

# Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

**This policy covers all youngsters who apply to join or who come on one of the "Journeys of a Lifetime" organised by the Journey of a Lifetime (JoLt) Trust whether they are legally youngsters or adults.**

## **Introduction and purpose**

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers of the Journey of a Lifetime Trust, including Trustees, volunteer leaders, other volunteers, paid staff, agency staff or anyone working on behalf of the Trust.

The purpose of this policy is :

- to protect children and young people that use our services
- to provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding

## **Legal Framework**

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children and young people, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedom Act 2012
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding

## **Child protection policy:**

It is the policy of JoLt to safeguard the welfare of all youngsters by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm, and to provide a safe and supportive environment that secures the well-being and best outcomes for youngsters participating in a "journey of a lifetime". Accordingly, JoLt is committed to the following principles:

- the welfare of the youngster is paramount
- all youngsters without exception have the right to protection from abuse
- some young people are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, their communication needs or other issues
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all the charity's trustees, leaders and other volunteers have a responsibility to report concerns.

In addition JoLt is committed to:

- taking into account in all its considerations and activities the interests and well-being of young people
- respecting the rights, wishes and feelings of young people with whom it is working
- taking all practical steps to protect them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect
- adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- working in partnership with young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare
- sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and young people as appropriate
- promoting the welfare of young people and their protection within a relationship of trust.

This policy is linked to procedures that make clear:

- what is good practice among all personnel
- what is practice never to be sanctioned
- that the ways in which all charity personnel are recruited and selected ensures their suitability for working with young people using the appropriate and available checks
- how to respond properly to suspicions and allegations
- how to ensure confidentiality
- what systems are in place to ensure that all leaders working with young people are routinely and regularly monitored.

# Child Protection Practice Procedures

## 1. Child protection and child abuse

- 1.1 The Senior Leader is the senior member of the leadership team who takes specific responsibility for child protection matters on expeditions. The Senior Leader is responsible for:
- holding and being conversant with JoLt's Child Protection Policy and Procedures
  - briefing leaders on relevant contents of the above guidance and procedures, and on the procedures JoLt should follow below – including the briefing of new leaders as part of their induction
  - ensuring the procedures below are followed within JoLt
  - liaison over Child Protection Procedures with the Social Services Department
  - receiving reports of alleged or suspected child abuse within JoLt, or reported by a youngster relating to incidents on the journey, at JoLt events, at home or elsewhere, contacting the Social Services Department and taking other action in response, as set out below
  - keeping secure records of individual cases.
- 1.2 Every leader or trustee needs to be thoroughly familiar with the ways in which youngsters can be protected from abuse by being sensitive to abuse in all its forms and knowing what action to take. Leaders should be alert to the appearance of neglect and distress, all of which can be significant yet easily overlooked. It is essential that the procedures are scrupulously followed to ensure that every reasonable step is taken to avoid the tragedy of a youngster being seriously damaged physically or emotionally either on a 'journey of a lifetime' or on their return home.

## 2. What is child abuse / signs and symptoms?

- 2.1 The Child Protection Procedure relates to the protection of youngsters and vulnerable adults on JoLt expeditions or attending JoLt events from abuse and neglect by leaders, parents, others with parental responsibility, guardians, service providers, other responsible adults, or other youngsters or vulnerable adults.
- 2.2 The following categories of harm are commonly used, but leaders should always be vigilant to any sign of distress in a youngster:
- a) **Physical abuse** – physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer or other fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
  - b) **Emotional abuse** – emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a youngster such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the youngster's emotional development. It may involve conveying to youngsters that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age- or developmentally-inappropriate expectations being imposed on youngsters. These may include interactions that are beyond the youngster's developmental capability, as well as over-protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the youngster participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing youngsters frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of youngsters. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a youngster, though it may occur alone.
  - c) **Sexual abuse** – sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a youngster or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the

youngster is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex), or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving youngsters in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging youngsters to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

- d) **Neglect** – neglect is the persistent failure to meet a youngster’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the youngster’s health or development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a youngster from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate caretakers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a youngster’s basic emotional needs.

### 2.3 **Signs and symptoms**

The following behavioural signs may or may not be indications that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered:

a) **Physical signs of abuse**

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries, which occur to the body, in places that are not normally exposed to falls, rough games and so on
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Neglect – under-nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care and so on
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains
- Bruises, burns, bites, fractures and so on, that do not have an accidental explanation
- Cuts/scratches/substance misuse.

b) **Emotional signs of abuse**

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour; particularly where a youngster withdraws or becomes clingy. Also depression/aggression, extreme anxiety
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying.

c) **Signs of possible sexual abuse**

- Any allegations made by a youngster concerning sexual abuse
- Youngster with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters, and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour; or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Youngster who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares; sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders – Anorexia, Bulimia.

d) **Racial, cultural and religious patterns**

- Crucial to any assessment is the knowledge and sensitivity to racial, cultural and religious patterns. While it is important to respect these practices, it is important to remember that all youngsters have basic human rights. Differences in a youngster's rearing do not justify Child Abuse.

