



## **Thames21 POLICY FOR THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

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Revised Policy March 2017,  
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Michael Heath (Thames21 Personnel Manager)

# **Thames21 Policy for the Welfare of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

Thames21 acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice. The policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children, young people and vulnerable adults are prevailing in all circumstances.

Thames21 acknowledges that some children and adults can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare. We aim to ensure that regardless of age, gender identity, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socioeconomic background, all children, young people and vulnerable adults:

- have a positive and enjoyable experience whilst taking part in Thames21 activities in a safe environment, and
- are protected from abuse whilst participating in Thames21 activities.

## **As part of our safeguarding policy Thames21 will:**

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults,
- ensure all Staff, Freelance Educators, Event Support Team (engaged at the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre and other relevant educational young & vulnerable person activities) and Contractors engaged in delivering events understand their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding. That they are 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;
- To reduce the risk of the the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals by carrying out a Disclosure and Baring Service check on all Employees and Freelance Educators, Event Support Team and Contractors (as above) ;
- Require that all Employees, Freelance Educators and Event Support Team members read this policy and sign up to the Thames21 Code of Conduct for the Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults, and
- risk assess all activities to ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

This policy and associated procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in Thames21. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

**Monitoring of the policy:**

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, or
- as a result of any other significant change or event.

**Main point of contact for this policy and safeguarding in Thames21:**

Michael Heath, Personnel Manager

michael.heath@ thames21.org.uk

07968 805751

## **Thames21 procedure for dealing with welfare issues that have been discovered, disclosed or observed**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Thames21 to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any welfare concerns by reporting them to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities. If you are unsure about the situation it's always best to be overcautious and follow the steps to reporting below.

The following basic principles should be followed if a person wants to talk to you about something of concern that has happened to them or another person, or if you witness or suspect abuse:

- Listen, don't question.
- Never push for information.
- Accept what the person is saying.
- Keep calm and look at them directly.
- Reassure them that they were right to tell you and that you take them seriously.
- Assure them that, even though they may have broken a rule they are not to blame.
- Be aware that the person may have been threatened.
- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Let them know what you are going to do next.
- Tell them that you will let them know what happens if appropriate.
- Make notes as soon as you can, writing down exactly what was said. If possible, use the person's own words. Record dates and times, when you were told about them and when you made the notes. Give the notes to Michael Heath and agree next steps to following up the concerns. You could use the Thames21 Accident and Near Miss reporting form.
- Don't confront the person who is alleged to have abused.
- Follow the steps below to make a report.

### **Steps to reporting:**

1. If you see abuse taking place and the victim is in immediate danger report immediately call 999.
2. If you are concerned about a person's welfare, if you suspect abuse has taken place, or if someone has disclosed concerns to you contact Michael Heath, Thames21 Personnel Manager, as soon as possible. He is responsible for coordinating safeguarding within the organisation: 07968 805751 michael.heath@thames21.org.uk
3. If Michael Heath is not working or unavailable go to your line manager or senior manager.
4. The information you have provided will be used to determine the next course of action. This may involve speaking to the Police, the organisation whom we made contact with the individual through, and / or the local safeguarding team in the borough council.

## **Thames21 Code of Conduct for the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults**

Thames21 Staff, Freelance Educators, Event Support Team members and Contractors must read, understand, and abide by this code of conduct before engaging in Thames21 activities. Outlined below are references to key behaviours expected, however this is not a comprehensive list and it is important for individuals to be aware of situations which may present risks and manage them appropriately. Actions or behaviour which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour must be avoided. All those representing Thames21 must ensure and maintain a sense of accountability as poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour will not go unchallenged.

