

# **Freedom Boat Adventures (FBA)**

## **Safeguarding policy 2026**

### **THE POLICY AND ORGANISATION MANAGEMENT**

#### **INTRODUCTION AND POLICY STATEMENT**

This policy has been developed by Freedom Boat Adventures, a registered CIC. The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, provide children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst participating in Operational activities and allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues. The FBA Directors recognise that the welfare of the child is paramount, and will operate in a manner to try and ensure that all children and young people, without exception, have the right to be protected from abuse - regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs - whilst continuing to enjoy the benefits and fun that taking part in our activity can bring.

The main legislation underpinning this document is the Children's Act 2004. Guidance and requirements.

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- adopting child safeguarding guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY - 2023 for staff and volunteers and recruiting staff and volunteers safely ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about child safeguarding and good practice with teachers, children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

#### **DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Children and young people have a right to be safely cared for and protected from, (but not restricted to), neglect, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. Parents and carers need to have confidence that the organisations to which they entrust their children and young people will provide safe care. All Trustees,

employees and volunteers share responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, irrespective of individual roles.

The following definitions have been sourced from The National Network for Child Employment and Entertainment document A Guide to Child Performance Licensing in England (May 2016)

A child is abused or neglected when somebody inflicts harm or fails to act to prevent harm. A child or young person up to the age of 18 years can suffer abuse or neglect and require protection.

Physical Abuse - May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, or suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates or induces illness in a child whom they are looking after.

Sexual Abuse - Forcing or enticing a child/young person to take part in sexual activities, whether they are aware of what is happening, may involve: physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities; or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect - Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY - 2022 Revision 6 – January 2022 5 protects a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Emotional Abuse - The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional and behavioural development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age and developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to feel

frightened or in danger, for example witnessing domestic abuse within the home or being bullied, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers directly engaged by FBA will adhere to the relevant legislation when working with children and young people under the age of 18 years as outlined in the following: > Children Act, 1989 > Children Act, 2004 > Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018 > The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014 > Licensing Act 2003.

A child is defined as anyone up to the age of 18 years or up to 25 if registered disabled and vulnerable.

## **RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFEGUARDING**

Overall responsibility for safeguarding rests with the Directors. The responsibility for implementing and monitoring the policy has been delegated to Paul Button

If he cannot be contacted, responsibility will be assumed by one of the other three Directors. This role is referred to Nominated Person Deputy. Please note that it is not the role of FBA to decide whether a child has been abused or not. This is the role of the Local Authority Children's Social Care. It is however everybody's responsibility to ensure that concerns are shared, and action is taken. Referrals should be made to Children's Social Care if it is thought that a child is being abused or at risk of abuse.

## **REVIEW OF POLICY**

The policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Directors, with a summary of any proposed changes occasioned by revision in legislation, guidance or learning from practical application of the policy being prepared by the Nominated Person

## **PAID STAFF**

Whilst employees usually do not have a formal role in respect of children, they are the face of the FBA, which regularly has children and young people as part of educational or leisure activity and the staff may be a point of contact for a child or young person in distress. As such, FBA will require paid staff:

- to have Enhanced Disclosure through the DBS
- to be briefed and updated on this policy and its associated procedures at least annually
- to be clear about how to report concerns, and to whom
- to conduct themselves in a manner which avoids over familiarity

In recruiting paid staff, FBA will:

ensure that all applicants have completed a structured application form, which requests information regarding any gaps in employment history

- 
- shortlist applicants in a fair and transparent manner
- interview shortlisted candidates, and include within that a question(s) that test the applicants' awareness of safeguarding issues, and the behaviour appropriate to the post
- ensure that at least one reference is from an employer or individual whose knowledge and experience is sufficient to enable them to provide an impartial view of the applicant
- generate a request for enhanced disclosure for the preferred applicant only
- not offer the post until references have been received, and make the offer subject to an Enhanced Disclosure certificate showing no relevant cautions convictions, reprimands or warnings, and no information from the list held under Section 142 of the Education Act 2002
- ensure that the induction for the employee includes an understanding of this policy which they know where and how to access

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers are active in all aspects of the business of FBA. When volunteers are being recruited, they will be asked to complete an application form, and their contact details will be kept on a database with controlled access. All volunteers will be interviewed by the Operations manager or other directors

