



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that every young person who participates in the charity's programmes or who engages with the Foundation in any way is safe and protected from harm. It puts in place processes to minimise or eliminate the risk of the Foundation causing harm to any young people it comes into contact with.

Scope

This policy applies in any context where staff or volunteers are interacting with young people. It covers face-to-face interactions, on events or otherwise, and all communications channels, either digital or physical. It does not apply to participants over the age of 18 who are not in full-time education (e.g. University students), although many of the same principles and procedures will be applicable as a matter of best practice, particularly where vulnerable adults are concerned.

Review Schedule

Last Review Date: July 2025

Schedule Frequency: Annually

Next Review Date: July 2026



Policy

Introduction

Altitude Foundation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all young people. This means that the Foundation will always work to:

- Protect young people participating on the Foundation's programmes from maltreatment;
- Prevent impairment of young people's health or development;
- Undertake activities so as to enable the best possible outcomes for participating young people.

This policy gives clear direction to staff, volunteers and others about expected behaviour and the legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all young people participating in Altitude's programmes. The charity fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and young people from harm and aims to support and promote the welfare of all participants. The elements of this policy are: *prevention, protection and support*.

The Altitude Ethos

Young people's welfare is of paramount importance. The charity will always work to establish and maintain an ethos where young people feel secure, are encouraged to talk, are listened to, and are safe. The Foundation will promote an environment of tolerance, support and mutual respect.

Everyone who comes into contact with children, young people and their families has a role to play in safeguarding. The Foundation recognises that its staff and volunteers play a particularly important role because they are in a position of trust. All staff and volunteers are required to maintain an attitude of "***It Could Happen Here***" in relation to safeguarding matters. When concerned about a young person's welfare, staff and volunteers must always act in their best interests.

All staff and volunteers will, through training and induction, know how to recognise indicators of concern, how to respond to a disclosure from a child or young person, and how to record and report this information. Staff will not agree to make promises to any young person and will not keep secrets. Adults will make clear to children and young people what they will have to do with any information that they have chosen to disclose.

At all times, the Foundation will work in partnership and endeavour to establish effective working relations with parents, carers, and colleagues from other agencies.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of every trustee, member of staff and volunteer to ensure that they carry out the requirements of this policy and, at all times, work in a way that will safeguard



and promote the welfare of all participating young people. This includes the responsibility to provide a safe environment in which young people can participate and learn.

The Trustees' Board and the General Manager are accountable for ensuring the effectiveness of this policy and compliance with it. The Foundation will ensure that:

- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is in place and reviewed annually;
- The policy is publicly available;
- It contributes to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018);
- That the General Manager takes responsibility for safeguarding as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), with appropriate training, and, when practical, appoints a Deputy DSL who is similarly trained;
- All staff and volunteers undertake role-appropriate child protection training that is updated regularly, and at least annually;
- Procedures are in place for dealing with allegations against members of staff and volunteers, in line with statutory guidance;
- Identified weaknesses in safeguarding practice are remedied without delay.

The DSL is responsible for safeguarding and child protection on behalf of the charity. The DSL will provide advice and support to other staff and volunteers on child welfare and child protection matters. The DSL will ensure that any concern for a young person's safety or welfare is recorded in a timely fashion.

The DSL or their Deputy will always be available during the charity's operating hours, particularly during the time that events and activities are being delivered. Through appropriate training, knowledge and experience, the DSL or their Deputy will liaise with Children's Services or other agencies where necessary.

The DSL is responsible for ensuring that all staff members and volunteers are aware of this policy and the procedures they need to follow. They will ensure that all staff and volunteers have received appropriate child protection information.

Training

Every new member of staff or volunteer will receive safeguarding training within their first three months. This programme will include information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, how to record, and the remit of the role of the DSL. The training will also include information about whistle-blowing relating to concerns about another adult's behaviour and their suitability to work with children.

The Foundation will ensure that mechanisms are in place to assist staff and volunteers to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities. The DSL and their Deputy will attend appropriate training. They will ensure that they update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals, at least annually, to keep up with any developments relevant to their role.