- 2.4 Always remember that many symptoms of distress in a youngster can point to abuse, but there may be alternative explanations.
- 2.5 Leaders should also be aware a reluctance to participate in games or swimming may also be an indicator.
- 2.6 Any leader or trustee who is told of any incident or who has strong suspicion of abuse occurring on JoLt, or to a youngster at home, or elsewhere (or who him/herself knows of or suspects such abuse) must report the information the same day to the Senior Leader. In the absence of the Senior Leader, the immediate report should be made to the Deputy Senior Leader or the Chair of Trustees. If the allegation or suspicion is about the Senior Leader or Chair of Trustees the report should be made to the Deputy Senior Leader or Treasurer.
- 2.7 Abuse to be reported includes abuse of a youngster by a leader or other adult, abuse at home, which a youngster reports to leaders, abuse by a stranger on JoLt or elsewhere, and abuse of one youngster by another. The key issues identifying the problem as abuse rather than an isolated instance of bullying considered within normal bounds on JoLt are:
- The frequency, nature and severity of the incident(s)
  - Whether the victim was coerced by physical force, fear, or by a youngster or group of youngsters significantly older than him/herself, or having power or authority over him/her.
- 2.8 All leaders and other volunteers should be aware of the need to report allegations of child abuse to the Senior Leader or Trustee responsible for Child Protection.

## **What happens**

### **If you suspect a youngster is being abused emotionally, verbally, physically or sexually**

#### ***Never tell a youngster you will keep a secret they told you***

1. Tell the Senior Leader immediately (Deputy Senior Leader if your suspicions involve the Senior Leader)
2. Record any facts as you know them and give a copy to the Senior Leader (Deputy Senior Leader if suspicion relates to Senior Leader)
3. Ensure the youngster has access to an independent adult
4. Ensure that no situation arises which could cause any further concern

### **If a youngster discloses to you abuse that has occurred on the expedition by someone else**

#### ***Never tell a youngster you will keep a secret they told you***

1. Allow the youngster to speak without interruption, accepting what is said
2. Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement
3. Advise that you will try to offer support but that you must pass the information on
4. Same steps as 1-4 as in suspecting a child is being abused

### **If a youngster discloses to you abuse that occurred prior to the expedition**

#### ***Never tell a youngster you will keep a secret they told you***

1. Allow the youngster to speak without interruption, accepting what is said
2. Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation
3. Advise that you must pass the information on to the leader in overall responsibility
4. At the earliest opportunity record in writing what you have been told
5. Tell the Senior Leader immediately

### **If you receive an allegation about any adult or about yourself**

#### ***Never tell a youngster you will keep a secret they told you***

1. Immediately tell the Senior Leader. If the accusations relate to the Senior Leader, the Deputy Senior Leader must be informed immediately
2. Record the facts as you know them and give a copy to the Senior Leader or, if the accusations relate to the Senior Leader, the Deputy Senior Leader
3. Try to ensure that no-one is placed in a position that could cause further compromise.

### **You must refer; you must not investigate**

The Senior Leader (Deputy Senior Leader if the abuse may relate to the Senior Leader) are required to refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies. Advice should be taken at the earliest possible opportunity (usually as soon as the group return to the UK or earlier if the situation requires immediate notification) from

#### **Harrow Children's Services, 020 8901 2690**

On a JoLt expedition, the Senior Leader receiving an allegation of abuse will:

- (a) Take any steps needed to protect any youngster involved from risk of immediate harm. (This may involve allocating an appropriate leader, as far as possible a person chosen by the youngster him/herself to stay with him/her).
- (b) Not interview or investigate the allegation further, but seek advice at the earliest possible opportunity (usually as soon as the group returns to the UK or earlier if the situation requires immediate notification) from the Harrow Child Protection Team
- (c) He/she will speak personally to one of the Child Protection Team or, if they are unavailable, the Duty Social Worker and not rely on leaving a message
- (d) They will complete the relevant forms and send to Social Services at the earliest possible opportunity.

If the Police are involved on the journey itself, the Senior Leader will ensure that any youngster being interviewed by the Police has available a supportive leader of his/her own choice to accompany him/her if this becomes necessary.

#### ***If a trustee receives an allegation about any adult or youngster***

1. Allow the person to speak without interruption, accepting what is said
2. Do not investigate but try to get as many facts as possible
3. If the person making the allegation is the alleged victim, alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement. If the person concerned is a third party pass no judgement
4. Advise that you will try to offer support but that you must pass the information on
5. At the earliest opportunity record in writing what you have been told
6. Tell the Chair of Trustees immediately. If the allegation involves the Chair of Trustees, tell the Treasurer immediately.

### **You must refer; you must not investigate**

#### ***Trustee action***

The Trustees and the Senior Leader are required to refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies.

#### **Harrow Children's Services, 020 8901 2690**