

THE ARTHUR RANSOME SOCIETY

Child Safeguarding Policy

To be read, signed and adhered to by

- All Trustees
- Junior Co-ordinators
- Regional Committees
- All adults involved in organising and supervising events

The Arthur Ransome Society exists to celebrate the life of Arthur Ransome and to promote his interests in exploring, camping, sailing, navigation, literature and much more.

Aim of the policy

Through awareness of and compliance with this policy our aim is to prevent any situation where inappropriate behaviour can occur and provide clear guidance on how to proceed if inappropriate behaviour does occur. Throughout this policy a child/ junior is someone under 18 years of age.

Policy statement

The Arthur Ransome Society (TARS) recognises its responsibility to

- provide responsible supervision of unaccompanied junior members.
- prevent physical, sexual or emotional abuse of juniors whilst they are taking part in activities organised by TARS when their parent/guardian is not present.
- Report any abuse discovered or suspected.

Children remain the responsibility of their parents unless the child is attending an event unaccompanied.

We define sexual abuse as the actual or likely involvement of children or adolescents in any form of sexual activity whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Sexual activity may involve physical contact or non-contact activities.

This policy sets out basic best practice on avoiding abuse, on identifying possible cases of abuse and on what to do if you suspect that abuse may have

taken place.

Avoiding situations conducive to abuse

You can reduce the likelihood of the abuse of juniors arising and help to protect TARS adult members from false accusations, by observing these guidelines:

- Treat everyone with respect.
- Avoid one-to-one situations with juniors.
- Always be within sight and hearing of others.
- Always try to have at least 2 other adults present (ideally one male and one female.)
- Respect the rights of others to personal privacy.
- Avoid any inappropriate physical contact with either adults or juniors.
- Be aware that your actions might be misinterpreted, no matter how well-intentioned.
- Do not spend time alone with juniors away from others.
- Do not take juniors alone on car journeys, however short.
- Do not invite juniors to your home without another adult present and parental consent.
- Do not show favouritism.
- Do not use sarcasm or use humiliating comments.
- Do not allow abusive activities such as initiations, bullying or ridiculing among adults or juniors.
- Do not instigate a hug with a young person.
- Do not rely on your own good name to protect you from allegations or misinterpretation of your actions.

Awareness

You may become concerned for one or more of the following reasons:

- A junior may tell you that something has occurred with which they are uncomfortable
- Someone may tell you that a junior has told them or that they strongly believe a junior has been or is being abused
- A junior shows signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation
- A junior's behaviour may indicate to you that it is likely that he or she is being abused
- Something in the behaviour of an adult alerts you or makes you feel uncomfortable in some way
- Your awareness of a suspicion about abuse may come about as a result of something disclosed to you by a third party (parent, friend, another child,

another volunteer)

Actions for dealing with reports of possible abuse

There is no one simple set of rules to follow in responding to these situations. However, the following key points are designed for specific situations which may arise.

DO

- Do stay calm and caring.
- Do listen and hear and allow the junior (or anyone else telling of their concern) to do the talking. Don't postpone the opportunity to listen.
- Do give time to the person to say what they want. Don't allow your own feelings to show or affect your response.
- Do reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you about what has happened and about their concerns.
- Do, as soon as possible, **record in writing** what was said to you (and by you), so that there is an accurate account of what you were told.
- Do share your concerns. Discuss what has happened with your Regional Chairman and the Trustees as soon as possible.
- Do keep a record of your report.

DON'T

- Don't panic.
- Don't go somewhere isolated to have the conversation, be in sight of others and have another person with you.
- Don't promise to keep secrets.
- Don't enquire into the details of the abuse.
- Don't ask probing or leading questions.
- Don't investigate any allegations yourself.
- Don't make any child repeat the story unnecessarily, or make false promises.
- Don't contact the person the child alleges has abused them.
- Do not examine the child.
- Don't under any circumstances attempt to deal with the problem alone.
- Don't break the rules of confidentiality – only tell those who **need** to know.
- **DON'T DO NOTHING.** Failure to observe these guidelines may leave a child unprotected against further abuse.

The Government document 'Working together to safeguard children' (July 2018) states that 'Anyone who has concerns about a child's welfare should make a referral to the Local Authority Child Protection Services and do so immediately if there is concern that the child is suffering significant harm or is likely to do so.' Child Safeguarding issues should be treated with a sense of urgency. Anyone has a right to contact a Local Authority Social Services Department, who will deal with child protection issues. The contact for this can be found on the website of the Local Authority where the child lives. It is also advisable to consult with the Regional Chairman and the Trustees, but not at the cost of introducing a delay. The Trustees will provide support and will assist in liaison with Social Services if required. Do not assume that someone else will have already reported concerns.

Guidance for day events

TARS day events will almost certainly include mixed groups of adults, parents and juniors, with the possibility of some juniors being unaccompanied.

Opportunities for adults to practise abuse in such mixed group situations are mercifully rare, since even unaccompanied juniors are likely to be in the presence of a number of adults. However such events may include people who are strangers to both yourself and/or to one another. It is advisable to be alert to the following potential risk points.

