

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Policy Version: 1.0

Date Adopted: April 2026

1. Policy Statement

BMAT is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults who engage in our activities, events, educational visits, volunteering, nature recovery experiences, and community programmes.

We recognise our responsibility to:

- Provide a safe and welcoming environment.
- Act in the best interests of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Respond promptly and appropriately to concerns or allegations.
- Comply with UK safeguarding legislation and guidance.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Trustees, directors and management
- Employees (full-time, part-time, seasonal)
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Partner organisations
- Visiting professionals
- Anyone representing BMAT

It covers all activities on-site, off-site visits, online engagement, and events delivered in partnership with other organisations.

3. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children (latest edition)
 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
 - Care Act 2014
 - Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
 - Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
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4. Definitions

Child: Anyone under the age of 18.

Young Person: Generally 13–17 years old.

Vulnerable Adult: A person aged 18 or over who has care and support needs and may be unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect.

Abuse may include:

- Physical
 - Emotional/Psychological
 - Sexual
 - Neglect
 - Financial
 - Discriminatory
 - Domestic abuse
 - Exploitation
 - Modern slavery
 - Self-neglect
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5. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

BMAT will appoint a **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

DSL Name: Caroline Jessel

Role: Facilitator

Contact Details: 07979770134

The DSL is responsible for:

- Managing safeguarding concerns and referrals
- Acting as the main point of contact
- Liaising with local authority safeguarding teams
- Ensuring policy implementation
- Maintaining confidential records

- Coordinating safeguarding training

In the absence of the DSL, concerns must be reported to the Deputy DSL, Rob Edmans.

If a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, call **999**.

6. Safer Recruitment

BMAT will ensure safer recruitment practices by:

- Obtaining references
- Conducting interviews
- Verifying identity
- Carrying out appropriate DBS checks where required
- Providing safeguarding induction
- Clearly outlining safeguarding responsibilities in role descriptions

No individual will begin regulated activity without appropriate checks.

7. Code of Conduct

All staff and volunteers must:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
 - Avoid being alone with a child or vulnerable adult where possible.
 - Ensure activities are open and observable.
 - Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
 - Not engage in inappropriate physical contact.
 - Not exchange personal contact details or connect via personal social media with children or vulnerable adults.
 - Not include children, young people or vulnerable adults in **WhatsApp** groups or similar chat groups without appropriate permission.
 - Not take photographs without consent from a carer or parent.
 - Report any concerns immediately to the DSL
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8. Supervision Ratios

BMAT will ensure appropriate supervision levels for activities involving children and young people, following national guidance for ratios depending on age and activity risk.

Children under 18 must not be left unsupervised.

9. Health & Safety

As many of our activities take place in a natural outside environment, additional risks exist. We will:

- Conduct risk assessments for all activities.
 - Provide appropriate safety briefings.
 - Ensure appropriate supervision around livestock, machinery, tools and water.
 - Require suitable clothing and footwear.
 - Clearly mark restricted areas.
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10. Recognising Safeguarding Concerns

Concerns may arise through:

- Disclosure from a child or vulnerable adult
- Observed injuries or behavioural changes
- Reports from third parties
- Inappropriate conduct by staff or volunteers

All concerns must be taken seriously.

11. Responding to a Disclosure

If someone discloses abuse:

1. Stay calm and listen.
2. Do not promise confidentiality.
3. Reassure them they have done the right thing.
4. Do not ask leading questions.
5. Record the information as soon as possible.
6. Report immediately to the DSL.

Do not investigate the matter yourself.

12. Reporting Procedure

All safeguarding concerns must be:

- Reported to the DSL immediately.
- Recorded in writing (date, time, facts, observations).
- Stored securely and confidentially.

The DSL will decide whether to:

- Monitor the situation
- Speak with parents/carers (if appropriate)
- Refer to Children's Services or Adult Social Care
- Contact the Police

Whistleblowing concerns about staff or volunteers must be reported to the BMAT Board or relevant authority.

13. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information will be shared only on a need-to-know basis.
Confidential records will be securely stored in line with GDPR.

Data protection does not prevent sharing information where someone is at risk of harm.

14. Photography and Media

Photographs or videos of children or vulnerable adults will only be taken:

- With written consent from parent or carer
- For agreed purposes
- Using organisational devices where possible

Images will be stored securely and not used inappropriately.

15. Online Safety

Where online communication is used:

- Official channels only will be used.
 - Group communication preferred over one-to-one.
 - Content will be appropriate and monitored.
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16. Managing Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer:

- The DSL must be informed immediately.
 - The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) may be contacted.
 - The individual may be suspended pending investigation (neutral act).
 - Appropriate external agencies will be involved.
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17. Training

BMAT will:

- Provide safeguarding induction for all staff and regular volunteers.
 - Provide DSL training for designated leads.
 - Refresh training at least every 2–3 years.
 - Keep training records.
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18. Partnership Working

When working with schools, community groups or partner organisations:

- Safeguarding responsibilities will be clarified in writing.
 - Risk assessments will be shared.
 - Appropriate insurance and DBS requirements confirmed.
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19. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Legislation changes
 - A safeguarding incident occurs
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Commitment

BMAT is committed to creating a safe, inclusive and supportive environment where children, young people and vulnerable adults can learn, grow and participate without fear of harm.