



## Forest School Camps Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

### Policy statement

FSC is an educational charity and a voluntary organisation. All our officers and staff are unpaid volunteers. This policy applies to all staff, organisers, committee members or anyone working on behalf of Forest School Camps including children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The purpose of this policy:

- to protect children and young people and vulnerable adults who receive Forest School Camps' services. This includes the children of staff who come on our camp or spend time at our stores;
- to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection;
- Forest School Camps believes that a child or young person or vulnerable adult should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- we have a duty to safeguard the children, young people and vulnerable adults who attend our camps.
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- working in partnership with children, young people, vulnerable adults, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.

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

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them;
- adopting child and vulnerable adult protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers;
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training;
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made;
- sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with campers parents, staff and volunteers;
- sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children and vulnerable adults appropriately.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice regularly

## **Safeguarding Procedures**

### **Purpose and aim of this procedure**

This procedure provides clear direction to staff and volunteers of Forest School Camps if they have concerns that a child is in need of protection or at risk of harm. This procedure also includes vulnerable adults.

### **Different types of abuse (and examples)**

Physical abuse is violence causing injury or occurring regularly. It happens when:

- a child is hurt or injured by being hit, shaken, squeezed, thrown, burned, scalded, bitten or cut
- someone tries to drown or suffocate a child
- someone gives a child poison, alcohol or inappropriate drugs
- someone fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

In some cases the injuries will be caused deliberately. In others they may be accidental but caused by the child being knowingly put at risk.

Sexual abuse occurs when someone uses power or control to involve a child in sexual activity in order to gratify the abuser's own sexual, emotional or financial needs or desires. It may include:

- forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening
- encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- showing children pornographic material or involving them in the production of such material
- involving children in watching other people's sexual activity or in inappropriate discussions about sexual matters.

Emotional abuse is persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment of a child that is likely to cause serious harm to their development. It may include:

- persistently denying the child love and affection
- regularly making the child feel frightened by shouts, threats or any other means
- hurting another person or a pet in order to distress a child
- being so overprotective towards the child that they are unable to develop or lead a normal life
- exploiting or corrupting a child, eg by involving him/her in illegal behaviour
- conveying to a child the message that he/she is worthless, unlovable, inadequate, or their only value is to meet the needs of another person. This may or may not include racist, homophobic or other forms of abuse.

Neglect involves persistently failing to meet a child's physical, psychological or emotional needs. It may include:

- failing to ensure that a child's basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, health care, hygiene and education are met
- failing to provide appropriate supervision to keep a child out of danger. This includes lack of supervision of particular activities or leaving a child alone in the house.

### **Role of Camp Safeguarding Lead**

Every camp will have a member of staff to lead on safeguarding. This person should have experience or training from their professional life, or have undertaken training through FSC such as that run by the NSPCC. Camp Chiefs should delegate this responsibility to a suitable member of staff and they should be kept informed and involved if any concerns arise.

The Camp Chief has ultimate responsibility for safeguarding the children on the camp.

The Safeguarding Lead will ensure staff on camp are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and the principles of the safeguarding policy. On camp they will be available to respond to safeguarding concerns and issues raised by staff members, children or young people on the camp.

### Specific responsibilities

1. Read the FSC Safeguarding Policy and Procedure and the safeguarding section of the childcare document.
2. Have completed Introduction to Safeguarding training, or equivalent.
3. Ensure staff are aware of the FSC Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, and implement recommended practice. This should be done at the first Staff Cuppa of the camp.
4. Be the named contact for anyone who has concerns about a child or vulnerable adult on the camp.
5. Report promptly any safeguarding concerns to the Safeguarding Panel (via 'holding the fort') and Camp Chief within 24 hours.
6. Record information using the Child Concern Report form provided and keep confidential all personal records.
7. Take responsibility for seeking emotional support for themselves or any member of staff where necessary, on camp and afterwards. The Children's Secretary can be contacted to provide or direct staff to support.

## **Keeping a record of concerns**

The Child Concern Reporting form will be used to record the concern and how it is dealt with. The relevant sections of the form should be completed and signed at each stage of the procedure. It can be used to forward information to the statutory child protection authorities if a referral to them is needed.

All safeguarding concerns must be discussed with the safeguarding lead on the camp and any actions agreed with them (unless it relates to a concern about them). A camp chief should be informed that the concern has been raised and relevant information shared. Other members of staff should be made aware on the concerns only if necessary to ensure the safety of the child. Immediate risks should be communicated directly with Holding the Fort and escalated as necessary.

The form should be signed and dated by all those involved in its completion and kept confidentially on the child's file by Children's Committee. The name of the person making the notes should be written alongside each entry. These notes will be forwarded to the safeguarding team during or immediately after the end of camp or immediately if urgent action is required.

## **What if a member of staff is not satisfied with the action taken?**

If any member of staff is uncomfortable with the decision that has been taken on camp with an issue raised, or has further concerns, this should be initially discussed again with the safeguarding lead and camp chief. They may have additional background information about the child, or it may be a useful prompt to help them re-think action. If this does not resolve the concern, any member of staff can call the FSC hotline 'holding the fort' directly. If concerns arise after camp, any member of staff can contact the children's secretary.

## **Supporting staff**

Dealing with safeguarding issues on camp can be stressful, and for some staff may be a trigger for stressors in their personal life/past. Staff will be encouraged to look after themselves and others dealing with a safeguarding situation: a debrief with the camp chief/safeguarding lead/Children's Committee will be available at any time.

## **Responsibilities of Children's Committee outside of camp**

Children's Committee will ensure that there is a safeguarding team responsible for managing any concerns and ensuring that the procedures detailed above are followed. The safeguarding team will report to the monthly Children's Committee meeting.

The safeguarding team will be experienced members of staff who have completed level 3 safeguarding training. At least one member of the safeguarding team will be available to the Holding the Fort team for the duration of all camps.

Any safeguarding concerns raised by camp staff with the Holding the Fort team will be discussed with the safeguarding representative to ensure any actions are taken as necessary.

Any actions that were taken during the camp will be recorded on the child concern form. Child concern forms will be returned to the safeguarding team following camps and reviewed. Any further actions will be completed either by the camp staff or by the safeguarding team including referrals to any statutory agency and contact with parents/carers.

Child concern forms and any further information or documents will be stored securely by Children's Committee and shared only with relevant people and only where necessary.

The safeguarding team are also responsible for receiving any potential safeguarding information about campers provided before camps. This information will be assessed by the team and appropriate action will be taken to gather necessary information that will be needed to safeguard the camper while on camp. In some cases a risk assessment will be undertaken to determine whether a camper is safe to attend camp. This will be completed by the safeguarding team in collaboration with the camper and/or their parent/carer.

An annual review will be completed by the safeguarding team and an overview of issues will be provided to FSC council.

## **FSC volunteers**

All FSC volunteers will complete an enhanced DBS check before attending any camp or FSC event where children will be present.

All safeguarding leads and camp chiefs will be expected to complete the Introduction to Safeguarding training every three years, or equivalent. Details of completion of the training will be stored by Staffing Committee. All staff will be provided by a safeguarding briefing by the FSC safeguarding lead at the start of each camp.

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