

ADVENTURE ALTERNATIVE CHILD & VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

Adventure Alternative has a duty of care to safeguard all children and vulnerable adults involved in UK and overseas Ventures and training from harm. All children and vulnerable adults have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.

Adventure Alternative will ensure the safety and protection of all children and vulnerable adults involved in an Adventure Alternative venture.

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

There are three potential interactions with children and/or vulnerable people on all Adventure Alternative Ventures:

Adventure Alternative Staff interacting with child and/or vulnerable volunteers.

Volunteers interacting with child and/or vulnerable volunteers.

Adventure Alternative Staff and volunteers interacting with local children.

Policy aims

The aim of this Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy is to promote good practice and set guidelines for those working with children and/or vulnerable people:

Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of **Adventure Alternative**

Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

Promoting good practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A member of staff or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

Good practice guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication.
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate environment (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children to share in decision making.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance.
- Where possible to provide male and female members of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

Practices to be avoided

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If a case arises where these situations are unavoidable (eg the child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital), it should be with the full knowledge and consent of Adventure Alternative or

the child's parents.

Otherwise, avoid:

Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.

Practices never to be sanctioned by Adventure Alternative Staff or volunteers

The following should **never** be sanctioned. You should **never**:

- Engage in rough physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a room with a child.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children to stay with you unsupervised.

NB It will not be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out by professionals with the adequate skills and security checks.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

- If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another volunteer and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:
- if you accidentally hurt a child and/or vulnerable person
- if he/she seems distressed in any manner
- if a child and/or vulnerable person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- if a child and/or vulnerable person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers

Adventure Alternative recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

Pre-selection checks must include the following:

All volunteers/staff should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.

For all Adventure Alternative Staff consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.

Two confidential references. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.

Evidence of identity should be provided (e.g. passport or driving licence with photo).

Pre-departure Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

The volunteer requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.

They should sign up to **Adventure Alternative** Code of Conduct.

Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.

Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.

Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.

Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.

Work safely and effectively with children.

Adventure Alternative requires all staff to:

Attend good practice and child protection awareness training, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection.

Receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.

Undergo first aid training.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

Adventure Alternative will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern that a colleague/volunteer is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- a criminal investigation
- a child protection investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Action

1. Concerns about poor practice:

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, **Adventure Alternative** will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

If the allegation is about poor practice by **Adventure Alternative** or a **Adventure Alternative** member of staff, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the relevant **Adventure Alternative** Manager who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

2. Concerns about suspected abuse:

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to **Adventure Alternative**, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

Adventure Alternative will refer the allegation to the local or international social services department which may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.

The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.

If a **Adventure Alternative** member of staff is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate **Adventure Alternative** Manager.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

This includes the following people:

the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused

the person making the allegation

social services/police

Adventure Alternative staff members

the alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Internal enquiries and suspension

Adventure Alternative will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries **Adventure Alternative** will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, **Adventure Alternative** must reach a decision based upon the available information, which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of help lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189.

Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (eg by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children).

Where such an allegation is made, the club should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children, may be at risk from this person.

Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

Action if bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying:

Take all signs of bullying very seriously.

Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns

(It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority.

Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.

Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.

Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).

Report any concerns to **Adventure Alternative** (wherever the bullying is occurring).

Action towards the bully(ies):

Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour.

Seek an apology to the victim(s).

Inform the bully(ies)'s parents.

Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that the bully(ies) compensate the victim.

Impose sanctions as necessary.

Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.

Inform all organisation members of action taken.

Keep a written record of action taken.

3. Concerns outside the immediate venture environment (eg a parent):

Report your concerns to an **Adventure Alternative** Leader, who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible.

See 4. below for the information social services or the police will need.

If the **Adventure Alternative** Leader is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact social services or the police immediately.

Social services and the Child Protection Officer will decide how to involve the parents/carers.

Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.

See 4. below regarding information needed for social services.

4. Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse:

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.

The child's home address and telephone number.

Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
Details of witnesses to the incidents.
The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
Have the parents been contacted?
If so, what has been said?
Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?
Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.

Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.
If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact social services or the police direct, or the **NSPCC Child Protection Helpline** on +44 (0)808 800 5000, or **Childline** on +44 (0) 800 1111.



