

Safeguarding Policy for Working with Children and Young Persons

1. The Bourne Conservation Group (BCG) welcomes the opportunity to involve children (up to age 16 years) and young persons (up to 18 years) in its work and activities so as to encourage their interest in the natural world and community service. It is recognised, however, that the inexperience and vulnerability of young people necessitates putting in place a clear policy for their protection in a mainly adult environment involving manual work.

Aim

2. The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety of children and young persons while they are participating in the work and activities of The Bourne Conservation Group.

3. To that end the policy sets out procedures to be adopted in the Group and documents a Code of Behaviour for the use of volunteers when working with children.

Background

4. Throughout its existence BCG has endeavored strenuously to provide a safe working environment for its members. The measures taken to achieve this are given in the Health and Safety Manual published on the group's website and regularly updated. Additionally, a single page summary giving guidance on individual responsibilities for Health and Safety is handed to every new member on joining.

5. Within the overall legal framework provided by the Children Acts of 1995 and 2004, these local Health and Safety rules and procedures provide the foundation on which this specific Children's Safeguarding policy is based.

Levels of Involvement

6. **Organised Groups of Children and Young Persons.** When BCG works with groups of children from local schools or youth organisations such as the Scouting movement, responsibilities are as follows:

- The responsibility of BCG is to organise and supervise the work, ensuring that children are not expected to undertake dangerous tasks. Where tools are to be used, Annex G of the Health and Safety Manual (which lists allowable tools by age groups) will be applied.
- The responsibility of teachers or leaders is to carry out a prior Risk Assessment and to supervise all appropriate safety precautions.

7. These arrangements must be clearly understood in advance by means of close liaison between BCG and the group leaders on the work to be undertaken. Children are to be briefed at the start of each session on the jobs to be done and the Health and Safety rules which apply.

Individual Children.

- **Children below the age of 4.** These will not be allowed at any work sessions as they are not covered by the Group's insurance policy.
- **Children between the ages of 4 and 13.** Children in this age bracket are made welcome if they are accompanied by a responsible adult, usually their parent or grandparent. They

will be the responsibility of this adult at work sessions and this is to be confirmed by use of **Annex A**.

- **Children aged 14 to 15 years.** Children aged 14 and 15 can attend work sessions unaccompanied with written consent from their parent or guardian (**Annex B**). It is expected that this adult will be available to be contacted during the duration of the work session in case of an emergency.
- **Young Persons aged 16 to 18.** 16-18 year old young persons are officially not considered vulnerable if they are in volunteering situations and may therefore attend work sessions independently. They will be considered to be full members of BCG and expected to adhere to the rules and procedures set out in the H & S Manual. They will be required to sign BCGs normal adult consent form.

General Approach

8. In all circumstances when working with children and young persons, the Bourne Conservation Group recognises that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children and young persons, regardless of age, have the right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Working in partnership with the children, young persons, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential to achieve the safety and protection required

Implementation of Policy

9. The Bourne Conservation Group will seek to safeguard children in their care by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Accepting that no one has the right to do anything to them that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Implementing the child protection procedures laid down in this Policy
- Ensuring that all volunteers are fully familiar with this Policy and the associated Code of Behaviour, and that they have a personal responsibility for the safety and protection of children and young persons on site.
- Making Session and Team Leaders aware of their supervisory responsibilities with respect to the safety of children and young persons.

10. BCG also has a responsibility to protect volunteers from false allegations.

Management

11. BCG will integrate the management of this Policy within its existing well-established procedures as follows:

- **Designated Safeguarding Officer.** Implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the BCG Designated Safeguarding Officer who is a committee member. The duties of this post are as follows:
 - Briefing the committee on child safeguarding issues
 - Ensuring the Policy is available to all members on the website or by other means
 - In conjunction with the Membership Secretary, drawing the attention of all new members to this Policy when they join

- Being the first point of Contact when a child safeguarding issue arises
- Maintaining this Policy up to date

The current incumbent is Dr Karen Redman who coincidentally is also Membership Secretary.

