



South Downs National Park Authority

Safeguarding Policy

Version 3: February 2024

Review Date: February 2025
Responsibility: HR Manager
Date Approved: 2 February 2024
Approved by: OMT

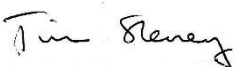
Safeguarding Policy

Policy Change/Version Control:

Date	Description	Approved by/date:
<u>22/09/23</u>	Substantial changes to policy to reflect increased risk due to SSCP, contact with volunteers, remote working and introduction of designated safeguarding officers. Comments from external safeguarding consultant and H&S committee taken into account.	
23 January 2024	Revised opening statement by Tm Slaney, Interim Chief Executive Changes made to process flowchart on page 6 Changes made to planning site visits procedure following further feedback from H&S Committee (I Iv. pg 8)	

Policy Statement

This is the Safeguarding Policy of South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), which is crucial for promoting the welfare and protection of vulnerable individuals that may be in contact with Officers of the Authority. We know this is an important responsibility upon us and this policy has been developed by SDNPA and agreed upon collaboratively with staff. It is officially adopted by the Authority and will undergo regular annual review by management and Health and Safety representatives. This policy will be communicated to all new staff, volunteers, and members at the commencement of their roles, as part of their induction process. The most current version of this policy is readily accessible to all SDNPA personnel through the Intranet. The overarching commitment of SDNPA is to ensure, to the best of its abilities, a secure and safe environment for its employees, volunteers, and the public. This commitment extends to the safeguarding of children, young people, and vulnerable adults who may come into contact with the Authority's services and activities. The SDNPA is dedicated to fostering an atmosphere of trust, responsibility, and ethical conduct, with a particular emphasis on the well-being and protection of vulnerable individuals in every aspect of its operations.

Signed: 
(Interim Chief Executive)

Dated: 14 January 2024

Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

South Downs National Park Authority provides a variety of services for groups and individuals including children, young people and vulnerable adults in order to increase awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park. These services include taught sessions, both within schools and elsewhere in the National Park, volunteering, community outreach, events, engagement, work experience and practical conservation tasks.

SDNPA is committed to ensuring that the highest standards are maintained in protecting children and vulnerable adults from harm in all situations. The SDNPA is also aware that staff, volunteers and Members working with, or in the vicinity of children, young people and vulnerable adults are vulnerable to having allegations of abusive, illegal or improper conduct made against them.

The purpose of this policy, therefore, is to provide all staff, volunteers and Members with clear and practical guidance to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom they come into contact, whilst minimising the risk of allegations being made against them.

SDNPA has a duty to report any safeguarding issues and therefore cannot promise complete confidentiality to the individual raising the concern. The matter will however be treated sensitively and the individual will be kept informed of any actions that have been taken.

This policy relates to all SDNPA staff, volunteers and Members.

2. What is safeguarding?

While anybody can potentially be a victim of abuse or neglect, only certain categories of people are defined as vulnerable for safeguarding purposes. The term 'safeguarding' describes the action that is taken to promote the welfare of vulnerable people and protect them from harm.

3. Vulnerable people

For safeguarding purposes, vulnerable people are those who are deemed unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect, due to their circumstances.

A vulnerable person is either a child or an adult at risk:

- anybody under the age of 18 is automatically classed as a vulnerable person because of their age;
- people who are over 18 may be considered an 'Adult at risk', if they are in need of care and support services for physical or mental health reasons (regardless of whether or not they are receiving them), and if because of those needs, they are unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect.

4. Who is responsible for safeguarding?

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. It is important that all staff, volunteers and Members are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and knows how to raise a safeguarding concern.

The table on page 3 outlines the key responsibilities of SDNPA, Designated Safeguarding Officers and Individuals. The SDNPA has four Designated Safeguarding Officers. Their contact details are found in Appendix A. Designated Safeguarding Officers will be the main point of contact for any safeguarding concerns and are responsible for overseeing the implementation and effectiveness of the Safeguarding Policy.

