

# Cumberland Geological Society

## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

This policy document is to inform members and all participants about the principles and procedures we will undertake when safeguarding concerns are raised. The Society believes that no one should ever experience abuse of any kind. We recognize that we have a duty to promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults that we come into contact with and we are committed to safeguarding their well being and protecting them from harm.

The Society does not provide activities designed exclusively for children and young people nor vulnerable adults. Although their involvement is rare, activities may be attended by them when accompanied by a parent, guardian or responsible adult.

Cumberland Geological Society (CGS) is pleased to adopt the Geologists' Association (GA) Policy and Procedures below, and will fully apply them as appropriate to the CGS. Where there is reference to 'Trustee' CGS Council member applies, and where there is reference to 'Council' the CGS Council applies. The CGS council members who are the current Safeguarding Lead and Designated Safeguarding Officer can be obtained from any CGS Council Member.

Policy number	Governance Pol 2	Approved by Council	May 2019
Drafted by	Adrian Champion	Review date	July 2020

### INTRODUCTION

The Geologists' Association (GA) actively promotes the study of geology to all who are interested in the past, present and future of the natural world. It is an inclusive organisation welcoming adults and children. The GA, RockWatch (RW) and regional societies organise lectures, events and field trips with a duration ranging from 1 day to 2 weeks in the UK and overseas. This document applies to anyone working on behalf of the GA and RW. It is expected that regional societies will adopt this policy or produce their own Safeguarding Policy.

The policy is reviewed annually by the GA Executive Committee.

Reference to the GA includes RW throughout.

### PURPOSE

'Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.' (NSPCC 2017). Safeguarding legislation includes 'Adults at Risk' and is defined below, the term 'vulnerable adults' is also used.

The purpose of this safeguarding policy is:

- To safeguard children, young adults under the age of 18 and adults at risk from harm and/or abuse when attending GA events and promote a culture that respects the rights of children and adults at risk.
- To provide staff and volunteers with overarching code of conduct and procedures to protect and safeguard children and adults at risk (also known as vulnerable adults).

## DEFINITIONS AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

A **child**, as defined in the Children's Acts 1989 and 2004, is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. **Child Abuse** is 'any action by another person - adult or child - that causes significant harm to a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can just as often be a lack of love, care and attention' (NSPCC July 2017 <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/>).

An **adult at risk** is defined in the Care Act 2014 as anyone aged 18 or over who may be vulnerable to abuse or maltreatment who meets all the following criteria:

1. Has needs for care and support and
2. Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and
3. As a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

The **Safeguarding Lead** (SL) is the GA trustee with responsibility for safeguarding. The Responsibilities Section describes the role of the SL and DSO.

The **Designated Safeguarding Officer** (DSO) is the GA field trip representative present at any GA lecture, event or field meeting.

**Responsible Adult** is the parent, carer or group leader responsible for the welfare of the child or adult at risk.

This policy has been based on law and guidance that seeks to protect children and adults at risk:

The Children Act 1989, United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991, Data Protection Act 1998, GDPR implemented May 2018, Human Rights Act 1998, Sexual Offences Act 2003, Children Act 2004, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Protections and Freedom Act 2012, Children and Families Act 2014, Care Act 2014.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

This code of conduct is applicable to GA paid staff, volunteer staff and external organisations working with the GA. Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that children and vulnerable adults participating in a GA event or activity are protected from harm or abuse. Staff and volunteers who engage with children, young people and adults through the GA, including students, may be seen as role models by children, young people and adults at risk and must act in an appropriate manner at all times.

### Do:

- Operate within and adhere to this policy at all times.
- Act as a positive role model
- Be respectful towards and listen to children and vulnerable adults at all times.
- Use appropriate language.
- Treat children and adults at risk fairly and without prejudice or discrimination.
- Make sure that favouritism is avoided.
- Where possible involve children and adults at risk in the planning of programmes and activities. Value and listen to their contributions.
- Ensure that wherever possible more than one adult is present during activities with children and adults at risk. If this is not possible, ensure other adults are within sight or hearing distance and they know where you are and what you are doing.
- Monitor use of equipment making sure it is used safely for its intended purpose.
- Approach a child, young person or vulnerable adult in distress.
- Maintain professional conduct.
- Respect a child and adult at risks right to personal privacy.
- Maintain a distance from physical contact

- Challenge unacceptable behaviour such as bullying, follow procedures for allegations of abuse or bullying and refer concerns immediately
- Contact the Designated Safety Officer (DSO) if there are concerns about any aspects of the procedure, process, appropriate checks or the code of conduct.

