

Keeping Young People Safe



A guide for staff, skippers and volunteers

Safeguarding is an essential part of the Trust's core goal of rebuilding young people's confidence.

The Trust's approach aims to ensure that all our activities promote a climate of inclusive respect and dignity that is supportive, safe and free from derogatory or degrading language, attitudes and behaviour.

As well as describing ways in which the Trust will act to protect young people from harm, it also aims to promote positively their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

All participants on Trust activities are considered to be young people in this context, although some elements may be adapted to suit their age and needs.

All staff, skippers and volunteers take on a position of trust in relation to the young people and, at all times, are required to follow the principles and expectations set out in this document.

As detailed below, there are six elements to keeping young people safe in the Trust:

1. The Trust using best practice in **safer recruitment and training**;
2. **A Code of Personal Conduct** for all staff and volunteers;
3. Guidance for staff, skippers and volunteers about the use of **social media and the protection of confidentiality**;
4. **Operating Procedures** for all activities that meet or exceed safety standards;
5. Clear processes and responsibilities with regard to **child protection and safeguarding vulnerable adults**;
6. Feedback systems for **listening** to the Trust's participants, volunteers, skippers and staff to improve the Trust's work.

1. Safer Recruitment and training

All staff, skippers, volunteers and Trustees who are involved with the Trust go through a recruitment process that includes:

- Clearly stating the Trust's commitment to safeguarding as part of the advertising
- An enhanced DBS (England and Wales) or PVG (Scotland) check;
- The taking of at least two references;
- An interview to assess suitability, which may be by phone/video call
- Initial safeguarding training with regular updates.

Recruitment is the responsibility of the Leadership Team including the Chief Executive and, possibly, an external HR Consultant.

A member of the Leadership Team shall conduct a full interview with all applicants for staff and skipper positions. The interview shall include questions about their experience of working with children. All volunteers shall complete and submit an online Trust application form.

Any offer of employment to staff is made conditional on receipt of satisfactory references from current or previous employers and shall be sought in respect of all staff before they begin work. Where these are not available for valid reasons, references will be sought from reputable persons (i.e. GP, solicitor etc).

For volunteers not joining trips as a Hospital Volunteer, two references are required from either current or past employers, another organisation that they volunteer with or from a reputable person are required.

Any offer of employment will be made conditional on receipt of satisfactory Enhanced DBS / PVG checks. These checks are also required for all skippers and volunteers, whether sailing crew, medical workers or support staff who participate in the Trust's activities and come into contact with young people.

NB: the above procedures do not apply to volunteers seeking roles that do not involve contact with young people, such as office based or fundraising roles.

A Trustee is to provide a satisfactory DBS or PVG certificate within six months of the appointment of that Trustee, failing which, the Trustees will consider whether that individual should remain as a Trustee.

It is the policy of the Trust to re-check DBS Certificates for all staff, skippers and volunteers every three years. The PVG Scheme does not require this.

Outdoor Activity Centres belonging to other organisations and trips run on our behalf by other Sail Training Organisations:

The Trust uses Outdoor Activity Centres and works with other Sail Training Organisations for Return to Sail and Siblings trips. The Trust will review the Child Protection Policy of the Residential Centres / other Sail Training Organisations annually and shall take any measures that are deemed appropriate in order to be satisfied that they do not apply lower standards of child welfare than those of the Trust.

2. Code of Personal Conduct

This Code applies to anyone working on behalf of the Trust whether in a paid or volunteer role.

The aim is to set out what the Trust expects from staff, skippers and volunteers in their interactions with young people whilst involved in activities organised by the Trust.

Trust activities are highly 'branded' which is great for raising the Trust's profile. Whenever wearing Trust branded clothing, around a Trust branded boat, at a residential centre or involved in a fundraising event, staff, skippers and volunteers are perceived as representatives of the Trust and their behaviour must reflect that.