All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues, some of which are listed below. Staff should be aware that behaviours linked to drug taking, alcohol abuse and sexting put young people in danger. All staff and volunteers should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to: bullying (including online), gender based violence, sexual assaults or sexting. Staff and volunteers should be clear on the charity's policy and procedures with regards to peer on peer abuse.

Expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues. Government advice is available on the following topics:

- Children missing education
- Child missing from home or care
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Bullying including online bullying
- Domestic abuse
- Drugs
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith based abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- Gangs and youth violence
- Gender-based violence
- Hate
- Mental health
- Missing children and adults
- Private fostering
- Preventing radicalisation
- Sexting
- Relationship abuse
- Trafficking and modern slavery

Procedure for Managing Concerns

All staff and volunteers must follow these procedures.

It is not the responsibility of the staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All staff and volunteers, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. Accordingly, all concerns regarding the welfare of pupils will be recorded and discussed with the DSL.

Adults are well placed to observe any physical, emotional or behavioural signs which indicate a child or young person may be suffering significant harm. Interpersonal relationships which foster respect, confidence and trust can lead to disclosures of abuse or alert staff and volunteers to concerns.

Definitions

As in the Children's Acts 1989 and 2004, a **child** or **young person** is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Harm means ill-treatment or impairment of health and development, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

Development means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.



Health includes physical and mental health.

Ill treatment includes sexual abuse or other forms of ill treatment which are not physical.

Abuse and **neglect** are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children and young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

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 fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including online bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's physical or mental health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:



- Provide adequate food, clothing or shelter (including exclusion from home and abandonment);
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caretakers);
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment;

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Reporting

Staff and volunteers must immediately report:

- Any suspicion that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play;
- Any explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious;
- Any behaviour which give rise to suspicions that a child may have suffered harm (e.g. worrying drawings or play);
- Any concerns that a child may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment;
- Any concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect;
- Any significant changes in a child's presentation, including non-attendance;
- Any hint or disclosure of abuse from any person;
- Any concerns regarding anyone who may pose a risk to children (e.g. living in a household with children present).

Staff are also encouraged to actively consider children who might present as vulnerable.

Disclosures or information may be received from young people, parents or members of the public. The Foundation recognises that those who disclose such information may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak. Accordingly, all staff and volunteers will handle disclosures with sensitivity. Such information cannot remain confidential and should be immediately communicated to the DSL or their deputy.

Staff and volunteers will not investigate, but will, wherever possible, elicit enough information to pass on to the DSL in order that they can make an informed decision of what to do next.

Staff and volunteers will:

- Listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information that a child may be at risk of harm;
- Clarify the information;
- Try to keep questions to a minimum, and ensure they are of an "open" nature;
- Try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise;
- Not express feelings or judgements regarding any person alleged to have harmed the child;



- Explain sensitively to the child that they have a responsibility to refer the information to the DSL;
- Reassure and support the child as far as possible;
- Explain that only those who "need to know" will be told;
- Explain what will happen next and that the child will be involved as appropriate;
- Record the disclosure as appropriate.

All staff and volunteers are encouraged to report any concerns that they have, and not see these as insignificant. On occasions, a referral is justified by a single incident such as an injury or disclosure of abuse. More often, however, concerns accumulate over a period and are evidenced by building up a picture of harm over time; this is particularly true in cases of emotional abuse and neglect.

In these circumstances, it is crucial that staff record and pass on concerns in accordance with this policy to allow the DSL to build up a picture and access support for the child at the earliest opportunity. A reliance on memory without accurate and contemporaneous records of concern could lead to a failure to protect.

Following receipt of any information that raises concern, the DSL will consider what action to take, including referring to other services as appropriate. All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented. The Trustees' Board will receive a report at each meeting detailing the safeguarding concerns reported during the previous period, and any other updates as appropriate.

If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral should be made to Children's Services and/or the Police immediately. Anybody can make a referral.

