



TC01 – Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults Policy and Procedure

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1. Statement of Policy

This document states TOPCATS policy on preventing and reducing harm to children and vulnerable adults when they are in contact with, workers, volunteers or students. The policy aims to:

- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults;
- Provide assurance to parents, carers and other parties that TOPCATS takes reasonable steps to manage risks and keep children and vulnerable adults safe;
- Ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with the necessary information, training and support on safeguarding matters;
- Prevent the employment of individuals in working with children and/or vulnerable adults where they have been barred by the DBS or are deemed by the TOPCATS to pose an unacceptable risk to vulnerable groups;
- Ensure that appropriate action is taken in the event of any allegations or suspicions regarding harm to children or vulnerable adults arising from contact whether the harm has taken place at TOPCATS premises or not.

The Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy also seeks to manage effectively the risks associated with activities and events involving children and vulnerable adults through departments/institutions:

- Completing a risk assessment process which involves identifying risks and means of reducing or eliminating these;
- Implementing the required actions identified by the risk assessment process and reviewing the effectiveness of these on a regular basis;
- Ensuring that the appropriate DBS or basic disclosure checks are conducted, depending on eligibility, for any individuals starting or moving into work which involves working with children or vulnerable adults;
- Requiring new employees and individuals involved in working with children or vulnerable adults to familiarise themselves with the content of this policy and the associated Code of Practice.

This policy requires that any suspicions and allegations involving harm to children and vulnerable adults are referred to TOPCATS Management to determine what action, if any, must be taken. This will enable each situation to be investigated thoroughly, whilst treating the parties involved fairly and with sensitivity. It will also ensure that suitable steps are taken as a result of any investigations, which may include contacting the police and/or fulfilling the legal duty to refer information to the DBS as required.

The procedure for managing suspicions and allegations aims to strike a balance between the need to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse and the need to protect staff, students and volunteers from false or unfounded accusations.

The Children and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy should be used as the basis of each department/institution's approach to preventing and reducing harm to children and vulnerable adults. However, departments/institutions are encouraged to develop their own local policies and procedures to address any safeguarding matters of particular relevance to them.

3. Application and definitions

3.1 Application

The key parts of the Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy apply as described below.

• Risk assessment process

- Recruitment to a new or existing post which involves working directly with children and/or vulnerable adults
- The commencement of new activities or events involving or potentially involving children and or vulnerable adults; and
- Changes being made to activities or events involving or potentially involving children and or vulnerable adults.

• Screening check processes

These apply to those carrying out work for TOPCATS which involves direct contact with children and/or vulnerable adults and meets the eligibility criteria for a basic disclosure or Disclosure and Barring Service check.

• Procedure for dealing with reported suspicions and allegations

This applies to all TOPCATS staff, workers, volunteers, visitors and students made aware of, or involved in, an allegation or suspicion involving harm to children and/or vulnerable adults.

• Appendix B Code of Practice

This applies to all TOPCATS staff, workers, volunteers, visitors and students who come into direct contact with children and vulnerable adults.

3.2 Definitions

A child is any person under the age of 18. Adults aged 18 and over have the potential to be vulnerable (either temporarily or permanently) for a variety of reasons and in different situations. An adult may be vulnerable if he/she:

- Has a learning or physical disability; or
- Has a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs; or
- Has a reduction in physical or mental capacity; or
- Is in the receipt of any form of healthcare; or
- Is detained in custody; or
- Is receiving community services because of age, health or disability; or
- Is living in sheltered or residential care home; or
- Is unable, for any other reason, to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation.

It is recognised that people who meet one or more of the criteria above may not be vulnerable at all, or all of the time. However, until a department/institution has direct contact with people on an individual basis, it may be impossible to identify whether vulnerability exists in relation to an activity or event involving adults that they are planning.

Therefore, in order to support departments/institutions in identifying and managing potential risks of harm to people effectively, and for the purposes of this policy only, a vulnerable adult should be identified (for the purposes of this policy only) as a person aged 18 or over who meets one or more of the criteria listed above.

4.3 Examples of TOPCATS activities involving children and vulnerable adults

TOPCATS staff or students may encounter children and vulnerable adults in a wide range of situations. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The provision of healthcare or health services;
- Children's activities in the Physical Education Department;
- Work experience students under and over 18;
- Widening participation outreach activities with schools and colleges (In Suffolk);
- Childcare provision in TOPCATS playschemes;
- School visits;
- Community sports projects;
- Photography of children for publication;
- First aid delivery;
- Christmas parties for children;
- Open days;
- Working with disabled students.

