



Mendip Activity Centre

The staff and Mendip Outdoor Pursuits fully recognise that all staff have a full and active part to play in protecting customers who use Mendip, from harm. The staff team believe that Mendip should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment; which promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child or vulnerable adult, as well as every other customer who visits.

Mendip makes a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe. Mendip comes into contact with children and / or vulnerable adults through the following activities:

SNOWSPORTS

- Skiing
- Snowboarding
- Tobogganing

WATER SPORTS

- Kayaking
- Canoeing
- Raft Building

LAND SPORTS

- Assault Course
- Bush Craft
- Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Initiative Exercises
- Mountain Biking
- Mountain Walking
- Navigation
- Orienteering
- Team Development

ROCK SPORTS

- Abseiling
- Caving
- Climbing

TARGET SPORTS

- Frisbee Golf
- Archery
- Rifle Shooting

The types of contact with children and/or vulnerable adults will include both regulated and controlled activity.

- regulated activity can be defined as 'frequent contact' with a vulnerable person (once a month or more) or as 'intensive contact' (3 days or more within a 30 day period),
- controlled contact includes ancillary roles, such as caretakers, where there may be contact with vulnerable groups, administrators or managers who can access data on vulnerable people.

This policy seeks to ensure that Mendip undertakes its responsibilities with regard to protection of children and / or vulnerable adults and will respond to concerns appropriately. The policy establishes a framework to support staff in their practices and clarifies the organisation's expectations.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of directors - every 12 months and when there are changes in legislation or other factors that make a review prudent.

1. Aims of this Policy

The aims of this policy are as follows:

- To support a child or vulnerable adult's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To raise the awareness of both teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and vulnerable adults, and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse in line with Local and National procedures and guidance.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children or vulnerable adults known or thought to be at risk of harm.
- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff, schools and centre users.
- To develop a structured procedure within the company, which will be followed by all members of Mendip team in cases of suspected abuse.
- To be aware of other agencies and contacts, especially within the Schools, Police and Social Services
- To ensure that all adults within our company who have access to children or vulnerable adults have been checked as to their suitability.

2. Procedures

Our company procedures for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults will be in line with recommend procedures.

We will ensure that:

- We have a designated member of staff for Safeguarding who undertakes training.
- We have a Deputy member of staff who will act in the Designated Person's absence and deal with any child or vulnerable adult's protection issues.
- All members of staff develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse and all permanent staff have received training under the guidance of the designated member of staff following the NSPCC Safeguarding manual.
- All members of staff know how to respond to a young person who discloses abuse.
- Our procedures will be regularly reviewed and up-dated.
- All new members of staff will be given a copy of our safeguarding procedures as part of their induction into Mendip Outdoor Pursuits.

3. Definition of Safeguarding

Here at Mendip, we define safeguarding as embedding practices throughout the organisation to ensure the protection of children and/or vulnerable adults wherever possible.

Abuse is a selfish act of oppression and injustice, exploitation and manipulation of power by those in a position of authority. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture - It can take a number of forms, including the following:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Bullying
- Neglect
- Financial (or material) abuse

Definition of a child

A child is under the age of 18 (as defined in the United Nations convention on the Rights of a Child).

Definition of Vulnerable Adults

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.

This may include a person who:

- Is elderly and frail
 - Has a mental illness including dementia
 - Has a physical or sensory disability
 - Has a learning disability
 - Has a severe physical illness
 - Is a substance misuser
 - Is homeless
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4. Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedures.

We expect all staff to promote good practice by being an excellent role model, contribute to discussions about safeguarding and to positively involve people in developing safe practices.

Additional specific responsibilities

The Designated Senior Manager/Duty Manager responsibilities are as follows:

- To ensure the policy is accessible
- To ensure the policy is implemented
- To ensure the policy is monitored and reviewed
- To liaison with and monitoring/help the Designated Senior Manager work
- To ensure sufficient resources (time and money) are allocated to ensure that the policy can be effectively implemented
- To promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults
- To ensure staff have access to appropriate training/information
- To receive staff concerns about safeguarding and respond to all seriously, swiftly and appropriately
- To keep up to date with local arrangements for safeguarding and DBS
- To develop and maintain effective links with relevant agencies.
- To take forward concerns about responses

Confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to Safeguarding are confidential. The Designated Person at Mendip Outdoor Pursuits will disclose any information about a young person to other members of staff on a need to know basis only. All staff are aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. All staff are aware that they cannot promise a child or vulnerable adult to keep secrets.

5. Implementation

The scope of this Safeguarding Policy is broad ranging and in practice, it will be implemented via a range of policies and procedures within the organisation. These include:

- “Whistleblowing” – ability to inform on other staff/ practices within the organisation
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures – to address breaches of procedures/policies
- Risk Assessment and operating procedures and policies, including lone working procedures, mitigating risk to staff and clients
- Equal Opportunities policy – ensuring safeguarding procedures are in line with this policy, in particular around discriminatory abuse and ensuring that the safeguarding policy and procedures are not discriminatory
- Data protection
- Confidentiality - ensuring that service users are aware of your duty to disclose
- Staff induction
- Staff training

Safe recruitment

Mendip Outdoor Pursuits ensures safe recruitment through the following processes:

- Job or role descriptions for all roles involving contact with children and/or vulnerable adults will contain reference to safeguarding responsibilities.
- There are person specifications for roles which contain a statement on core competency with regard to child/vulnerable adult protection/safeguarding
- Shortlisting is based on formal application processes/forms and not on provision of CVs
- Interviews are conducted according to equal opportunity principles and interview questions are based on the relevant job description and person specification

DBS checks will be conducted for specific roles for all staff working with children and vulnerable adults. It is a criminal offence for individuals barred by the DBS to work or apply to work with children or vulnerable adults in a wide range of posts.

