

## **Safeguarding Policy Statement for Ventures and Falcons**

Ventures and Falcons are engaged primarily in children's and young people's ministry. The Board of Trustees of CPAS takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people entrusted to the care of agents of the charity, i.e. volunteer leaders of Ventures and Falcons. It is vital that safeguarding is given paramount importance, for the sake of the children and those who volunteer with children. Children and young people cannot flourish and grow in faith where they are being abused or bullied. Thus safeguarding supports our vision and our work.

### **What Does Safeguarding Include?**

A child is anyone under the age of 18. Safeguarding, promoting welfare and child protection includes the following:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances. As part of our safeguarding responsibility, Ventures and Falcons is committed to:
  - Listening to, relating effectively to and valuing children and young people whilst ensuring their protection within Ventures and Falcons activities.
  - Having a system for dealing with complaints about Ventures and Falcons, including concerns about harm or abuse occurring during the event or afterwards.
  - Ensuring that volunteers are given support and training.
  - Maintaining appropriate links with the statutory child care authorities.

Ventures and Falcons recognise that many children and young people today are the victims of neglect and physical, sexual, emotional harm and abuse. Accordingly, Ventures and Falcons has adopted the Safeguarding Policy and related procedures in this section and set out in full in the Safeguarding Officer's Handbook. The policy and procedures cover the following areas:

- What to do if you are worried a child/young person might have been harmed.
- Responding to formal or informal complaints and allegations of abuse, including those made against volunteers or volunteers of Ventures or Falcons.
- Appointing, supporting and training volunteers of Ventures and Falcons.
- Supervision of activities and safeguarding good practice.
- Challenging poor safeguarding practices.
- Supporting victims of abuse.
- Working with those who may pose a risk.
- Reviewing the events, the policies and procedures and learning from year to year.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone on a Venture or Falcon holiday, not just the designated Safeguarding Officer and Overall Leaders. Every volunteer is responsible for their own behaviour and ensuring the safety and welfare of children, young people and adults at risk both during an event and in any contact after an event. In addition, volunteers are required to watch out for each other in ensuring that good practice is followed. However, all Overall Leaders of Ventures and Falcons are responsible for ensuring that each member of their team understands the Safeguarding Policy and its associated procedures. The Overall Leader has a summary of the policy for this purpose, but they should also familiarise themselves with the responsibilities of each special delegated role.

In addition, Ventures and Falcons is committed to providing ongoing training for Overall Leaders. This policy is in place to protect children and young people, but also to protect volunteers from allegations which may be unfounded. It also demonstrates our continued commitment to safety,

good practice and accountability. This policy statement refers to safeguarding policies and procedures regarding the welfare and protection of children/young people including the promotion of good practice and the prevention of situations which may lead to abuse. It includes disclosures and allegations of abuse, be that physical, emotional or sexual abuse, neglect or organised abuse. Policy concerning issues of general safety and health on Ventures and Falcons are to be found in the Overall Leader's handbook and in specific handbooks for these specially delegated officers.

The Safeguarding Policy and related procedures have been prepared in accordance with up to date statutory guidance and guidelines provided by a qualified and independent safeguarding consultant. They are subject to an annual review and for this reason volunteers should attend safeguarding training each year.

### **Helping Survivors of Abuse**

If a victim or survivor of abuse discloses current or non-recent abuse at a Venture or Falcon it is important to listen, not to judge and not to investigate. It is important to recognise the courage shown by anyone who discloses abuse and the need to refer such concerns to the authorities, especially when the person concerned and/or others are still at risk. Always consult with the Safeguarding Officer or the VF office. Advice should be sought from our external safeguarding consultant, thirtyone:eight.

We consider the support of victims of abuse to be important and that the proper place for this is in the context of the local church, not just for a few days during a short residential event. Overall Leaders should encourage such victims of abuse to talk to a group volunteer at their church or school (offering, if possible, to be with them when they do so) so that they can receive on-going support.

### **Positions of Trust**

As a charity we recognise the trust placed in volunteers by parents and all members. It is therefore unacceptable for volunteers to abuse their position of trust in particular by engaging in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop whilst the relationship of trust continues. We consider it of paramount importance to protect the welfare of the young people in our care and protect them from sexual activity from those looking after them. Volunteers on Ventures and Falcons must recognise that they are in a position of trust and that they are not to abuse that relationship. This includes abuse in any contact or communications, including the making, sending or viewing of inappropriate material, either during or following an event.

All volunteers have a duty to raise concerns to the Safeguarding Officer about behaviour by any volunteer which may be harmful to those in their care, or which may be negligent concerning safeguarding or safety procedures. These principles of the 'abuse of trust' apply irrespective of sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, etc. Any volunteer with any concerns about this area (for example, if they feel they may already be in breach of our safeguarding policies) should raise them immediately with their Overall Leader. Undertaking or continuing a sexual relationship whilst in a position of trust may be a criminal offence and therefore clarification should be sought.