

DECEMBER 2021

SAFEGUARDING YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY



OSCR REGULATED CHARITY - SC044185

THIS POLICY WILL BE REVIEWED IN RESPONSE TO LEGISLATIVE CHANGES, IN LINE WITH BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE OR EVERY THREE YEARS.

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1. Overview - what this policy covers

In line with our 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy' Bats without Borders believes that all persons have a right to protection from any form of abuse regardless of gender, age, sexuality, ethnicity, economic status, physical or mental ability.

This policy is for all Bats without Borders employees, volunteers, board and advisory board members, consultants and partners (including donors and visitors to any of our projects) (hereafter referred to as personnel). Bats without Borders rarely works directly with young people, apart from carrying out environmental education talks or group bat walks, where young people will be under the supervision of teachers or parents/guardians. None of our work requires any lone working with young people or vulnerable adults.

When education and public engagement activities are carried out, Bats without Borders operates in line with global practices for child protection set out within this policy. We recognise our responsibility to ensure that all employees, volunteers and partners are made aware of these guidelines in order to understand what is expected of them in terms of behaviour/conduct and how to report any concerns.

Bats without Borders is committed to the welfare of all beneficiaries involved in our education and community engagement activities and we support and believe in the protection of all beneficiaries, including young people and vulnerable adults, from abuse and exploitation.

With this Safeguarding Policy, Bats without Borders **aims to demonstrate** our commitment and set out internal procedures to deter, minimise and remove the risk of abuse from children and vulnerable adults occurring during the scope of our work.

2. Definitions used in this policy

Young person (or child) - any person under the age of 18 years, as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Vulnerable adult - we broadly define as any person over the age of 18 years who is deemed to be vulnerable as a result of a physical or mental disability, illness or vulnerable due to their economic circumstances, such as extreme poverty.

2. Definitions used in this policy (cont.)

Safeguarding is:

- protecting young people and vulnerable adults from harm;
- preventing damage to the health or development of children and vulnerable adults;
- making sure that children and vulnerable adults grow up safely; and
- taking action to make sure all individuals have the best start in life.

Child protection is part of safeguarding and refers to the action taken to protect specific young people who are being abused or who are at risk of abuse.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Bats without Borders

- to provide a designated Safeguarding Officer;
- to provide specific training to any staff or volunteer member carrying out environmental education or community engagement activities (e.g. bat walks or research where community input is required);
- to ensure effective complaints and whistleblowing measures are in place; and
- to treat all suspicions and allegations of abuse seriously and to respond swiftly, fairly and appropriately.

3.2 Safeguarding Officer

- has responsibility for receiving concerns about the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults;
- makes decisions about what actions need to be taken;
- ensures that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns/allegations are maintained and securely stored;
- maintains an overview of all concerns, including details of action taken and, where possible, the outcomes;
- reports any significant safeguarding incident or concern to the Board of Trustees;

3. Responsibilities (cont.)

3.2 Safeguarding Officer (cont.)

- reviews this policy regularly and as required by changes in legislation and/or government guidance ensuring it is up-to-date and fit for purpose;
- ensures all personnel have read and understood this policy (delegating to relevant individuals as appropriate); and
- promotes safeguarding and provides guidance and advice where needed.

At the current time, Safeguarding Officer responsibilities are designated to:

Personnel and main contact:

Rachael Cooper-Bohannon

E-mail: rachael@batswithoutborders.org

Cell: +265 (0)993726669 - Whatsapp / +44 (0)7748946730

Chair of the Board contact:

Helen Grimble

E-mail: helen.grimble1@gmail.com

Cell: +44 (0)7736932816

4. Arrangements

4.1 Training

- All personnel will be made aware of our Safeguarding Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy, as part of their induction.
- Any personnel working on our education programme, going into schools and communities to engage with young people or vulnerable adults will be required to undergo additional, detailed training (provided by the safeguarding contact) prior to carrying out any activities with these groups. In-country legislation and emergency contact information will also be provided.

