisation that will do all it reasonably can to ensure their safety and welfare whilst they are engaged with us and that we have appropriate policies and procedures in place for the protection of children and vulnerable and protected adults
- To ensure a safe route for complaints from children, families and vulnerable and protected people in the event of abuse occurring, and to ensure that all employees, volunteers and visiting families, children and vulnerable and protected adults know how to report incidents that have happened or possible incidents that could happen
- To ensure incidents of abuse are referred to appropriate authorities
- To ensure that any allegations or incidents involving employees or volunteers are investigated using relevant procedures, and that appropriate sanctions are applied
- To ensure that offences and details of investigations are reported to the Disclosure and Barring Service, Disclosure Scotland or Access NI as appropriate

- To maintain secure records of safeguarding documents in accordance with legal requirements and good practice.
- To maintain links with the Government bodies, not-for-profit, charity and volunteering sectors to keep up with legal changes brought about by Government and share and follow good practice in safeguarding.

Safeguarding Advisers

Safeguarding Advisers are the first point of contact across the RSPB for Safeguarding matters

Training for Safeguarding Advisers

- They will be trained internally to Safeguarding Level 2 and will also have received external training from a leader in the sector on safeguarding.

Training delivered by Safeguarding Advisers

- They will facilitate internal RSPB Safeguarding Level 2 training for their colleagues on 3 or 4 occasions through the year to support their own continued professional development.
- Safeguarding Advisers will encourage and champion completion of all safeguarding training by people as appropriate.

Communicator and Champion

- Safeguarding Advisers will be responsible for facilitating two-way communication between the RSPB Safeguarding Group and colleagues in Countries and Directorates and disseminating key messages. They will help shape and influence the RSPB Safeguarding decision makers in relation to policy and will provide information and updates to colleagues to raise awareness and understanding of our Safeguarding process and direction of travel.
- They will be safeguarding champions for those who come into contact with the RSPB, ensuring that appropriate safeguarding measures are in place in line with the RSPB commitment to 'A Safe Place' as per our Safeguarding Policy.

Adviser

- Safeguarding Advisers will provide advice to people on all matters connected with safeguarding in Countries and Directorates including planning for example, educational activities, reserve, community events and work experience. They will listen to views and empathise with experiences of individuals working with children and vulnerable and protected adults, provide support and share ideas. They will assist with queries as to appropriate levels of training for employees and volunteers.

Auditor

- Safeguarding advisers will ensure that any safeguarding matters they deal with are entered on PRIME and will encourage other colleagues to do so. This will

ensure that the RSPB has accurate information in relation to Safeguarding. They will feed back any areas of concern or areas for improvement and will share good practice identified.

RSPB Safeguarding Group

- The Safeguarding Advisers are represented on the RSPB Safeguarding Steering Group that meets bi - monthly.

Sites/projects

- Operate in line with the Safeguarding Policy in all their work with children
- Ensure all staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities
- Encourage staff to identify any signs/suspicions of harm/concern and report these to a Safeguarding Adviser or a member of the Safeguarding Team
- Ensure all staff who form part of the children's workforce at the site/project have received appropriate training and DBS/Access NI checks or PVG Scheme registration as necessary.

Human Resources and Volunteering Development Departments

- Ensure where necessary appropriate DBS/AccessNI checks or PVG Scheme registration are undertaken on staff
- Undertake annual checks on staff that are registered with the Update Service to ensure they are still suitable individuals to be working with children with the RSPB.

Employee/Volunteer

- Work towards creating a safe, friendly and welcoming environment and treat children with respect
- Follow all guidance in our Safeguarding Policy when working with children
- Complete any training considered appropriate for their role
- For those working in certain roles have the appropriate DBS/Access NI check or PVG Scheme registration
- Report any concerns/issues around safeguarding to their line manager.

What is Abuse?

Types of abuse

There are a number of different forms of abuse, the main ones being:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect
- Online
- Grooming
- Financial
- Bullying and cyber bullying
- Radicalisation
- Domestic
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Child sexual exploitation and abuse
- Forced marriage

An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly or may be responsible for abuse by failing to prevent another person harming that child.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual photographic or online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their development.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development.

Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Online abuse

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones. Children may experience cyber bullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse.

Children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know, as well as from strangers. Online abuse may be part of abuse that is taking place in the real world (for example bullying or grooming). Or it may be that the abuse only happens online (for example persuading children to take part in sexual activity online).

Children can feel like there is no escape from online abuse – abusers can contact them at any time of the day or night, the abuse can come into safe places like their bedrooms, and images and videos can be stored and shared with other people.

Grooming

Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation.

Children can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know - for example a family member, friend or professional.

Groomers may be male or female. They could be any age.

Many children don't understand that they have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse.

Financial abuse

Financial abuse is another name for stealing or defrauding someone of goods and/or property. It is always a crime but is not always prosecuted. Examples include: theft, fraud, exploitation, and pressure in connections with wills, property, possessions or benefits.

Fundraising that knowingly targets a person known to be vulnerable or in vulnerable circumstance.

Bullying and cyber bullying

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else - it can take many forms, but the three main types are:

- Physical - hitting, kicking, theft etc
- Verbal - racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling etc
- Emotional - isolating an individual from the activities or social acceptance of their peer group

Ultimately it is the perception of the victim that determines whether or not they are being bullied, rather than the intention of the bully.

It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.

Bullying that happens online, using social networks and mobile phones, is often called cyber bullying. A child can feel like there's no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night.

Bullying should not be ignored, and the victim should be supported through what can be a traumatic experience. Bullying will not just go away. Bullies can be very cunning and develop strategies to avoid it being seen by anyone but the victim.

Radicalisation

The government defines radicalisation as 'the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.' Young and vulnerable students are susceptible towards radicalisation by malicious individuals who attempt to lead the young/vulnerable students astray and to commit violent extremism.

Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs and the calls for death of members of our armed forces, whether in

the UK or overseas. During the process of radicalisation, it is possible to intervene to prevent children being radicalised.

Radicalisation can happen in many different ways and settings. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide the answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. But it isn't just physical violence – domestic abuse includes any emotional, physical, sexual, financial or psychological abuse.

It can happen in any relationship, and even after the relationship has ended. Both men and women can be abused or abusers.

Witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse, and teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision, cutting or sunna.

Religious, social or cultural reasons are sometimes given for FGM. However, FGM is child abuse. It's dangerous and a criminal offence.

There are no medical reasons to carry out FGM. It doesn't enhance fertility and it doesn't make childbirth safer. It is used to control female sexuality and can cause severe and long-lasting damage to physical and emotional health.

Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something such as gifts, money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them.

Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed and exploited online.

Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation can also happen to young people in gangs.

Child sexual exploitation is a hidden crime. Young people often trust their abuser and don't understand that they're being abused. They may depend on their abuser or be too scared to tell anyone what's happening.

It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults, including oral and anal rape. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online.

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning difficulties or who are under-age, cannot) consent to the marriage and where duress is used to enforce the marriage. 'Duress' includes psychological, sexual, financial or emotional pressure and physical violence.

Forced marriage is a violation of human rights and is seen in the UK as a form of domestic violence and/or child abuse. It may affect girls, boys, women and men from any community or background. However, existing statistics show that greater numbers of women are affected.

Forcing someone to marry without their consent is a criminal offence. The maximum penalty is seven years imprisonment. It is also illegal to take someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place) or to marry someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they are pressured to or not).

Signs of harm or abuse

Harm is an action or behaviour which has a detrimental effect on a child's physical or emotional health or wellbeing. Harm is often referred to as neglect, abuse or bullying. Harm may start as poor practice, which might include: shouting, ignoring health and safety guidelines, failing to adhere to our Safeguarding Policy etc. Neither poor practice nor suspicions of harm should be ignored - they should always be reported, and victims supported throughout.

It is important to recognise the signs and indicators of abuse and to be aware of how it should be dealt with.

A child may be being abused or bullied if they:

- Change their usual routine
- Begin to be disruptive during sessions
- Being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn
- Have possessions going missing
- Become aggressive or unreasonable
- Start to stammer or stop communicating
- Have unexplained cuts or bruises
- Start to bully other children
- Are frequently dirty, smelly, hungry or inadequately dressed
- Display sexual behaviour or using sexual language inappropriate for their age
- Seem afraid of parents or carers

- Takes risks
- Obsessive behaviour
- Misses school
- Stop eating/eating disorders/changes in eating habits
- Self-harms
- Thoughts about suicide
- Are frightened to say what's wrong
- Don't want to attend or take part in activities.

One of these signs on its own is very unlikely to be an indicator of abuse. However, cumulatively they should be taken seriously. Members of staff need to be aware of these possible signs and always report any concerns to their Safeguarding Adviser. In their absence any member of the Safeguarding Team should be informed at the earliest possible opportunity. Any report must be made in writing using the RSPB's Incident Reporting System.

There may be a number of reasons why a child displays concerning behaviour or their behaviour changes. It is advisable to discuss concerns with parents, carers or the school (if it is a school group) in the first instance, except where this may place a child at increased risk.

An individual who becomes aware of any suspicions or concerns about the safety or welfare of a child must pass these on to the Safeguarding Adviser as soon as possible. If they feel the child is in **immediate risk** of abuse then a statutory agency (local authority children's services or the police) should be contacted immediately.

Please refer to the flowchart on page 25 for the steps to be followed. It is also appropriate to follow this procedure for allegations of abuse by one child against another.

If abuse is suspected

If you suspect that a child may be suffering abuse but have no evidence, you should first contact your local Safeguarding Adviser or any member of the Safeguarding Team, who can discuss the situation and guide you.

You should not attempt to carry out your own investigations, but must be able to discuss the subject and should pass on any concerns you may have. Write down any suspicions as soon as possible outlining what you have witnessed, heard or were told.