Principles:

- All interactions with young people, other volunteers and staff should be based on openness, honesty, trust and respect.
- Activities should be fun, inclusive and enjoyable.
- Staff, skippers and volunteers should be positive and approachable.

Priorities:

- The safety and wellbeing of young people must be your first concern, including respecting their rights, promoting their welfare and understanding their individual needs.
- Creating a safe environment that maximises benefits and minimises risks to the young people.
- Ensuring that activities (e.g. games) are appropriate for the age, experience, maturity and ability of the people involved.
- Avoiding behaviour that is not tolerated by the Trust including that which could be interpreted as bullying, verbal abuse, racism, physical abuse, sexism or abuse based on someone's disability.
- Ensuring that relationships with young people remain appropriate at all times.
- Avoiding situations where an adult is alone with a young person away from others.
- Avoiding behaviour that is or could be interpreted as engaging or attempting to engage in sexual or inappropriate relationships with children, young people or vulnerable adults for whatever reason, including the use of suggestive conversations, comments, texting or emails.
- Avoid doing anything of a personal nature that young people can do for themselves, or another suitable young person can help them to do with their agreement.
- Maintaining confidentiality in relation to sensitive information.
- Discouraging and challenging rough or dangerous play, the use of bad or inappropriate language or behaviour between young people, staff or volunteers.
- If you have any concerns about a child or young person's welfare you must take action in line with the procedures outlined in this document. Allegations of abuse of any kind or poor practice must not be allowed to go unchallenged or unrecorded.

Expectations of staff, skippers and volunteers:

- That they take the opportunity to be a positive role model to the young people on our trips.
- That they don't smoke or consume alcohol or banned substances during Trust activities.
- That they avoid doing (or not doing) anything that could bring the Trust into disrepute.

Situations where individuals have failed to uphold this Code of Personal Conduct will be considered individually by the Chief Executive or a member of staff appointed by him/her. Members of staff could face disciplinary action; skippers and volunteers may be required to end their relationship with the Trust.

If criminal behaviour is involved, including breaches of child protection legislation the police or relevant authorities will be informed.

3. Social Media and the protection of confidentiality

Preserving confidentiality for the young people we support is essential. The Trust has a published [privacy notice](#), which all staff, skippers and volunteers are required to ensure they respect and adhere to.

On our trips we encourage young people, volunteers, skippers, and staff to take lots of photos and videos and we provide each boat or outdoor adventure group with a means to capture images and videos.

What we do to safeguard young people on social media:

We collect image and interview permissions to record whether young people (or their parent/guardian if under 18) are happy for their image/words to be used for a variety of purposes, including social media.

Subject to the [Privacy Notice](#), the Trust keeps and records that consent. If that consent changes the Trust keeps and records that change.

Before the Trust posts any images or videos on social media it will have checked that we have the required permissions to do so.

We do not remove photos of young people who have not given their permission for images to be used from publicity/promotion purposes from the trip photos link that is sent to all participants after a trip. This is because these photos are intended for [personal use only](#), not publicity or promotion.

What we require of staff, skippers and volunteers in relation to social media:

- You should only share photos/videos of young people from official Trust social media accounts.
- You should never upload and post any photos/videos of young people (such as photos you have 'saved' from a Trust social media post or photos from trip photos link) to your personal social media accounts.
- Do not take any images of young people on your own phone, camera, tablet etc. unless you have the specific, prior permission of an Operations Manager.
- If you do have permission to take photos of the trip, including of young people on your own devices (phone, camera, tablet etc.) we require you to hand the photos to us to be managed by the Trust.

You may share photos/videos of yourself and/or scenery, such long-distance shots of boats, sunsets, beautiful landscapes etc, that do not include anyone else and post them as an original post. We invite you to tag @EMCTrust in these posts.

If in doubt, do not post.

To reiterate, we collect the young person or their parent/guardian's consent to the Trust sharing images of them. They have not consented to you, as an individual, sharing images of them on your personal social media feed.