4.2 Planning activities

- for activities, ensure health and safety requirements and risk assessments are appropriate and implemented;
- where possible make sure children and vulnerable adults are accompanied by their own adult carers (in general, at public and education events, Bats without Borders does not take responsibility for the care of young people and vulnerable adults and if such an occasion occurs Bats without Borders will only accept a person into its care when there is a signed, written agreement with a parent/guardian/carer);

4. Arrangements (cont.)

4.2 Planning activities (cont.)

- ensure that a signed parent/guardian consent form has been obtained if you are providing direct supervision; and
- avoid inappropriate activities and material; think about the age, maturity and ability of any children/young people/vulnerable adults, so that they can understand and participate safely.

4.3 Awareness

- share information about safety issues and safeguarding best practice with young people, vulnerable adults, parents, teachers, and other staff or volunteers;
- be alert to potential harm or inappropriate behaviour by others to young people and vulnerable adults in your care; and
- provide access for young people and vulnerable adults to talk to another adult about any concerns they may have.

4.4 Code of conduct

Please do:

- remember you are a role model and should listen, show respect and understanding for others;
- bear in mind that some actions, no matter how well-intentioned, may easily be misinterpreted; use appropriate language, gestures and posture/body language;
- respect an individual's right to privacy unless you feel they are at risk of harm.

Please do not:

- rely on your good name to protect you;
- show favouritism or get drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour (e.g. tantrums or crushes);
- allow or engage in suggestive remarks, gestures or touching which could be misunderstood;
- jump to conclusions about others without checking the facts;
- develop any form of relationship with children/young people/vulnerable adults, which could in any way be deemed inappropriate or exploitative;

4. Arrangements (cont.)

4.4 Code of conduct (cont.)

Please do not:

- act in ways that may be abusive or place children/young people/vulnerable adults at risk of abuse;
- use language, make suggestions or offer advice (in person or online), which is offensive or abusive;
- allow children/young people/vulnerable adults with whom you are working to stay overnight at your home without a parent/guardian/carer;
- condone, or participate in the behaviour of children/young people/vulnerable adults, which is illegal, abusive or unsafe;
- intentionally act in ways intended to shame, humiliate or degrade children/young people/vulnerable adults; and
- undertake any other action that could compromise the rights, safety or welfare of young people/vulnerable adults.

4.5 Supervision

- arrange for an appropriate ratio of adults to be present, bearing in mind the activity, number, ages and any particular needs of the individuals, in line with best practice;
- have a minimum of two adults when working with groups;
- meetings with individuals should take place as openly as possible (ideally with more than one responsible adult present in the room or with an open door to allow visual contact by another responsible adult);
- have male and female helpers where practical;
- where young people and vulnerable adults are in your care, make sure you know, the extent of your responsibility, where they are and what they are doing;
- avoid being left alone with a child or vulnerable adult, e.g. 'one-to-one' car journeys, unless it is an emergency; and
- if one-to-one contact is unavoidable make sure it is for as short a time as possible, ensure you are accessible and visible to others, tell someone else where you are going, what you are doing and why; and always with the full knowledge of another responsible person and the individual's parent/guardian.

4. Arrangements (cont.)

4.6 Online safeguarding

- Ensure all activities and language are age-appropriate when young people are present.
- Consider platform use - most platforms have a minimum age requirement. Check the terms and conditions of services to make sure they're suitable. If the young people are under the age limit of the tool you want to use, then their parents must set up the required accounts and remain nearby throughout the meeting/activity.
- When using live video calling, two adults must be present at all times and both must remain on the video call until all young people have logged off. This ensures no young person is left alone with an adult online.
- If a Bats without Borders' representative is calling from home and there are other people around, they should make sure those people are dressed appropriately and know how to behave when you're talking to young people.
- Background space must be child-friendly, ensuring nothing inappropriate is on display. You shouldn't be drinking alcohol or have alcohol in the video.
- If an online session is to be recorded (e.g. a meeting or webinar), ensure appropriate consideration has been given to the need to record the activity and ensure any young persons name and image is not visible on the recording unless prior consent (from an adult) has been obtained.

