



# **Safeguarding Children Policy for The Isle of May Bird Observatory Trust & Field Station**

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Isle of May Bird Observatory Trust & Field Station (the Trust) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated organisation (SCIO) (Charity Number SC001783).
- 1.2 The Trust operates its core activities from its base (known as the Low Light) situated on the Isle of May (Fife).
- 1.3 The Trust is managed by a board of trustees. Several trustees have a particular responsibility for supervising children/young people from time to time, notably Young Birders' Training course leaders and volunteer work party leaders, to which this policy specifically relates.
- 1.4 The Trust has adopted this Safeguarding Children Policy and expects every adult working or helping during Low Light and/or Isle of May activities to support it and comply with it. Consequently, this policy applies to all Trustees, volunteers, students or anyone appointed by or working with or acting on behalf of the Trust.

## **2.0 Purpose of the Policy**

- 2.1 This policy is intended to protect children (15 and under) and young people (aged 16 - 17) who receive any service from the Trust or are involved in any activities on the Isle of May, connected with the Isle of May Bird Observatory (IOMBO) which also includes Low Light occupancy.
- 2.2 As an organisation, the Trust believes that everyone it comes into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Trust is committed to the protection of children and young people and this policy is intended to provide guidance and overarching principles to those who represent the Trust as volunteers (e.g. course leaders / work party leaders) to guide our approach to child protection and safeguarding.

## **3.0 Definitions of Safeguarding**

- 3.1 Safeguarding means protecting an individual's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.
- 3.2 It means protecting people, including children/young people from any harm that might arise when they are in contact with Trustees and volunteers with courses, work parties or programmes.

- 3.3 Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect vulnerable children/young people from that harm; and to respond appropriately in the event that when harm does occur.
- 3.4 Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across our activities, partners and trustees and volunteers. It requires proactively identifying, preventing and guarding against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable and transparent systems for response, reporting and learning when risks materialise.
- 3.5 It should also be strongly emphasised in this section that the Isle of May is predominantly a rocky island with high cliffs along part of its coastline. It is also important to protect young people from any physical harm by appropriate supervision.
- 3.6 Safeguarding puts beneficiaries and affected persons at the centre of all we do.
- 3.7 In summary, the Trust is dedicated to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of this Safeguarding Policy.

#### **4.0 The risks to children and young people**

- 4.1 Nearly every child and young person grows up in a safe and happy environment and it is important not to exaggerate or overestimate the dangers. Nevertheless, there are situations where children and young people need protection including :
- Sexual abuse
  - Grooming
  - Physical and emotional abuse and neglect
  - Domestic violence
  - Inappropriate supervision by staff / volunteers
  - Bullying, cyber bullying, acts of violence, aggression within schools, campuses or other learning environments
  - Victimisation
  - Self harm
  - Unsafe environments or activities
  - Crime
  - Exploitation

#### **5.0 Safeguarding children and young people during activities or programmes on the Isle of May**

- 5.1 Programmes or activities on the island are defined broadly to include any occasions where the Trust will be organising an activity or providing a service. There

are three occasions which relate directly to 'services' provided by the Trust on the Isle of May - all of which centre around the Low Light :

**1)** Young Birders' Training Course (1 week annually) involving six participants / students (male and female aged 16-25).

**2)** Volunteer Work Party Programmes (up to 4 weeks) involving young people and adults (male / female) to assist with a wide range of practical tasks in and around the Low Light and other island structures (including landscaping).

**3)** Weekly occupancy of the Low Light from April to November each year by private individuals and parties (maximum of six participants) which can involve children and young people provided they are in close supervision of adults aged 18 or over.

5.2 With regard to **Points 1 & 2** above, such programmes and activities may involve young people aged 16 or 17, in which case such an individual who attends unaccompanied by a parent is required to provide written consent to participate in the said course or programme. The consent must also include a mobile telephone number of one of their parents. Written consents must be submitted to course and work party leaders at least 14 days prior to the activity. On no account should consents be provided to leaders only on arrival to the island.