If abuse is disclosed

If a child suffering abuse is attending your activities regularly, they may see you as someone they can trust. Should a child disclose abuse to you, you should:

- Listen carefully and stay calm
- Use reflective listening, i.e., listen more than talk, and respond with affirmative statements such as 'that must have been very difficult for you.' Avoid advice giving or problem solving
- Allow them to speak without interruption and accept what they say
- Be understanding and reassuring but do not give your opinion

- Reassure them that they are not to blame, and you believe them
- Avoid making promises of confidentiality or outcome (you have a duty to pass on the accusation to the authorities and if you promise not to tell you will betray the trust of the child)
- Do tell them you will help and that it is OK to tell
- Keep questions to a minimum. Any questions you ask should be open ended, 'tell me about ...' or a repeat of what the child has said as a means of confirming the information: 'what you are telling me is ...'
- Do not interrogate. Don't ask the child a lot of questions, especially leading questions. A question in which you provide a possible answer - Did this or that happen? Were you at home? Did your dad hit you on the leg? Avoid using the word 'why'
- Avoid being judgemental about the information supplied
- Make brief, accurate notes at the earliest opportunity. Use the actual words used wherever possible
- Tell your Safeguarding Adviser urgently.

If you're worried that a child or young person is at risk or is being abused contact [the children's social care team at your local council](#).

Your local authority will have a Children's Emergency Duty Team. The Children's Emergency Duty Team (EDT) is a small team of qualified, specially trained and experienced senior social workers who provide an emergency response outside of office hours. EDT work 365 days a year and will consider a response for any child or young person (up to the age of 18) who is at risk of significant harm.

Call 999 if the child is at immediate risk, or call [the police on 101](#) if you think a crime has been committed.

The NSPCC operates a 24-hour helpline staffed by childcare professionals for anyone concerned about a child. It is primarily for use by adults and can be used anonymously: 0808 800 5000.

One of you or another helper is accused of abuse or inappropriate behaviour

Whether the accusation refers to activities outside of the RSPB or while working for us, you should report it immediately to an appropriate senior member of staff and your Safeguarding Adviser or a member of the Safeguarding Team.

See [How the RSPB will respond to suspicions or concerns](#) for more information.

Whilst a staff member is under investigation they may be temporarily suspended from their role subject to the outcome of that investigation

If a staff member is under investigation for activities outside their role with the RSPB which might breach the RSPB's Safeguarding Policy, the RSPB reserves the right to suspend the staff member. Following the outcome of the investigation the RSPB itself may take disciplinary action in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

The RSPB must protect its reputation and ensure its staff uphold high standards of behaviour in relation to the treatment of children and vulnerable and protected adults.

If a child refuses to go home because of abuse

There is a very remote possibility that a child may suddenly announce that they do not want to go home after an event/activity because they are afraid of abuse. This may happen five minutes before the event/activity is due to finish and will put you in a difficult position.

A child should be encouraged to go home **unless you feel they are in real danger by doing so**. You cannot legally keep a child from going home with their parents. You can, however, insist on calling the police, who may ask you to stay with the child until they arrive. If the child does go home after disclosing abuse to you, you should contact the local Child Protection Team via the police and tell them of your concerns. Do not disclose to the parents what the child has said. The police will act in a professional manner as they would for any other potential reported crime.

Inform your Safeguarding Adviser or a member of the Safeguarding Team of the incident.

The local authority

The local authority has a legal duty to:

- follow up any complaint or concern about child abuse and
- get involved with a family where child abuse is suspected.

In severe cases, the child will be removed from the family.

Each local authority has a specialised department that deals with child protection issues. This could be called, for example, the child protection team, the children's social work team or the safeguarding children's team. In some areas, independent organisations carry out child protection duties on behalf of the local authority

Your local authority's website will give you the details of who to contact about child abuse or concerns relating to anyone working with children.

Your local authority will also have a Children's Emergency Duty Team. The Children's Emergency Duty Team (EDT) is a small team of qualified, specially trained and experienced senior social workers who provide an emergency response outside of office hours. EDT work 365 days a year and will consider a response for any child or young person (up to the age of 18) who is at risk of significant harm.

The Police

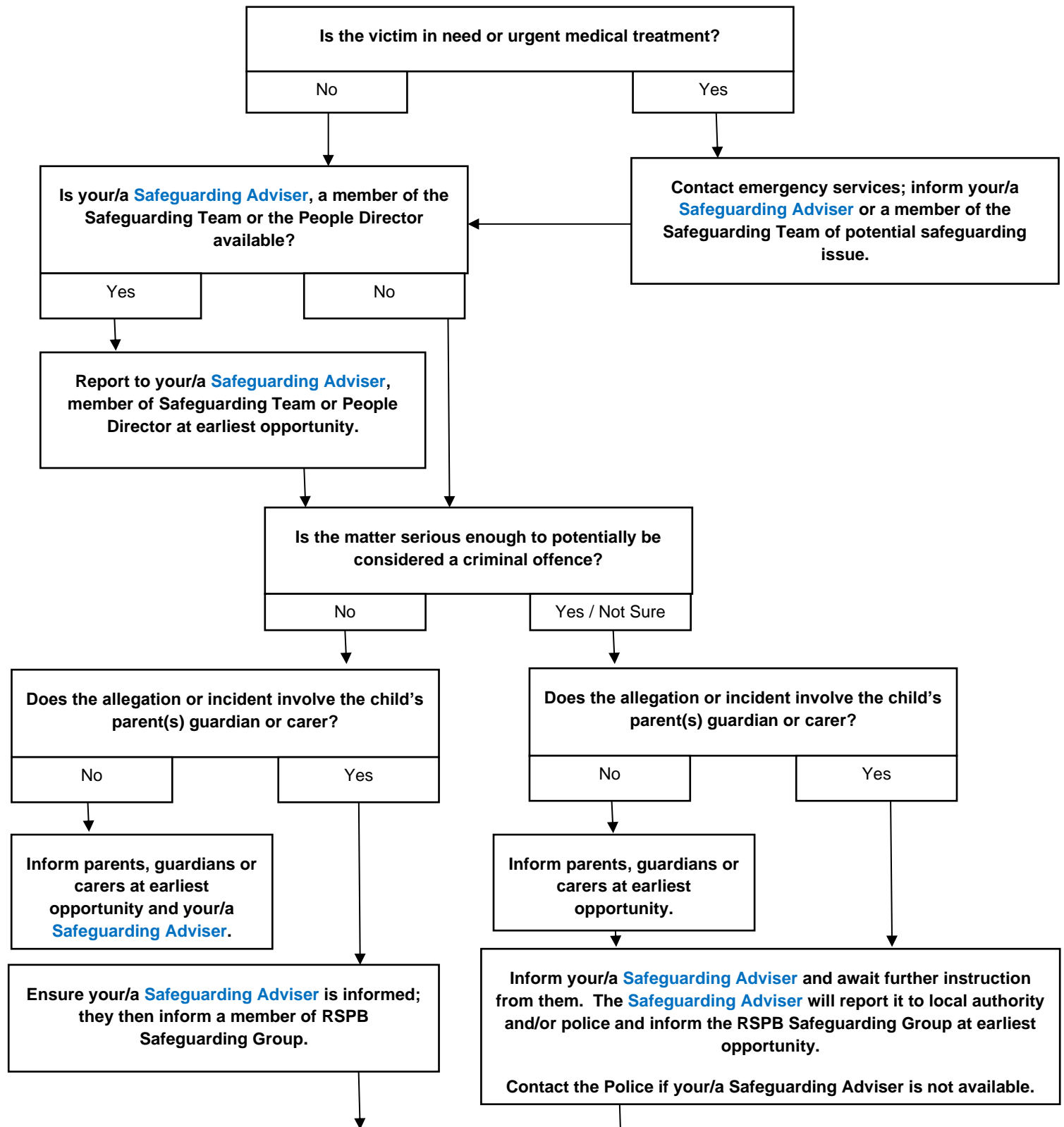
The police have a legal duty to:

- follow up any complaint or concern expressed about child abuse
- report their concerns to the local authority

A child has disclosed concerning information to you OR you have witnessed or had reported to you an incident or complaint involving the behaviour of an adult in relation to a child, which may be considered abuse or poor practice.

In all circumstances the senior member of staff present should take charge of ensuring this process is followed.

NO PROMISES – FEW QUESTIONS – FOLLOW GUIDE



Whatever the circumstances the person receiving and then reporting the complaint or incident to their Safeguarding Adviser must also record appropriate information on the RSPB's Incident Reporting System after discussions with your Adviser.

The system will also ensure your Safeguarding Adviser receives a copy of what has been recorded.

Safeguarding incidents, be they minor accidents or something more significant; usually require swift and decisive action. RSPB staff are expected to carry out such actions in line with our safeguarding approach, as they deem necessary at the time. If it turns out that another course of action would have been more appropriate, the RSPB will support its employees / volunteers during the course of any subsequent investigation and action so long as:

- The action was taken with good intent
- It did not contravene other RSPB policies or procedures
- The needs of the victim were paramount
- A written record of the incident was passed to the Safeguarding Team as soon as possible.

The RSPB encourages and supports “whistle-blowing” and has a Speak Up Policy and Procedure. Where appropriate we will notify the statutory agencies of any allegation and work in partnership with them. An RSPB investigation will usually commence once the statutory agencies have completed their investigations and refer the case back to the RSPB.

The wellbeing of the child must be central to any procedures involving them. The RSPB will work with local children’s services to support the victim, witnesses and RSPB staff involved.

Incident Referral Process

This policy requires all incidents, suspicions and concerns regarding a child to be reported to the Safeguarding Team as soon as possible. Once the Safeguarding Team receives written notification of an incident, allegation or disclosure, they will assume management of the case following our [Internal Incident Management Process](#).

Safeguarding investigations are handled by the Safeguarding Team. Once the Safeguarding Team assumes management of the case, the site/project should take no further action until advised to do so by the Safeguarding Team or relevant authority. The Safeguarding Team will, where appropriate, ensure that the site/project is kept informed of procedure and progress.