- **Session and Team Leaders.** On all work sessions, the Session Leader as defined in the Group's Health and Safety Manual, along with his or her other duties, must ensure that the Code of Behaviour in this Policy is strictly upheld. Particular attention must be paid to the tasks children are invited to undertake and to the composition of any sub-groups formed to carry out specific jobs, especially if distant from the main activity. Where a session involves the use of subordinate teams, Team Leaders must take on this responsibility if children are present in their team.
- **Group Members.** It is the responsibility of all volunteers to be aware of this Policy and to uphold the Code of Behaviour.

Special Needs

BCG recognises that all its members have different levels of ability with respect to the practical work undertaken. The onus is on the members not to attempt tasks or activities which are beyond them and this is made clear in the One Page H&S Summary given to everybody. This is backed up on site by appropriate job allocation and supervision by Session Leaders.

In the case of children applying to join the Group, the parents are invited on the Parental Consent Form (Annex A or Annex B) to confirm that their child is able in all respects to understand and undertake the conservation tasks likely to be encountered.

Child Protection Procedures

12. In the case of an incident it is important that correct procedures are applied:

- If a volunteer notices something of concern about a child, they are to inform the person in charge (usually the Session Leader) who will ask the volunteer to record the facts on a Record of Concern Form (**Annex C**) and return the completed form to the Session Leader. The Session Leader must hand a copy to the Child Protection Officer at the first opportunity. (When necessary, concerns will be shared with Surrey County Council Children's Services.)
- A blank copy of Annex C will be found attached to the Attendance Sheet for the session
- If a child discloses something of concern to a volunteer, they must allow the child or young person to speak without interruption, in their own time. The volunteer needs to be sensitive, but must explain to the child that they have a responsibility to pass the information on to others for the child's safety. The volunteer must not allow the child to believe that the information being disclosed will be kept secret. The discussion will be documented on the Record of Concern Form, with details of time, location and persons present, and will immediately be shared with the Session Leader. A copy of the form must be given to the Child Protection Officer at the first opportunity. When necessary, concerns will be shared with Surrey County Council Children's Services.
- If there is any concern for a child's immediate safety, the Police should be called using 999.
- If an allegation is made against a volunteer, the allegation must be recorded with all the facts as they know on the Incident Report Form and forwarded to the Child Protection Officer without delay. The volunteer Concerned should be encouraged to seek support from a friend, or relevant professional.

Contacts

13. Contacts are as follows:

- **Children's Social Care.** This is a Surrey County Council service with a statutory duty under the Children's Act 1989 to ensure the welfare of a child. When a referral is made they have a legal responsibility to investigate, and all agencies have a duty to cooperate. Clearly, the reporting of concerns about a child must not be taken lightly.
 - In working hours, Monday to Friday their contact is 0300 200 1006
 - Out of hours the Emergency Duty Team is on 01483 517898 and edt.scd@surreycc.gov.uk
 - **The NSPCC.** Available for advice 24/7 on 0808 800 5000 and help@nspcc.org.uk

Code of Behaviour for All Volunteers

14. In establishing the right safe and secure environment, volunteers should at all times show respect and understanding for individual rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the ethos and principles of The Bourne Conservation Group as set out in its Constitution. This applies equally to non-members who may be working with the Group on specific occasions.

- **Attitudes.** Volunteers should be committed to:
 - Treating children and young persons with respect and dignity
 - Always listening to what a child or young person is saying
 - Recognising the unique contribution each individual can make
 - Giving encouragement when necessary
- **Setting an Example.** Volunteers should endeavour to:
 - Set an example they would wish others to follow
 - Use appropriate language and challenge any inappropriate language used by a child or young person
 - Respect the right to privacy
- **One to One Contact.** Volunteers should:
 - Not spend excessive time alone with children away from others
 - In the event of having to meet with an individual child or young person, make every effort to keep the meeting as open as possible
 - If privacy is necessary, ensure that others are informed of the meeting and its whereabouts
- **Physical Contact.** Volunteers should **never**:
 - Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind
 - Engage in provocative or rough physical games
- **General.** Volunteers must:
 - Be aware that someone might misinterpret their actions however well intentioned
 - Not be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking situations such as tantrums or crushes
 - Not exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.