Staff and volunteers should always follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy in the first instance. However, they may also share information directly with Children's Services or the Police if:

- The situation is an emergency and the DSL or their deputy are unavailable;
- They are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the young person's safety.

Any member of staff who does not feel that concerns about a young person have been responded to appropriately and in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy, should raise their concerns with the Trustees. If they still do not feel the situation has been addressed properly, then they should contact Children's Services directly with their concerns.

Abuse perpetrated by young people can be just as harmful as that perpetrated by an adult, so it is important to remember the impact on the victim of the abuse as well as to focus on the support for the young person exhibiting the harmful behaviour. Such abuse will always be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult and the same safeguarding procedures will apply. Staff and volunteers must never tolerate or dismiss concerns relating to peer on peer abuse.



Records and Information Sharing

If staff or volunteers are concerned about the welfare or safety of any young person, they will record their concern on an Incident Record Form (IRF). Any completed forms should be sent to the DSL without delay.

Any information recorded will be held securely. Forms will be the responsibility of the DSL. Child protection information will only ever be shared internally on a "need to know" basis, and on the understanding that it remains strictly confidential. Sharing information externally will only ever be conducted in a manner compliant with GDPR: this will normally either be on the basis of consent, legal obligation, or the young person's vital interests.

Working with Parents and Carers

Altitude Foundation is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people and to support them to understand statutory responsibilities in this area. A copy of this safeguarding policy will always be provided upon request, and is publicly available on the charity's website.

The Foundation is committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly and will ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. The Foundation respects parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality, and will not share sensitive information unless granted permission, or where it is necessary to do so in order to safeguard a child from harm.

In order to keep young people safe and provide appropriate care for them, the Foundation requires parents and carers to provide accurate and up to date information on the following:

- Full names and contact details of persons with parental responsibility, and consent to discuss the young person with these named individuals;
- Full names and contact details of, and consent to contact, any other adults authorised to discuss the young person's welfare, safety, or organisational arrangements.

The Foundation will only share information about participants with those for whom it has prior consent to contact. In certain circumstances, the charity may be obliged to deny all knowledge of a young person to individuals enquiring about them, if consent has not been given.

Safe Working Practices

All adults who come into contact with children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare.

The Foundation will use the recruitment and selection process to deter and reject unsuitable candidates for advertised roles. The charity will undertake Disclosure and Barring Service



(DBS) checks, and use any other means of ensuring that the most suitable employees to work with young people are recruited and selected. DBS checks will be refreshed every three years to ensure they remain up to date.

All staff and volunteers working on delivery events must wear identification, provided by Altitude, at all times.

All staff and volunteers will be provided with a copy of the Foundation's Safeguarding Policy at induction or training. They will be expected to know the contents of this policy and to carry out their duties in accordance with this advice.

Working alone with young people should be avoided wherever possible. If staff or volunteers find themselves in this position, they should endeavour to be visible to other adults. They will be expected to inform other staff or volunteers of their whereabouts, who they are with, and for how long they will be there. Doors should be left open unless fire regulations prevent this; in such circumstances, an alternative room should be sought if this is possible.

Online content delivery presents novel risks. The potential for unmoderated contact is greater, and the ability to share inappropriate content (between staff and participants or peer-to-peer) is enhanced.

Online delivery should not be conducted on a 1-to-1 basis. All communications channels should be moderated. Staff and volunteers should have due regard to the environment they are in whilst recording or delivering live video content, to ensure it is appropriate for the audience. Access to any content, including online platforms, live video content, or electronic resources, should be restricted to intended audiences only, to prevent gatecrashing.

All virtual meetings between volunteers and participants should be accessible to a member of staff, and timings should be agreed in advance. All video meetings should be recorded. Incident Record Forms will be made available online and a link will be provided for electronic reporting of issues by participants.

Guidance about acceptable conduct and safe practice will be given to all staff and volunteers during induction. These are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily conduct with young people. This advice can be found in "Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults who Work with Children and Young People in Education Settings" (October 2015). All staff and volunteers are expected to carry out their work in accordance with this guidance and will be made aware that failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action or removal from the programme.

Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers

The Foundation aims to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the wellbeing and very best outcomes for young people. However, the Foundation recognises that sometimes the behaviour of adults associated with the charity may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.



Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. The Foundation recognises that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.

If an allegation is made or information is received about any adult who contributes to programme events that indicates that they may be unsuitable to work with young people, the DSL will be informed immediately. Should the allegation be made against the DSL, the Trustees should be notified. A specific Trustee with lead responsibility for safeguarding will be identified, to whom any allegations can be flagged in the first instance.

Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel comfortable raising their concerns with the DSL or Trustees should contact Children's Services as a matter of urgency. The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline (see *Useful Contacts*, below) is also available.

No member of staff will undertake further investigations. The DSL or lead safeguarding Trustee will liaise with external agencies, as appropriate, to determine further actions.

The Foundation has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or young person, or if there is a reason to believe the member of staff or volunteer has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person.

Additional Information

Safeguarding Adults

Whilst the Foundation does not normally work with vulnerable adults, it is acknowledged that staff and volunteers may come into contact with an adult who is at risk from abuse or neglect. In such circumstances, the Foundation will adapt the processes established within this policy, within the limitations of the established expertise of staff.

The aims of adult safeguarding are to:

- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs;
- Stop abuse or neglect wherever possible;
- Safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live;
- Promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned;
- Address what has caused the abuse or neglect.

Safeguarding enquiries may need to be made on behalf of an adult who:



- Has needs for care and support;
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect;
- And as a result of their care and support needs, is unable to protect him or herself against the abuse or neglect, or the risk of it.

In the event of a safeguarding enquiry needing to be made, the processes outlined in this policy will be followed in an age-appropriate manner. In particular, recognising adults' personal agency, the Foundation will follow the principles of *Making Safeguarding Personal*¹.

Given that staff and volunteers do not have expertise in safeguarding adults, the priority for the Designated Safeguarding Lead, once any immediate or urgent risk to harm has been addressed, will be to refer to the appropriate agency for further action.

Useful Contacts

Name	Contact Details	Notes
Designated Safeguarding Lead (Altitude General Manager)	0191 345 4420 07704 157 805	Available during events for any concerns or consultation
Lead Safeguarding Trustee (Helen Scott)		Available for allegations or disclosures relating to the General Manager
Police	999 or 101	<u>Always call the police in situations of immediate danger.</u>
NSPCC Whistleblowing	0800 028 0285	08:00 - 20:00, Monday to Friday
Childline	0800 1111	24 Hours; For Young People
Newcastle City Council Children's Social Care	0191 277 2500	08:00 - 17:00, Monday to Friday
	0191 278 7878	Emergency Duty Team - if the call cannot wait until the next weekday
Northumberland County Council Safeguarding Children Team	01670 536 400	08:30 - 17:00, Monday to Thursday 08:30 - 16:30, Friday
	0345 600 5252	Out of Hours
North Tyneside Council Children's Services	0345 2000 109	Office Hours
	0330 333 7475	Evenings and Weekends
South Tyneside Council Children's Services	0191 424 5010	08:30 - 17:00, Monday to Thursday 08:30 - 16:30, Friday

¹ <http://bit.ly/3Dbsolt> - LGA (2013) *Making Safeguarding Personal*



	0191 456 2093	Out of Hours
Sunderland City Council Together for Children	0191 520 5560	08:30 - 17:00, Monday to Thursday 08:30 - 16:30, Friday
	0191 520 5552	24 hours, Saturday and Sunday
Durham County Council One Point Service	03000 267 979	



Altitude Foundation

Incident Record Form

About the Incident

Name:	Subject:	
Date & Time:	Participant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Location:	Staff/Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activity:	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Summary Details:	Incident Nature:	
	Serious Accident/Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Minor Accident/Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Behavioural Incident	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Illness/Health	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow Up:		

Further Details

Reporter:	Position of Reporter:	
Witnesses:	Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Information:		
	Received by DSL?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Signed Receipt:	
	Date & Time of Receipt	