



# **Safeguarding Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults**

**Effective for all BES employees, trustees, committee members and others working on behalf of the Society.**

**Overall responsibility:** Board of Trustees

**Implementation:** Executive Officer

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**Date Reviewed:** December 2018

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## **Policy statement**

The British Ecological Society believes that no one should experience abuse of any kind; this is especially important in our dealings with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

We are committed to practice in a way that protects all those involved in learning, mentoring and professional development experiences delivered through or on behalf of the British Ecological Society.

This policy applies to all staff and the board of trustees, volunteers, agency staff, students or anyone working else on behalf of the British Ecological Society.

The purpose of this policy is:

- to protect from harm children, young people and vulnerable adults who engage with the British Ecological Society's programmes.
- to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

## **Legal framework**

### **Safeguarding children**

A child or young adult is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989)

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Charity Commission guidelines
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children

### **Safeguarding vulnerable adults**

Within the BES a vulnerable adult is defined as, but not limited to any individual over the age of 18 in vulnerable circumstances either professionally or personally who is interacting with the BES through mentoring, education and training programs and within which they may be at risk of harm or exploitation.

This policy has been drafted using guidance from the Office of the Public Guardian

### **We recognise that:**

- the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989

- Everyone regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some individuals are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership is essential in promoting young people's and vulnerable adult's welfare.

**We will seek to keep children, young people and vulnerable adults safe by:**

- adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training including appropriate levels of first aid training
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made to an appropriate level
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with young people, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

**Managing and reporting safeguarding issues**

- the Society has nominated a lead safeguarding staff member. This individual will have undertaken a higher level of training and will provide training, support and advice for anyone who is working directly or indirectly with children and vulnerable adults or anyone within the society who feels a safeguarding matter has arisen
- The Society will maintain and review annually its list of projects and activities that are high risk (that is those activities where safeguarding issues are most likely to arise)
- Any event/programme will have a designated lead staff member who holds responsibility for ensuring that all child protection and safeguarding requirements are met
- All staff and volunteers involved in these activities will be issued with the policy and safeguarding will be embedded within the training provided.

- All staff involved will be issued with a safeguarding code of conduct
- Communications plan specific to the event and location will be agreed in advance and communicated to all staff and volunteers
- All events should have a safeguarding file which includes
  - A copy of this policy,
  - Named first aiders
  - All contact details
  - All emergency medical information
  - A reporting form for incidents
  - Body map reporting form
- Incidents or concerns must be reported to lead staff member at the first available opportunity and recorded in written form- where physical contact/ injury is involved, the body map should also be completed
- In the event safeguarding matters arise, they must be reported to the safeguarding lead and Executive Officer at the earliest opportunity
- If there is any suspicion or knowledge that an individual is suffering harm or is at risk of harm from others or themselves then the BES will record the information and pass to the appropriate body as required
  - If there is a risk of significant harm, including self-harm to a child or a clear allegation, current or past has been made then reporting will be to children's services in the first instance who will advise on next steps
  - If there is a risk of significant harm to a person over 18 or they have made a clear and serious allegation of harm or assault then they should be encouraged and supported to contact the police
  - If there is a suspicion or known risk of self harm to person over 18 then this must be reported to the lead staff member who will record, monitor and implement any measures required
- If an allegation has been made against a BES representative, the Lead staff member should record this, investigate and implement appropriate measures this may include
  - Any incident that involves physical/sexual harm must be reported to the police immediately who will advise on next steps

- If the incident does not warrant police notification and does not include anyone under the age of 18, then the lead staff member is responsible for ensuring that allegations are taken seriously, they are investigated with due care and consideration given to all individuals involved. Measures may include asking the BES representative to leave the event, and where this is not possible separating the individuals concerned
- If an allegation has been made against a BES staff member and does not warrant police notification, the lead staff member should implement the BES disciplinary policy



### **Safeguarding Code of Conduct**

The following advice is provided by the BES to ensure that everyone working with children or vulnerable adults understands their responsibilities and the BES expectations.

1. Any staff or nominated BES persons with responsibility for safeguarding receive appropriate training and induction.
2. Everyone is encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour to promote the welfare of all participants and reduce the likelihood of any allegations being made. This includes
  - Working in an open environment, i.e. avoiding private and unobserved situations
  - Treating all young people and vulnerable adults equally, with respect and dignity
  - Always putting the welfare of individuals first before educational or project goals
  - Maintaining a safe and appropriate physical and emotional distance
  - Maintaining a professional and friendly but non-personal, non-sexual dialogue at all times with all participants
  - Any manual or physical contact required seeks permission, is openly provided and reported ( if individuals are under 18 years of age)
3. At all residential events, additional good practice guidelines include
  - Shared and clear responsibilities and rotas for all those involved in safeguarding at residential events. At least two staff members are on duty at all times.
  - Ensuring male and female staffing for all events
  - Adults and staff do not enter participant bedrooms unless there is
    - First aid emergency and they are the designated first aider
    - Evacuations are taking place and rooms are being checked
    - Threat of harm to self and others requires immediate action
4. At residential events with young people under the age of 18 additional good practice includes
  - Limiting smoking and drinking areas to those not accessed by students
  - Staff should not drink alcohol before or during duty periods and must not drink sufficient to become inebriated during the course of the event
5. It is far better to seek advice if any doubts arise and these should be directed to the safeguarding lead or lead staff member. Contacts for both individuals will have been provided
6. Timely reporting of any incident or concern should be made into the record book along with details of any treatment or concerns raised