Where an allegation relates to a member of the Safeguarding Team, an investigation will be undertaken as outlined above but by a Senior Manager who is not a member of the Safeguarding Team, or a Director, should the allegation relate to the People Director.

Those under investigation

Under this Policy the RSPB is committed, first and foremost, to protecting the interests of the child. In the course of a referral being made to the RSPB or statutory agencies, individuals who are accused of causing harm will be informed of the procedures by the RSPB. They may also request at any time an update on the progress of the referral. Investigations will be concluded as quickly as possible to ensure that those guilty of causing harm are dealt with expeditiously, and those falsely or mistakenly accused are able to return to their role with reputation intact.

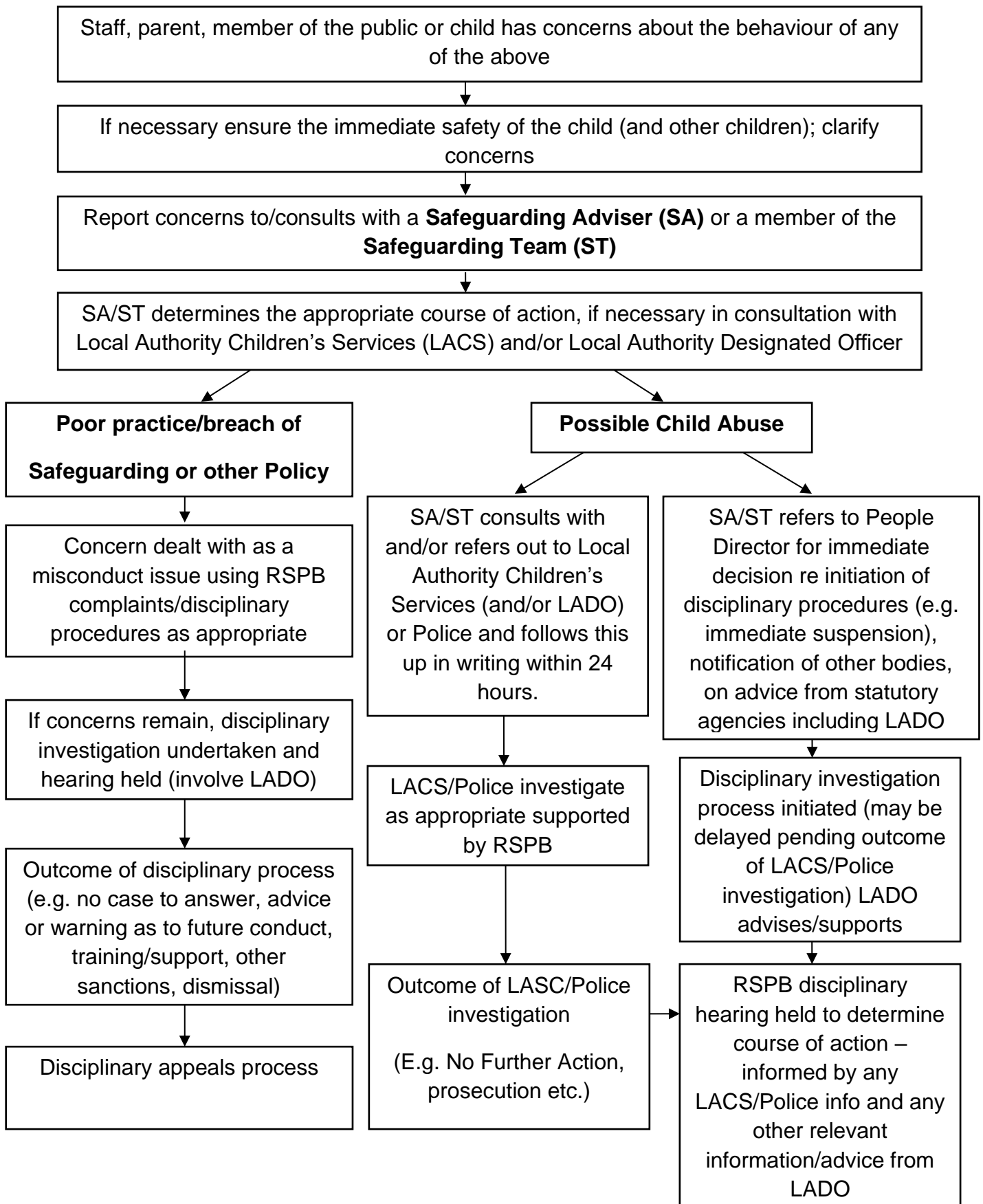
Suspension from role

Whilst a staff member is under investigation they may be temporarily suspended from their role subject to the outcome of that investigation. The RSPB procedures establish a clear route through which complaints, incidents, problems and enquiries are handled.

Internal incident management process

This guide is designed to outline how the RSPB, via the Safeguarding Team, will handle any concern raised about the behaviour of a member of staff. It sits alongside the earlier guidance which sets out how an immediate concern should be dealt with.

Internal Incident Management Process



Dealing with media enquiries

Child abuse is an issue which will generate media interest.

Your Country Communications Manager and the Communications Department at RSPB HQ are the people you should call on to handle media enquiries and deal with these difficult issues. Please contact them immediately you are aware of a safeguarding issue that might, or has, attracted media interest.

Where necessary we will prepare a press statement on an issue that the Country Communications Manager or the Communications Department will give to any media enquiries.

However, it is important that you handle initial enquiries in a way that will not aggravate the situation, or generate negative publicity. It is also important to be aware of legislation that prevents the naming of children and young people in the media. The RSPB is committed to investigating all allegations, but the potential damage the publication of false allegations can do to an individual or the RSPB must not be underestimated.

Be prepared

- If you know of an allegation of child abuse it is important to be prepared in advance for potential publicity
- Contact the relevant Communications Manager for your country or a Media Officer in the Communications Department immediately and give them all the facts. Contact details are available on the RSPB website
- Don't give any statement to the media - simply refer them to your Communications Manager for your country or the Communications Department at RSPB HQ.

What to do when approached or contacted by a journalist.

- A journalist may hear of an alleged case of abuse from a source or directly from a relative or acquaintance of the alleged victim
- They are likely to approach the site/project and ask for a response. It is worth remembering that the journalist may already have the story mapped out in their own mind, so what you say is important
- Make sure you make a note of the name of the journalist and the media they are working for
- Make sure you fully understand what the journalist is asking you. Ask them to repeat a question if necessary. You may or may not be aware of the incident concerned
- Do not say 'No comment'. It makes you sound as if you have something to hide
- Instead take a contact number and find out when their deadline is, then contact the Communications Manager for your country
- The Country Communications Manager will work with the Safeguarding Team to formulate an appropriate response, will respond to the journalist and inform you of that response.

The follow-up

Allegations of child abuse are rarely one-day stories so be prepared for more phone calls and media enquiries. Just because one response has been given does not mean that the media will not have more questions in the future. Follow the same procedure as before and refer them to your Country Communications Manager or the Communications Department at RSPB HQ.

Going 'off the record'

Journalists like nothing better than going 'off the record'. They use this tool to get more information but with the undertaking that they will not publish what you say.

Do not speak off the record in any situation involving safeguarding issues.

Safer recruitment

Children are entitled to participate in RSPB activities in a safe and welcoming environment. Safe recruitment procedures will enable us to reduce the risk of abuse to children.

When recruiting employees or volunteers to the Children's Workforce all reasonable steps should be taken to ensure only suitable people are selected.

'Organisations should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children including safe recruitment practices and ongoing safe working practices for individuals whom the organisation permit to work regularly with children, including policies on when to obtain a criminal record check'

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, HM Government

The RSPB requires any individual engaged in Regulated Activity or working unaccompanied with children to undertake the appropriate DBS/Access NI checks or PVG Scheme registration processes in order to work with children. Depending on the nature of the role and the level of supervision, the RSPB will require either Enhanced or Enhanced with barred list checks (in England, Wales and NI). Further information about the process for accessing DBS/Access NI checks or PVG Scheme registration for staff is available on the Intranet

Our people are the most important asset we have. A good recruitment process is essential to ensure the best people are chosen for the roles they undertake.

These must be people who are suited to the role and who are less likely to harm children, intentionally or accidentally. Good recruitment, induction and supervision processes shows the value which the RSPB puts on children's safety and wellbeing.

Official checks and vetting procedures are, on their own, not enough to protect children. They are only part of a wider set of practices and an organisational culture which supports safe practice.

Our approach to safeguarding training

All employees and appropriate volunteers should undertake some form of safeguarding training appropriate to their role.

All volunteers should receive a copy of the booklet '*A little of your time goes a long way*' which has information on safeguarding in it.

Safeguarding children and vulnerable and protected adults is something we are all responsible for, whatever our role with the RSPB. Not everyone has the same level of contact with children and vulnerable and protected adults so there are three different levels of training, one (or more) of which will be appropriate for you. The safeguarding training pyramid (see next page) will help you and your line manager decide what training is appropriate for you or your team.

We have also looked at each Role Profile in the RSPB and made an assessment of what is the minimum level of safeguarding training that should be undertaken by anyone in that role. Contact the HR Support Hub if you have any questions about the training level a role has been assigned to.

We want to make sure that the RSPB is a safe place for all, safeguarding training will help us to achieve this. It's not just a case of knowing the best ways to behave, it's also knowing what to do and who to speak to if you have any concerns. Training is only useful if we know or do something different at the end of it.

- **Level 0** is simple advice on safeguarding in the induction booklet all volunteers receive (***A little time of your times goes a long way***) even if they also need to undertake level 1 or 2 training
- **Level 1** is an eLearning module that all employees and appropriate volunteers will complete, even if they also need to attend level 2. This is a resource that can be re-visited at any time though to be compliant needs to be completed, and passed, every 3 years
- **Level 2** is a 1 day Adobe Connect virtual learning event for those with some contact with children and vulnerable and protected adults
 - Must be redone every 3 years

If you're in any doubt as to which level of training is right for you or your team please speak to your Safeguarding Adviser or a member of the Safeguarding Team.