Friending and following on social media:

We have a very clear rule that adults should not 'friend' or follow any young person on social media that they have met initially through Trust activities, even if that young person was over 18 when they were involved in those activities.

If you have a public social media presence, potentially young people could decide to follow you, but, as per above, you must not follow them back.

Once a young person becomes a volunteer the relationship has changed, and you can be friends on social media within what would be considered reasonable professional boundaries.

If you are unsure of what is considered 'reasonable professional boundaries' and/or are concerned that these have been breached, you should talk to your line manager or the Operations Managers/Volunteer and Team Development Manager (depending on your role within the organisation)

If you have any questions about social media in relation to Trust activities, please ask one of the Operations or Communications Managers.

An important distinction: The difference between sharing official Trust posts and posting one of your own:

We have detailed above why you should only ever share posts from official Trust accounts and not post content featuring other young people to your own social media accounts.

This scenario helps explain what that means and why it matters.

Imagine you are a young person and you've said 'Yes' to photos on your Media Consent permission form.

The Trust posts photos/videos from your trip on social media, but there is a picture of you really dislike. You tell the Trust, and we agree to remove that specific photo. When that photo is removed from the particular Trust social media account(s) it will disappear from the feed of anyone that has liked or shared that photo.

But, if someone has saved that picture and created an original post on their own timeline/feed then the Trust has no control over it. The Trust cannot remove it. The link has been broken.

Unfortunately, the Trust also supports young people that might relapse or die. The Trust has a Sad News Photo Management procedure to try to ensure photos of young people who do relapse or die do not get used in communications without the express further permission of the young person/their family. If you do not know a young person has relapsed or died, you could cause distress to any friends or relatives who see it.

When a person gives the Trust their permission to use their image in promotional materials, they are NOT giving their consent for you as an individual to do the same. To post their image to your personal accounts amounts to a breach of their privacy.

RAISING A CONCERN

Any concern about any issue or suspicion of malpractice should be raised at the earliest opportunity. If there is any uncertainty as to whether a particular act constitutes bribery or corruption, or if there are any other queries or concerns, these should be referred to the CEO or the Chair as appropriate. Further reference should be made to the Trust's Whistleblowing Policy.

4. Operating Procedures

The Trust has standard operating procedures for trips on yachts and the Canal Trip. Each boat has a copy of the standard operating procedures which skippers are required to be familiar with. They can be found in the Boat Folder on each boat. Volunteers and young people are briefed about these by the skipper in the introduction to each trip.

A trip (or trips) at Outdoor Activity Centres or run by other Sail Training Organisations on the Trust's behalf operate under that organisation's Operating Procedures. Their Instructors or Staff will be responsible for briefing volunteers and young people about operating procedures as required.

5. Child Protection, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and the Welfare of Young People

The Trust has a responsibility to ensure that the law in England and Scotland is respected in relation to the protection of children and vulnerable adults from abuse and neglect. It fulfils this responsibility through:

- A Safeguarding Policy, agreed by the Trustees, that is reviewed at least annually.
- An appointed Trust Safeguarding Lead who advises the Chief Executive and Trustees and who ensures effective processes and procedures for dealing with any child protection, vulnerable adult or general welfare concerns.
- Ensuring that all staff, skippers and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding training.
- Ensuring that all staff, skippers and volunteers know what to do if they are concerned that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk or if they have a welfare concern.

You will have completed your online Safeguarding Training (Child Protection in Sport and Active Leisure) before your first trip. This course covers, amongst other things:

- Forms of child abuse
- Recognising and responding to abuse
- Reporting abuse
- Good practice

After three years you will be asked to complete online refresher training.

If you are able to provide evidence of successful completion of an equivalent Safeguarding course (e.g. through your employer or another voluntary organisation) we are able to accept this as an alternative. The course must have been completed in the three years prior to your trip.

