

# Cheltenham District Woodcraft Folk

## Safeguarding Policy

### Introduction

This policy has been drawn up using the Woodcraft Folk Safeguarding Procedure April 2009 as a basis. It has been approved by the Cheltenham District Woodcraft Folk and a copy has been submitted to the national organisation. The policy should be reviewed annually. It is also compatible with the local child protection procedures produced by the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board (for more information go to [www.gscb.org.uk](http://www.gscb.org.uk)).

The purpose of this policy is to assist leaders, volunteers and young people participating in activities organised by the Cheltenham District of the Woodcraft Folk, in ensuring that all activities are carried out in a safe and secure manner, that our young members are protected from harm and our leaders and volunteers avoid misunderstandings and allegations of abuse.

Central to this policy is:

- the maintenance of an open, friendly and welcoming organisation that encourages participation from parents, allows leaders and volunteer helpers the opportunity to discuss and share concerns and that empowers our young members to express themselves in a frank and open manner;
- this policy recognises the importance of ensuring all Woodcraft Folk activities are carried out in accordance with the aims and principles of the national organisation of the Woodcraft Folk, which promote best practice for working with young people by respecting the rights of each young member of the organisation;
- that the safety and welfare of our young members and any other children or young people involved in any Woodcraft Folk activity is paramount; and
- all children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability and sexuality.

All group leaders, volunteer helpers and DF's helping to run group activities, will be expected to have read and be fully committed to the implementation of this policy. All Group Leaders should sign a form (Appendix One) to confirm the policy has been read and understood. The District Safeguarding Officer will keep this securely. It applies without exception to all adults and young people, whether full leaders or volunteer helpers, involved in running Woodcraft Folk activities and in supervising groups of young members or supporting individuals. Copies of the policy will be available at group nights and other activities for parents to take away and study, it will form part of the new members induction or training the District uses to promote the organisation and be available on the District's website.

## Respecting the rights of the individual

### Behaviour

The use of, or the threat of, physical punishment against any member of the Woodcraft Folk is not acceptable under any circumstances. Physical restraint is only appropriate if required in order to prevent harm to an individual or others and should involve only the minimum of force to ensure that aim is achieved. Incidents of restraint should be reported to the young

members' parents/carers, recorded on the District Incident Form (see Appendix Two), and passed to the District Safeguarding Officer for safe and confidential storage.

Management of individuals and groups of young members will be carried out in a positive and constructive manner that encourages appropriate participation in group activities. It is not appropriate to use negative criticism or language, which is in anyway discriminatory through race, gender, culture or disability. All leaders, volunteer helpers and young members will be expected to meet the emotional needs of all young members in an appropriate manner and will avoid situations that are exploitative, frightening or too challenging to individuals. Care will be taken to ensure all behaviour and language cannot be interpreted as abusive or exploitative.

### **Bullying**

The Woodcraft Folk recognises the harmful effects on children and young people of being subjected to bullying. Incidents of behaviour that can be interpreted as 'bullying' will be quickly brought to the attention of the individuals concerned and, if appropriate, discussed in a group setting in a way that clearly explains why such behaviour is inappropriate and that it will not be tolerated.

Persistent bullying behaviour should be discussed by group leaders and the appropriateness of taking further action agreed and recorded on an incident sheet. Further action to include:

- Raising concerns with the parents and carers of the young member perpetrating the bullying behaviour and asking for their assistance in dealing with the concern,
- Suspending the individual young member perpetrating the bullying behaviour for a fixed period; or
- Excluding the young member perpetrating the bullying behaviour from the group permanently.

### **Photographs**

Care must be taken when taking pictures of our young members on group activities to ensure that they cannot be interpreted as inappropriate or exploitative in any way. Suitable photographs of Woodcraft events may be used on District or National Woodcraft Folk material, including publicity leaflets, newsletters or websites.

### **Risks from the Internet**

Leaders need to be aware of the dangers of exploitation and abuse of young people when planning activities using access to the internet, so that appropriate supervision, advice and support can be given. A general awareness of risk will enable group leaders to give appropriate advice and support around e-safety issues through discussion and information giving; issues of concern include young people putting personal details onto internet sites and being aware of the implications of putting such images onto the internet and between mobile phones and social network sites - images can be spread very quickly and can last on the internet for years, causing great distress to young people. Our young members need to know that they can get help and advice from group leaders about Internet issues and that problems will be dealt with sensitively and effectively.

### **Raising Concerns**

Leaders, volunteers, parents and our young members are to be encouraged to raise concerns about group or an individual's behaviour; concerns will be listened to and responded to in an appropriate manner (see addressing concerns).

## **Ensuring all activities are carried out in a safe environment**

### **Safe recruitment**

Before being able to lead groups all group leaders will need to be full members of the Woodcraft Folk. They will have provided two references from adults who are not already part of the organisation. All leaders (over 18 years of age) will have received an enhanced CRB check, renewed every three years, in accordance with national policy. All group leaders will be encouraged to take part in training, including basic child protection training.

