

Safeguarding Policy



Document Owner Lead Safeguarding Officer

Approval Date December 2025

Review Date December 2026

Approved By General Council

Document Family

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☒ Staying Safe | ☐ Finance |
| ☒ Volunteering | ☐ Programme |
| ☐ Inclusion | ☐ Governance |
| ☐ Staffing | ☐ Communications |

Applies To

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☒ Volunteers | ☒ Staff |
| ☒ Groups & Districts | ☒ Centres & Campsites |
| ☒ Contractors & Partners | ☒ Projects & Events |

Scope & Purpose

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

The purpose of this policy is:

- To protect and empower all 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

A child is defined, in both the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and UK legislation, as anyone under 18 years of age. For guidance on the wellbeing of volunteers and staff, or concerns please see Woodcraft Folk's Volunteer Policy, staffing policies, and associated procedures and guidance.

What is safeguarding?

Working Together to Safeguard Children provides a definition of safeguarding that includes:

- 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. Woodcraft Folk's safeguarding procedures and guidance set out the minimum safeguarding requirements which all groups should meet, 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 wider society.

Woodcraft Folk has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe.

Woodcraft Folk is committed to practice 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 strives 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 recognises that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- All children 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 young members (children and young people) and volunteers should be protected at all times from behaviour and attitudes they find uncomfortable. To achieve this aim:

1. The needs of the children and young people are central to all activity planning
2. Open communication with beneficiaries and volunteers and effective planning will support safeguarding of children, young people and adults
3. 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
4. Every Group, Centre, project and event organiser must nominate a named individual to take the lead on safeguarding issues and to develop a tailored safeguarding plan
5. Groups of children and young people should be supervised by a minimum of 2 adult volunteers
6. Any physical contact should be instigated or consented to by the child or young person, and should be relevant to their needs or safety

7. Appropriate screening and checks need to be undertaken in respect of all adults regularly working with children, but these are only effective when supported by good communication, training and ongoing observation
8. All volunteers and staff are required to undertake appropriate Safeguarding training relevant to their role in the Woodcraft Folk
9. Risk assessments must be completed for all venues and activity types
10. Personal details of all volunteers, children and young people are held securely in accordance with Woodcraft Folk's data protection policy
11. All children, young people and their parents/carers should be made aware of this policy and who they should speak to about safeguarding or child protection issues
12. 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 is committed to reviewing its policy and practice. The Lead Safeguarding Trustee will work with Woodcraft Folk's Lead Safeguarding Officer to co-ordinate the Safeguarding Subcommittee. The committee will meet twice a year to ensure that:

- Policies and procedures are kept up to date
- Appropriate training is provided to members and staff
- All groups, centres and projects have identified a Safeguarding Lead and produced a local safeguarding plan
- Best practice in safeguarding and Health & Safety is embedded at every level of the organisation
- Sound systems and processes are in place locally and nationally
- Safeguarding incidents are reviewed and lessons learned
- Screening decisions are reviewed to ensure appropriateness and consistency of decision-making.

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

Whose responsibility is it?

All volunteers 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
- Sharing concerns promptly with the relevant Safeguarding Lead

Local/Event Safeguarding Leads are responsible for:

- Being familiar with statutory procedures and structures locally (e.g. Safeguarding Partnerships)
- Co-ordinating safeguarding training for volunteers 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
- Supporting volunteers after they have shared their concerns about a child
- Liaising with appropriate local agencies for support and advice and keep a list of local contacts

Woodcraft Folk's Safeguarding Team is comprised of the Lead Safeguarding Officer and their deputies, and is 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 volunteers and young members to disclose any 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/Event Safeguarding Leads in their role

The Safeguarding Subcommittee 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

Woodcraft Folk's Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Nominating a lead Trustee for safeguarding
- Nominating a Lead Safeguarding Officer and their deputies
- Overseeing the Safeguarding Subcommittee
- 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

The Lead Safeguarding Trustee is responsible for:

- Overseeing the effective implementation of Woodcraft Folk's safeguarding policy and child protection procedures
- Chairing the Safeguarding Subcommittee
- Working with the Safeguarding Team to advise the Board on safeguarding matters

Further Support & Information

Safeguarding Team

Woodcraft Folk's Lead Safeguarding Officer is Owen Sedgwick-Jell, Head of Membership & Programmes. He is supported by two deputies: Leanne Powell, Membership & Groups Manager and Lauren Karstadt, Programme Manager.

The Safeguarding Team can be contacted by emailing safeguarding@woodcraft.org.uk, or by calling 020 7703 4173 and selecting option #4.

Website

The Safeguarding section of the Woodcraft Folk website contains links to:

- [Online training](#) on Safeguarding for groups and volunteers
- [Advice and good practice resources](#)
- Guidance for [responding to concerns](#)
- Templates for [Local Safeguarding Plans](#)