



Hakeford Woods Forest School

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Hakeford Woods Forest School acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and Devon County Council requirements.

The policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, all children

- have a positive and enjoyable experience of outdoor education at Hakeford Woods Forest School in a safe and child centred environment.
- are protected from abuse whilst participating in the Forest School programme or outside of the activity.

Hakeford Woods Forest School acknowledges that some children, including disabled children and young people or those from ethnic minority communities and vulnerable adults can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

As part of our safeguarding policy Hakeford Woods Forest School will

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored
- prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals
- ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

Staff & Assistants

All staff will have enhanced checks from the Disclosure & Barring Service, dated within 5 years and at the current home address. Hakeford Woods Forest School will not employ people with unsuitable DBS certificates. All volunteers and visitors will be vetted by gathering: references / employment history / record of qualification / or because we will have had prior personal knowledge of the person. If the visitor has a DBS certificate relevant to working with children or vulnerable adults, this will be checked by the management of Hakeford Woods Forest School. Participants will not be left unsupervised with a visitor or volunteer where no DBS certificate has been seen.

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in Hakeford Woods Forest School. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

Adults working with Hakeford Woods Forest School need to appreciate that when children feel comfortable and content, when their instinct to trust and risk take is encouraged, they may be moved to disclose information which they might have otherwise kept to themselves. Any volunteer, or member of staff, who finds that a child is telling them something that concerns them should follow the course of action set out below in simple steps:

1. **Listen** to the pupil but ask NO leading questions. Allow the child to lead the discussion but do not press for details.
2. **Keep calm and offer reassurance.** Accept what the child says without challenge.
3. **Make NO promises.** You cannot 'keep a secret'. You should make it understood that there are limits to confidentiality at the start of the disclosure.
4. **Inform** the Child Protection Officer Mr Stuart Young, or the deputy CPO Mrs Desiree Young.
5. Keep an accurate, **written record** of the conversation, including the date, the time, the place the conversation occurred in and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. Keep the record secure and hand it to the CPO.

Disclosures, Recording & Reporting

Appropriate steps will be taken where concerns arise regarding the safety of a participant. Concerns will be reported to a designated safeguarding person and we will ensure that disclosures are responded to sensitively and appropriately, in line with current best practise.

- Any concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon immediately
- Positive action will be taken to ensure the protection of participants who are subject to any concerns
- The safety of the rest of the group will be secured before taking further action if on site – if a crime has taken place call 999 and report this to the Police.
- Implicated adult(s) will be encouraged to leave the group until the disclosure is officially cleared/action taken.
- All appropriate staff/managers will be informed.
- Relevant information/evidence will be recorded in an appropriate and cooperative manner
- In all child/vulnerable adult protection situations, confidentiality will be maintained at all times by disclosing information only to those who need to know

NSPCC helpline can be used for children 08088005000 or the Care Quality Commission for vulnerable adults 03000616161

Hakeford Woods Forest School will follow guidance provided by partner organisations and local authorities.

Monitoring

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- as required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board or any other governing or advisory body.
- as a result of any other significant change or event.