4. Procedure

4.1 Raising awareness of the policy

TOPCATS recruitment procedure ensures that all new members of staff are made aware of this policy and that they are given time to read it during their induction period. Reasonable adjustments for disabilities and any capability/capacity matters in the workplace are

managed outside of this policy. Training is available upon request from Management on conducting risk assessments in relation to working with children and vulnerable adults.

4.2 Initiating the Risk Assessment Process

Organisations are required under health and safety legislation to protect people as far as is 'reasonably practicable'. In particular, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require organisations to assess the risks in their workplaces and to put plans in place to control the risks.

The Children and Vulnerable Adults Risk Assessment process will be initiated by the following circumstances (although other situations may trigger this procedure if deemed appropriate by TOPCATS management):

- Recruitment to a new or existing post which involves working with children and/or vulnerable adults;
- The commencement of new activities or events involving or potentially involving children and or vulnerable adults;
- Changes being made to activities or events involving or potentially involving children and or vulnerable adults.

Please note that where there are multiple posts, activities or events of a similar nature, it is unnecessary to complete an individual risk assessment for each of them. Instead, it is possible to complete an overarching assessment for a particular type of post, activity or event and ensure that it manages the relevant risks appropriately. Once it has been identified that the risk assessment process should be initiated, it is vital that the person responsible for the relevant recruitment campaign, activity or event includes completion of this within his/her planning process and ensures that it is completed.

4.3 Completing the Risk Assessment Process

A risk assessment must be completed in advance of the relevant activity or event by a competent person (where there are not current, adequate and documented risk management procedures already in place).

Risk assessments must be completed by a competent person; that is, is someone who understands the job, activity or event and is aware of the hazards. It is important to note that TOPCATS insurance may be invalid if a claim is made and no risk assessment is in place. The purpose of the risk assessment is to enable the responsible person to identify, mitigate and remove any potential risks relating to contact with children or vulnerable adults. This can also be a prompt to consider alternative working practices, such as minimising occasions where an individual is alone with a child or vulnerable adult and considering whether the activity could be supervised or observed by others. Any actions identified as a result of completing the risk assessment must be completed within the timescales specified on the form. The risk assessment should:

- Identify the nature, length and frequency of the contact and if it would be supervised or unsupervised;
- Consider if there will be children and adults who are particularly at risk;
- Consider whether any children or vulnerable adults have allergies, are on medication, have any disabilities (physical or mental), or any behavioural difficulties;
- Identify any potential areas for harm;
- Evaluate the risks;
- Determine actions to prevent harm occurring, which might include consideration of alternative working practices, and prompt individuals to ensure that they are implemented;
- Identify those situations that would require a DBS check or a basic disclosure check.

Completed risk assessments are retained and kept secure onsite at TOPCATS whilst and activity/event is ongoing and for five years after it has ceased (or the risk assessment has been superseded).

Where an activity is ongoing but unchanged, TOPCATS will review the risk assessment on a regular basis to ensure that the measures put in place are still relevant and appropriate.

It is important for departments/institutions to remember to complete a risk assessment prior to any work experience placement being provided. The Temporary Employment Service (TES) provides advice and support for departments/institutions on the arrangement of work experience, including for children, to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place and that there is compliance with relevant legislation. Further details are available on the [TES work experience web pages](#)

4.4 Identifying required checks

Once the key duties and responsibilities of the activity are determined, one of the required actions must be to identify which checks, prior to the individual working with children and/or vulnerable adults. TOPCATS considers checks should be treated as essential before employment (that is, that the new employee recruited to the role should not be able to start work until the check is completed).

Detailed guidance on when a check should be treated as essential or non-essential for completion before an individual starts work is found in the Identify screening checks section of the Recruitment Guidance (<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/camonly/offices/hr/recruitment/vacancy/checks.html>).

4.4.1 DBS checks

TOPCATS is a registered body with the DBS. Registered bodies are entitled in law to apply for a DBS check only where the position is included in the DBS's list of eligible posts. These posts represent the professions, offices, employments, work and occupations that are known as the exceptions to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

There are two types of check available from the DBS:

- **Standard** - contains details of all spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings held on the Police National Computer (PNC) that are not 'protected'. Protected convictions and cautions are normally old and minor; they are filtered by the DBS so they are not disclosed, and they must not be taken into account by employers. The filtering rules and the list of offences that will never be filtered are now available for you to view on the DBS's web pages.

