

Safeguarding Policy, February 2020

This Safeguarding policy applies to all volunteers, helpers, members, staff, including senior managers, sessional workers, freelancers and General Council members or anyone working or volunteering on behalf of Woodcraft Folk.

The purpose of this policy:

- to protect and empower children and young people who attend Woodcraft Folk groups and events
- to provide volunteers and staff with the overarching principles that guide Woodcraft Folk's approach to safeguarding and child protection

For guidance on the wellbeing of adults and staff, or concerns please see the following policies:

- Volunteer policy
- Health, Safety and Well-being policy
- Working Together guidelines
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Managing Behaviour guidance
- Social media, online communication and networking guidance
- Complaints procedures
- Whistle-blowing Policy
- Staffing policies

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding children is defined in [Working together to safeguard children](#) as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or 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 outcomes

Charities which work with children must always act in their best interests and ensure they take all reasonable steps to prevent harm to them. Please see the safeguarding checklist for a list of minimum safeguarding requirements e.g. supervision ratios, risk assessments, screening, training and other actions which create a safe environment for all.

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. Child protection refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm e.g. referral, support plans and other intervention.

Woodcraft Folk's Commitment

Woodcraft Folk believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind, that they should be supported to feel comfortable and confident when participating in our activities and the wider society.

Woodcraft Folk have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. Woodcraft Folk are committed to practice in a way that protects children and supports them to engage in activities that support our aims and principles.

Woodcraft Folk will not tolerate any behaviour which may harm children or young people emotionally, physically or psychologically. Such behaviour includes physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse, bullying, harassment, undue or harsh criticism or violence directed towards individuals or groups. Woodcraft Folk will take serious measures against any volunteer or staff member found in violation of this policy.

Woodcraft Folk strive to maintain a culture of honesty and openness, supporting children and young people to work co-operatively with adults to identify what they consider likely to affect them and their safety.

Children have said that they need:

- **Vigilance:** to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- **Understanding and action:** to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon
- **Stability:** to be able to develop an ongoing stable relationship of trust with those helping them
- **Respect:** to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not
- **Information and engagement:** to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans
- **Explanation:** to be informed of the outcome of assessments and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response
- **Support:** to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family
- **Advocacy:** to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views
- **Protection:** to be protected against all forms of abuse and discrimination and the right to special protection and help if a refugee

Safeguarding Principles

Woodcraft Folk recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

Woodcraft Folk's underlying safeguarding principle is that all members (children, young people and adult volunteers) should be protected at all times from behaviour and attitudes they find uncomfortable. To achieve this aim:

- The needs of the children and young people are central to all activity planning

- Open communication with members of all ages and effective planning will support safeguarding of children, young people and adults
- Anyone has the right to speak out about behaviour and attitudes they find uncomfortable, they know who they should speak to in advance and be confident they will be listened to
- Every District, Centre, project and event organiser must nominate one adult member to take the lead on safeguarding issues and to develop a tailored safeguarding plan
- Groups of children and young people should be supervised by a minimum of 2 adult members
- Physical contact should be instigated or consented to by the child or young person, and should be relevant to their needs or safety
- Appropriate screening and checks need to be undertaken by all adults regularly working with children, but these are only effective when supported by good communication, training and ongoing observation (link to screening procedures)
- All volunteers and staff receive appropriate Safeguarding training relevant to their role in the Woodcraft Folk
- Risk assessments must be completed for all venues and activity types
- Personal details of members, children and young people are held securely in accordance with Woodcraft Folk's data protection policy
- All children, young people and their parents/carers should be informed of this policy and who they should speak to about safeguarding or child protection issues
- All concerns and allegations will be taken seriously and responded to following the appropriate procedure. This may include a referral to child protection teams or other agencies

Review and learning lessons

Woodcraft Folk are committed to reviewing our policy and practice. The Lead Safeguarding Trustee will work with Woodcraft Folk's Lead Safeguarding Officer to co-ordinate the Members Safety and Well-Being Review Group. The review group will meet twice a year to ensure that;

1. Policies and procedures are kept up to date
2. Appropriate training is offered to members and staff
3. Each branch appoints a safeguarding officer and produces a local safeguarding plan
4. All branches, at every level, adopts best practice in safeguarding and Health & Safety
5. Sound systems are in place locally and nationally
6. Maintain an overview of screening decisions, ensuring appropriateness and consistency of decision-making.
7. Review all safeguarding and health & safety incidents

The Lead Safeguarding Officer will report to the group and General Council every six months, and together they will review this policy annually.