No formal job offers are made until after checks for suitability are completed (including DBS and references).

Disclosure and Barring Service Records Gap Management

The organisation commits resources to providing DBS check on staff whose roles involve contact with children and/or vulnerable adults.

In order to avoid DBS gaps, the organisation will ensure that their established staff and roles are regularly reviewed through the following processes:

- A 3 year rolling programme of re-checking DBS's is in place for holders of all identified posts or use of the monitoring service.
- Existing staff who transfer from a role which does not require a DBS check to one which involves contact with children / vulnerable adults will be subject to a DBS check.
- In addition to checks on recruitment for roles involving contact with children/vulnerable adults, for established staff the following processes are in place
- There will be systematic checking of safeguarding arrangements of partner organisations

6. Communications training and support for staff

Mendip Outdoor Pursuits commits resources for induction, training of staff, effective communications and support mechanisms in relation to Safeguarding.

Induction

Induction will include:

- Discussion of the Safeguarding Policy (and confirmation of understanding)
- Discussion of other relevant policies
- Ensure familiarity with reporting processes, the roles of line manager and Designated Senior Manager (and who acts in their absence)
- Initial training on safeguarding including: safe working practices, safe recruitment, understanding child protection and the alert guide for adult safeguarding

Training

All staff who, through their role, are in contact with children and /or vulnerable adults will have access to safeguarding training at an appropriate level.

Communications and discussion of safeguarding issues

Commitment to the following communication methods will ensure effective communication of safeguarding issues and practice:

- team meetings
- Board meetings
- One to one meetings (formal or informal),
- Activity supervision and observation

Support

We recognise that involvement in situations where there is risk or actual harm can be stressful for staff concerned. The mechanisms in place to support staff include:

- Debriefing support for staff so that they can reflect on the issues they have dealt with.
- Seeking further support as appropriate e.g. access to counselling.

Bullying

Our policy on bullying is set out in a separate document and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under safeguarding procedures. This would be documented an incident in its own right.

Professional boundaries

Professional boundaries are what define the limits of a relationship between a support worker and a client. They are a set of standards we agree to uphold that allows this necessary and often close relationship to exist while ensuring the correct detachment is kept in place.

Mendip Outdoor Pursuits expects staff to protect the professional integrity of themselves and the organisation.

The following professional boundaries must be adhered to:

- Giving and receiving gifts from clients: Mendip Outdoor Pursuits does not allow staff to give gifts to or receive gifts from clients. However gifts may be provided by the organisation as part of a planned activity'.
- Staff contact with user groups. Personal relationships between a member of staff and a client who is under 18 is prohibited. This includes relationships through social networking sites such as Facebook.

If the professional boundaries and/or policies are breached this could result in disciplinary procedures or enactment of the allegation management procedures

If as an employee you believe you have a potential interest that conflicts with the above, please discuss this with your line manager or designated senior manager immediately, or refer to this policy for guidance.

Reporting

The process outlined below details the stages involved in raising and reporting safeguarding concerns at Mendip Outdoor Pursuits

Communicate your concerns with your immediate manager or senior manager



Seek medical attention for the vulnerable person if needed



If needed seek advice from the Children and Families helpdesk or Adults helpdesk



the senior management will complete the Local Authority Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Incident Report Form if required and submit to the local authority within 24 hours of making a contact



Ensure that feedback from the Local Authority is received and their response recorded

Any local authority process for reporting will be adopted alongside this policy by Mendip.

Allegations Management

Mendip Outdoor Pursuits recognises its duty to report concerns or allegations against its staff within the organisation or by a professional from another organisation.

We understand that a young person may make an allegation against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff or company user receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Designated Person. The Designated Person on all such occasions, will discuss the content of the allegation with the North Somerset Local Safeguarding Children's Board, or in their absence, the Safeguarding Advisory Service. If the allegation made to a member of staff or company user concerns the Designated Person then will immediately inform the Deputy member of staff at Mendip Outdoor Pursuits who will consult with the the Safeguarding Advisory Service.

7. Monitoring

The organisation will monitor the following Safeguarding aspects:

- Safe recruitment practices
- DBS checks undertaken

- References applied for new staff
- Records made and kept of supervision sessions
- Training – register/record of staff training on child/vulnerable adult protection
- Monitoring whether concerns are being reported and actioned
- Checking that policies are up to date and relevant
- Regularly reviewing the current reporting procedure in place
- Presence and action of Designated Senior Manager responsible for Safeguarding is in post

8. Managing Information

Information will be gathered, recorded and stored in accordance with the following policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- Confidentiality Policy

All staff must be aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. The public interest in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need to know basis only, as judged by the Designated Senior Manager.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise service users or their families/ carers that they will keep secrets.
