

Wiston Lodge Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk across residential outdoor education, community learning, volunteering and estate-based activity

Policy owner: Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Approved by: Board of Trustees/Directors.

Applies to: All staff, volunteers, trustees/directors, contractors, sessional workers, visiting groups and partner organisations.

Review cycle: Annual review, or sooner following a serious incident, legislative change or significant learning



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1. Policy statement

Wiston Lodge is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment in which children, young people, and adults at risk are protected from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and is integral to all Wiston Lodge activities, including residential outdoor education, day programmes, community learning, volunteering, events, accommodation, outreach, and work delivered on or away from the estate.

The welfare, rights, dignity, and voices of children, young people, and adults at risk will always be prioritised. All staff, trustees/directors, volunteers, sessional workers, contractors, and partners must act promptly whenever they have concerns, follow this policy, and work with statutory agencies where required.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Wiston Lodge personnel and to all activities delivered by, hosted by, commissioned by, or associated with Wiston Lodge. It covers children and young people under the age of 18, adults at risk, visiting groups, families, carers, staff, volunteers, and members of the public using Wiston Lodge facilities.

Where visiting schools, youth organisations, care providers, or partner agencies attend Wiston Lodge, safeguarding responsibilities will be clearly agreed in advance. Wiston Lodge expects visiting organisations to retain responsibility for their participants while also ensuring that Wiston Lodge personnel follow this policy and report any concerns without delay.

3. Legal and guidance framework

This policy is informed by current Scottish and English safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance, UK-wide safeguarding expectations for community, voluntary, charity, education, and residential activity providers, outdoor education safeguarding guidance, and legislation relevant to residential outdoor education, charity governance, safer recruitment, data protection, and the protection of vulnerable groups.

- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021, updated 2023).
- *Getting It Right for Every Child* (GIRFEC) principles and child-centred planning.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) principles, as reflected in Scottish and UK public policy.
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 and Disclosure Scotland requirements.
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007.

- Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Act 2026.
- Children Act 1989, including duties relating to children in need and children who may be suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.
- Children Act 2004, including duties on relevant agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Children and Social Work Act 2017, including safeguarding partner arrangements in England.
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children* statutory guidance for England.
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education* statutory guidance for schools and colleges in England, where visiting schools or educational partners are involved.
- Care Act 2014, including safeguarding duties relating to adults with care and support needs in England.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements, where activity, recruitment, or partnership work falls within the English safeguarding regime.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).
- Equality Act 2010, including duties to avoid discrimination and make reasonable adjustments where applicable.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Outdoor education safeguarding and educational visits guidance relevant to residential and adventurous activity settings.

4. Definitions

Child or young person: anyone under the age of 18.

Adult at risk: an adult who may be unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights or other interests; may be at risk of harm; and may be more vulnerable because of disability, illness, mental health, age, frailty, trauma, dependency, isolation or other circumstances.

Safeguarding: the action taken to promote welfare, prevent harm and respond effectively to concerns, disclosures, allegations or incidents.

Harm may include: Physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, harassment, discriminatory abuse, domestic abuse, online harm, self-harm risk, radicalisation, financial abuse, organisational abuse, child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour.

5. Safeguarding principles

- The welfare of the child, young person or adult at risk is paramount.
- Safeguarding is a shared responsibility across the whole organisation.
- Concerns must be acted on promptly; no concern is too small to record or report.
- People should be listened to, believed, treated with dignity and kept informed where safe and appropriate.
- Responses must be trauma-informed, anti-discriminatory and proportionate.
- Information must be shared lawfully, securely and in the best interests of safety and protection.
- Safer recruitment, training, supervision and clear conduct expectations reduce risk.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Board of Trustees/Directors: hold overall accountability for safeguarding governance, ensuring that this policy is implemented, reviewed, resourced and embedded in organisational culture.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: acts as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns, supports staff and volunteers, maintains secure records, liaises with statutory agencies, monitors patterns of concern and reports safeguarding activity to senior leadership and the Board.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: provides cover when the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, including during residential stays, evenings, weekends and off-site activity.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Chief Executive David Murdoch

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Vicky Reed: Head of Programmes

All staff, volunteers and sessional workers: must complete required safeguarding training, follow the code of conduct, maintain professional boundaries, report concerns immediately, and cooperate with safeguarding procedures.

All staff, volunteers and sessional workers must all wear or carry Wiston Lodge identification when acting in an official capacity.

Staff, volunteers and visitors should be challengeable. If an individual is not known, not wearing identification, or their presence cannot be explained, staff should politely verify who they are and report any concerns immediately.