- **Enhanced** - contains the same information as the standard check but also any relevant and proportionate information held by the local police forces. In addition, where the role is eligible, registered bodies can request a check on whether a person is barred from working with children or adults in regulated activity (particular types of work with children and adults). Many roles at TOPCATS CHARITY which involve working directly with children and vulnerable adults fall into the category of 'regulated activity' and so are eligible in law for an enhanced DBS check with appropriate barred list check.

Where an individual is not working in regulated activity, he/she will be eligible for a standard DBS check where his/her work is:

- Concerned with the provision of health services;
- Of a kind as to enable the individual concerned to have direct, physical contact (such as interviews or focus groups) with persons in receipt of such services in the course of his/her normal duties.

Full details of the type of work and roles which are eligible for DBS checks are found in the DBS section of the Recruitment Guidance.

TOPCATS recruitment policy is to request an Enhanced DBS for all new employees at the first instance.

Guidance on whether a check can be treated as 'essential before start' or not is found in the Identifying required screening checks section of the Recruitment Guidance. The HR Division's DBS web pages also set out the procedure for requesting a DBS check for new and current employees, receiving and recording check results, and how departments/institutions may (where it is appropriate) complete a risk assessment in order to allow individuals to start work where their DBS check is being treated as 'non-essential before start'.

Appropriate control measures must be set out in the risk assessment and implemented in order to minimise any risk arising from the DBS check not having been completed when the individual begins work. Examples of control measures include not allowing the individual to commence any work relating to the DBS check until it has been completed or ensuring that he/she is supervised at all

times. Please note that DBS checks for students are managed by the Student Registry. Their process is set out in the DBS section of the Student Registry web pages.

4.4.2 Basic Disclosures

Disclosure Scotland is the Scottish equivalent of the DBS and its services can be used by employers throughout the UK. It differs from the DBS in that it offers basic level criminal records checks (known as basic disclosures), which only reveal convictions which are unspent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 are revealed. This means that, unlike DBS checks, eligibility for basic disclosures is not restricted in law. Employers may choose to require basic disclosures as they deem reasonable for certain work.

In the circumstances where an individual will have direct contact with children or vulnerable adults as a central part of their role, but where they are ineligible for a DBS check, they may be eligible for a basic disclosure. At the start of the recruitment process or planning for an activity/event, and as part of the risk assessment process described in section 5.3, the department/institution will need to assess for such roles (with support from the HR Division):

- The nature of the contact with children/vulnerable adults;
- The level of risk arising from the duties/responsibilities of the role;
- Whether a basic disclosure would be relevant to managing that risk;
- If there are more effective alternative means of managing the risk.

An appropriate individual in the department/institution will need to determine whether the check must be completed before an individual can start work or if there are activities that the individual could reasonably and safely carry out before the check result has been received. Guidance on whether a check can be treated as 'essential before start' or not is found in the Identifying required screening checks section of the Recruitment Guidance.

The HR Division's basic disclosure web pages also set out the procedure for requesting a basic disclosure, receiving and recording check results, and how departments/institutions may (where it is appropriate) complete a risk assessment in order to allow individuals to start work where their basic disclosure is being treated as 'non-essential before start'.

Appropriate control measures must be set out in the risk assessment and implemented in order to minimise any risk arising from the basic disclosure not having been completed when the individual begins work. Examples of control measures include not allowing the individual to commence any work relating to the basic disclosure until it has been completed or ensuring that he/she is supervised at all times. The department/institution is responsible for asking the preferred candidate to complete the basic disclosure application form (which are available from the HR Compliance Team upon request) and ensuring that it has been filled in correctly.

4.4.3 Portability

Where an individual has previously undergone a DBS check or basic disclosure required for his/her post with another organisation in the course of his/her employment, this check is not portable to TOPCATS. It will not be accepted as meeting the Charities requirement for a post-holder to undergo a particular type of DBS check or basic disclosure. Exceptions to this are as follows:

- Where an individual has subscribed to the DBS Update Service – this means that their DBS check will be kept up-to-date and they can take this with them from role to role, where the same level and type of check is needed. With an individual's permission, the University will be able to go online to do a free, instant check (known as a status check) to confirm that their DBS Certificate is still up-to-date.