## **Running group activities**

### **Group night accommodation**

#### **Leader member ratios**

There will be at least two adult leaders present at each organised District activity. Volunteer helpers will not be left 'in charge' of individual or groups of children unless absolutely necessary (i.e. in an emergency or through providing transport etc). All leaders present at any activity are responsible for the safety and welfare of the young members. Leaders will ensure there are enough adults or older young members present to ensure the safety of our young members at all times. The recommended ratio from the Woodcraft Folk Child Protection Policy is one adult to five elfins; one adult to eight pioneers and one adult to ten venturers.

#### **Travelling home after activities**

Where possible, group leaders need to know how children are leaving activities to go home. If a young member is walking home alone then written permission is needed from the parent or carer. Where this is not possible, group leaders will endeavour to ensure that the young member is escorted home in a manner acceptable to the group leaders and the parents/carers.

#### **Risk Assessments**

A 'risk assessment' should be carried out and recorded by the leaders responsible for activities at all times, using the approved Woodcraft Folk template as a prompt (see Appendix Three). Leaders should ensure they are in a position to 'supervise' all young members, appropriate to any risk assessment discussed (depending on the nature of the activity and the maturity of the young members), ensuring their safety at all times. Leaders will maintain a list of names and emergency contact numbers of all young members on each activity.

#### **Safeguarding on overnight activities**

The ratio for group nights applies to overnight camping (the recommended ratio is one adult to five elfins; one adult to eight pioneers and one adult to ten venturers). Adults of both genders must be available at all times.

Adults (over 16) and group leaders should avoid being alone with any individual or group of young people (under 16) at all times. If this becomes necessary, to support young people in an emergency for instance, this should be talked through with other group leaders or adults present. Adults (and young members 16 and over) should avoid sharing tents, bedrooms or other sleeping areas with young members (under 16) if possible. Exceptions to this general rule are family groups and organised activities such as 'bivvies'. Adults and group leaders should try and ensure any individual contact is carried out in view of other adults and young

members if at all possible. No young member under 16 should be permitted to sleep on their own unless agreed with the young person's parents or guardian.

### **Addressing Concerns**

Cheltenham District have an elected Safeguarding Officer. This person has the responsibility to ensure they have a basic understanding of safeguarding issues, receives a level of training to enable them to fulfil the role and advise other leaders about safeguarding issues. Young members, parents and leaders are encouraged to raise any safeguarding concern with the Safeguarding Officer.

#### Contact details of safeguarding officer

Duncan Siret  
Tel: 01242 263017  
Mob: 07794079968  
Email: duncan\_siret@yahoo.co.uk

## **Responding to allegations and child protection concerns**

### **Allegations of possible abuse against group leaders and volunteers**

If a child or young person makes an allegation of abuse of any kind against any other member of the group immediate action must be taken. The leader receiving the information must listen carefully to the allegation and reassure the person that their concerns will be taken seriously. The leader receiving the information should complete a District Incident Form (see appendix two) including details of the nature of concern, dates and times, and a record of what is being said. The District Incident form should be sent to the District Safeguarding Officer for safe storage.

It is essential that the parents of the child must be informed as soon as possible.

The person concerned should be asked to stay away from all District activities pending the conclusion of an investigation into the allegations.

Advice should be sought from the District Safeguarding Officer at the earliest possible opportunity (see contact details above). The Local Authority Designated Officer (Tel: 01452 426994) must be informed of any allegation against a leader or volunteer helper, who will advise about appropriate further action that needs to be taken. Advice of the Local Authority social work services must be taken if the alleged abuse is perpetrated by a young member (through the Children's Helpdesk on 01452 426565). Under normal circumstances this will be done by the District Safeguarding Officer but can be done by any Woodcraft Folk leader or parent. The District Safeguarding Officer will notify the national Woodcraft Folk office.

Where possible the situation should be resolved by following the guidance in the Disputes and Complaints Resolution procedure (available on the national Woodcraft Folk website).

The accused person must be kept informed of the timescale of the investigation at all times. Groups may also wish to offer support to the person.

Any possible criminal offence should be reported to the police as soon as possible.

### **Concerns about behaviour**

If an adult member of a group/district has a concern about the behaviour of another adult member, immediate action must be taken. The concerns must be reported to the District Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible and no longer than 24 hours. The District Safeguarding Officer will advise on whether the person concerned should be asked to stay away from activities pending the conclusion of an investigation. Additional help and advice may be sought from the local the Local Authority Designated Officer (Tel: 01452 426994) and from the Woodcraft Folk national office. The leader with the concern should complete a District Incident Form (see appendix two) including details of the nature of concern, dates and times. The District Incident form should be sent to the District Safeguarding Officer for safe storage.

The situation should be resolved where possible following the guidance in the Disputes and Complaints Resolution procedure, available on the national Woodcraft Folk website. The accused person must be kept informed of the timescale of any investigation at all times and groups may also wish to offer support to the person. Any concerns substantiated through an investigation should be reported to the national Woodcraft Folk office.

Any possible criminal offence should be reported to the police as soon as possible.