Details of the eLearning package and the workshops can be found on iLearn

Training at Levels 1 and 2 must be refreshed every three years.

RSPB Safeguarding training pyramid

Level	Role	Who	Method of delivery
TOP	People who provide specialist advice on Safeguarding to the organisation, deliver training and lead the RSPB's approach to Safeguarding.	Safeguarding Advisers RSPB Safeguarding Group	External specialist training/advice as needed e.g. NSPCC Plus RSPB Safeguarding Level 2 training Plus Completion of RSPB Safeguarding Level 1 (eLearning Module)
2	People who have direct and regular contact with children regardless of if they are the same children and/or unaccompanied children and/or vulnerable and protected adults	See list of Role Profiles on the Safeguarding Intranet pages identified as needing Safeguarding Level 2 training. If you believe your role should have Safeguarding Level 2 Training and it is not on the list please speak to a Safeguarding Adviser.	RSPB Safeguarding Level 2 via Adobe connect virtual learning - 1 Day Plus Completion of RSPB Safeguarding Level 1 (eLearning Module)
	People who need from time to time to be involved in delivery of actions or services with/for children or vulnerable and protected adults to a sufficient degree that merits this level of training		
1	No direct face to face but access/interventions with data e.g. VMS / Run Social Media Accounts / Education database	All Employees regardless of role Regular Volunteers in these roles that require the training Trustees	Completion of RSPB Safeguarding Level 1 (eLearning Module)
	No direct interactions with children or interactions with data relating to children. Could have access to vulnerable and protected adults in employment / volunteering		
0	Basic awareness of our policy	Infrequent Volunteers and Volunteer Groups e.g. Pin Badge minders, Local Group volunteers	Volunteer Induction booklet – <i>A little of your time goes a long way</i> Handbook for Volunteer Groups

RSPB Safeguarding training for Youth Groups

Our Youth Leaders who run Wildlife Explorer and Phoenix groups don't easily fit into the training pyramid as they consistently run activities for unaccompanied children.

There are very few other roles in the society which do so and therefore we have developed a bespoke training package for these volunteers who are regularly in 'Loco Parentis'

Who	What	When
All Assistant and Main Leaders (Mandatory)	RSPB Safeguarding Level 1 (e-learning module)	Must be completed within 6 months of registering with the group. All leaders remain on a trial period for their first six months. Refreshed every three years.
Main Leader (Mandatory) Assistant Leaders (Optional)	RSPB Safeguarding Level 2 via Adobe connect virtual learning - 1 Day	If they are new to the group this must be completed within 6 months of joining. If they are currently an Assistant Leader they cannot step up into the Main Leader role until complete. Can be delivered alongside other Youth Leader training or meetings. Refreshed every three years.
Cascade training lead by attendees of the Level 2 training who weren't able to attend (Mandatory)	Discussion around scenarios building on eLearning but rooting it in the context of the group.	Within six months of leaders attending the RSPB Safeguarding Level 2 training.
Main leader and Assistant leaders	Safeguarding is highlighted as part of the Group Review and should be a topic for discussion at these visits.	Once every two years.
A representative of each group	Webinar / Teleconference to refresh and bring up to date the topic of Safeguarding with leaders.	Annual – still in development.

New or existing main or assistant leaders according to assessed need	Youth Group Leadership skills training – not a safeguarding course per se but has safeguarding woven into many aspects of the course.	As needed – delivered at a country level
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Inappropriate relationships with children

RSPB staff must not enter into a sexual relationship with a child. Sexual intercourse, sexual activity, or inappropriate touching of a child under the age of 16 years is a criminal offence. A child under 16 in law can never give their consent.

A sexual relationship, involving mutual consent, between two 16 to 18 year old RSPB staff (as long as both are above the legal age of consent) will be assessed regarding any possible conflict of interest issues.

A new sexual relationship between a staff member (aged over 18) and a child (aged over 16 years of age but under 18) entered into as a consequence of the staff member's role with the RSPB whilst not a criminal act, may well be a breach of trust and an abuse of the adult's position. Such a relationship will be subject to investigation and may result in disciplinary action.

The RSPB has a legal duty to refer anyone removed from work with children and/or Regulated Activity to the DBS/Disclosure Scotland/AccessNI. Therefore, a staff member involved in a sexual relationship with a child over 16 years of age may be referred to the DBS/Disclosure Scotland/AccessNI for consideration. This could result in the individual being barred from working with children.

No-one should encourage a physical or emotionally dependent relationship to develop between them and a child; this is often referred to as grooming. Staff must never send children inappropriate or sexually provocative messages or images by text or other electronic media.

Monitoring our approach to safeguarding

Our Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually by our RSPB Safeguarding Group and may also be reviewed in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance in England & Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland
- As required by the Disclosure & Barring Service, Disclosure Scotland and Access NI or other appropriate body/ies
- To reflect evolving best practice in the sector
- As a result of any other significant change or event.

A Safe Place: The RSPB safeguarding approach

Introduction

The aim is to ensure that children experience and enjoy nature with the RSPB within a safe environment.

Whilst this guidance endeavours to address the majority of issues that you might face, it is impossible to cover them all. When you are considering what steps to take in respect of matters not covered in this document you **must always** put the welfare of the child first.

If you need any advice on any matter relating to the safeguarding of children, please speak to a Safeguarding Adviser or any member of the Safeguarding Team.

Our Safeguarding Statement

The following safeguarding statement must be displayed at all events/activities:

The RSPB is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable and protected adults.

We ensure our safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and regulatory requirements wherever we operate as a charity.

Everyone has the right to take part in activities with us in a safe, positive and enjoyable environment.

Responsibilities

As set out in the Safeguarding Policy, the RSPB Safeguarding Group has responsibility for the development and management of the Safeguarding Policy. Sites and projects are responsible for implementing policy and practice. In each country there is a Safeguarding Adviser, who will provide support and advice to sites/projects on all matters relating to safeguarding. The RSPB Safeguarding Group and the Safeguarding Advisers together form the Safeguarding Team for the RSPB. Further details of their respective responsibilities are set out in the Safeguarding Policy.

For events involving children we need to be very clear when we are acting “in loco parentis”. We are doing that when there are no accompanying parents or other responsible adults (e.g. grandparent, child minder, babysitter) and where parental or

individual consent forms have been signed. In these circumstances other non-approved adults or children (including 13-17 year olds) cannot take responsibility for children.

All RSPB staff working with children have a responsibility to foster an open, safe and trusting atmosphere at all times. They must also follow the code of conduct outlined below.

Code of conduct for the Children's Workforce

All members of the Children's Workforce need to be aware of the impact that their behaviour has on the children they come into contact with. The trust required between an adult and a child is fundamental and should never be jeopardised.

As a member of the Children's Workforce you are expected to act and behave in the following manner:

- Respect everyone as an individual.
- Provide a good example of acceptable behaviour.
- Respect everyone's right to privacy.
- Make your communications open, friendly, clear and positive.
- Be available as a listening ear and, if necessary, refer for more appropriate help.
- Be sensitive to other people's likes and dislikes.
- Try to ensure that their actions cannot be misunderstood or cause offence and are acceptable within a relationship of trust.
- Show understanding when dealing with sensitive issues.
- Plan to have more than one adult present during activities.
- Adhere to the RSPB policies laid out in [The Safeguarding Policy](#)
- Be aware that they are accountable to the children, their parents or carers and RSPB.

As a member of the Children's Workforce you may not act or behave in the following manner:

- Permit abusive behaviour such as bullying, ridiculing or taunting.
- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others.
- Touch a child in a way that could be misunderstood or without their express consent.
- Jump to conclusions or make assumptions about others without checking facts.
- Encourage inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour such as 'crushes'.
- Show favouritism to anyone.
- Make suggestive remarks or actions, even in jest.
- Resort to corporal punishment
- Deliberately place themselves or others in a compromising situation.
- Believe 'it could never happen to me'.

Good management and careful planning will go a long way to make your activities safe for both you and the children or vulnerable and protected adults in your care.

Language

Care should be taken about what is said and the way it is said. Swearing is unacceptable, but children's inappropriate language must be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

Smoking/Vaping

Anyone above the legal age for smoking/vaping must ensure that they smoke in a discreet, safe manner and in an appropriate legal place away from the children.

Alcohol

Adults at an event or residential experience involving children must not consume alcohol.

Drugs

It is illegal to take non-prescribed drugs not sold over the counter, at any age, and RSPB has an obligation to ensure that the law is upheld.

The use of touch

The RSPB does not say that staff should never touch a child or vulnerable and protected adult, but the use of touch should never be open to misinterpretation.

For example, a comforting hug after a minor fall or handholding to cross a road may be entirely suitable, so long as it is initiated by the child and is not part of a 1:1 situation.

It is important that staff are open with each other so that it is clearly understood that the way you interact with children is a legitimate issue to discuss. Be aware, however, that some children may develop crushes or other inappropriate attachments to RSPB adults. In such cases touch is rarely appropriate.

Infatuation

You should discourage children from becoming infatuated with you and other staff. Situations where an individual develops a 'crush' on an adult need to be handled sensitively. While it is important not to encourage a participant with a crush, the adult should be aware of the damage caused by rejection. If an adult thinks a child is developing a crush, she/he should mention it to their line manager or their Safeguarding Adviser, so she/he does not have to deal with the situation alone.

Favouritism

Staff should avoid showing favouritism. There are times when an adult finds it easier to relate to one child. However, singling them out can create a feeling of resentment from others in the group, or they can become the object of their teasing. Similarly, unrealistic expectations can be created, and the motive misunderstood.

Bullying and discrimination

Bullying is a form of persistent abuse. It may be physical, verbal, or digital. Be aware that staff could be accused of bullying as a result of an overbearing or authoritarian manner. Take care with adult banter and sarcasm – this is often perceived negatively by children. Bullying behaviour is not appropriate in any RSPB context, and you should look out for it and prevent. This is best done by bringing it into the open and discussing it, and perhaps by involving the children in setting ground rules for behaviour.

