

Child Protection Policy for VOCAWAVES

VOCAWAVES is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in its care. It recognises the responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. For the purposes of this policy and associated procedures a child is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years.

Committee members and associate volunteers will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of children and young people.

This document outlines VOCAWAVES' commitment to protecting children. These guidelines are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of children is the primary concern.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse.
- Child protection is everyone's responsibility.
- Children have the right to express views on all matters which affect them, should they wish to do so.
- Organisations shall work in partnership together with children and parents/carers to promote the welfare, health and development of children.

VOCAWAVES will:

- Promote the education and creative growth of children by providing them opportunities to take part in events safely
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children.
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and protect them from abuse.
- Recruit, train, support and supervise its staff, members and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse and to reduce risk to themselves.
- Require staff, members and volunteers to adopt and abide by this Child Protection Policy and these procedures.
- Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children in line with this Policy and these procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Observe guidelines issued by local Child Protection Committees for the protection of children.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of this Policy and these procedures.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

All personal information we may process relating to children shall be processed and stored in accordance with our data protection privacy policy which can be found on our website.

Photography

On some occasions, we may take photographs featuring children. We recognise that photography of children carries risks, such as:

- The potential for images to be re-used, shared or adapted in a damaging or inappropriate manner
- The general risk of sharing images and the impact this could have on a child's public image as they grow older

In view of these risks, we will:

- Always ask for permission from a child and their parent/guardian before taking and sharing any image of them
- Always ensure that a child and their parent/guardian are properly informed how an image will be used and shared
- Always ensure that a child's identity is protected as far as possible within any published material
- Ask that parents, guardians, children and any other person connected to them who may wish to share any of our published images which feature other children to refrain from doing so unless they have the permission of the other children and their parent/guardian
- Always store photos in accordance with our data protection policy.

We also recognise that members of the public may take photographs when they are attending our events or activities.

We ask that any parents, guardians and other members of the public take the following into consideration when taking photos at our events or activities:

- Images of other children should not be shared on social media without the permission of an children who feature in the images (where ascertainable), together with the permission of the children's parent/guardian
- Images which are shared on social media should be shared cautiously, with the appropriate privacy and security settings in place.

Safeguarding Children at Events

In events where children could be involved, such as concerts, VOCAWAVES shall hold ultimate responsibility for the safety and appropriateness of the event. All venues for these events will be risk assessed properly in reference to the suitability and safety for children. Fire and safety procedures and precautions shall be made clear to all those involved.

For certain events, we may issue an additional code of conduct, policy or some other specific other requirements which are specific to that occasion. Any such documentation will be made available to committee members, associate volunteers and members of the public on our website or ticket booking service. They should be read carefully and adhered to.

Where we hold any events whereby a child attends alongside their parent or guardian, parents and guardians should ensure that children are properly supervised.

Responding to Concerns

Where a child is at immediate risk of serious harm, any adult volunteer present should call 999. Thereafter, an available committee member should be contacted as soon as reasonably possible.

Where there is a safeguarding concern but no immediate risk of serious harm, the adult volunteer who has heard or witnessed this concern should consult with an available committee member as soon as practicable.

When a child makes a disclosure relating to harm or abuse to an adult, it is important for that adult volunteer to:

- Listen calmly and carefully, showing that their views are taken seriously
- Provide an appropriate and honest level of reassurance
- Avoid interrogating children and asking probing, intrusive and/or leading questions
- Avoid making false promises regarding secrets and confidentiality with the child (as any concern of abuse/harm must be shared with a committee member and any subsequent safeguarding referral)
- Make a confidential written or electronically stored record of the discussion either during the discussion or immediately afterwards. The record should include the key details of the disclosure together with any relevant times, dates, places and people concerned. Audio and video recordings of children making disclosures should be avoided.
- Refer all relevant information to an available committee member as soon as practicable.

Upon receipt of any safeguarding concern, a committee member shall consult with any other relevant persons and will make any appropriate referrals to the relevant authorities.

Reporting Concerns

Where any person has a concern regarding the conduct of an adult connected to VOCAWAVES, which poses or may pose a safeguarding risk to children, this must be raised in the first instance with an available committee member where appropriate so that the next steps may be agreed and actioned. We recognise that there could be circumstances where a person may need to report a matter that has taken place in a setting outside of the person's engagement with VOCAWAVES.

Usually, any appropriate steps following a safeguarding referral in respect of an individual connected to VOCAWAVES will include either:

- Further initial enquiries
- Escalation to the applicable authorities and/or the police for investigation
- Instigation of any appropriate disciplinary, formal investigation processes and suspension of any person concerned within VOCAWAVES
- A referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service or any other relevant regulatory bodies.

Any person within VOCAWAVES who has allegations made against them shall be informed properly in a formal meeting with the particulars of the allegations and the relevant next steps shall be taken. Such a meeting should only be held by committee members. On certain occasions, a meeting may not be convened until this has been approved by any authorities involved.

Any person within VOCAWAVES who has allegations made against them shall be treated fairly. All enquires, investigations and decisions taken shall be just and fair, with the safety of any child concerned at the heart of the process.

Any person within VOCAWAVES who makes an allegation against another person from within VOCAWAVES shall be listened to, taken seriously and shall be treated fairly and justly throughout the process of enquiries, investigations and decision making.

Review

This Policy and these Procedures will be regularly reviewed:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children or following any changes within VOCAWAVES.
- Following any issues or concerns raised about the protection of children within VOCAWAVES
- In all other circumstances, at least every Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Document updated and effective as of 24/08/2023