Visiting group leaders and partner organisations: must provide accurate participant information, maintain agreed supervision, follow their own safeguarding procedures, cooperate with Wiston Lodge procedures, and report any safeguarding concern arising before, during or after a visit.

Visitors and contractors: must sign in and out where required, wear identification or be otherwise identifiable, remain within agreed areas, avoid unsupervised contact with children, young people or adults at risk, and report any concern immediately to a Wiston Lodge member of staff.

7. Safer recruitment and suitability

Wiston Lodge will apply safer recruitment practices for staff, volunteers, trustees/directors, contractors and sessional workers whose roles involve contact with children, young people or adults at risk. Recruitment decisions will be based on role risk assessment, application information, interview, identity checks, references, qualification checks, right-to-work checks where relevant, and appropriate Disclosure Scotland/PVG membership checks.

No person will begin regulated work or unsupervised contact with children, young people or protected adults until required checks have been completed and assessed. Where supervision is used pending checks, it must be documented, active and proportionate to risk.

Recruitment records will be retained securely and will include the basis for any decision to appoint, restrict duties, require supervision or reject an applicant on safeguarding grounds. Any gaps in employment history, unclear references or concerns about conduct must be explored before appointment.

8. Code of conduct and professional boundaries

- Treat everyone with respect, dignity, fairness and kindness.
- Avoid being alone with a child, young person or at-risk adult where this is not visible, accountable or necessary.
- Use appropriate language and avoid favouritism, humiliation, intimidation or discriminatory behaviour.
- Do not exchange personal contact details with participants or connect through personal social media.
- Do not take, store or share images unless consent, purpose and storage arrangements are clear and authorised.
- Maintain appropriate physical boundaries; any physical contact must be necessary, proportionate, explained and in line with activity safety requirements.
- Report any breach, concern or unsafe practice immediately.

9. Low-level concerns and poor practice

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult working with or around children, young people or adults at risk may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the code of conduct, even if the behaviour does not meet the threshold for a formal allegation. Examples may include over-familiar behaviour, favouritism, inappropriate language, unnecessary one-to-one contact, poor boundaries, careless use of social media or failure to follow supervision arrangements.

Low-level concerns must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a senior manager. Wiston Lodge will record and review such concerns to identify patterns, provide support or training, address unsafe practice early, and take further action where the concern reaches the threshold for allegation management or referral.

10. Recognising and responding to concerns

Concerns may arise from observation, disclosure, behaviour, injury, attendance patterns, online activity, information from another organisation, or a gut feeling that something is not right.

If you are concerned about a child, it is important that this is communicated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. You may become aware of suspected or likely abuse because:

- You have seen something
- A child says they have been abused
- Somebody else has told you they are concerned
- There has been an allegation against a team member
- There has been an anonymous allegation
- An adult has disclosed they are abusing a child
- An adult has disclosed they were abused as a child

The Four Rs of Safeguarding:

1. Recognising – The signs of abuse Behaviours which cause concern or a niggling feeling something is not right.
2. Recording – The information you have, to the best of your ability, without adding your opinions and emotions.
3. Reporting – To the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL.
4. Referral – The DSL or Deputy DSL will make a referral to the appropriate external agency.

If a child makes a safeguarding disclosure to you:

1. Listen carefully to what they are saying – Be patient and focus on what you are being told. Try not to express your own views and feelings. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions.
2. Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset. – If you appear shocked or as you do not believe them it could make them stop talking and take back what they have said.
3. Let them know they have done the right thing in telling you – Reassurance can be a big impact. If they have kept the abuse a secret it can have a big impact knowing they have shared what has happened.
4. Tell them it is not their fault and they have done the right thing telling you. – Abuse is never a child's fault. It is important they hear, and know this.
5. Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on – Do not promise to keep it a secret.
6. Report to the DSL or Deputy DSL as soon as possible – Do not discuss with any other colleagues or with any accompanying adults. However, If you consider the child to be at immediate risk of harm tell the DSL or deputy DSL straight away.
7. Write up your conversation as soon as possible.

11. Reporting procedure

1. Ensure immediate safety and seek emergency help if required.
2. Listen, reassure and avoid leading questions.
3. Record factual information as soon as possible, using the person's own words where relevant.
4. Report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy without delay.
5. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will assess the concern, consult statutory guidance, and contact social work, police, adult protection services, the placing organisation or other relevant agency where required.
6. All actions, decisions, times, dates and people involved must be recorded securely.
7. Where a concern involves a member of Wiston Lodge personnel, the allegations procedure must be followed.