4.7 Responding to abuse

If you have concerns about a young person/vulnerable adult or someone discloses that they are being abused, then upon receiving the information you should:

- react calmly;
- reassure the individual that they were right to tell you and that they are not to blame and take what they say seriously;
- allow them to speak freely;
- do not trivialise the issue being discussed;
- only ask questions to clarify the situation, do not probe or interrogate so as to investigate the allegations;
- reassure but do not promise confidentiality, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments;

4. Arrangements (cont.)

4.7 Responding to abuse (cont.)

- inform the individual what you will do next;
- make a full and written record of what has been said/heard as soon as possible; and
- inform the Safeguarding Officer asap.

If the Safeguarding contacts (or a member of the trustee board if the Safeguarding contacts are not available) consider that the individual concerned is in immediate danger, or there has been a crime committed (e.g. you witness physical abuse), contact must be made with the emergency services and/or the appropriate authorities (parents/social services) to help ensure the individual does not remain in an unsafe environment. A full detailed record must be made.

Remember, if you witness an assault, crime, or act of abuse the priority is the immediate health, safety and welfare of the individual and you should contact the Police.

4.8 Record keeping

A written record, marked 'confidential', should include the following details and can be sent electronically to the Safeguarding contacts by the person reporting the incident/concern:

- name of person making the report stating whether or not they are expressing their own concerns or those of someone else;
- name of child/young person/vulnerable adult;
- name of parent/guardian/carer;
- **date of birth;**
- address and telephone number;
- **first language;**
- date, time and place of incident/when concern arose;
- how the concern was identified (alleged or reported by young person/vulnerable adult; alleged, reported, suspected or witnessed by someone else; suspected or witnessed by self; other);
- details of other people involved/alleged to be involved;

4. Arrangements (cont.)

4.8 Record keeping (cont.)

- summary of incident/concern (if you include statements by other parties try to use their words in quotations; include details of all alleged perpetrators and details of any immediate protection made);
- details of any physical injuries reported or witnessed (including a description of any visible injuries and any indirect signs such as behavioural changes);
- names of any witnesses;
- have parents/carers been contacted? (details of any discussion)
- were emergency services involved? (e.g. taking young person to A&E, police etc.) (where possible, referral to the Police or Social Services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be noted); and
- details of any advice given and any action taken.

5. Laws and guidance

Bats without Borders is a Scottish/UK registered charity, this policy has been drawn up on the basis of relevant law and guidance, namely:

- Children Act 2004
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- General Data Protection Regulation 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014

6. Review Date

This policy will be reviewed in response to legislative or best practice guideline changes (e.g. NSPCC), or at a maximum of every three years.

Date for review: 1st December 2024

CONFIDENTIAL
Report of suspected abuse (page 1/2)

Name of person making the report stating whether or not they are expressing their own concerns or those of someone else

Name of child/young person/vulnerable adult

Name of parent/guardian/carer

Date of birth

Address and telephone number

First language

Date, time and place of incident/when concern arose

How the concern was identified (alleged or reported by child/vulnerable adult; alleged, reported, suspected or witnessed by someone else; suspected or witnessed by self; other)

CONFIDENTIAL
Report of suspected abuse (page 2/2)

Details of other people involved/alleged to be involved

Summary of incident/concern (if you include statements by other parties try to use their words in quotations; include details of all alleged perpetrators and details of any immediate protection made)

Details of any physical injuries reported or witnessed (including description of any visible injuries and any indirect signs such as behavioural changes)

Names of any witness(es)

Have parents/carers been contacted? (details of any discussion)

Were emergency services involved? (e.g. taking **young** person to A&E, police, etc.) (where possible, referral to the Police or Social Services or Safeguarding Team should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be noted)

Details of any advice given, and/or any action taken