### **Dealing with a reported problem from outside the group**

Even if unlikely, it is always possible that a young member will disclose behaviour by parents, siblings or other people that might be regarded as child abuse. Or they may show signs or exhibit behaviour that suggests the young member may be experiencing abuse. Remember that it is not appropriate for group leaders or adult volunteers to investigate or make a judgement about whether abuse has taken place but that it is the responsibility of all of us to report concerns of a child protection nature to the appropriate authorities. If concerns are raised the following guidelines should be followed:

- The young member will be listened to carefully and his or her concerns taken seriously.
- No promises about keeping things secret should be made, the group leader or volunteer helper will need to explain that he or she will need to get help if the disclosure amounts to a potential child protection matter.
- Details about the disclosure to be recorded on a District Incident Form, giving as much detail about what is said as possible (including date and time the disclosure is made and details as to who else was present), and given to the District Safeguarding Officer for safe keeping.
- If the allegation made refers to activities outside the home, the child's parents must be informed as soon as possible.
- If the allegation made refers to behaviour from within the child's home or family, advice should be sought from the Local Authority social work services.
- The young member should be kept informed about any response, including the need to inform parents and their views obtained.
- Advice about how to handle child protection concerns can be obtained from the local authority Children's Helpdesk (01452 426565) or the Safeguarding Children Service (01452 583636).
- The police should be called if it is felt a criminal offence has been committed.
- A referral to the children's service (01452 42 6565) should be made if it is felt the young member is at risk of significant harm or in need of services.

- Medical assistance should be sought if the young member is found to have an injury that requires treatment.

## Useful Information

National Woodcraft Folk [www.woodcraftfolk.org.uk](http://www.woodcraftfolk.org.uk), Tel No. 020 8672 6031

Aims and principles <http://www.woodcraft.org.uk/library/item/61>

Gloucestershire Police 08450 901234 (Use 999 in an emergency)

Children's Services for referral to social care (social services) 01452 426565

Child Line 0800 1111

District Safeguarding Officer

Duncan Siret

Tel: 01242 263017

Mob: 07794079968

Email: [duncan\\_siret@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:duncan_siret@yahoo.co.uk)

Safeguarding Children Service (for advice) 01452 583636

Gloucestershire Child Protection Procedures can be found on [www.gscb.org.uk](http://www.gscb.org.uk)

District website [www.thewoodcraftfolk.co.uk](http://www.thewoodcraftfolk.co.uk)

**Approved :- February 2013**

## Cheltenham District Woodcraft Folk

### Safeguarding Policy

I confirm that I have read, understood and that I am committed to its implementation in full.

Name: -----

Signature: -----

Date: -----

Please send to District Safeguarding Officer.

## Appendix Two

### Cheltenham District's Incident Form

Date and Time of Incident	
Nature of Incident	
Outcome of incident	
Who incident reported to?	
Incident form passed to District Safeguarding Officer	
<b>Signed and Dated</b> Group Leader	District Safeguarding



# Appendix Three

Risk Assessment For Woodcraft Folk Activities:

Activity/ies: \_\_\_\_\_

Location(s) Of Activity/ies: \_\_\_\_\_

**Hazard**= anything that can cause harm.  
**Risk**= Chance (high or low) that somebody will be harmed by the hazard.

Co-ordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment Written By \_\_\_\_\_

Other Volunteers: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Written: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date for review of assessment: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

List Significant Hazards Here: (Slip/ trip, fire, chemicals, equipment, height, vehicles, electricity, lifting/ handling, noise, lighting, temperature)	Groups of people who are at risk from the hazards listed: (Volunteers, participants, people with disabilities, pregnant people, young people, untrained people)	List existing ways of reducing the risks: (Training, Procedures, Information, Signs, Protective Equipment/ Clothing)	Is the risk adequately controlled? (Yes/ No)	Action needed (Be specific!)

Checked by:                      Adequate?                      PPE?                      COSHH?                      Date:    /    /

## Appendix 3

# Cheltenham District Woodcraft Folk Child Protection Policy

## Key Points to remember

- The safety and welfare of our young members is paramount during all our activities.
- All leaders are responsible for the health and safety of all present on Woodcraft Folk activities.
- All adults running, or helping to run groups, should have read and agreed to this policy.
- Inappropriate behaviour by adults, or our young members, should be challenged and discussed with the individual and, if necessary, within the group. Parents should also be informed about incidents that affect their children.
  - Young members should be made aware that they can approach any Woodcraft leader, if they have concerns about inappropriate behaviour of other people, both within and external to the Woodcraft.
  - Concerns about the inappropriate behaviour of leaders, DFs, volunteer helpers, or of persons outside of the Woodcraft, **MUST** be taken seriously and procedures described in the Child Protection Policy should be followed.
- All DFs or adults running groups **MUST** be full members of the Woodcraft group and have a current CRB certificate.
- All group activities will be supervised by at least two leaders, who are full members of the Woodcraft Folk.
  - Volunteer helpers will not be left in sole charge of individuals, or groups of children, unless absolutely necessary. (i.e. providing transport in their own car)
- All leaders are responsible for ensuring there is sufficient adult supervision to safely manage all groups, and that a risk assessment for the activity is carried out.
- Activity leaders shall ensure that contact sheets, containing the contact details of all young members participating in Woodcraft Folk activities, are always readily available.