4.5 Disclosure of a criminal record

Where a criminal conviction is disclosed by an applicant or through a DBS check/basic disclosure, the Head of Recruitment/Service Manager will work with the department/institution (where appropriate) to complete an Objective Assessment for Disclosure of a Criminal Conviction Form. This contains details of the check result, the individual's explanation and an assessment of the level of risk.

The Management/Board of Trustees will consider this assessment objectively and, where the assessment indicates that the level of risk is too high to allow the individual to start/continue working in a particular role/activity, the consequences of this for the individual will depend upon:

- The check concerned;
- The reason for the check (that is, check for a new employee, a recheck for an existing employee in their current post or a check for an existing employee in a new post);
- Relevant legislation;
- The post concerned;
- Whether the individual is suitable for other employment opportunities available within TOPCATS.

Where appropriate, Management and Trustees will be involved in the decision process. Possible outcomes include, withdrawal of an offer of employment or, where the individual started work before the relevant screening check was completed, dismissal.

4.6 Recruitment of ex-offenders

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar an individual from working at TOPCATS. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offence. TOPCATS complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a disclosure because of a conviction or other information revealed.

4.7 Dealing with reported suspicions and allegations

Concerns for the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults could arise in a variety of ways and in a range of situations. For example, a child/vulnerable adult may report or show signs of abuse, someone may hint that a child/vulnerable adult is at risk or that a colleague is an abuser, or someone may witness abuse.

According to the Department for Education and Skills, there are five main types of abuse, which are outlined in Appendix A. It is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has taken place and TOPCATS employees are not experts at such recognition. However, each person has a responsibility to act if they have any concerns about someone's behaviour towards a child or vulnerable adult. It is important that the recipient of any complaint or accusation that a child or vulnerable adult has been or is being abused listens carefully without making or implying any judgment as to the truth of the complaint or accusation.

To ensure that all of the details of an allegation are captured for any future investigation, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the matter being raised. An Incident Report form is provided for this purpose.

It is impossible to promise complete confidentiality when a concern is raised or an accusation made. This is because TOPCATS owes a duty of care to its staff and visitors that cannot be fulfilled unless TOPCATS takes action on the basis of information that may have been provided in confidence. The duty of confidentiality must be weighed against the duty of care, in case of potential or actual harm of an individual. However, at all stages, only those people who need to be made aware of an incident or concern, whether internal or external to TOPCATS, should be informed.

Where an individual suspect's or is informed that a child or vulnerable adult has been, is being or could be harmed as a result of taking place at a TOPCATS activity/event or through contact with TOPCATS staff or volunteers, it is not the responsibility of that person to decide whether abuse has taken place. Instead, the individual aware of these suspicions or allegations must contact TOPCATS Manager immediately for guidance and assistance on the action that must be taken. If circumstances make this impossible, the Board of trustees must be contacted. Staff who are worried about sharing concerns about abuse are encouraged to speak with an appropriate agency for further advice (for example Customer First 0808 800 4005 or Childline on 0800 1111).

Where a complaint of abuse is reported, the relevant manager/supervisor will carefully consider the information available and decide on the appropriate course of action. Such situations may require contact with the relevant external agencies (including social services and the police) for them to investigate the matter and determine any necessary action. Consideration will also be given to whether it is necessary to notify the relevant head of department/institution and take further action

through the relevant internal procedures. This may include invoking TOPCATS employee disciplinary procedures.

In emergency circumstances (for example, where there is certain immediate and significant danger to an individual or a criminal act has been witnessed), TOPCATS staff should make referrals to the police, social services or other appropriate authorities themselves prior to consulting with HR. Where this is necessary, HR should be informed immediately afterwards. In such cases, a criminal investigation may follow.

TOPACTS has a legal duty to refer an individual to the DBS if they have been removed from working in regulated activity with children and/or adults because they caused harm to children/adults or posed a risk of causing harm. The duty to refer is absolute and overrides any concerns about data protection.

All cases for possible referral must be raised with Management in the first instance as soon as harm or a risk of harm is identified. Management and HR should work together to complete the DBS referral form found on the DBS's web pages. They may seek advice from the Head of Recruitment, who is TOPCATS DBS check counter-signatory for employees.

The completed form must then be provided to HR for review and a final decision on whether the referral is required. Where it is deemed that a referral must be made, the referral form must be forwarded to the Head of Recruitment to be logged prior to being sent to the DBS.

Any enquiries made by the media about possible allegations of abuse regarding children/vulnerable adults should be referred to the Office of External Affairs and Communications immediately.