**When working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, consider and implement the following.**

### **You must:**

- Ensure work activities that are likely to involve children, young people or vulnerable adult follow the Thames21 adult to child ratio of supervision – details noted at the end of this document.
- Be aware of how you approach and touch a child, young person or vulnerable adult. Don't pick up or touch a child, young person or vulnerable adult unless it is in the case of an emergency. If you are worried about touches from a child, young person or vulnerable adult let the Thames21 event/ session leader know as soon as possible.
- Read and understand the Thames21 Policy for the Welfare of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults.
- When working in a school always use toilets designated for adults, never use pupils' toilets.
- When working on activities with children, young people or vulnerable adults who are participating through an external organisation, it is important to let staff from the external organisation remain accountable for the behaviour and overall accountability for participants, especially should a hazardous situation develop. In open public events where Thames21 are providing activities that will involve children, young people or vulnerable adults, the parents or guardians of those participants must remain accountable for the behaviour and accept overall accountability for participants, especially should a hazardous situation develop.

### **You must never:**

- Never give out contact details to a child, young person or vulnerable adult – this includes specific work email addresses, telephone numbers, and mobile numbers. Notify a child, young person or vulnerable adult that they can make contact with you through their point of contact at the organisation responsible for involving them with Thames21 activities, or a parent or guardian.
- Take photos during Thames21 events and activities unless you have been instructed to do so by the project manager and have read and adhered to the Thames21 media guidance.

- Record the personal information of a child, young person or vulnerable adult, including name, address or social media details.
- Behave in a way that frightens or demeans a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Develop physical or sexual relationships with a child, young person or vulnerable adult; or behave in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
- Develop relationships with a child, young person or vulnerable adult that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child, young person or vulnerable adult at risk of abuse.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive, or abusive.
- Do things for a child, young person or vulnerable adult of a personal nature that they can do for themselves.
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of a child, young person or vulnerable adult which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour a particular a child, young person or vulnerable adult to the exclusion of others.
- Take a child, young person or vulnerable adult to the toilet.
- Use force or rough handling with a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Ask a child, young person or vulnerable adult to keep secrets.
- Participate in or tolerate inappropriate physical activities such as horseplay with a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Participate in or tolerate bullying of a child, young person or vulnerable adult by others.
- Tolerate or participate any sexually provocative games (talking or touching) involving or observed by a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Be alone with a child, young person or vulnerable adult. If you find yourself in this situation leave the room / area and notify a member of staff from the organisation responsible for involving them with Thames21 activities, or a parent or guardian immediately, informing them that you are unable to continue the activity unless accompanied.
- There is some scope for discretion in relation to this for example if a child, young person or vulnerable adult wants to speak to you in private. If this occurs ensure you approach the situation in a manner that does not elicit a sense of secrecy. For example, notify a Thames21 colleague or member of the staff from the organisation responsible for involving them with Thames21 activities about what you are doing; speak to the child, young person or vulnerable adult in an area where you can be seen by other adults, or if you need to go into another room leave the door ajar. Log the incident as soon as possible with the Thames21 Personnel Manager and the organisation responsible for involving them with Thames21 activities.

- Lend a child, young person or vulnerable adult money, give gifts or accept anything of a similar nature.
- Undertake conversations of topics which are adult in nature such as drinking or smoking in the company of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

**Appropriate use of physical contact:**

- You should only physically restrain someone if no member of staff from the organisation responsible for involving them with Thames21 activities or parent or guardian is present or if the individual is in immediate danger, for example if a fight breaks out or they are at risk of falling into a water body.
- You should be aware of the potential for misunderstanding when touching a child, young person or vulnerable adult. In the event that it is an accepted part of an activity, touching should be appropriate to the situation.
- Physical contact should be open and initiated by the child, young person or vulnerable adult. Consoling a child, young person or vulnerable adult who is upset, administering first aid or supporting a participant in an activity is an acceptable and necessary behaviour. You should however leave this to members of the organisation responsible for involving them with Thames21 activities or parent or guardian where possible.

**Thames21 supervising adult to child ratio.** This must be provided by the organisation responsible for involving the participants with Thames21 activities or parents or guardians Thames21 staff and volunteers must not be counted as part of this ratio.

Child's age	Amount of adults	Amount of children
0 - 3	1	3
4 – 8	1	6
9 - 12	1	8
13 - 18	1	10

In the case of involving and managing vulnerable adults in Thames21 activities, during the risk assessment process seek guidance from the organisation responsible for involving those individuals with Thames21 activities or guardians to determine and agree the required supervision and support.