Bullying often results from discrimination, which can have many triggers including race, creed, sexuality, hair colour, given name or physical characteristics. Discrimination usually targets qualities that are outside an individual's control. Whatever individual views people hold discrimination is not acceptable.

Recruitment of volunteers and employees

The RSPB should be a safe, friendly and welcoming environment where all staff involved with children should be suitable to work with them. All reasonable steps must be taken to prevent anyone who may pose a threat to children from working with them.

Depending on the role, a staff member may or may not need to have a DBS disclosure/Access NI check or PVG Scheme registration. So how do you know if you or your staff will need one?

We have developed a vetting tool kit to assist you in deciding whether or not a check or registration is required. The Young people and vulnerable adults vetting toolkit is available on our Intranet.

In Scotland only, PVG Scheme registration is automatically required for certain roles and responsibilities. Please contact your Safeguarding Advisor for advice and guidance.

If after using the toolkit you feel a check or registration is required please discuss this with your Safeguarding Adviser.

Induction

All members of staff should be aware of the RSPB's Safeguarding Policy. Those who are in roles that mean they are working with children (part of the Children's Workforce) will need to have additional training as outlined in the Training section below.

A Safe Place - Our approach to running events/activities

Whilst the guidance is detailed, it is not exhaustive, and local circumstances often require local solutions. There will always be unforeseen circumstances, and where these occur common sense should always prevail, whilst always considering the needs of the child. If best practice is followed by staff, they will be supported and protected as they carry out their roles.

Our [Safeguarding Statement](#) must be displayed at all events/activities.

Supervision

To provide a safe environment, we will ensure that staff when working with children avoid working in isolation out of the sight of parents or other volunteers. Whilst staff are awaiting their DBS disclosure / Access NI check or PVG Scheme registration they must be supervised by someone who does have these checks.

Contingency planning should ensure that wherever possible levels of supervision can be maintained by suitably checked adults. However, in an emergency, this may not always be possible and if there are insufficient suitably vetted adults available, clearly other responsible adults will need to be asked to step in.

Planning events for children, families and vulnerable and protected adults

- Risk assess activities and sites to take account of the specific risks to children and vulnerable and protected adults by thinking about their characteristics
- Ensure that all people in supervisory roles, as well as other helpers, have had appropriate checks and training and that they know when they may be acting in loco parentis
- Plan to avoid any situation in which an individual is alone (1:1) with a child or vulnerable and protected adult
- Ensure you have the required [adult:child ratio](#) for your audience and the activity you are undertaking. Some activities will require a higher adult:child ratio – pond dipping or working with under 8s for example
- Always know how many unaccompanied children there are throughout the activity and where they all are. Consider using a buddy system if unaccompanied children are present
- Know what to do in the event that a child goes missing, or if one is found
- Know what to do if there is an accident or if abuse is witnessed or reported to you, and how to get support
- Report any incident, including “near misses” using the RSPB’s Incident Reporting System and inform your line manager or Safeguarding Adviser as soon as possible.

Adult: Child Ratios

For any activity the RSPB undertakes that has legally stated or recommended adult: child ratios (holiday clubs), we will ensure these ratios are in place.

For school visits to our sites the minimum ratio of RSPB adults to children is:

1:30 for school groups (however the RSPB expects schools to provide adult/child ratios in accordance with the requirement of their LEA or similar)

For any events/activities planned for children/families the level of supervision needs to be appropriate to the capabilities of the children involved in the activity. This could vary depending on:

- age (see table below)

- gender
- behaviour
- abilities within your group
- nature and duration of activities – if you are working near water, ratios may need adjusting
- competence and experience of staff involved
- requirements of location or accommodation
- any special medical needs
- specialist equipment needed.

As a minimum the RSPB will follow the adult : child ratios set out below for any events/activities planned for children/families:

Age	Adults	Children
0-2	1	3
2-3	1	4
4-8	1	6
9-12	1	8
13-18	1	10

These are based on [Ofsted](#) guidelines

Where we are running events for unaccompanied children, there should always be at least one DBS/Access NI checked or PVG Scheme registered adult in charge of any group of unaccompanied children, and a minimum of two other adults present.

Think of the **rule of three** - if there is an accident and help is needed:

1. someone must remain with the injured party
2. someone goes to get help
3. someone supervises the rest of the group.

As for all activities at our sites/projects, first aid provision and risk assessment also needs to be in place. RSPB activities on other sites, such as at county shows, follow these same guidelines.

Lone RSPB volunteers or staff interacting with the formal education system, such as during outreach visits to schools, should never plan to be alone with an individual child.

Plan activities so that individual RSPB staff members are never alone with a child. If you need privacy or have to discuss issues with a child alone, make sure at least one other adult is within sight and preferably earshot and that someone else knows why you are taking the action before you do it

The independent person procedure

Children should have a way of bypassing the adults running activities if they have any concerns about the way they are being treated. The RSPB has established a Freephone number at The Lodge for this purpose and staff have been trained appropriately.

When organising regular events for children where parents are not attending, such as holiday play schemes, Wildlife Explorers and Phoenix Group activities material given directly to children must carry the following 'independent person information' statement:

If you would like to talk to someone about the way this event was run and how you were treated, please call the RSPB on 0800 917 8566.

Call between 9 am and 5 pm to speak to someone, you can leave a message outside these times and we will get back to you.

Transportation

It should be made clear that it is the responsibility of parents to transport their child to and from activities at our sites/projects or nominated meeting point for an activity. If parents make arrangements between themselves, this is a private arrangement and at the parents' discretion.

In the event of a late collection of children, staff should:

- Attempt to contact the parents
- Wait with the child, in the company of others wherever possible.

Remind parents of their responsibility to collect their child promptly at the appointed time.

Organiser's responsibility

Whether an employee or a volunteer, the organiser is in a position of authority, but should operate from a position of mutual respect. Good working relationships will help children to feel safe in expressing their feelings, fears and experiences openly.

Organisers will ensure:

- All unaccompanied children have written parental consent to be with RSPB for the activities they are undertaking.
- There are agreed procedures with parents for delivering and collecting unaccompanied children as appropriate for the activity
- Only staff who are approved to work with children in a supervisory capacity are involved. Non-approved staff can still be involved but should not be placed in a supervisory role, allowed access to personal data or left in a one to one situation with a child. People should not move into roles requiring approval without additional checks
- Photographic consent forms are completed and retained before any photographs are taken on RSPB's behalf. Completed consent forms must be stored locally in a safe and secure location, and destroyed on the child's 18th birthday.
- A risk assessment is in place and the controls implemented for the site and the activities being undertaken.
- Where appropriate, the [independent person information](#) is made available.
- Adequate supervision according to our minimum [staff:child ratios](#). Note these are minima. Some activities, such as building nest boxes, may even require 1:1 supervision

- Plan any arrangements for toileting. If any children need a trip to the toilet, make sure that a one to one situation between any adult and a child is avoided. At least two adults or two children should be present on a toilet run. When going to the toilet yourself, try to not be alone with a child.
- Clearly advertised start and finish times for meetings, activities and events,
- Know who the event/activity leaders will be in any given situation and what their roles and responsibilities will be on the day
- Avoid any staff being alone with a child in private. If this is not possible, for example when administering first aid, then ensure that other staff are aware of the situation and support the action being taken. Plan carefully around the known pinch points of arrivals, departures, toilet breaks and accidents
- Ensure all events have at least one person trained in basic first aid. An appropriate first aid kit must be available
- Ensure one person is responsible for overseeing the safety of the event, and that everyone knows what to do in the event of an emergency
- Keep a register - the activity should end with the same number of participants/children it started with!
- Ensure that there are procedures for dealing with lost children
- The front and back rule. Ensure adults are at the front and back of a line of children heading to and from an activity.

RSPB staff should remember to take into consideration the age and abilities of children involved and the wishes of their parents/guardian.

Helpers

Offers of help in running activities are always welcome, but organisers must set out the ground rules at the start. If someone offers their services, say 'Great! but this is how we all work - as a team, looking out for one another and the children we are working with, never working alone with an individual child for their and our own safety and wellbeing, not being too familiar with children we are working with'.

If they won't accept the guidelines as you have done, then refuse their offer. It is carelessness that abusers are looking for and will exploit. Anyone with a genuine concern for the well-being of children or vulnerable and protected adults will readily accept the procedures and see the sense in following them.

Follow the RSPB procedures for recruiting and working with volunteers, and speak to your local Volunteering Development Officer if necessary.

Children, parents/carers/guardians and vulnerable and protected adults

Your audience shares the responsibility for keeping themselves and everyone else safe. In itself that does not reduce our responsibilities, but it should help by having more people watching out for issues. We need to be clear when we are acting "in loco parentis". We are doing that when there are no accompanying parents or other responsible adults (e.g. teachers, grandparent, child minder, babysitter) and where parental or individual consent forms have been signed. In these circumstances other non-approved adults or children (including 13-17 year olds) cannot take responsibility for others. One role for all RSPB staff working with these groups is to foster an open, safe and trusting atmosphere at all times. Relevant techniques include agreeing ground

rules for behaviour, encouraging active listening skills and discussing safeguarding arrangements regularly.

Other roles

The activity leader

Usually, the person leading the activity will also be the organiser, but not necessarily. The organiser may, for example, be the office staff who arrange the event, while the main leader carries out the organiser's wishes at the event itself, ensures that procedures are followed, ratios are maintained, all jobs are carried out and that the children have a good time.

First aider

This person will be trained in emergency first aid at work (EFAW - the one-day course) at least, will have easy access to a first aid kit and be able to take control in an emergency. Activities that are deemed risky enough to warrant special emergency provision or safety equipment are unlikely to be suitable for our audiences, and should only be led by suitably qualified and experienced adults.

Registrar

At one-off events, regular meetings and residential events involving unaccompanied children, this person will keep a record of all those present and ensure parental/guardian consent has been given.