4.8 Data protection

TOPCATS complies with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 and Human Rights Act 1998 and more recently GDPR 2018 in the way it collects, holds and disposes of personal information:

- Completed risk assessments relating to activities involving children/vulnerable adults must be retained by departments/institutions whilst and activity/event is ongoing and for a minimum of five years after it has ceased (or the risk assessment has been superseded).
- Details of relevant training (such as on safeguarding or working with children or vulnerable adults) retained by departments/institutions (for local training) or by TOPCATS training provider for the commencement of the training i.e. 1 year-2 years 3-years etc OR for term of employment. Kept securely in a locked cabinet only accessible to management/admin
- Personal files of all employees (including those who have contact with children/vulnerable adults) and any documentation related to allegations or suspicions of abuse must be retained for a minimum of six years after the individual concerned leaves employment.

In addition, departments/institutions should, wherever practicable, record lists of the individuals (staff, volunteers and child/vulnerable adult participants) involved in activities/events for children and/or vulnerable adults and retain them securely for a minimum of six years after the activity/event. TOPCATS has a statement on confidential handling and storage of criminal records information within the Data Protection section of the HR web pages. Information about any allegations or suspicions of abuse must be shared on a need to-know basis only. Documentation related to allegations or suspicions of must be stored in a secure place which is only accessible to those with appropriate knowledge of the suspicions/allegations.

Where it is necessary for staff to take photographs or video images of children or vulnerable adults, written consent must be obtained (from parents in the case of children) before these images are taken in order to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.

5.Roles and Responsibilities

TOPCATS Manager and designated safeguarding person takes overall ownership of the policy and will promote the importance of safeguarding within TOPCATS, the day-to-day operation of the policy and its procedures will be the responsibility of all TOPCATS staff.

Management are required to promote the importance of safeguarding within TOPCATS and ensure that appropriate systems in place for:

- All their staff to become familiar with the Children and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy during their induction;
- Relevant staff to review the department/institution's activities and follow the Children and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding risk assessment process.

It is the responsibility of the member of staff leading the recruitment campaign, activity or event which involves working with Children and Vulnerable adults to:

- Identify that the Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding procedure is applicable to a particular role, activity or event;
- Ensure that staff, workers, volunteers and students working with children and vulnerable adults are familiar with the contents of the policy and its application before any new or changed activity/event;
- Complete/update the risk assessment;
- Ensure implementation and review of the actions identified by the risk assessment;
- Staff, In addition, should, wherever possible, conduct themselves in accordance with the Code of Practice set out in Appendix B. This provides guidance on acceptable and desirable conduct to

protect both children and vulnerable adults who come to TOPCATS premises to visit, and those working with them.

Every individual who becomes aware of any suspicions or allegations regarding harm to children or vulnerable adults is required to report this immediately to his/her Manager/Supervisor immediately. Managers/supervisor or the Board of trustees will be the initial point of contact where any allegations of abuse against children and vulnerable adults are raised. They will hold responsibility for:

- Promoting the Children and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy at TOPCATS
- Dealing with any reported suspicions and allegations of abuse of children or vulnerable adults within TOPCATS.
- Providing appropriate information when making referrals to external agencies (such as Social Services or the Police) in all cases of suspected abuse of children or vulnerable adults.
- Ensuring that appropriate records are kept in relation to the reporting of suspected abuse.
- Working with HR and relevant DBS counter signatory to determine whether a referral needs to be made to the DBS.

6. Context

TOPCATS has a duty, both in law and as a responsible organisation, to take reasonable care of children and vulnerable adults coming onto its premises.

TOPCATS aims to adopt the highest possible standards and take all reasonable steps in relation to the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults. TOPCATS encounters children and vulnerable adults in a variety of settings, as well as through its outreach programmes.

Safeguarding in relation to children is defined by the Children Act 1989 and Joint Chief Inspectors Report on Arrangements to Safeguard Children (2002) as requiring:

“Agencies [and organisations] working with children and young people to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to the individual’s welfare are minimised; and Where there are concerns about children and young people’s welfare, all agencies [and organisations] take all appropriate actions to address those concerns, working to agreed local policies and procedures, working in partnership with other local agencies’.

