

Safeguarding Policies

Abuse of children and vulnerable adults is never acceptable. A commitment to children's rights in general also means a commitment to safeguard the children with whom Nature Explorers is in contact.

Designated Safeguarding Lead – Steph Holland

Communication Policy

Nature Explorers is committed to clear and open communication about what goes on at Forest School. All stakeholders (staff, parents/carers, children and volunteers) are part of our Forest School extended community and are to be kept informed about Forest School events, procedures and incidents as appropriate.

Communication in an emergency situation is covered in our **Health and Safety Policies**.

Some communication matters will be bound by confidentiality (see procedure)

Communication Procedure

Nature Explorers communicates with staff and parents mainly via email on first contact. Details of sessions are available for the public to see via the website at www.natureexplorers.org.uk and the Facebook page at www.facebook.com/stephnatureexplorers Prospective participants can contact Steph via either of these, or via email at steph@natureexplorers.org.uk When participants sign up for sessions, Steph will contact them via email including a reminder of the terms and conditions, and directing them to visit the website to read a copy of the policies. All participants must provide a current email address, a contact number and an emergency contact number.

Appropriate clothing is recommended for participants and staff at every session, and this is listed on the terms and conditions. When there is going to be extreme weather conditions, Steph will contact parents before the session with any further instructions (eg. bring sun hats or gloves) Further details are on the Weather and Clothing Policy.

The behaviour expected at Forest School is outlined in the Forest School rules, which will be explained to participants at the start of a block of sessions, and repeated when necessary. A copy is available to view on the website, and more details can be found in the Behaviour Management Policy.

Personal details (phone numbers, address etc) will be confidential, and only used by Steph to communicate with participants and their parents. Specific permission will be sought to share any of this information. Please make Steph aware of any changes to contact details or medical information provided.

Data protection (including social media) Policy

Nature Explorers is committed to protecting personal data. Our collection and use of personal data follows the General Data Protection Regulations (May 2018) and also considers the rights and wishes of all participants whose data is collected, (photographic, video, written). The same considerations are made for the sharing of collected data, particularly on social media/for publicity.

Data Protection (including social media) Procedures

All participants are asked to sign up for sessions via a booking form. This form requires their name, contact address, email address and a contact telephone number, as well as the name and number of an emergency contact. By submitting their form, they will be allowing Steph to use these details solely to communicate with them. These details will not be used for any other purpose and a paper copy will be held in a file for at least five years from the date they are submitted. A digital version of participants contact details will remain on Steph's computer, and a hard copy will always be with her at Forest School sessions in order to communicate with parents in an emergency. If anything happens to Steph during a session, an adult volunteer or member of staff will be allowed access to the folder to inform parents.

There is an opt-in section on the form to give consent for photographs to be taken during the sessions, and used on the website and social media channels for the purpose of promotion. No children will be named when photos are available online, although parents can specifically request for copies of any particular photo of their child. Photographs may be taken using Steph's camera, or via the mobile phone of her or any of her volunteers, on the understanding that they will only be posted on the Nature Explorers Facebook page, Instagram account and website, or shared in the parent-only discussion forum on WhatsApp.

All volunteers and staff will have read and signed the Safeguarding and Data Protection policies and procedures before taking any photos, and will comply with the safe storage and deletion of any photos they have with the children in. If at any point a parent wishes to withdraw consent for allowing photographs to be taken and used of their child/children, they must contact Steph, who will inform all the volunteers.

The contact data stored is used solely for communication and will not be shared publicly via social media or any other means. All volunteers working with Steph are made aware of the location of the contact information, and will not make copies for themselves. Steph is responsible for reviewing and destroying data after five years. At the start of each year, all parents will be required to resubmit a contact form to confirm they are continuing to give their consent for their contact details to be held. If any parent desires to have their data permanently deleted and removed they must inform Steph in writing via email.

Disclosing Policy

Participants at Nature Explorers may feel they can trust adults enough to speak to them about abuse (physical, emotional, sexual or neglect). All disclosure is taken seriously and responded to appropriately

Disclosure Procedure

It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that all safeguarding issues raised at sessions are effectively responded to, recorded and referred to the appropriate agency. They are also responsible for arranging safeguarding training for all staff and volunteers who regularly and frequently work with children and young people in our sessions and that this training takes place at least every three years.

All child protection (CP) concerns need to be acted on immediately. If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk or is actually suffering abuse, they should report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately. All adults, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead, have a duty to refer all known or suspected cases of abuse to children's social care or the police. Where a disclosure is made to a visiting staff member from a different agency, it is the responsibility of that agency staff to formally report the referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the first instance. Any records made should be kept securely.