Children going home

A nominated person should know how each child is expected to go home after the activity (the parental consent form asks for this information). This can be a chaotic time and you will find it helpful to have at least one person responsible for this with someone else close by to answer any questions that may distract them from their duty. Another way to account for everyone is to adopt a procedure whereby each child reports to this person and tells them when they are going home and with whom. This is less important for casual events when children attend with parents or guardians.

Where this is not practical, such as when part of a wider event, the leaders should make sure they are the last to leave.

You should not offer to take children home yourself unless their parents have consented to do so, and you have arranged for another adult to accompany you. Your vehicle must be suitable for carrying children.

Head count

The leader or nominated approved person should check numbers regularly so that you know where everyone is at any given time.

A Safe Place - Things to think about for indoor events

Everyone should be aware of fire and other emergency exits at any venue where an event/activity is taking place. Anyone who is not leading the event/activity should check with the event organisers to find out:

- where the fire exits are
- who has the register and the emergency contact details?
- who the first aider is
- where the first aid kit is stored
- if any of the participants have a special need
- any other information needed to help ensure the environment is safe for the activity to take place.

A Safe Place - Things to think about for outdoor events

Always observe the following before leading an activity or event outside.

- Go through the risk assessment with another person just to check you've not missed anything
- Follow the [adult-to-child ratios](#), it is advisable to invite an extra adult in case one drops out
- Visit the venue if it is unfamiliar and work out where to meet the children, where to cross roads if necessary and where the nearest available toilets are
- Check if there is a working telephone nearby or if you can get a signal for a mobile phone. Alternatively you might consider using a set of walkie talkies
- Inform the parents of the details of the event, including what children should wear and bring
- Consider weather necessities such as sunscreen and hats or waterproofs.
- Always have a wet weather plan
- Stay with the group and keep it reasonably close together – make sure you do not lose anyone – do a regular head count
- Be flexible – be prepared to adapt to what your audience finds exciting.

A Safe Place - Non-RSPB events

The RSPB may wish to attend events or activities, from county shows to craft fairs that are run by other organisations. Whether we are intending to run activities for children or not, we should only attend if we are satisfied that the event organisers have integrated safeguarding into their planning, such as having suitable levels of first aid provision and a lost child procedure. As well as the direct safeguarding of children, we have to recognise the reputational risk of being associated with unsafe events or activities.

It is the responsibility of the RSPB event organiser to find out which elements of our approach to safeguarding are being handled elsewhere.

It is our responsibility to:

- Check the event's lost child procedure. Is there a rallying point?
- Assess how our planned activities fit with everything else going on around you (e.g. if you find yourself next to an appealing but decidedly non-child-friendly activity, work out how to stop the children in your care straying)

- Find out what other (children's) activities are going on and whether they are likely to clash with yours (e.g. groups mingling in a hide).

A Safe Place - Risk management

RSPB wants children want to:

- have fun
- learn about nature and wildlife.

Staff can help ensure that activities and environments are safe by:

- identifying potential hazards and concerns in any place that we undertake activities with children.

Risks can be reduced by checking for:

- clear access
- adequate space for activities
- security
- fire/emergency procedures
- sufficient heating
- possible damage to facilities
- adequate/appropriate equipment or facilities
- hazards (objects, uneven surfaces etc)
- other venue users.

Check also for outside factors including:

- traffic/parking
- weather
- animals
- bodies of water such as rivers, streams and lakes
- boundaries.

Staff may be more familiar with a site from an adult perspective, but risk assessments must be carried out with the entire audience in mind.

Children are shorter, more active and less likely to read instructional and safety notices than most adults, but they are still entitled to a fulfilling experience with the RSPB. Consider, for example, heights of hand-rails on bridges, the accessibility of viewing slots in hides, the stiffness of toilet door locks, and road crossings. Vulnerable and protected adults may have hearing or mobility issues that affect their ability to react to alarms, and many conditions may not be immediately apparent. Risk assessments are a legal requirement, and this thinking is likely to benefit your whole audience.

A Safe Place - Under 6s

Sites/projects that provide the opportunity for under 6s to participate in activities need to ensure that they are aware of the additional factors which should be taken into account.

Whilst all parents/guardians should be encouraged to remain on the premises throughout an event/activity, it is particularly important for those of this age group.

Activities should be located within easy reach of shelter and toilets. An event/activity should ideally not exceed one hour and there should be at least one break for refreshments. Adults should be alert to the mental and physical capabilities of the individual children involved, and be prepared to adapt/curtail sessions in the event that the children become tired or lose concentration. Whilst all children will normally start activities at the same time, their parents/guardians should be instructed that they may withdraw them at any time during the session.

Where there is a wide range of children they should be matched to activities according to age and development.

A Safe Place - lost and found children

All sites/projects will establish procedures for responding to a lost or found child incident and brief staff on them. All sites with a Visitor Centre will have a collection point for lost children. Each site/project will have different procedures depending on local circumstances, but you should base your actions on the following best practice advice:

If a child is reported lost

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

If you find a lost child

- Get down to the child's height. Show the youngster your name badge and tell them you work there. Ask them their name or check a jacket for a nametag.
- Carry out a brief search of the immediate area with the child. Usually "lost" children are near their family.
- Take the child to the lost child point if the site/project has one or somewhere obvious and well populated. Notify other staff on the reserve that you have found them, stay with them in an open area and use calming words.
- If possible, seek help from another adult (that way you don't break the finding yourself in a 1-1 situation rule).
- Confirm the identity of anyone claiming the child and make sure the child can identify them. Do not release the child to anyone under 16. If in doubt call the police.
- If the child is not collected or claimed within 30 minutes, inform the police giving them as much detail as possible.

- Write up detailed notes of what happened, when and who was involved in the RSPB's Incident Reporting System and tell your line manager about the incident. If the police were called, you must also inform your local Safeguarding Adviser or a member of the Safeguarding Team.

A Safe Place - Safeguarding disabled children

Disabled children and their families may need additional information, help and support. At specific sites staff may require training and advice to ensure they include and safeguard them.

Some children may be more susceptible to harm than other participants because they may:

- lack the mutual support and protection of a peer group
- require higher degrees of physical care and support
- have limited communication skills
- find it difficult to resist inappropriate interventions
- have several carers making it difficult to identify an abuser
- have a history of having limited or no choice or have a degree of dependency on a carer conflicting with the need to report harm or raise concerns.

It is also important to be aware of the additional vulnerability some children experience as a result of a wide spectrum of additional support needs, for example autism or attention deficit disorder.

Useful contacts:

www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk (Council for disabled children)

www.ndcs.org.uk (The National Deaf Children's Society)

www.autism.org.uk (The National Autistic Society)

www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk (Autism Education Trust)

A Safe Place – Young people at work

When employing a young person under the age of 18, whether for work experience, or as an apprentice, the RSPB has the same responsibilities for their health, safety and welfare as we do for other employees. Where the individual is a volunteer we will consider them to be an employee for the purpose's health, safety and welfare.

The RSPB has a responsibility to ensure that young people are not exposed to risk due to:

- lack of experience
- being unaware of existing or potential risks and/or
- lack of maturity

We should consider:

- the layout of the workplace
- the physical, biological and chemical agents they will be exposed to
- how they will handle work equipment
- how the work and processes are organised
- the extent of health and safety training needed
- risks from particular agents, processes and work

You must let the parents or guardians of any child know the possible risks and the measures put in place to control them. This can be done in whatever way is simplest and suitable, including verbally.

Any employee or volunteer under the age of 18 should be managed as you would any other employee or volunteer. An important part of a line manager's role is to ensure that a younger worker fits into the team and works effectively alongside their colleagues.

When a younger worker starts working for the RSPB their line manager should:

- Lead by example, showing the type of behaviours that are expected from the younger worker
- check that the younger worker understands their role and responsibilities
- find out what the younger worker can and can't do
- ensure the younger worker is trained and supported so they can meet all the responsibilities of their role
- encourage the younger worker to come to them if they need any help or have any problems
- arrange frequent reviews and catch ups to talk about how the younger worker is doing and resolve any issues that may arise
- arrange mid-year and end-of-year reviews to discuss the younger worker's progress more formally. As part of these discussions, training and development needs should be considered

Children under 13 are generally prohibited from any form of employment. Local authorities have powers to make bye-laws on the types of work, and hours of work, children aged between 13 and the Minimum School Leaving Age can do. Please speak to your Employee Relations Adviser for further guidance.

A Safe Place - Work experience

The RSPB will on occasions provide opportunities for teenagers to spend time within the organisation as part of their work experience. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that the placement is safe and appropriate, but the RSPB has a duty of care to the students. The main concerns for many people are as follows:

- What is the lower age limit for work experience?
 - There isn't one for the RSPB, but it is rare for the child to be under 14.

- Can teenagers be placed with staff that are not approved to work with children?
 - So long as the school is aware of the situation, this is acceptable, and would be the case in most work experience placements in other organisations. Talk to your Safeguarding Adviser before the placement to discuss the implications.
- Can teenagers be placed in circumstances where they are likely to be alone for a proportion of their time with a staff member (e.g. on a research project)?
 - Again, so long as the school is aware of the situation this can be acceptable, but consult with your Safeguarding Adviser. However, simply shadowing one lone staff member for a week may not show the RSPB in its best light as an employer. Try mixing lone fieldwork with more social work activities. Most children (and schools) will not be aware of our range of activities.
- Who has responsibility for the teenager during their time with the RSPB, the school, the staff member in charge, or a parent (if on staff)?
 - The school has a responsibility to place students safely, but the staff member directly in charge of the student's daily activities is responsible for their immediate safety and welfare. This need not be the school's main contact. Schools usually require one main contact point in relation to their students, and you should be aware that the school or local authority adviser will ask about basic health and safety issues.
- What about the use of special equipment or driving work experience students in RSPB cars?
 - Follow the relevant code of practice for the use of specific equipment. Students can be driven in RSPB cars provided the school has agreed to this in their initial briefing. Remember the golden rule of including a risk assessment relevant to the child, the results of which must be available to the school, whether they ask for it or not.
- What about children who are not linked with a school, such as via the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme?
 - We encourage such contact. Treat them as if they were linked with a school. Contact your Safeguarding Adviser to discuss specific queries before taking the individual on.
- Where can I get help with work experience matters?
 - Contact your Safeguarding Adviser.