References will be requested. Volunteers must be over the age of 16 on application. All volunteers and paid staff will be given a copy of Safeguarding – Keeping ourselves Safe Leaflet, attached as Appendix 1. Where volunteers are asked to be involved in working with children as part of an educational event provided solely by FBA, or in partnership with another organisation, then The FBA will:

1. Ensure that the Nominated Person is involved in reviewing and signing off the agreed cover arrangements for that event with the organiser
2. Seek an Enhanced Disclosure for that person through the Disclosure and Barring Service. Only experienced volunteers should be requested to take on such duties.
3. All staff will complete safeguarding training before being operational

## **RECORDING INFORMATION ABOUT A CONCERN**

It is possible that a director, employee, or volunteer at FBA may have cause for concern about the welfare of a child. This may arise because: A child/young person may state that something has happened. Physical actions or behavioural indications have been observed, which cause concern Someone else (adult/child or other young person) reported their concerns regarding the welfare of a child. Any concerns regarding the welfare of a child on board FBA should be reported as quickly as possible to someone who is not involved: Nominated Person Paul Button or in his absence, Another FBA Representative **REMEMBER:** It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies following a referral to them of concern about a child.

## **DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE**

If a child confides in you that what seems to be abuse has taken place:

- remain calm and in control, (easier said than done!) but do not delay in taking action
- listen carefully to what has been said. Allow the child to tell you at their own pace and ask questions only for clarification.
- don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer. Use the following approach:

1. T – Tell me
2. E – Explain that to me
3. D – Describe that to me

- don't promise to keep it a secret.
- reassure the child that they 'did the right thing' in telling someone.

- tell the child what you will do next. Make it clear to the child that you will need to share the information with others and that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.
- use the first opportunity you must share the information with the Nominated Safeguarding Lead, (the person with responsibility for child protection). It is that person's responsibility to liaise with the relevant authorities, usually Children's Social Care or the Police
- never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a child makes a disclosure
- as soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, make a note of what was said, using the child's own words. Be careful to record facts. If you are recording hearsay (someone else said...) or opinion, make this clear. Appendix 3 provides further guidance on the information that might be needed.
- note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned, and who you gave information to.
- make sure you sign and date your record.

The Nominated Safeguarding Lead would discuss concerns with a parent/carer if this was thought not to place the child at further risk. When the disclosure is about something a parent/carer has done, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should always seek advice from Children's Social Care

## **REPORTING CONCERNS**

Where there is a need for advice about a situation, then this can be obtained from the Essex Children and Families Hub. This can be accessed by calling 0345 603 7627. Please state that you are a member of the public, and you will be put through to a Family Adviser.

Out of hours: (Monday - Thursday 5.00pm – 8.45am, Friday-Monday and Bank holidays Fri 4.30pm – Mon 8.45am )

Telephone: 0345 606 1212

Email: [emergency.dutyteamoutofhours@essex.gov.uk](mailto:emergency.dutyteamoutofhours@essex.gov.uk)

If there is an immediate risk of harm to a child then also contact the Police on 999. If you are generally worried about a child, contact the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000 In case of difficulty in contacting the Essex Children and Families Hub check the Essex County Council website currently under <https://www.essex.gov.uk/report-a-concern-about-a-child>.

Important: Reporting the matter to the Police or Children's Social Care should not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information. Records should be securely maintained and only viewed by appropriate personnel, Children's Social Care personnel or the Police. The matter must be kept confidential. It is the responsibility of the nominated person/deputy to notify the Directors and to agree any management plan that may be felt to be required as set out in What Happens Next?

### **ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF/VOLUNTEERS**

This may include anyone directly employed by FBA in a paid or voluntary capacity working with children and young people. It is important for all Directors, staff, and volunteers to remember to be aware that child abuse can happen outside of the home within other settings, including sport and leisure activities. Allegations must therefore be taken seriously, and appropriate action taken.

However, it may be difficult for the Nominated Person/Deputy or person in charge to distinguish whether an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer is due to poor working practices or abuse. In this case seek help and advice from Essex County Council Children and Families Hub. It may be one of a series of instances, which, put together, can cause concern. Allegations should remain confidential. There may be difficulties in reporting colleagues, but the way in which they are dealt with should be professional and fair and most importantly protect the welfare of the child. Everyone needs the reassurance of their organisation that they would be supported for their action if they disclosed information.

### **CONCLUSION**

There are many difficult and sensitive issues that are inherent with this subject. By following the guidelines both children and staff are protected, and incidents should be minimised and should incidents occur, staff or volunteers involved will be better placed to deal with the matter.

Review of this document January 2027