

Staying Safe at Common Ground



Summary of Safeguarding Approach

Introduction

Common Ground will be delivered in accordance with [Woodcraft Folk](#) & [IFM-SEI](#)'s Safeguarding Policies. Both organisations' safeguarding approach is rooted in the following principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, guardians and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare

Overview

Safeguarding of children and young people on camp will be co-ordinated and overseen by the Common Ground Safeguarding Team, comprising representatives from the Common Ground board, Woodcraft Folk and IFM-SEI.

Each village must identify a named Village Safeguarding Lead, who will act as a point of contact for any safeguarding concerns, issues or queries from adults or young people in the village. They will work with the Village Co-ordinator and other volunteers throughout the camp to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is prioritised. They will be responsible for reporting or escalating any issues to the Safeguarding Team as required.

Programme Centres and Site Stewards are required to report any incidents or concerns directly to the Safeguarding Team.

Each day, a Duty Safeguarding Officer from the above team will be based in the Camp Office, or contactable by radio during core hours (11:00 to 22:00) to respond to any issues or incidents. Issues can also be shared or escalated via the safeguarding inbox, safeguarding@woodcraft.org.uk, which will be monitored throughout the event.

Screening & Vetting

Organisers will ensure that adult (18+) volunteers from Woodcraft Folk attending the event are members of the organisation and have completed screening and vetting checks necessary for their role, including DBS and/or PVG record checks.

UK-based members aged 16 and 17 attending must be members of Woodcraft Folk, but are only required to undergo volunteer screening if they are taking on a volunteering role at the event (e.g. steward, centre volunteer, workshop leader).

International visitors will be expected to complete (either in advance of the event or on arrival) a Safeguarding Declaration, indicating that they will comply with policies and procedures to protect young people, and that they do not have criminal convictions that would bar them from working with vulnerable groups. Additionally, IFM-SEI partner organisations will be expected to confirm the suitability of their volunteers/adult members attending the event.

Invited guests (e.g. workshop leaders from partner organisations) will be asked to complete a similar declaration, and will have a named supervisor while at camp.

Staying Safe on Camp

Each village's volunteers, with the support of the Village Co-ordinator and the Village Safeguarding Lead, will be expected to agree on their approach to safeguard all under 18s in the village. Each village must ensure:

- appropriate support for children who are on camp unaccompanied - e.g. identifying 'tent parents' to check in on their welfare
- the volunteer leaders responsible for each age group are clearly identified, ensuring appropriate adult:child ratios are met for each age range
- young people are appropriately supervised at all times, in the village and when attending daytime and evening activities in the central area
- boundaries that will apply to young people of different ages are clearly defined and understood, e.g. whether they can leave the village in small groups without an adult
- risk assessments are completed for programme activities delivered in the village, and any risks are appropriately controlled
- sign-in for young people attending late evening programme takes place, as outlined in the Code of Conduct and having clear systems for welfare check-ins as appropriate
- that volunteers are able to respond effectively to an emergency - if adults choose to drink alcohol in the evenings, sufficient adults to respond in an emergency must not drink alcohol - this may be organised on a rota basis
- all adults and young people understand how to share any concerns, and who they should address these to

At the start of camp, and when new campers join the village, age-appropriate induction workshops will be delivered at a village level, which will include information and activities addressing expected behaviour, boundaries and consent. Safeguarding information and key contacts will also be included in the camp guide issued to all participants.

Villages should ensure that all adults have appropriate training/briefing to support their role in safeguarding children and young people at camp. As a minimum, Village Safeguarding Leads should have completed either:

- a Level 1 Introduction to Safeguarding course (usually provided free through local safeguarding partnerships)
- the National Youth Agency's 'Safeguarding In a Youth Work Setting' course, available to complete online through the [NYA Safeguarding Hub](#)

Volunteers with a central role (e.g. stewards, programme centre volunteer) will receive safeguarding briefing relevant to their role as part of their induction to Common Ground.

Supporting Young People & Adults

Throughout the event, age group leaders should schedule regular meetings with the group to give space for individuals to share what they are enjoying and to raise concerns or questions. It is also recommended practice that the named adult also has a conversation with each individual daily to make sure all is well.

Village Safeguarding Leads should act as a first point of call for any safeguarding issues or concerns in the village. Young people may share a concern or disclosure with their leader or any other trusted adult - this should be communicated to the Village Safeguarding Lead at the earliest opportunity.

A Duty Safeguarding Officer will be available to contact each day via the Common Ground Office if additional support or advice is required. Concerns can be shared with the Safeguarding Team by emailing safeguarding@woodcraft.org.uk.

Stewards will be on duty in central areas during programmed activities, and on site overnight, and can assist with any issues or concerns.

Drop-in services available on camp include:

- Sanctuary, a space for YOUth - this will be a safe space staffed by volunteers with a range of experience and qualifications in mental health and allied disciplines as well as representatives from the MEST UP team who will be available for peer support.
- The Positive Energy Bubble - a wellbeing space aimed at volunteers

Other support is available from:

- ChildLine (0800 1111 or childline.org.uk)
- Crisis Messenger (text THEMIX to 85258)
- NSPCC helpline (0808 800 5000)

Responding to Issues

Children & Young People

All issues relating to the wellbeing or safety of a child or young person identified at a village level should be referred to the Village Safeguarding Lead, who will, if necessary, seek input from the group leader responsible for child(ren) in question. Such issues may include:

- Serious or repeated breaches of the Code of Conduct
- Bullying between young people
- Suspicion, allegation or disclosure of peer-to-peer abuse
- Disclosure by a child of abuse at home, school, camp or other setting
- Misuse of alcohol or other intoxicating/controlled substances
- Allegations of criminal behaviour
- Instances of self harm
- Mental health crisis

Significant concerns about the welfare of a child or young person must be shared with the Duty Safeguarding Officer, who will advise on any further action required. This may include monitoring the situation for a period, or referral to other agencies.

Adults

Concerns about the behaviour of adults that pose a risk to the safety and wellbeing of children or young people must also be referred to the Village Safeguarding Lead, who will notify the Duty Safeguarding Officer. The Duty Safeguarding Officer will advise on any further action required, and ensure that the correct procedures are followed and any external agencies notified/involved as necessary.

Allegations of misconduct or inappropriate behaviour by members of Woodcraft Folk staff should be brought to the attention of the Chief Executive, who will ensure that correct disciplinary procedures are followed.

Accident or Injury

Accidents or injuries to any participants will be attended to by first aiders on site, an ambulance called if necessary, and referred either to Camp Health Service or local NHS services as appropriate.

Details of first aid given must be recorded in writing. Any injury or condition requiring follow up from the Camp Health Service, an ambulance or A&E visit, GP appointment or referral to the NHS 111 service must be reported to the Duty Safeguarding Officer or notified by email to safeguarding@woodcraft.org.uk.

The Duty Safeguarding Officer will consider if further action is required, e.g. review and updating of risk assessments, additional behaviour guidelines, advice or support to volunteers.