12. Allegations or concerns about staff, volunteers or representatives

Any allegation, disclosure or concern that a member of staff, volunteer, trustee/director, contractor, sessional worker or visitor has harmed, may have harmed, or may pose a risk of harm to a child, young person or adult at risk must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or nominated

senior manager. If the concern relates to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or senior manager, it must be reported to the Chair of the Board or another nominated safeguarding trustee/director.

Wiston Lodge will take proportionate protective action, which may include suspension from duties, removal from activity, referral to statutory agencies, referral to Disclosure Scotland where required, and cooperation with police, social work or regulatory investigations. Internal disciplinary processes must not compromise statutory investigations.

13. Residential and outdoor activity safeguards

Residential and outdoor education activities create particular safeguarding considerations because participants may be away from home, in unfamiliar environments, taking part in adventurous activities, sharing accommodation, using changing or washing facilities, or interacting with adults and peers outside their usual networks. Safeguarding must be built into planning, supervision, accommodation, activity delivery and post-visit review.

- Safeguarding responsibilities must be agreed with visiting leaders before arrival.
- Participant information, medical needs, additional support needs and vulnerability factors must be shared on a need-to-know basis.
- Supervision arrangements must be suitable for age, ability, risk, activity, accommodation layout and overnight arrangements.
- Accommodation arrangements must protect privacy, dignity and safety, including clear expectations for room access, night-time supervision and emergency response.
- Staff should avoid one-to-one situations unless necessary and managed through visibility, agreed purpose and recording.
- Activity instructors must be competent, appropriately checked and clear about safeguarding boundaries.
- Missing participant procedures must be known to staff and visiting leaders.
- Transport, arrival, departure, handover and visitor arrangements must be controlled and recorded.

14. Consent, participant information and planning

Before activities or residential stays, Wiston Lodge and the visiting organisation will agree what participant information is required to support safety, welfare and inclusion. This may include emergency contacts, medical needs, medication arrangements, allergies, dietary requirements, additional support needs, communication needs, behaviour support plans, personal care requirements, trauma-informed considerations and any known safeguarding or vulnerability factors.

Consent arrangements must be clear before participation, including consent for activities, medical treatment in an emergency, photography or filming, transport where relevant, and any additional support arrangements. Information must be used only for legitimate safeguarding, welfare, operational and legal purposes and shared only with those who need to know.

15. Risk assessment, supervision and dynamic risk management

Safeguarding risk assessment must be integrated into activity risk assessments, residential planning, accommodation allocation, transport, staffing, visitor control, personal care, behaviour support and emergency response. Staff must consider both planned risks and dynamic risks that arise during a session, residential stay or change in circumstances.

Supervision ratios and arrangements must be proportionate to age, ability, needs, vulnerability, group composition, activity, environment, weather, accommodation layout and the experience of staff and visiting leaders. Any decision to alter supervision arrangements must be recorded where it affects safeguarding risk.

16. Online safety, photography and communications

Wiston Lodge will manage online safety risks linked to devices, Wi-Fi, social media, photography, filming and digital communication. Images or recordings of children, young people or adults at risk must only be taken and used where consent, purpose, storage, retention and publication arrangements are clear. Personal devices should not be used for official photography unless specifically authorised and managed.

Staff and volunteers must use approved organisational communication channels and must not engage in private messaging with participants. Any online safeguarding concern, including bullying, grooming, exploitation, inappropriate images or harmful content, must be reported under this policy.

17. Information sharing and records

Safeguarding records must be factual, dated, signed where possible, stored securely and shared only with those who need the information to protect welfare or meet legal obligations. Records should distinguish between fact, observation, professional judgement and third-party information.

Data protection law does not prevent necessary safeguarding information sharing. Where there is a risk of harm, information may be shared without consent when it is lawful, proportionate and necessary to protect a child, young person or adult at risk.

18. Training, induction and supervision

All Wiston Lodge staff, freelancers, sessional workers and volunteers must receive safeguarding induction appropriate to their role before they work with children, young people or adults at risk. Induction must include this policy, the code of conduct, professional boundaries, recognising signs of harm, responding to disclosures, reporting procedures, low-level concerns, online safety, safer working practice, equality and inclusion, confidentiality, information sharing, and residential/outdoor activity safeguards.

Training requirements will be proportionate to the role and level of responsibility. Staff and freelancers delivering programmes, supervising residential stays, transporting participants, working one-to-one, leading volunteers or making safeguarding decisions must receive additional role-specific training before undertaking those duties.