15. The one page H&S Guidance for Individuals given to all new members on joining BCG has been amended to say:

“Working with Children and Young Persons. Our Group endeavours to encourage children and young persons to take part in our work and activities to introduce them to the natural world and community service. When children are present you need to:

- *Be aware of our Safeguarding Policy for children and young persons contained on our website; in particular the need to inform the leader of the work session immediately if you have any safeguarding concerns about a child taking part in that session.*
- *Adhere to the Code of Behaviour given in that Policy*
- *Be very careful not to place yourself in a position that might cause doubts as to your actions or intentions.”*

Annex A. Children's Parental Consent Form

Annex B. Older Children's Parental Consent Form

Annex C. Record of Concern Form



Children's Parental Consent Form

The Bourne Conservation Group is keen to encourage children and young persons to take part in work sessions. In exercising its duty of care to children between the ages of 4 and 13 it is required they are accompanied by a responsible adult (usually parent or guardian) who has given written consent on this form for the activity to take place. If for any reason, the behavior of the young person is not suitable for the tasks involved, the parent or guardian will be asked to remove the child from the situation, and possibly from the work site.

Name of child

Date of Birth

Address

Phone Number

Email address

Emergency Contact Name and Telephone Number

I confirm have received information on the Bourne Conservation Group's Health and Safety policy.

I confirm I have received a copy of The Bourne Conservation Group's Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young Persons.

I confirm that my son or daughter is able to understand instructions and is physically able to undertake the conservation tasks likely to be encountered.

I agree to fully supervise my son or daughter whilst present at Bourne Conservation Group work sessions, and understand that I may be asked to remove him or her from a task or situation.

I agree / do not agree for my son / daughter to have their photo taken at work sessions, and the image published on BCG communications ie website / reports / local press articles.

I agree to inform the team leader at future work sessions of any medical condition that may affect my son or daughter's ability to undertake a task.

As parent / guardian, I (print full name)

consent to.....(print child's name)

attending work sessions with the Bourne Conservation Group

Signed.....Date.....



Older Children's Parental Consent Form

The Bourne Conservation Group is keen to encourage children and young persons to take part in volunteer work sessions. In exercising its duty of care to older children aged 14 and 15 whilst they are participating in such work unaccompanied it is required that written consent is given on this form by the parent or guardian. If for any reason, the behaviour of the child is not suitable for the tasks involved, the parent or guardian will be contacted and asked to collect the child from the work site as soon as possible.

Name of child

DOB

Address

Phone Number

Email address

Emergency contact name, telephone number and email address

I confirm that I have received a copy of the Bourne Conservation Group's Health and Safety Policy.

I confirm that I have received a copy of the Bourne Conservation Group's Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young Persons.

I confirm that my son / daughter is able to understand instructions and is physically able to undertake the conservation tasks likely to be encountered

I agree to be contactable whilst my son / daughter is present at a Bourne Conservation Group work session, and understand that I may be asked to collect him / her at short notice whilst the work session is in progress.

I agree / do not agree for my son or daughter to have their photo taken at work sessions, and the image published on BCG communications ie website / reports / local press articles.

I agree to inform the team leader at future work sessions of any medical condition that may affect my son or daughter's ability to undertake a task.

As parent / guardian, I.....(print name)

consent to.....(print child's name)

attending work sessions with the Bourne Conservation Group

Signed.....Date.....

Children's Safeguarding Policy: Record of Concern Form

Strictly Confidential

This form is to be used to document and record any concern about the potential abuse of a child / young person, or the disclosure of abuse made by a child / young person when attending a Bourne Conservation Group led event. It should be used in conjunction with the policies and procedures of the BCG Children's Safeguarding Policy.

The report should be factual and should not include opinions or personal interpretations of the facts presented. The child or young person should be allowed to speak without interruption.

The completed form should be given to the Session Leader, with a copy given to the Child Protection Officer at the first opportunity.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY RECORD OF CONCERNS
Name of child:
Address:
Telephone Number:
Parent / Carer's details: Name(s):
Telephone Number(s):
Name of person reporting:
Contact details:
Date and time of the incident:
Where did the incident occur?
Who else, if anyone was involved and how?
What was said by those involved?
Who has been told about the concern and when?

Do the parents or guardians know?
To whom the incident was reported:
Date / Time:

Signed:

Date:

TO BE COMPLETED BY BGC OFFICER RECEIVING REPORT

<p>Action taken? (In the event of a safeguarding concern the expectation would be that a relevant statutory body will be informed)</p>

Signed:

Date: