

## Westminster Boating Base

### Safeguarding Policy

August 2020

Date of next planned review:

#### **Purpose and Scope of this Policy**

This policy sets out to:

- Detail the overarching principles that guide the approach to safeguarding all users, including children, young people and vulnerable adults, at WBB
- Define the escalation procedures for responding to a safeguarding concern within the organisation
- Detail our approach to staff and volunteer recruitment, safeguarding training and maintaining appropriate operating procedures in all the activities on offer to facilitate best practice in safeguarding

This document does not address in detail the safety measures to be followed to minimise the hazards associated with the practice of watersports, which are detailed separately (Building & facilities risk assessment; Watersports risk assessment; and Operations Manual).

This policy applies to all those working on behalf of WBB, including the Director, Trustees, management board members, full-time staff, sessional instructors and volunteers.

#### **Supporting Documents**

- Royal Yachting Association (RYA) Safeguarding & Child Protection Guidelines: <https://www.rya.org.uk/about-us/rya-policies/safeguarding/Pages/CP-policy-guidelines.aspx>
- British Canoeing (BC) Safeguarding in Paddlesport: <https://www.britishcanoeingawarding.org.uk/safeguarding-in-paddlesport/>

Detailed information about the spectrum of harms that constitute abuse, and how these can be recognised, can be found via the NSPCC website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/>.

#### **Introduction**

We are committed to ensuring that WBB offers a safe and fun environment for all those taking part in activities and events. We strive to create an open and approachable culture where users of all ages, staff, parents/guardians and others feel able to raise concerns, know who to approach and know that concerns raised will be taken seriously and treated confidentially.

In maintaining this commitment, we recognise that:

- Sport can make a significant positive contribution to improving the health, wellbeing, personal development and experience of all, including children and young people
- WBB has a duty of care towards all those taking part in watersports and other activities/events organised by the Base, to ensure all can participate safely and enjoyably in a supported environment regardless of previous experience or ability

## Westminster Boating Base: Safeguarding Policy

- The safety, welfare and needs of our youth users aged <18 are paramount, and all users have a right to equal participation and the same protection from harm irrespective of age, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual or gender identity or social status
- Some users will have particular additional needs or vulnerabilities and/or may be disadvantaged by their personal circumstances, and will require or benefit from additional support to participate safely and enjoyably in activities at WBB
- It is essential to work in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies within the community to promote young people's welfare
- It is our duty to take prompt, proportionate and appropriate action in case of any concerns raised alleging harm, discrimination or abuse involving any members/users, staff, volunteers or others affiliated with the Base

### **WBB: Our Safeguarding Policy in 10 Points**

We seek to promote the wellbeing and safety of children, youth members and all other users by:

1. Valuing, listening to and respecting them
2. Adopting best practice in child protection and safeguarding through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
3. Building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns where these arise
4. Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health & safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
5. Appointing a nominated Safeguarding lead and a lead Trustee/management board member for safeguarding
6. Ensuring effective training, support and supervision is provided for staff and volunteers so that they are confident in following our policies, procedures and behaviour codes
7. Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
8. Recording, storing and using information securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
9. Where required, following our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
10. Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately

### **Role of the Safeguarding & Child Protection Lead**

The Safeguarding & child protection lead is responsible for:

1. Maintaining up-to-date safeguarding policy and procedures, compatible with the guidance issued by the RYA and BC, with the support of the Director
2. Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are aware of and follow safeguarding procedures, including implementing safe recruitment procedures, suitable induction to new joiners and facilitating regular safeguarding training
3. Maintaining up to date contact details for relevant outside agencies to enable appropriate escalation of concerns without delay, including school liaison contacts for those attending with school groups
4. Advising the Trustees and management board on safeguarding and child protection issues
5. Acting as the first point of contact to handle any concerns or allegations, ensuring that confidentiality is maintained in all cases, and decide on the appropriate action to be taken
6. Overseeing and following up any contact with Children's Services and the Police

## Recruitment

Whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity, all WBB staff, paid sessional and volunteer instructors and others who are expected to work with children and young people at WBB, including new Trustees or management board members, will be required to:

- Undergo an enhanced check via the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)
- Provide evidence that they are suitably experienced for the role to be taken on
- Provide references on request

New joiners will be offered suitable induction, training and ongoing mentoring/supervision on an individual basis.

All new staff and volunteers will be provided with copies of all WBB policies applicable to their role, including the watersports Operations Manual, instructor code of conduct and safeguarding policy, which must be reviewed in full and signed prior to commencing work.

## Code of Conduct

The WBB Instructors' Code of Conduct details expected standards of behaviour in relation to maintaining appropriate conduct at all times and safety in all activities at the Base. All paid and volunteer instructors and coaches must be familiar with and adhere to Code, and review this on at least an annual basis.

## Safeguarding Training

Safeguarding training for staff and volunteers appropriate to the individual role will be organised for all those working with children, young people or vulnerable adults at WBB.

- Certified RYA/BC instructors, whether working in a paid or voluntary role, must ensure they are up to date with an accredited Safeguarding training programme (e.g. RYA Safe & Fun, BC UK Coaching Safeguarding and Protecting Children) within the last 3 years. This can be organised via WBB or externally, providing evidence of certification can be demonstrated
- For others working regularly in direct contact with children and young people at WBB, the same level of safeguarding experience is highly recommended
- Additional safeguarding training will be provided as appropriate via induction for new joining staff and volunteers and ongoing mentoring/supervision

## Raising and Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

A safeguarding concern, allegation or complaint may be raised via a number of different sources: a child, their parent(s) or guardian(s), a staff member, volunteer or other person affiliated with WBB, a member of the public, or occasionally statutory authorities (e.g. the Police or Children's Social Care). Any such report should be taken seriously and escalated without exception.

For anyone who has concerns that a child may be being harmed, abused or is at risk of harm, or encounters an allegation of historical abuse through their work or involvement with WBB, it should be clear that it is not their responsibility to investigate further but it is their responsibility to report their concerns through the appropriate channels so that they can be handled appropriately and referred if necessary to the relevant authorities.

## Westminster Boating Base: Safeguarding Policy

Anyone who is concerned about the welfare of a child, youth member or other participant's welfare, whether the concerns relate to events linked to WBB or otherwise, should inform the Safeguarding & Child Protection lead in strict confidence.

- If unavailable, the concern should be reported to Director or Trustee lead for safeguarding
- If the concern relates to a child who has attended with a school group, the concern will be shared with the school liaison contact
- In the event of perceived risk of serious or imminent harm, the Police or Children's Services will be contacted without delay, or in the event that urgent medical treatment is needed an ambulance called

Details of all concerns reported must be recorded [where], detailing:

- The concern and who reported it
- Where/who it was reported to
- Initial actions taken/response to the concern
- The final outcome of the report

Following any report of a safeguarding-related matter to the Police or Children's Services, the Safeguarding & Child Protection lead should notify the RYA and BC safeguarding teams.

Should WBB be contacted by the Police or Children's Services at any time concerning information received or a complaint made by or about a member, volunteer or employee, the Director should be notified of the request without delay, and relevant information must be divulged.

### **Complaints and Allegations of Misconduct Against an Instructor, Other Staff Member or Volunteer**

All complaints or allegations will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately. Investigations will be undertaken sensitively and discretely, with details shared only with those who need to know.

It is likely that being the subject of a complaint or allegation will be a source of considerable stress for the individual involved. Support is available from the RYA and BC Safeguarding teams, and internally through the WBB Safeguarding & Child Protection lead, Trustee team and Director.

In the event of a serious complaint or allegation, suspension must be considered, and will be necessary if there is cause to suspect a child or children are at risk of harm, or the complaint/allegation may represent grounds for dismissal or represents a criminal act. This will be a decision taken involving the Director and Trustees, and notification will be given in writing if suspension is the agreed outcome. Based on assessment of risk, alternatives to suspension may include:

- Providing increased monitoring of or supervision to the individual concerned
- Altered duties during the period of investigation to avoid direct contact with the child(ren) concerned
- Altered duties to avoid on-the-water instruction or other work directly with users until the investigation has been resolved

### **Managing Challenging Behaviour Among Users**

The WBB instructor team are responsible for overseeing the behaviour of users in the course of watersports activities, and ensuring this is in line with the Users' Code of Conduct. This is essential to maintaining safe participation and enjoyment for all WBB users.

## Westminster Boating Base: Safeguarding Policy

Where a user displays challenging, disruptive, inappropriate or unsafe behaviour, it is the supervising instructor's duty to:

- Highlight the inappropriate behaviour and make the user aware that this must not continue
- Take appropriate action to terminate any unsafe activity, which may include escorting the user off the water
- Report any significant instances of challenging behaviour to the Senior Instructor responsible for the session

The response should always be proportionate to the actions, be implemented as soon as is practicable and be fully explained to the child or user in question in a way they can understand.

In instances of repeated challenging behaviour, it is important to consider whether any specific contributory factors exist (such as personal difficulties, relevant medical or psychological conditions). Repeated challenging behaviour should be discussed with the child or young person in question, and their parent(s)/guardian(s) if appropriate, to establish whether they would benefit from any additional support and agree an approach to managing the behaviour. As a last resort, if a user continues to present a high level of disruption or poses a risk of harm to themselves or others, a specific behavioural contract may need to be applied, or rarely exclusion from WBB discussed.

Some children and young people exhibit challenging behaviour as a result of specific circumstances or underlying long-term needs. Instructors may benefit from additional guidance to effectively meet their needs and allow the child/young person to engage with activities safely and productively, without distressing or disrupting other users. These should be discussed with parents/guardians and the child in advance of the activity wherever possible.

### **Data Handling**

- All personal information, including Disclosure information, should be treated as confidential, stored securely and only shared with those who need to see it in the course of their duties or to protect children

### **Photography**

Publication of photos and videos via the website, social media pages and in external sources (e.g. news articles) is an important means of promoting and advertising WBB's activities and recognising young people's achievements. However, it is essential that:

- Written consent is sought from parents/guardians before taking or publishing photos or videos of youth users <18
- No identifying information other than names should be included with any photos or video footage published by WBB, which would allow anyone to contact the child
- Images and video material is reviewed to ensure the content is appropriate
- Any concerns about inappropriate photography or use of images should be reported to the Safeguarding & Child Protection lead or the Director

### **Social Media**

Regarding use of social media by staff and volunteer instructors, it is strongly recommended that:

- Separate accounts are used for personal and professional use
- Instructors do not permit youth users <18 to follow them or be friends with them via their personal accounts
- Instructors seek to educate youth users about the boundaries between them and the instructor team
- Privacy settings on instructors' personal accounts are set as high as possible

## Westminster Boating Base: Safeguarding Policy

- Any inappropriate contact or comments from youth users or others encountered via social media platforms are challenged and responded to

### **Contacts**

#### **Safeguarding & Child Protection lead**

**Name:** Adam White, Chief Instructor

**Contact:** adam@westminsterboatingbase.co.uk

#### **Director**

**Name:** Rod Craig

**Contact:** rod@westminsterboatingbase.co.uk

#### **Trustee lead for safeguarding**

**Name:** Gabby Bathgate

**Contact:** gabriella.bathgate@gmail.com, 07743130304

#### **RYA Safeguarding team**

RYA Safeguarding and Equality Manager, 023 8060 4104

RYA Safeguarding Officer, 023 8060 4226

Safeguarding@rya.org.uk

#### **BC Safeguarding team**

BC Safeguarding Lead, 0115 8968842

Safeguarding@britishcanoeing.org.uk

#### **Westminster Children's Services**

020 7641 4000 (9am-5pm weekdays), 020 7641 6000 (out of hours)

#### **NSPCC Helpline**

0808 800 5000