Volunteers must receive clear safeguarding guidance before starting, including who they report to, what they may and may not do, how to maintain boundaries, how to respond to a concern, and when they must seek help from staff. Volunteers must not be placed in unsupervised regulated work unless safer recruitment checks, training and supervision arrangements have been completed and approved.

Freelancers and sessional workers must confirm that they have read and understood Wiston Lodge's safeguarding policy and code of conduct, provide evidence of relevant safeguarding training where requested, complete any Wiston Lodge-specific induction, and agree to follow Wiston Lodge reporting procedures even where they also work under another organisation's policy.

Safeguarding training must be refreshed at intervals set by Wiston Lodge and sooner where legislation, guidance, role responsibilities, learning from incidents or organisational risk changes. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead must receive enhanced training and regular updates to support decision-making, referrals, record keeping, supervision and Board reporting.

Managers must keep accurate training records for staff, freelancers and volunteers, monitor completion, restrict duties where required training has not been completed, and provide supervision and debriefing following disclosures, allegations, serious incidents or concerns involving trauma, risk or complex safeguarding decisions.

Training, induction and supervision arrangements will be reviewed through safeguarding audits, incident learning, feedback from staff and volunteers, and Board oversight to ensure that safeguarding practice remains current, consistent and effective across Wiston Lodge activities.

19. Whistleblowing and complaints

Wiston Lodge encourages anyone to raise concerns about unsafe practice, poor safeguarding culture, breaches of this policy or failures to act. Staff and volunteers will not suffer detriment for raising a genuine safeguarding concern in good faith. Complaints from participants, parents, carers, visiting organisations or members of the public will be taken seriously and managed through the relevant complaints or safeguarding procedure.

20. Partnership working

Wiston Lodge will work cooperatively with schools, youth organisations, local authorities, social work, Police Scotland, health services, carers, families, funders and regulators to promote welfare and respond to concerns. Partner arrangements should clarify safeguarding roles, participant information sharing, incident reporting, supervision, consent, transport, accommodation and emergency contacts.

21. Escalation and external referral

If there is disagreement, delay or uncertainty about safeguarding action, Wiston Lodge will escalate the concern to the appropriate senior person, statutory service or placing organisation. Safeguarding concerns must not be left unresolved because responsibility is unclear. Where Wiston Lodge believes a child, young person or adult at risk remains at risk of harm, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or senior manager must seek advice from social work, police or adult protection services as appropriate.

22. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, and sooner following significant incidents, changes in legislation or guidance, learning reviews, organisational change, or feedback from participants, staff, volunteers or partners. Safeguarding practice will be monitored through training records, safer recruitment checks, incident logs, supervision, audits and Board reporting.

Appendix A: Immediate safeguarding response checklist

- Is anyone in immediate danger? If yes, call emergency services.
- Is urgent medical help required? If yes, seek medical assistance immediately.
- Listen calmly and avoid leading questions.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Record what was seen, heard or disclosed, including date, time and location.

- Report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy without delay.
- Preserve any evidence where relevant and do not investigate.
- Follow up to confirm that the concern has been recorded and actioned.

Appendix B: Safeguarding incident record template

Field	Details
Date and time of concern	
Name of person completing record	
Participant name and organisation/group	
What was observed, disclosed or reported?	
Exact words used, where relevant	
Immediate action taken	
Who was informed and when?	
Decision and rationale	
External agency contact/reference	
Follow-up actions and review date	

Appendix C: Safeguarding contacts and escalation record

Role or service	Name/contact details	When to use
Designated Safeguarding Lead	David Murdoch 01899 850228 david@wistonlodge.co.uk	All safeguarding concerns, advice, records and referrals.
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Vicky Reed 01899 850228 vicky@wistonlodge.co.uk	When the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable.
Chief Executive or senior manager	David Murdoch 01899 850228 david@wistonlodge.co.uk	Serious concerns, allegations, escalation and operational decisions.

Board safeguarding lead or Chair	Amanda Burgauer 01899 850228	Concerns involving senior staff or organisational safeguarding governance.
Local authority social work / child protection	South Lanarkshire Social Work (Children's Services) 0303 123 1008	Where a child or young person may be at risk of harm.
Adult protection services	South Lanarkshire Social Work (Adult Protection) 0303 123 1008	Where an adult at risk may be at risk of harm.
Police Scotland / emergency services	999 in an emergency; 101 for non-emergency police contact.	Immediate danger, crime, urgent protection or police advice.

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