Whose responsibility is it?

To be used by all Woodcraft Folk groups, Districts, camps, Centres and projects.

All volunteers, helpers and adult members are responsible for:

- Being familiar with safeguarding policy and child protection procedures
- Ensuring parents, carers, children and young people are aware of the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures
- Share concerns promptly with their Local/Event Safeguarding Officer

Local/Event Safeguarding Officers are responsible for:

- Being familiar with local Safeguarding Partnership procedures
- Co-ordinating safeguarding training on a local level
- Keeping safeguarding on the agenda, creating space for discussion
- Acting as the first point of contact for volunteers concerned about the safety and welfare of a child
- Contacting children's social care in cases where a child is at risk of harm
- Ensuring that all volunteers know where they can find the safeguarding policy, local safeguarding plan and child protection procedures
- To support volunteers after they have shared their concerns about a child
- To liaise with appropriate local agencies for support and advice and keep a list of local contacts

Lead Safeguarding Officer and their deputy are responsible for:

- Developing safeguarding policy and procedures
- Advising and providing guidance to staff and volunteers concerned about a child protection issue
- Communicating to staff and volunteers any changes in policy and procedures
- Creating an environment which encourages all members to discuss concerns
- Training staff and volunteers about how to respond to child protection concerns
- Keeping accurate records of concerns about children and actions taken
- Collecting monitoring data on all safeguarding activities across the organisation
- Ensuring that the organisation meets the requirements of its insurers regarding its safeguarding responsibilities
- Promoting the importance of safeguarding across the organisation
- Managing complaints about poor practice of either staff or volunteers
- Making decisions about appointing someone who has a criminal record
- Carrying out risk assessments to assess the suitability of adults to work with children and young people
- Supporting Local Safeguarding Officers in their role

Members' Safety and Well-Being Review Group is responsible for:

- Maintaining an overview of screening decisions, ensuring appropriateness and consistency of decision-making
- Identifying lessons to be learnt to support improvements in practice
- Making recommendations to update policy, procedures and guidance

General Council is responsible for:

- Nominating a lead Trustee for safeguarding

- Nominating a Lead Safeguarding Officer and deputy
- Overseeing the Members Safety and Well-Being Review Group
- Ensuring effective reporting of serious incidents to the Charity Commission and other relevant bodies
- Evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding within the organisation
- Reviewing and updating the organisation's policy and procedures on safeguarding every year

Lead Safeguarding Trustee is responsible for:

- Overseeing Woodcraft Folk's safeguarding policy and child protection procedures
- Chairing the Members Safety and Well-being Review Group
- Working with the Lead Safeguarding Officer to advise General Council on safeguarding matters

Safeguarding Declaration

I confirm that I have read and understand my responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children and young people taking part in Woodcraft Folk activities.

I confirm that I have never received criminal convictions for offences involving abuse against children, nor am I subject to any such investigation. I have no other criminal convictions which might render me unsuitable to work with young people or pose a risk to the welfare of children and young people.

I confirm that I am not barred from working with children and young people or barred by association.

I understand that any such proceedings or convictions could result in suspension or expulsion from the Woodcraft Folk subject to the organisation's procedures.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Where can I get more support and information?

General Council will nominate a Lead Safeguarding Officer (Debs McCahon) and a Deputy (Leanne Powell), who can be contacted on 020 7703 4173 or by emailing safeguarding@woodcraft.org.uk

The Lead Safeguarding Officer and their Deputy will work with external advisers, staff and volunteers to produce and deliver:

- Training in safeguarding and child protection
- Good practice guidance in risk assessment
- Guidance for responding to child protection disclosures and child abuse concerns
- Guidance for dealing with allegations about staff and volunteers

- Template for local safeguarding plans, health registration/consent forms, disclosure, accident and incident forms

The following links will provide advice and guidance:

www.woodcraft.org.uk/safeguarding

[Staying Safe, Woodcraft Folk's online module exploring Woodcraft Folk's Safeguarding Procedures and Health and Safety Policy](#)

[Recognising and responding to child protection issues](#)

Policy History

[Reviewed by the Members Safety & Well-being Group in October 2019](#)

[Last updated by General Council in November 2019](#)

[To be approved by General Council in February 2020](#)