Further information on Work Experience and our procedures is available on the Intranet.

A Safe Place - Play schemes and holiday schemes

Some sites/projects run play schemes or holiday schemes. Typically, they run for up to two hours, either on consecutive days or weekly during the summer and Easter school holidays. The exact nature of the schemes vary: some are for unaccompanied children

only; others require parents to stay. Most are for children aged between five and 12 years old; a few cater for younger children and toddlers.

Wherever possible, these schemes should be seen as RSPB Wildlife Explorers activities and therefore run to the same standards as expected of our groups. Please speak to the Education, Families and Youth Department for more information on RSPB Wildlife Explorer Groups.

The Children's Act 1989 regulates child care provision in this country and imposes restrictions on activities for children under 8 years of age. If you put on activities for the under 8s that do not involve parents, that are longer than two hours and occur more than six times a year, contact your local authority to discuss registration as a sessional care facility. Note that criteria for registration vary between local authorities. It is advisable to keep your activity to less than two hours or insist that a parent accompanies the child, as registration involves following strict guidelines and inspection. To avoid the need to register you cannot normally run morning and afternoon sessions for the same children. No more than five sessions should be run in a week, with a child-free break between sessions. A two-hour limit is very rarely a problem as this is quite a long time to be with this age group, especially without parents!

A Safe Place - Nuisance or disruptive behaviour

Children causing nuisance or anti-social behaviour on RSPB sites

Occasionally, particularly in urban locations, children can interfere with our operations, either deliberately or by accident. Accidental or incidental issues include unwanted access to our sites or excessive noise. Deliberate interference includes vandalism and unauthorised use of bicycles and motorbikes. You are probably most likely to come across these situations when you are on your own.

Children may not always realise that what they are doing is wrong, or why we object, so stay calm and non-aggressive while you assess the situation. First, ask them politely to stop whatever it is they are doing, and then try to engage them more positively. If that works, fine – treat it as an opportunity to educate and entertain a new audience. If they refuse, or you deem it unsafe even to ask, call for back up from a colleague or even the Police. Record the incident properly in RSPB's Incident Reporting System and report it to your line manager.

Disruptive behaviour and discipline

Dealing with disruptive children is not an easy task and there are no set rules that will work with every child. We seldom get to know the children well enough to know if they are suffering other problems that are contributing to their disruptive behaviour, but some action is necessary if the other young people are not to suffer.

You have control and can deliver ultimatums to parents if you feel the activity is suffering because of their child's behaviour. We should be aiming for calm and relaxed supervision where children have fun in a non-threatening atmosphere.

Disruptive children often attend our activities. Fortunately, they tend to be accompanied by parents. Disruptive behaviour may have many causes including boredom (activities

not pitched at the right level), hormones, attention seeking, troubles at home, and medical and learning/social factors (e.g. dyslexia, diabetes, autism spectrum disorder etc).

Having plenty of assistance will help as you will be able to provide better supervision of the disruptive child and keep their attention without ignoring the rest of the group. While we don't want to reward disruptive behaviour, it can help enormously if you can keep them busy. Set clear ground rules at the beginning and try giving them responsibility, giving praise, rewarding good behaviour rather than punishing disruptive, remembering to use their name, and using games as a distraction or to change pace. Speaking with teachers in advance of learning events to find out about previous learning as well as any additional support needs will help you to plan and pitch your session more appropriately.

It is not unreasonable to insist that a parent of a regularly disruptive child attends and takes responsibility for their child's behaviour.

Physical intervention

The welfare of the child is paramount. In a situation where individuals have to consider whether to intervene to protect a child being injured, injuring themselves or others, physical intervention as a first step should always be avoided unless absolutely necessary. In these situations it is imperative to try and resolve the issue by talking to the child to de-escalate the situation unless it is impractical to do so or if lack of immediate action puts the child at further immediate risk of harm.

In these circumstances, it is imperative to:

- Consider your safety and that of others
- If possible, consult a colleague to assess the best course of action and to see if they are able to support you
- Talk to the child if possible first and give them instructions about what you want them to do, rather than what you want them to stop doing: For example 'I want you to sit down' rather than 'don't do that'.
- Try to de-escalate the situation if possible. Remain calm, with neutral facial expressions and keep your voice low with an even tone.
- Allow the child time and space to react to what you are asking them to do unless it is impractical to do so or if lack of immediate action puts the child at further immediate risk of harm.
- Consider distracting or diverting the child unless it is impractical to do so or if lack of immediate action puts the child at further immediate risk of harm.
- If you need to physically intervene, use no more than minimum force and no more than is necessary to resolve the incident to prevent the child being injured, injuring themselves or others
- Do not strike blows, act with unnecessary or unreasonable force or retaliate.
- Avoid contact with the intimate parts of the body and the head and neck. Using force towards these areas could cause serious harm to the child.
- Stay in control of your actions and record what has happened
- Notify the Safeguarding Advisor or a member of the Safeguarding Team as soon as possible.

The Safeguarding Adviser or a member of the Safeguarding Team should be notified at the earliest opportunity of an incident of physical intervention which involves possible dispute as a complaint might be lodged with the RSPB or the Police by a parent whose child has been physically restrained. The incident should be recorded in the RSPB's Incident Reporting System.

Physical intervention, often referred to in education as 'Positive Handling', should only be used to achieve an outcome in the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern or other children involved and never as a form of punishment.

Useful contacts: www.mencap.org.uk

A Safe Place - Digital Guidance

The internet is amazing. Children can play, learn, create and connect - opening a whole world of exciting possibilities. Our young members and adult volunteers use these tools to socialise, communicate and learn, and also to speak positively about issues that matter to them. However, there are risks online, just as there are offline, including exposure to offensive material, cyberbullying, trolling, harassment and grooming.

Whether you're an online expert or you're not sure where to start, [NSPCC](http://www.nspcc.org.uk) has tools and advice that will help you keep children safe.

What children do online and through social networking?

Most social platforms require account holders to be 13 years old, there will be a few younger children who, with parental support will have accounts. Children go online to connect with friends, and make new ones, to browse the internet for information, chat with others and play games.

They may use social platforms such as Instagram, [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com), [Twitter](https://www.twitter.com), TikTok, Twitch, YouTube, [WhatsApp](https://www.whatsapp.com), and Snapchat to:

- Create, share, comment or engage with images or videos
- Keep up-to-date with friends
- Follow the life-styles of reality stars, celebrities and/or the channels of YouTube vloggers
- Live-stream videos
- Communicate with others using voice and video chat, or instant messenger. This can take place on social networks, through encrypted messaging apps and in some mobile games.

They may use search engines such as [Google](http://www.google.com), YouTube, Bing, Gibiru, Safari, Chrome etc to:

- Search for papers and support for homework
- Shop for classwork and projects and/or aspirational items or necessities

- Play games: including watching others playing games or stream their own game-play

When online, children can learn new things, get help with homework, express themselves creatively and connect with friends and family.

There are also risks, but by understanding and talking about the dangers, you can help keep them safe online.

Digital communication policy

- You should not contact any child under the age of 14 directly. Communication should be with parents, carers and/or guardians, digitally or otherwise.
- When contacting parents, carers, guardians or children over the age of 14, you should:
 - use appropriate language – try to avoid any words or phrases that could be misinterpreted or misconstrued
 - ensure that any images you send are appropriate and that external hyperlinks you include do not lead to inappropriate content
 - blind copy (Bcc) another member of your team into any message you send to a young member.

Should an RSPB staff member be invited to join Group Text Chats, such as a WhatsApp Group, we always recommend that there are two members of staff in any Group Chat.

Sharing photos and/or videos

Ensure that you have checked parental permission before sharing photos or videos of anyone on an RSPB branded website, social network or specialist media sharing sites.

Avoid mentioning children's full names or including other information that could reveal their identities. Be aware that children's full names can be visible on Facebook and Twitter, so think carefully about the content you are posting, particularly if you are tagging their account into the post.

Make sure children are aware that they should not share photos or videos of their friends online without permission from parents, carers or their guardians. Consider disabling the ability to comment on YouTube videos. This is a great interactive feature, but it also allows users to post negative comments or abuse.

Email

Ensure that appropriate email addresses are used when communicating in a RSPB capacity. Use the Bcc (blind carbon copy) box when emailing a group of people – this will ensure you don't share anyone's contact details without their permission and protect everyone against spam.

Do not forward chain emails to children or anyone else employees or volunteers.

If you receive an email from a child that causes you concern, speak to your Safeguarding Adviser.

Using social media networks safely

As a rule, no RSPB staff should be setting up or managing any social media accounts for, or targeted at, children.

There are a small number of exceptions to this policy. If you believe you need to set up such an account, please speak to your Safeguarding Adviser in the first instance and refer to our Social Media Policy.

Many social media platforms have a minimum age before joining, see below. If you believe anyone joining or utilising any RSPB social account is below the ages stated by the social channel or platform provider, it is your duty to report this to the social channel or platform for their teams to investigate.

- 13 years old - Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, Reddit, Snapchat, and Google+
- 14 years old - LinkedIn
- 16 years old - WhatsApp
- 17 years old –Tinder
- 18 years old - YouTube, Flickr, Keek, Foursquare and Kik, although kids aged 13-17 can sign up with parent's permission

Below are some tips should you be contacted by children through any RSPB social media networks or indeed your own:

- Staff should not become 'friends' with children on semi-private social networks (e.g. Facebook). If a child asks to become 'friends' with a member of staff, they should not reply on the social networking site (a reply can often allow the child to see your profile in full). Rather you should either message them directly via the RSPB's page or by email making clear that you are not allowed to be 'friends' with any child; stressing this is not a personal rejection but an organisational policy
- Staff should carefully consider their privacy settings and the information that their personal profiles say about themselves. Very lax privacy settings can give children information about your partner, personal photos and your interests and hobbies. This should be avoided. More broadly, this could cause significant reputational risks for the RSPB

For many children their social personas (profiles) are integral to how they interact with friends, family and peers. A great number of them will rely on fellow user gratification to define themselves and their achievements, which can lead to detrimental effects.

