

## Wild Flower Society Safeguarding Policy 07.03.2023

Approved by the Executive Committee 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023

To be reviewed annually at the March Executive Committee Meeting, or more often if necessary.

Safeguarding Officers	Contact
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Run by its members, the WFS is an organisation which values diversity and which is committed to a culture of inclusion. Our safeguarding policy is intended to ensure that everyone can participate in our activities and develop a shared understanding and appreciation of the flora of Britain, Ireland and the Channel Islands.

The policy applies to all trustees, volunteers, including leaders of meetings, members and other people participating in WFS activities.

The WFS is committed to:

- promoting a safe and congenial environment for members;
- ensuring the safety of all adults, including adults at risk, children and young people in the Society (see end of policy for definition of adults at risk);
- responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation;
- being welcoming and supportive of members of all abilities, from beginners to experts;
- ensuring discussions and debates are carried out in a respectful manner.

The WFS will:

- ensure that Health and Safety risk assessments are carried out and the risks communicated to meeting participants;
- ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the Society;
- have two named Safeguarding Officers who work with the Executive Committee to implement the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures;
- display on the website the Safeguarding Policy together with the contact details of the Safeguarding Officers;
- publish in the Year Book, a paragraph explaining what the Safeguarding Policy is intended to cover, the contact details of the Safeguarding Officers and a link to the Policy on the WFS website as well as an invitation to anyone without access to the website to request a copy;
- circulate the Policy to all Committee members, Branch Secretaries and meeting leaders;
- listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse and follow the appropriate procedures, which could include sharing concerns with agencies who need to know;
- direct any victims of abuse to appropriate sources of support;
  
- insist that children and young people under 18 who attend WFS events or are involved in WFS activities as part of larger events, must always be accompanied by a responsible adult;

- insist that if members or volunteers work with schools or other children's or youth groups, the teacher/group leader remains present at all times;
- insist that members or volunteers should not, when acting in their capacity as a WFS member, arrange to meet individually with a child or young person without the permission or presence of a responsible adult;
- ensure that any correspondence between the Junior Branch Secretary and members under 18 is sent with the presumption that it may be read by their parent or guardian;
- ensure that the Junior Branch Secretary has a DBS check, which should be renewed every 5 years;
- seek to create an anti-bullying environment and ensure we have effective complaints procedures to deal with bullying or inappropriate behaviour when it does arise;
- review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and procedures annually, or more often if necessary.

WFS members and volunteers are expected to:

- treat all people with respect;
- provide a good example of acceptable behaviour;
- respect the preferences and boundaries of others regarding personal space and physical contact;
- show understanding when dealing with sensitive issues;
- use risk assessment for all activities;
- take appropriate action to report any incidence of inappropriate behaviour or bullying to the Safeguarding Officer. This should be done confidentially and in writing.

WFS members and volunteers should not:

- permit abusive behaviour;
- make suggestive or inappropriate remarks or actions;
- deliberately place themselves or others in a compromising situation;
- let suspicion, disclosure or allegations of abuse go unrecorded or reported.

*Anyone who considers that they have experienced, witnessed or been informed about any incidence of abuse should report it to one of the Safeguarding Officers, whose names are at the beginning of this document, as well as in the Year Book and on the WFS website.*

*This should be done confidentially and in writing.*

## **Safeguarding Procedures**

### **Protection of Trustees, Volunteers and Members**

#### **Procedure for reporting Bullying (physical or emotional abuse) or Inappropriate Behaviour**

Report to one of the Safeguarding Officers or other member of the Executive Committee, making a written account of the complaint.

In consultation with the person who raised the issue, the Safeguarding Officer will:

- Look into the complaint in a way that's fair and sensitive to:
  - i) the person who made the complaint;
  - ii) anyone who witnessed it;
  - iii) anyone accused of bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation.
- Report to the complainant and the Executive Committee on actions taken.
- If the person about whom a complaint has been made is a member of the EC then that person will not be involved in any of the EC consultations on the matter.

#### **Safeguarding of Children, Young People or Adults at risk (see end for definitions of 'at risk' and 'abuse')**

**Safeguarding Procedures in event of an allegation of abuse (or suspicion thereof) made during a WFS event or activity, in relation to a person at risk, child or young person.**

##### **Immediate:**

**If person (adult at risk, child, young person) is at imminent risk:**

- in an emergency call 999.

**If not an emergency:**

- make a written record (record your concerns or observations and sign and date these);
- inform the Safeguarding Officer.

##### **Within 24 hours, if incident ongoing or likely to happen again:**

- provide a written record to the Safeguarding Officer;
- the Safeguarding Officer will then consult with the WFS Executive Committee and the appropriate Authorities (Police or Social Services)

##### **Within 7 days, if general concern but no immediate harm:**

- provide a written record to the Safeguarding Officer;
- the Safeguarding Officer will then consult with the WFS Executive Committee and decide whether or not to make a referral.

**Safeguarding Officer to inform person reporting disclosure of action taken.**

##### **Guidance for responding to a disclosure.**

If someone tells you that they, or someone they know, are being abused:

- assume what the person is saying to be true and take it seriously;

- reassure the person who has made the disclosure to you that they have done the right thing;
- give the person time to talk and do not probe or ask leading questions. Investigation is not your responsibility;
- where possible, if the person is an adult, obtain their agreement before sharing personal information with third parties;
- do not promise to keep secrets. Allegations of harm or potential harm must be acted upon. However, the information will only be disclosed on a 'need to know' basis and will not be shared more widely;
- explain to the person that you will share this information with the WFS Safeguarding Officer, who will ensure the appropriate procedures will be followed;
- respond within 24 hours to e-mails or text messages received giving details of suspected abuse (usually by contacting the person by phone or face-to-face to obtain further information);
- record the event in accordance with WFS's Safeguarding Policy.

**Reporting Procedures – DO NOT DELAY. It is vitally important that any disclosure made in confidence is recorded factually as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours; this is whether or not the matter is taken to another authority.**

An accurate account should be made of:

- names of person reporting and to whom reported;
- date and time of what has occurred and the time the disclosure was made;
- names of people who were involved;
- what was said or done by whom.

A copy of the report should be kept securely by the Safeguarding Officer.

**Remember:**

- the interests of the child, young person or adult at risk are paramount;
- in cases of suspected abuse all members and volunteers have a responsibility to take action in the ways set out in WFS's Safeguarding Policy;
- immediate action, to refer or consult, is required where there is suspicion of abuse;
- investigation is the responsibility of the relevant Authority;
- record-keeping is essential at each stage and all documents should be kept to the standards outlined in the policy.

**Definition of Adults at risk:**

A person aged 18 years or over, who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

This means that not all adults are at risk but some may be at risk at times and others will be at risk all the time.

**Definition of Abuse:**

Abuse is causing someone harm or distress. It can take many forms, ranging from disrespect to causing someone physical or mental harm.

Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly and is defined by the impact on the individual not the intention of the abuser.