TOPCATS is fully committed to meeting the requirements of safeguarding, as defined above, both in relation to children and vulnerable adults, in order to ensure that they are safeguarded whilst enjoying opportunities to develop their full potential. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following TOPCATS policies and procedures:

- Recruitment Guidance

- Recruitment of Ex-offenders Policy Statement
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection procedures
- Disciplinary action, grievances and appeals procedure
- Fair Access, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

The following legislation is relevant to this policy, either because it has influenced its introduction and/or its content:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975
- The Police Act 1997
- Protection of Children Act 1999
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 is of particular importance as all decisions made to bar individuals from working with children or adults are now made by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) under this legislation.

7. Policy Ownership and Status

The Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy is owned by TOPCATS. It will be periodically reviewed and updated by Management, in consultation with the Board of Trustees, to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and internal change. The Manager/Admin will ensure that each published version of this policy is archived, along with details of when it was in operation.

Appendix A – Types of Abuse

The categories of abuse below are produced from external guidelines². A person may abuse or neglect a child/vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. There are four main forms of abuse, although there are variations within these:

- Physical Abuse Deliberate physical harm to children and vulnerable adults or any other form of harm which causes illness in a child or vulnerable person.
- Sexual Abuse Forcing or manipulating a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities.
- Neglect This involves the persistent failure to meet a child or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological need, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's or vulnerable adult's health or development.
- Emotional Abuse This involves the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional wellbeing and/or development.

² The Department for Education and Skills guidance: "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused" (2006)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190604/DFES04320-2006-ChildAbuse.pdf

Appendix B – Code of Practice

When working with children and/or vulnerable adults, TOPCATS staff, students and volunteers are expected to take account of the guidance below in the way that they conduct themselves.

- Consider the wellbeing and safety of event participants in advance through proper planning and development of safe methods of working/activities.
- Wherever possible, work in an open environment with children where they can be seen by others.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- Avoid taking a child or vulnerable adult alone in a car on journeys, however short.
- Avoid taking a child or vulnerable adult to the toilet, unless another adult is present or another adult is aware (this may include a parent, group leader or other responsible person).
- In a situation where you are alone with a child or vulnerable adult, make sure that others can clearly observe you.
- Set expectations of the standards of behaviour required from participants in an activity/event and encourage them to accept responsibility for their own performance and behaviour.
- Ask participants in an activity/event to take reasonable steps to ensure their own safety and that of others, and to report any inappropriate behaviour they experience/witness or any concerns that they may have.
- Avoid showing favouritism towards particular participants.
- Report incidents of alleged abuse to the relevant Manager/Supervisor, and ensure that any allegations are recorded.
- Report any concerns about poor practice to management/Supervisor/Board of Trustees
- Report any accidents to the designated person in the department/institution for recording and investigation where required.
- Avoid personal relationships with a child or vulnerable adult.
- It is not appropriate for staff to have a physically or emotionally intimate relationship with a young person under the age of 18. Particular attention is drawn to the provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 which created a new criminal offence of abuse of "a position of trust".
- Staff, and volunteers should remember that inappropriate behaviour can also occur over the telephone, email, social media or internet.
- Only official TOPCATS social media should be used for engaging with the wider community. Inappropriate or abusive comments should be removed swiftly and abusive individuals blocked/reported to the social media concerned. Facebook instant chat and other similar functions should not be used to interact with children or vulnerable adults. Wherever possible, communication should be only public pages and avoid colloquial language/abbreviations which may be misinterpreted (e.g. LOL).
- Do not make suggestive or inappropriate remarks to or about a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted.
- Participate in training available to you to support you in your work with children and vulnerable adults.
- First aid treatment should be given with more than one adult present unless a delay would be life-threatening.
- Do not take children or vulnerable adults to your home.
- Maintain confidentiality about sensitive information.

- Where it is necessary for staff, or volunteers to take photographs or video images of children or vulnerable adults, written consent must be obtained (from parents/guardians in the case of children) before these images are taken in order to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. Personal details and photos which clearly identify an individual must only be published where he/she (or his/her parent/guardian) has given specific agreement. Subjects should be suitably dressed in photographs (e.g. when taking place in a sporting activity).

RELEVANT CONTACT DETAILS IN THE EVENT OF A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN:

**ANNE MARIE BATTRICK
SERVICE MANAGER
TOPCATS SAFEGUARD LEAD
01502 531897/01502 581576
07919207771**

**DAVE AND EDITH JORDAN
SECRETARIES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
07759653555**

**CUSTOMER FIRST
0808 800 4005**

**CUSTOMER FIRST
PROFESSIONALS
0345 6061499**

**POLICE EMERGENCY
999**