- The beginning and end of the event. Avoid finding yourself alone with one or more unaccompanied juniors. Make sure at least one other adult remains with you until the junior is collected.
- Transport during the day, especially if splitting into private vehicles.
- Splitting into smaller, separated groups for all or part of the day. Be aware of compromising adults by asking individual adults to look after a separated junior, even for a short time.
- The use of outside organisations or individuals (for example sailing instructors), where a junior may easily be isolated with a stranger. Commercial outdoor pursuit providers have to be licensed to operate and they need to demonstrate a working Child Safeguarding policy of their own to obtain such a licence. You can check whether a provider is licensed by searching the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority website or ask to see their policy.
- The guidance from The Disclosure and Barring Service is that we don't need DBS checks on the organisers for day events. DBS checks are necessary if the activity is regular (ie weekly) or for 3 days or more in a 30 day period or overnight. If you feel your event is unusual and may require someone to have a DBS check, please talk to the Trustees at least

- 4 months in advance.
- Ensure that all adults involved in organising or supervising at the event have been made aware of this Child Safeguarding document.

Remember that before the start of the event all unaccompanied juniors need to present a consent form, completed by their parent/carer.

Guidance for residential events

Residential events offer a much higher potential for Child Protection problems than day events. Events such as IAGMs may include large mixed groups of adults, parents, juniors and unaccompanied juniors. Some events may have a high proportion of juniors and a more limited number of adults present. Accommodation may be in buildings, tents or boats or a mixture of all three. The longer time scale and generally more complex programmes of these events increases the potential opportunities for abuse. The guidance from The Disclosure and Barring Service is that a DBS check is not necessary for regulated activity which is less than once per week or 3 days in a 30 day period. However there would be a requirement to have a DBS check if supervising children overnight, without their parents (or a family member in loco parentis or a guardian) being there. If a junior-only camp was considered, for example at an IAGM, all the people helping overnight would need to have a DBS check. This would need to be talked over with the Trustees at least six months before the event to enable the checks to be carried out in time. A junior-only camp is a much more risky scenario and it should be considered whether this is sensible.

Please be alert to the following risk points:

- No junior below the age of 18 may attend a residential event unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- Adults should not share overnight accommodation with any juniors other than their own children (or grandchildren / family members for whom they are in loco parentis). If such an arrangement proves necessary in an emergency, ensure that there are two or more adults and two or more juniors present. One adult sharing a room, tent or cabin with one or more juniors is highly reckless and must be avoided at all costs.
- Bathrooms and getting changed. Adults should not get changed in the presence of juniors and vice versa.
- If you have to enter a junior's bedroom for some reason (for example, to administer first aid), ensure that there is another adult present.
- Be aware of the risks involved in transporting juniors.

- If there are non-supervising adults present at the event, be aware that they must not be asked to undertake supervisory duties.
- In public locations be aware that non-TARS adults may be present and taking an unhealthy interest in your event. Our events are publicly advertised, including on the internet, and it is not unknown for abusers to target promising looking events.
- Ensure that all adults involved in organising or supervising the event must be made aware of this Child Safeguarding document.
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Remember that before the start of the residential event all juniors (accompanied and unaccompanied) must present a consent form completed by their parent or guardian.

Appendix A

Further points to consider

- Adult to junior ratio
- Provision of male and female helpers
- When among the general public have a method of identifying members of the party and do regular head counts.
- Arrangements for going to the toilet
- If a child requires help with personal needs, a parent/carer must accompany them on the event.
- If any member of TARS (not just juniors) is behaving badly, they may be asked to leave the event.
- When an activity requires it, safety equipment must be used by all participants (not just juniors).
- Check the consent form to see who will and will not be allowed to appear in photographs of the event. Consider taking photographs of hands doing the activity rather than shots of identifiable faces.
- If it is necessary to communicate with a junior this needs to be done in a very open way. Either use post so parents are likely to see the letter arrive, perhaps marking the envelope with TARS crossed flags, or if using email, then it should be to a parent's email address so that they know the conversation is taking place and can monitor it if they would like to.

Appendix B

Adult-to-child ratios

The NSPCC recommended adult-to-child ratios are given below. Please note these are minimum requirements and you should carefully consider whether you need more adults than this.

- For 0 to 2 years – one adult to every three children (1:3)
- For 2 to 3 years – one adult to every four children (1:4)
- For 4 to 8 years – one adult to every six children (1:6)
- For 9 to 12 years – one adult to every eight children (1:8)
- For 13 to 18 years – one adult to every ten children (1:10)

There should always be more than one adult for any group and at least one should be female. Helpers under 18 years old count as children and not adults in these ratios. If you have a number of teenage helpers, you will need more adult leaders, not fewer.

Appendix C

Useful information and links

- www.gov.uk search 'Working together to safeguard children.'
- www.nspcc.org.uk search 'Keeping children safe.'
- NSPCC helpline 0808 800 500 to talk through concerns, they will give expert advice.
- www.learning.nspcc.org.uk for further information on safeguarding. They also run a Trustee safeguarding course.
- Www.childrenengland.org.uk/everyones-business-safeguarding-for-trustees

Appendix D

Use of Zoom

Zoom is an over-16 platform and this should be remembered when running events online. It is suggested that, if a child wishes to join in with an online event, an adult (parent or guardian) accompanies them. The NSPCC website has further information.

Signed **Jules Blue**

Date **January 20th 2024**

Review date: This policy will be reviewed every two years.