Sexting

Sexting refers to making or sending self-generated inappropriate or explicit material (including photos) of a sexual nature. Remind children that photos are easy to forward, copy, edit and post online without their knowledge or consent. Children should be made aware of the consequences of sexting if copied and shared outside of the intended recipient.

Try to provide advice and guidance so that children can make an informed choice about how they share and distribute photos.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can occur via email, social media and gaming sites, online chat or text message. Encourage children not to respond if they receive threatening or abusive messages. Instead, they should save the messages and keep a copy – they can copy and paste the text or use the 'Print Screen' button on their keyboard and then save it in a document (in a programme such as Word or Paint) to show a trusted adult. Ensure children are aware that when chatting online, most services allow you to block and report users.

Remind children that if they find themselves in an unpleasant situation they should leave the website. They can always log out of their social media account, deactivate the notifications, hide or delete posts on their timeline if they are not happy with any content or comments that they receive or see. They can also temporarily deactivate their account if necessary.

If a child is receiving hurtful messages via their mobile phone, they should not reply. Advise them not to answer calls from a withheld number. They can speak to their mobile network provider about barring contact from a certain number. However, some mobile phone operators will act only if the police are involved. Alternatively, they could think about changing their mobile phone number.

Always encourage children to tell a trusted adult if they feel they are experiencing cyber-bullying. Attempting to deal with the situation alone may cause personal distress and the situation may escalate. Reassure them that they are not at fault if this happens to them.

If a child feels they can't tell anyone, they can call ChildLine on 0800 1111 for support and advice.

A Safe Place - Photographic images

The RSPB positively encourages parents to take photographs of their own children (only) involved in our activities as it helps to show we are connecting children with nature. However, there are circumstances where taking a photograph of a child will not be acceptable. Any photograph (digital or printed) which is produced and released into the public domain may be misused by anyone, as once this has been done control has been lost.

The key points are:

- Personal information which can lead to a child being identified should never be used. If it is necessary to name a child, ensure you have written parental consent and have informed the parents as to how the image will be used. This is particularly important when issuing press releases and match reports
- Photographic consent forms are completed and retained before any photographs are taken on RSPB's behalf. This can be done easily at the beginning of the event/activity using the appropriate Photographic Image Consent Form (for individuals or groups) on the Intranet. Completed consent forms must be stored locally in a safe and secure location, there is no need to contact the child when they turn 18 but we do need to enact their wishes and remove a photo of them if they contact us with an objection.
- Children must be appropriately dressed when being photographed. Images should be neither sexual, of an exploitative nature nor open to misinterpretation or misuse
- It is not an offence to take photographs in a public place. On privately owned or leased land it is the owner who may regulate whether or not photographs may be taken
- Parents should be aware that they may be asked to register their intention to take photographs.

Photographing children at RSPB led events on non-RSPB sites:

- There are no laws preventing photography of children in a public place, or in any place open to the public where photography is not expressively prohibited. Therefore you cannot restrict photography at these events. Make the parents aware that this is the case.

Commissioning professional photographers & the local media

If you commission professional photographers or invite the press to cover an activity, ensure everyone is clear about each other's expectations. The key is to plan ahead and communicate early on. You should:

- Speak to the Digital Media Team at RSPB HQ before commissioning a professional photographer (speak to the Picture Researcher)
- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour
- Ensure the photographer is accompanied by a staff member whilst photographing our event/activities
- Inform them of the RSPB's commitment to safeguarding children. Establish who will hold the recorded images and what they intend to do with them.
- Issue the professional photographer with identification, which must be worn at all times.

A Safe Place - Data protection, parental consent and name gathering

Only data (information) that is required for the running of an event/activity may be collected, and it must be collected in such a way that makes it clear what is to happen with the data. In practice, this means that explanations about how the data is to be used must be clear and appropriate to the age group.

If you ask a child to provide personal information, you need consent from a parent or guardian, unless it is reasonable to believe that the child clearly understands what is involved and they are capable of making an informed decision. The Data Protection Act does not state at what age a child can act in their own right, but has advised a minimum age of 12. Young people aged 16-18 are often more comfortable with Data Protection options than adults because of their experience in school and college.

Treat as confidential the names and addresses of children collected in any form. They must be kept secure and used only by approved adults. Do not copy names and addresses or use them for other purposes. Unwanted lists must be shredded or returned to The Education, Families and Youth Department at The Lodge for disposal. No one should have their own private list.

Check bespoke name-gathering activities with the Corporate and Legal Services team at The Lodge for compliance with Data Protection laws. The latest approved data protection statements appear on the intranet.

Where an image is submitted to RSPB Images, the consent form must accompany it.

Access to personal information and children's addresses

Unaccompanied children attending activities must have a parental consent form or fill in a register with details of known relevant medical conditions, e.g. allergies.

Any forms that contain confidential information about children must be treated with care, stored safely, securely and shared with approved adults only on a 'need to know' basis, e.g. after an accident or before eating or preparing food.

Addresses of children, including email addresses, must not be available for casual perusal and are for use by approved adults only.

Data storage

The RSPB has a duty to keep children's personal data safe and secure and in practice this means that these forms must be stored in a locked cabinet or desk when not in use. When they are being used, they must be kept by the main leader of the event/activity and not left for members of the public to see (e.g. not pinned on a notice board while a meeting is in progress).

Keep forms that relate to one-off events along with the rest of the paperwork for the event, but destroy after 18 months.

Keep forms that relate to ongoing activities, such as Parental Consent forms or a Volunteering form while there is still contact with the child and then dispose of by shredding. It is good practice to ask annually whether or not there have been any changes in consent. Where there are changes, a new form must be completed.

Photographic consent is granted in perpetuity, but the consent form is kept until the child's 18th birthday. For images that sit on RSPB Images, the consent form is directly linked to the record of the image.

Digital data should be password protected and stored in accordance with the RSPB's Information Governance protocols.

Finally

Whilst this document endeavours to address the majority of issues that you might face, it is impossible to cover them all. When you are considering what steps to take in respect of matters not covered in this document you **must always** put the welfare of the child first and use common sense to determine the best course of action.

If you need any advice on any matter relating to the safeguarding of children you should speak to your Safeguarding Adviser or a member of the Safeguarding Team

Useful Contact Details

RSPB

The RSPB Safeguarding Team contacts are:

Safeguarding Advisers

RSPB Safeguarding Group

[Ann Kiceluk](#)

Executive Director, People

Board member with responsibility for Safeguarding

RSPB's Designated Safeguarding Officer

T: 01767 693565

[Alan Murray](#)

Head of Volunteering and Employee Engagement

RSPB's Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer

T: 01767 693203

External

Abuse of a Vulnerable Adult

Refer concerns to your local council Adult Safeguarding team or co-ordinator and/or the police for further investigation

Action on Elder Abuse

Call for confidential help and advice on all aspects elder abuse

T: 0808 808 8141

<http://elderabuse.org.uk/>

Bullying UK

T: 0808 800 2222

www.bullying.co.uk

Childline

T: 0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

Children England

Provides a wide range of support to voluntary and community sector organisations working with children, young people and families.

T: 0207 833 3319

www.childrenengland.org.uk

Children in Wales - Plant yng Nghymru

This is an umbrella organisation in Wales disseminating information on policy, research and best practice for children in Wales. They aim to promote the interests of and take action to identify and meet the needs of children, young people and their families in Wales. They provide child protection courses for a range of organisations.

T: 029 2034 2434

www.childreninwales.org.uk

Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP)

T: 0870 000 334

www.ceop.gov.uk

Think U Know is a CEOP source of activities for children around online safety

www.thinkuknow.co.uk.

Childnet

Works in partnership with others around the world to help make the internet a safe place for children

www.childnet.com

Council for disabled children

The umbrella body for the disabled children's sector bringing together professionals, practitioners and policy-makers

T: 020 7843 1900

www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk

Domestic Violence

Women can call

T: 0808 2000 247, the free 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline

Men can call the [Men's Advice Line](#)

T:0808 801 0327 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm) or

T: 01823 334 244, ManKind

Female Genital Mutilation

If you're concerned that someone may be at risk call the NSPCC helpline

T:0800 028 3550 or

fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

Get Safe Online

The UK's leading source of unbiased, factual and easy to understand information on online safety:

www.getsafeonline.org/safeguarding-children

Internet Matters.org

A non-for-profit organisation that has a simple purpose – to empower parents and carers to keep children safe in the digital world.

www.internetmatters.org

Keeping Children Safe

A global network committed to protecting the world's most vulnerable children from exploitation and abuse

www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk

Mencap

T: 0808 808 1111

www.mencap.org.uk

Net Aware

Guide to social networks children us. Stay up to date and keep children safe in today's digital world.

www.net-aware.org.uk

NSPCC Helpline

To report or discuss concerns about a child's welfare.

T: 0808 800 5000 (for adults – 24 hrs)

E: help@nspcc.org.uk

www.nspcc.org.uk

NSPCC Learning

NSPCC Knowledge and Information Service provides quick and easy access to the latest child protection research, policy and practice.

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/>

NSPCC Cymru/Wales Child Protection Helpline

T: 0808 100 2524 (Mon-Fri 10am-6pm)

Safeguarding Advice and loads of useful information

NSPCC

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/safeguarding/>

The National Deaf Children's Society

T: 0800 800 8880

www.ndcs.org.uk

The National Autistic Society

Supporting autistic people and their families across the UK, and working to change society for the better for those on the autism spectrum.

T: 0808 800 1050

www.autism.org.uk

RSPB Safeguarding Group

December 2019

Your Safeguarding Notes

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GIVE
NATURE
a HOME