**Do not:**

- Patronise, threaten, make sarcastic, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments in the presence of anyone including children, young people and adults at risk.
- Take photos or video recordings of any child or adult at risk without permission of the Responsible Adult, including in the background of any such media, and in no circumstances for personal use. If observed discourage other adults from photographing children or adults at risk without the appropriate consent.
- Give children, young people or adults at risk your personal contact or social media details
- Travel alone in a vehicle with a child, young person or adult at risk unless specifically approved by the Responsible Adult.
- Rely on your reputation or that of the GA to protect you.
- Take unnecessary risks when policy and good practice suggest a more prudent approach.
- Do things for them that are of a personal nature that they can do themselves or that a Responsible Adult can do for them. Always defer to the Responsible Adult for the individual/group.
- Allow or engage in any inappropriate touching of any kind. The main principle is touch should be initiated by the child or adult at risk.

**AUTHORISATION**

Reviewed and Approved by Council 3 July 2020

**SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE**

Policy number	Governance Pol 2	Approved by Council	[date]
Drafted by	Adrian Champion	Review date	[date]

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

The role of the designated Safeguarding Lead:

- Lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection at Council.
- With support from the GA be given training to provide advice and support on welfare and protection matters.
- Ensure necessary DBS checks are carried out for specific identified roles
- Ensure safeguarding matters are reported to the relevant authorities including the Charity Commission
- Ensure policy and procedure are reviewed annually at a minimum
- Ensure safeguarding is on the risk register
- Ensure records and reports are kept confidential and in a safe place.
- Consult with child and adult protection agencies, such as the police or NSPCC as necessary.

The role of the DSO at any GA lecture, event or field meeting is to:

- Complete a Risk Assessment for the event including Safeguarding.
- Ensure GA volunteers, staff and parents are aware of this Safeguarding Policy and alert to the requirements of children and vulnerable adults.
- Receive and record information about safeguarding concerns
- Keep detailed and accurate records of concerns and referrals
- If a case of abuse is reported assess the information, clarify and refer on as appropriate.
- Where a crime may have been committed refer cases of suspected abuse to the police

## PROCEDURES

### 1 ADULT TO CHILD RATIOS.

The recommended ratios which meet NSPCC guidelines are 1:6 for primary age and 1:10 for secondary age students.

Behaviour of some young people may be considered challenging or inappropriate. Discipline at an event should be managed by the parent/group leader. Unsupervised activity should not be allowed to occur.

### 2 MISSING CHILD OR ADULT AT RISK

#### If a Child or Adult at Risk is Reported Missing

Advise the DSO. Only share information about a missing person via telephone or face to face.

Try and obtain the following details:

- A physical description of the child, adult at risk.
- When and where the person was last seen.
- Name of child/adult at risk name of parent or school, group etc.

Reassure the responsible person that you are assisting them and provide them with updates.

When the missing person has been found, always verify with them that they have been reunited with the parent/carer/group leader that brought them to the lecture, event or field visit.

The recommended maximum search time for a localised search is 10 minutes before a location wide search is instigated and more people are needed. The maximum recommended search time for a location wide search is 30 minutes before calling the police. However the DSO must use their best judgement based on the circumstances and the information provided as to whether they involve the police at an earlier or later stage than the recommended timings.

#### When a Child or Adult at Risk is Found

If you are on your own make sure you remain in a public space at all times where you can be seen and heard. For security and privacy, information must only be communicated by telephone or face to face.

If anyone else is with the child ask them to wait with you until the responsible adult is located. The DSO once informed will ask the accompanying adult where the child was found and try to obtain the following information from the lost person:

- Their name, group or organisation they are with
- Where they were found, where they last saw their Responsible Adult

Reassure the child/ adult that you are assisting them. If they need comforting follow the code of conduct. Listen and provide information updates about what you are doing to locate their Responsible Adult.

Avoid any situations which might appear compromising and be aware that physical contact can be misinterpreted. Touch should only be initiated by the child or vulnerable adult. Touch should always be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child or vulnerable adult, for example, it would be appropriate to hold the hand of a young child if they offered it to you.

If the Responsible Adult claims responsibility verify with the child/adult that they know the carer and they are who they say they are.

It is important to remain calm, to reassure the child/adult whilst waiting for the Responsible Adult.

### 3 DISCLOSURE PROCEDURES

#### What is a disclosure?

A disclosure is when somebody gives information that they have been or are being harmed.

Anyone who suspects that a child / adult is at risk of harm or abuse must take responsibility and act swiftly. Delay may put children and adults at further risk of harm. It is not the GA's responsibility to investigate a child or adult safeguarding complaint but to refer concerns on to local authority social care services or the police.

#### Discovering a Safeguarding Issue

Concerns about adults and children may arise in different situations:

- A child or vulnerable adult may disclose something in conversation or ask to speak to you.
- You may witness or make an observation of harm or abuse.
- Other people may tell you or express a concern.

The following guidance must be followed if you receive a disclosure/allegation of child abuse:

#### Disclosure of a Safeguarding Concern

- **Listen carefully.** Avoid expressing your own views on the matter. A reaction of shock or disbelief could cause them to 'shut down', retract or stop talking. Give them time to explain.
- **Don't promise to keep a secret.** You cannot keep this a secret, so let them know that you will inform the DSO immediately. The welfare of the child / adult at risk is paramount and takes precedence over confidentiality. Even if the child / adult at risk stops disclosing to you a disclosure form (see Attachment 1) still needs to be completed to record the incident.
- **Check your understanding** of the situation. Avoid asking questions, only ask questions if you do not understand something, for example a word they have used.
- **Do not ask leading questions**, for example, if they say they have been hurt follow up with 'Can you describe how that happened?' rather than 'Did someone hurt you?'
- **Tell them it's not their fault.** Abuse is never the child/young person/adult at risk's fault and they need to know this
- **Say you believe them.** A child, young person or adult at risk could keep abuse secret in fear they won't be believed. They've told you because they want help and trust you'll be the person to believe them and help them
- **Do not talk to the alleged abuser.** Confronting the alleged abuser about what you have been told could make the situation a lot worse
- **Explain** what you'll do next. If age appropriate, explain to the child or adult at risk you have a responsibility to report the abuse to the DSO.
- **Inform** the DSO, providing clear and accurate information as soon as possible and within 24 hours. Include to the best of your memory words said by you and the child/adult (see Attachment 1). Note anything that might be connected e.g. visible injuries.
- **If you are uncertain** whether what has been disclosed is a safeguarding issue speak to the DSO.
- **Information will be kept confidential**, archived and only shared with relevant authorities as required.

### 4 WITNESSING OR MAKING AN OBSERVATION OF HARM, BULLYING OR ABUSE

- Identify if the child, young person or at risk adult is in immediate danger
- If there is a current risk contact the DSO immediately
- Record all the details immediately afterwards on the safeguarding reporting form including to the best of your memory words said by you and the child/adult (see Attachment 1). Note anything that might be connected e.g. visible injuries
- If you are uncertain whether what you have observed is a safeguarding issue, speak to the DSO or SL.

## **5 CONFIDENTIALITY**

Information sharing is vital to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk. When sharing information ensure:

- There is a legitimate purpose for you to share the information
- It is shared only with those individuals who need to have access
- It is accurate and up-to-date
- It is shared in a timely fashion
- It is shared securely
- There is a record of who you shared it with

Once a disclosure has been made or a concern has been raised, it is confidential and will be managed under the GA Privacy Policy. Issues and concerns should only be discussed with the DSO or SL.

## **6 DSO's ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING OF DISCLOSURE**

The DSO should make an initial assessment of the allegation. The assessment is based on need and if further investigation is warranted. GA staff or volunteers must not investigate the allegation. The DSO is responsible for decisions about contacting Responsible Adults, statutory authorities and/or police.

DSO will record all of the details and actions taken immediately which may include referral for investigation by the proper authorities. This information will be kept confidential, retained in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the GDPR which came into effect in May 2018 and only shared with relevant authorities as required.

Where the allegation is considered to be a criminal act or indicates that the child/adult at risk has suffered, is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the matter should be reported directly and immediately to the Police. Relevant contact numbers are in Attachment 2.

Where there is good reason to do so (e.g. to help to protect a child), the DSO may share information without consent with the SL and will record the reason for this. Safeguarding records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them.

There may be occasions when the DSO determines that there is no safeguarding issue. In these circumstances reported concerns will be taken seriously and reported to Council.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

This procedure must be read in conjunction with the GA's procedures on Health and Safety, GDPR, Privacy Policy, E-Safety and digital images and Field Trip Protocols.



## **AUTHORISATION**

Reviewed and Approved by Council 3 July 2020

Concerns / Disclosure Report Form		Ref No	
Name of person at risk (if known)			
Location / Date / Time when information was shared			
<p>What have you been told in the words of the child/adult at risk, or observed, or heard?            Include anything you have witnessed and/or information from a third party that may be unsubstantiated.            Provide a record of what they said and what you said.            Has an allegation been made? Give details in their own words.</p>			
Have you / they spoken to anyone else about this concern?			
Was any further action taken?			
Name of person reporting concern/disclosure		Role or member of public?	
Name of DSO		DSO Signature	
Date of Report			
Forms will only be held for as long as is needed to resolve or pass on the incident information. DSO to take action as required.			



Contact details of external organisations that need to be consulted or notified

Concerned or need advice about a Child in danger?	NSPCC	0808 800 5000
Concerned about an adult?	NHS Action on Elder Abuse	0808 808 8141
	Local Council authority	
Do you require advice from the police to report a crime?	Police	101
Concerned a child is at immediate risk of harm?	Police	999