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Organisation	Designated Safeguarding Officers	Individuals
Ensure legal and moral responsibilities are fulfilled in regards to safeguarding	To lead the organisation on effective safeguarding practices	Read, understand and follow this safeguarding policy
Ensure adequate policies and procedures are in place	Supporting others	Prevent, recognise and respond to types of harm appropriately
Appropriate trained and resourced safeguarding staff are in place	Helping to prevent harm from occurring	Understand their responsibilities and raise concerns in a timely manner
Fully commit to the 'Do no harm' principle	Ensuring 'fit for purpose' systems are in place	Seek appropriate help and support
	Raising awareness and training others	Know how to raise a concern
	Managing referrals	Contribute to an effective safeguarding culture – "it could happen here"
	Reviewing and appropriately recording information	Continual professional and personal development

Everyone has a duty to keep vulnerable people with whom they come into contact safe and to protect them from harm. In particular to:

- Always act and be seen to act in the vulnerable person's best interests using integrity and maturity and making reasonable judgements to safeguard the welfare of vulnerable people at all times;
- Avoid any conduct which might lead a reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Ensure that any data or information you collect in relation to vulnerable people is kept secure and not shared with others without appropriate permission and safeguards in place. Please refer to the GDPR compliance policy for further information

5. Reporting

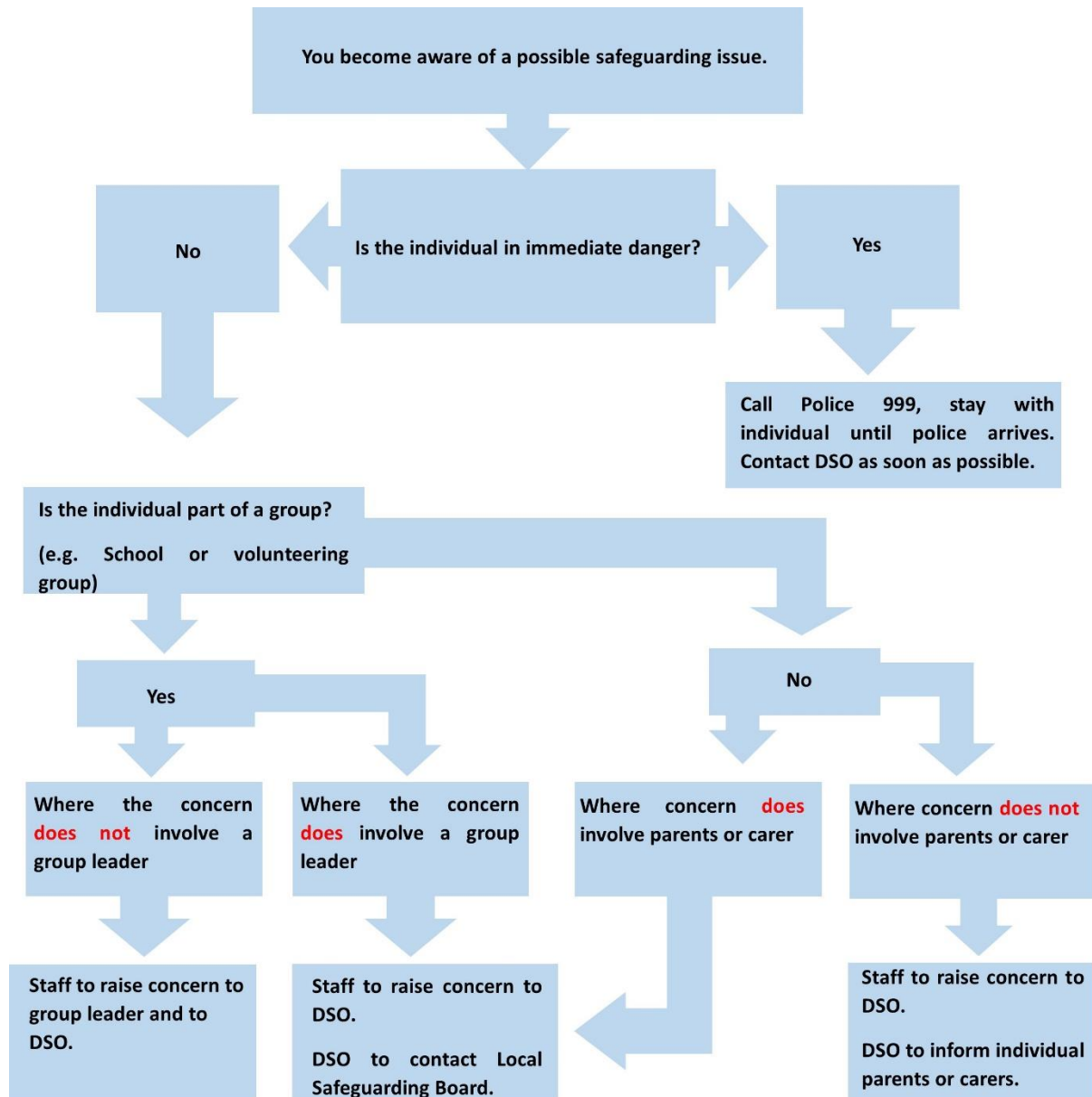
Suspicious or allegations of abuse may arise from a number of sources e.g. an observation, a comment, a complaint or a report from a child, a parent, a member of staff or another adult. The suspicion or allegation may be connected to the SDNPA activity in which the vulnerable person is participating or it may be to do with something completely separate to SDNPA business. There may be a number of reasons why a vulnerable person displays concerning behaviour or their behaviour changes. It is advisable to discuss concerns with parents, carers or group leaders (school staff if it is a school group) in the first instance, except where this may place the vulnerable person at increased risk.