If you remain concerned for a child's **immediate** welfare, refer to children's social care via Customer First using the number **0808 800 4005** or **call 999**.

Recognising concerns – signs and indicators of abuse.

Abuse is defined as a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

The following indicators listed under the categories of abuse are not an exhaustive list.

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect: 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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Managing Allegations – We are aware of the possibility of allegations being made against members of staff or volunteers that are working or may come into contact with children and young people whilst in our sessions. Allegations can be made by children and young people or other concerned adults and are made for a variety of reasons. If an allegation is made against an adult in a position of trust whether they be members of staff or volunteers this should be brought to the immediate attention of the DSL

Useful Contacts: Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Professional Helpline: 03456 061 499

Customer First: 0808 800 4005

Police (emergency): 999

Suffolk Police Cybercrime Unit: 101

Suffolk Local Safeguarding Children Board www.suffolkscb.org.uk

Lost Child Policy

The Forest School environment necessitates different boundaries to those of an indoor space. Nature Explorers balances this with the need to safeguard the children.

Lost Child Procedure

A register of children attending Nature Explorers will be taken at each session. Appropriate steps will be taken if a child was found to be missing by following our safeguarding procedures. All children and adults attending Nature Explorers sessions will be issued with a lanyard with their name, as well as Steph's contact details. The staff members at West Stow recognise that those wearing a Nature Explorers lanyard are part of our group. The children are reminded about the forest school boundaries and rules at the start of each session, and practice regular drills in finding one another using games and activities. We have a "signal" which they all recognise as a sign that they must return immediately. They can use this signal themselves if they need help.

If a child was found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions:

- Take a register to ensure that all the other children were present
- Inform the Forest School Leader
- Ask all of the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child.
- Arrange for an adult to search everywhere within the site.
- One adult will stay with the remaining children at all times.

If the child is still missing, the following steps would be taken:

- Contact the staff at West Stow who can communicate across the whole site via radio, and alert them to the situation.
- Contact the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the venue at once.
- Any available adults would continue to search the area and report back regularly to see if the child has been found.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead would contact the police
- A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

Actions to be taken when the child is found:

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child.
- Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not go beyond the boundary/separate from the group.
- Speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident
- Launch a full investigation (if appropriate involving Social Services/Local Children Safeguarding Board)
- The investigation should involve all concerned, providing written statements.
- The report should be detailed, covering time, place, numbers of adults and children, when the child was last seen, what appeared to have happened, the length of time the child was missing and how he/she appeared to have gone missing, lessons for the future.
- A copy of the report will be held on record by Steph for a maximum of five years after the incident and a copy will be given to the parents and any relevant authorities involved.

Vetting and Barring Policy

Nature Explorers is committed to the safety of everyone attending Forest School sessions. Appropriate vetting and barring procedures will help to attain this.

Vetting and barring Procedure

Steph has an enhanced DBS certificate for working with children. All volunteers helping at Nature Explorers are expected to have their own DBS checks in place, and these will be arranged by Steph if they are not in place already. Any adults who are in frequent contact with the participants must hold an enhanced DBS certificate for working with children. A copy of the certificates will be available to view if requested, and will be held on file by Steph, both digitally and as a hard copy. These checks are carried out via Disclosure Services and will be reviewed every three years.

Visitor Policy

Invited visitors to Forest School can enhance the Forest School community through their own skills and experiences and by joining in celebrations. Uninvited visitors are not always a threat to the safety of the participants and clear procedures are in place to ensure visitors do not disrupt sessions.

Visitor Procedures

Visitors are welcome to visit our Forest School sessions, and prospective participants are invited to a taster session before signing up for a term. All visitors to the site must wear a Nature Explorers lanyard, which can only be accessed by paying the entry fee for West Stow in the Visitor's Centre. Heritage Pass members can get in for free. If an uninvited visitor enters the site, they will be informed that they are trespassing, and will be asked to leave. If they do not leave, an adult will inform staff at reception, who will challenge them to show their entry ticket. There will be a sign indicating that the Forest School site beyond the fence is not a public right of way.

If a child sees a visitor enter the site, either wanted or unwanted, they must inform one of the adults, who will approach the visitor and ask for ID. This will be communicated with the children at the start of sessions when discussing Forest School rules. Any incidents involving visitors, either wanted or unwanted are recorded in the incident book which is kept in Steph's possession and will be copied to the West Stow management team.

Date policy completed: 5th January 2019

Completed by: S Holland

Date review due: 5th January 2020