What the information contained here aims to do is to give you a reminder of that training and explain what to do if you have a concern about a young person's safety whilst involved in a Trust trip.

Because Trust trips depend on a large number of people who are involved on an occasional basis, the Operations Managers play a key part in the process as they will be the person who manages any situation beyond the immediate trip and is involved in any referrals or follow up.

What to do if you have a concern or a concern is brought to your attention:

You may have a concern, or a concern is brought to your attention that is specifically about Child Protection or Safeguarding a Vulnerable Adult or it could be a concern about the welfare of a young person more generally. The Trust is not asking you to make a decision as to which of these it might be. Sharing a concern about a young person whatever their age is not a breach of confidentiality. Your responsibility is to respond to the young person and to raise that concern as outlined below.

A reminder about different types of abuse:

Abuse can be physical (including self-harm), emotional, sexual and can involve neglect, bullying or sexual violence and harassment, including between Children. It may already have happened, or the young person may be at risk of it happening.

A reminder about recognising abuse and welfare concerns:

It is worth remembering that if you are not sure whether a young person is at risk or has been abused or harmed then if it looks, sounds or feels wrong then it probably is wrong. Trust your gut feeling. This is only the starting point. You are raising or passing on a concern. You are not investigating it or required to come to a conclusion about the outcome.

How to respond if a young person discloses something that indicates they may have been harmed or may be at risk:

- Stay calm and take your time.
- Listen actively in a caring, neutral way.
- Reassure them that it is right for them to have told you.
- Use open questions/statements and only to check you have correctly understood the information being shared.
- Let them know that you will have to tell someone who can help and do something about it.
- Ask what the young person wants to happen in response to the concern.
- Do not take sole responsibility yourself. Depending on where you are, inform the Skipper, Trust Lead at a Residential or an Operations Manager immediately.
- Write everything down as soon as possible. There are forms on board yachts in the Boat Folder or in the Staff Folder at Outdoor Activity Centres and on trips run by other Sail Training organisations. Write what was said, try not to interpret anything.
- Do check that information you have passed on has been acted upon.
- If you do not personally feel able to respond to the situation, then reassure the young person and ask for help from another volunteer or member of staff.
- We ask you to avoid situations where an adult is alone with a young person away

from others. However, if a young person wants to talk to you about a situation that's a concern to them then you will be able to find somewhere to have that chat that is out of earshot but where you are not alone e.g. the foredeck of a yacht or the other end of the lounge at a residential.

What to do if you have a Child Protection, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults or general welfare concern that is not a disclosure from a young person, or someone brings a concern to your attention:

Depending on where you are you should speak to the Operations Manager, your Skipper or a Trust Lead at an outdoor activity centre or a trip run by another Sail Training Organisation.

If the concern involves that person, you should go above them to the Operations Manager, Trust Safeguarding Lead or Chief Executive. Mobile numbers for all these people are in the front of your Briefing Booklet and they are on call at all times during a trip.

You may be asked to write down your concerns on a Young Person Welfare Concern Form (which can be found in the Staff Folder on each boat or at the outdoor adventure trip) or to check that someone completing a form has understood and recorded what you have said accurately.

Confidentiality:

It is important to keep information confidential and to involve the minimum number of people. However, because of the nature of Trust trips you may find that you need to talk to a Skipper because you are at sea or away from base at the time who will then need to take the information to the Operations Manager.

6. Feedback and whistleblowing

To encourage the best practice in keeping young people safe and promoting the aims of the Trust, all participants, their family members, volunteers, skippers and staff are encouraged to provide feedback about activities and the organisation. The open and honest sharing of good and bad practice helps the Trust to continually improve its work.

The Trust will encourage feedback using methods such as:

- A post-trip evaluation form for young people and their parents/guardian if Under 18.
- A volunteer feedback form.
- The Trust's Whistleblowing policy.

If you have any questions about Keeping Young People Safe in the Trust, please direct them to one of the Operations Managers.

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