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6. What to do if you witness a safeguarding concern:

Concerns should not be discussed with anyone other than the DSOs.

Please refer to the flowcharts below for procedural guidance.



If a Designated Safeguarding Officer is not available or cannot be reached, refer to local safeguarding board for advice (contact available at the end of document)

Following a safeguarding event, staff (witness) must complete an [incident report form](#) as soon as possible and forward it to the designated safeguarding officers

The incident must be recorded as soon as possible, be factual and include:

- a chronology;
- Who said what?
- Who to?

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- When did they say it?
- Who was the information passed from / to?
- What action was taken at the time and when?
- Who was it referred to?

The DSOs will record the outcome of the referral, next steps, any actions taken and the individuals involved in carrying out these actions.

7. Breaches of the Safeguarding Policy

Any breaches of this Safeguarding Policy will be considered as unacceptable conduct and could result in disciplinary action, in accordance with the SDNPA Disciplinary Policy.

8. DBS Checks

Enhanced disclosure will be sought for all new and existing staff, volunteers and members working with children and/or vulnerable adults that meet [DBS requirements](#). This will include the Designated Safeguarding Officers. DBS disclosures will be reviewed yearly.

9. Training

The SDNPA will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Officers have undergone appropriate safeguarding training. All other staff, Members and volunteers will be expected to attend mandatory training.

10. Health and Safety

Additional considerations should be included in risk assessments for any activity which involves contact with vulnerable people. The Health and Safety Policy can be found here:

<https://intranet.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Health-and-Safety-Policy-2021-Final1.pdf>

11. Specific Guidance

There are particular situations where safeguarding issues may arise. Here are some examples. There may be other situations not listed below so please seek advice from an SDNPA Designated Safeguarding Officer.

i) Administering First Aid

- Whenever possible First Aid should be administered by a qualified member of staff;
- Staff administering First Aid to a vulnerable person should try to ensure that at least one other adult or child is present and aware of the action being taken;
- Details and actions must be recorded through the Incident Reporting procedure.

ii) Behaviour Management

Where a teacher or group leader is not present e.g. events, youth activities or work experience, staff, volunteers and Members must:

- act as any reasonable, prudent teacher would to ensure that all children have a worthwhile and enjoyable experience;
- always treat children with respect and dignity;
- try to diffuse situations before they escalate;
- not use sarcasm or make comments which are demeaning or insensitive towards children;
- not hit, smack or use any other kind of physical force

There may be occasions when it is necessary for staff to use physical intervention to prevent a vulnerable person committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others

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or causing damage to property. In such cases the minimum amount of force should be used for the minimum length of time required for the vulnerable person to regain self-control. In all such cases the staff member must record the circumstances and actions and report them using the Incident Reporting procedure.

iii) **Gifts**

Gifts should be treated in accordance with the SDNPA's [Code of Conduct](#). Rewards/gifts should not be given to any vulnerable person, unless it is associated with an accepted part of the SDNPA's work, for example, a prize given as part of a competition/activity.

iv) **Infatuation and Crushes**

It is not uncommon for vulnerable people to be strongly attracted to a member of staff, volunteer or Member and/or to develop infatuations. Such circumstances have the potential for actions to be misinterpreted and allegations to be made. Staff, volunteers and Members should report to the Designated Safeguarding Officer at the earliest opportunity any indication that suggests an infatuation.

v) **One to One Situations**

One to one situations can provide an opportunity for abuse and/or for allegations to be made. These situations should be avoided wherever possible.

Where one to one situations are unavoidable, such as during some work experience placements, the SDNPA will:

- request that school provides a risk assessment for individual children which should include consideration of any history of violent conduct, inappropriate sexual behaviour or any false or malicious allegations towards staff;
- ensure that a DBS Disclosure has been obtained for all staff likely to be in a one to one situation with a child;
- not allow one to one situations unless the child's parents and, if appropriate, school are aware of and approve the arrangement in writing.

In one to one situations in an office environment staff should carry out the following precautions:

- ensure that there is visual access and/or leave the door open;
- avoid having 'meeting in progress' or equivalent signs on the door;
- try to ensure that other staff are close by.

Planning site visits can have the potential to put staff in an unexpected one to one situation with a vulnerable person at a private home. One to one situations can be avoided during planning site visits by:

- Ensuring the visit is communicated in advance where practicable specifying that a responsible adult should be present for the site visit
- Should there be an unaccompanied young person or vulnerable adult present when the visit takes place, officers should leave and rearrange the visit
- If this occurs, the rearranged visit can be accompanied by two staff to remove the potential for further one to one situations.

Staff, Members or volunteers should not be in a one-to-one situation with a vulnerable person during transport to field sites or out in the field.

vi) **Photographs / Other Images**

The school, group leader, parent or carer consent must be given in writing before taking photographs or videos of children;

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- there is a potential risk of pictures of vulnerable people being misused for pornographic or 'grooming' purposes
- most schools now have strict policies on using images of children;
- the SDNPA has produced a consent form that can be sent to parents/carers to request permission to take photos/videos of children.
- Completed consent forms that contain the personal information of young people must be kept securely and in accordance with the Authority's GDPR compliance policy

vii) Physical Contact

There may be occasions when it is necessary for staff to have physical contact with a vulnerable person, for example to demonstrate a physical task. It is very important however, that the physical contact is carried out appropriately. In particular staff must:

- be aware that even well intentioned physical contact could be misconstrued by the vulnerable person, an observer or by anyone to whom the action is described;
- never touch a vulnerable person in a way which may be considered indecent;
- never indulge in 'horseplay', tickling or fun fights;
- report any incidents that they feel could be misconstrued to a Designated Safeguarding Officer.

viii) Power dynamics and Positions of Trust

All staff, volunteers and Members representing the SDNPA are in a position of trust. Staff, volunteers and Members must not use this power and position of trust to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine vulnerable people.

Staff, Members and volunteers must not pursue personal relationships or social contact with vulnerable people they encounter through their SDNPA role.

If social contact occurs coincidentally, staff must exercise professional judgement and be aware that any conduct could be misconstrued.

- Staff, Members and volunteers must not give their personal details such as phone number, address or e mail address to vulnerable people unless the need to do so is agreed with their manager or HR
- Email and text contact should be appropriate to the work involved.

Staff, Members and volunteers should report and record any situation which they feel might compromise the SDNPA or their own professional standing. If a member of staff has access to information about a vulnerable person, they must treat it in a confidential and discreet manner.

ix) Propriety and Behaviour

Staff, Members and volunteers should maintain high standards of moral conduct when engaged in professional activity and maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children/vulnerable adults under their supervision. In particular staff must:

- never make sexual remarks to a child or vulnerable adult or discuss sexual relationships with them;
- never make personal comments about children or vulnerable adults or encourage others to do so;
- never demean or humiliate children or vulnerable adults in any way.

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Appendix I: contact details of SDNPA Designated Safeguarding Officers

Name	Job Title	Contact Details
Vicky Paterson	HR Manager	01730 819224 07384 255184 Vicky.paterson@southdowns.gov.uk
Amanda Elmes	Learning, Outreach and Volunteer Lead	01730 819248 07872 410452 amanda.elmes@southdowns.gov.uk
Bruno Aveiro	Health and Safety Officer	01730 819333 Bruno.aveiro@southdowns.gov.uk
Richard Ayres	Visitor Services Manager (SSCP)	07950 285842 Richard.ayres@southdowns.gov.uk

Local Safeguarding Organisations

Name	Contact details
Hampshire Safeguarding children Partnership	01962 876355 hscp@hants.gov.uk
Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board	0300 555 1386 hsab@hants.gov.uk
West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board	03302 227952 safeguardingadultsboard@westsussex.gov.uk
ChildLine	08001111
West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership	0330 222 7799 wsscp@westsussex.gov.uk
East Sussex Safeguarding children Partnership	01273 481544 ESSCP.Contact@eastsussex.gov.uk
East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board	03456080191

Appendix 2: relevant legislation

Mental Health Act 1983

Children Act 1989

Further and Higher Education Act 1992

Human Rights Act 1998

Data Protection Act 1998

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1991

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003

Children Act 2004

Mental Capacity Act 2005

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Equality Act 2010

Education Act 2012

Care Act 2014

Children and Families Act 2014

Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014

Modern Slavery Act 2015

Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 – Prevent Duty

Children and Social Work Act 2017

Data Protection Act 2018

Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021

The Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022