5.3 **Point 3** relates to the groups or parties staying at the Low Light. Such parties may have children and young people in them and they require to have a designated leader / responsible adult per party. Although this policy does not relate directly to this 'group', all children aged 15 or under, must be in the care of a parent or of an adult who holds written consent from the child's / young person's parent.

5.4 If a lone adult brings more than one child onto the island, then the children must stay together, so that the adult (party leader) can supervise them. Any young person aged 16 or 17 attending in such a group unaccompanied by a parent should provide written consent and mobile telephone number of one of their parents. Note that it is the responsibility of the Party Leader to undertake this task and not the Trust and that the written consent from a parent for a child or a young person to stay at the observatory should be submitted with the party application to stay at the Low Light.

5.5 It is the sole responsibility of the parent, guardian or Party Leader to ensure adequate supervision is provided throughout the duration of the stay on the island.

## **6.0 Disclosure and Barring**

6.1 As intimated, the Trust offers an annual Young Birders' Training Course and on occasions, a Volunteer Work Party programme for young people annually on the Isle of May. Those activities may involve 16 or 17 year olds to which this policy specifically relates.

- 6.2 Those activities specified above require adult participants or adult leaders to undergo the relevant Disclosure (PVG) checks under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. The required level of checking will broadly reflect the degree and frequency of unsupervised access given to other people's children (young people).
- 6.3 Applications for adult participants or party leaders to register with the PVG scheme require to be processed directly by the Lead Signatory on behalf of the Trust.
- 6.4 The Trust will take very seriously any suspicion or allegation of impropriety on the part of any member of the Trust. A member of the Trust who discovers anything of concern should get in touch immediately with one or more of the following :
- Chairperson
  - Secretary
  - Lead Signatory
- 6.5 The Trust will then review the allegation and the likely risk to children/young people and, if appropriate, will consider one or more of the following courses of action :
- banning the member from future activity (pursuant with the rules and procedures of the Trust)
  - revoking his or her membership of the Trust (pursuant with the rules and procedures of the Trust)
  - reporting to the police where a law has been suspected to have been broken

## **7.0 Health and Safety aspects of safeguarding children / young people**

- 7.1 Before starting any course or programme for unaccompanied children (young people), the Trust will carry out a Health & Safety Risk Assessment (RA) and then take steps to minimise all risks to Health and Safety. Parents and children (young people) will be made aware of any particular risks and of the steps to minimise and control those risks. The Trust will keep a record of all risk assessments. It shall be the responsibility of the course leader(s) to ensure that RA's are carried out, proper mitigation and controls put in place and a record sent to the Honorary Secretary for safekeeping.
- 7.2 A sufficient number of adults must be present during any course or programme for unaccompanied children / young people to enable one adult to deal with any emergency while another adult supervises other young people not directly affected by the emergency.

## **8.0 Policy on the prevention of bullying**

- 8.1 The Trust will not tolerate the bullying of children / young people either by adults or by other children / young people. If any incident occurs of this nature during a course or work party programme, leaders will require to respond in an appropriate manner and if deemed necessary, and through consultation with those defined in

paragraph 6.4 and the parent, the perpetrator may be required to terminate their participation in the said activity and be escorted off the island at a suitably negotiated time.

## **9.0 Photographing children / young people**

9.1 Individuals, aged 16 or above, participating in courses, programmes or volunteering may have their photographs taken to illustrate the work done on the island and the Trust reserves the right to publish suitable photographs of those participating, along with the names of those shown in the photographs.

9.2 Photographs of those under 16 participating in programmes may only be used where express permission is provided by a parent or guardian.

## **10.0 References**

10.1 This policy has been drawn up in accordance with the following :

- Children Act 1989
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991
- General Data Protection Regulation
- Children(Scotland) Act 1995
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2016
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Information sharing : Advice for Practitioners providing safeguarding services
- Working Together to safeguard children (2013)

## **11.0 Policy Monitoring**

11.1 The policy will be reviewed a year after introduction and then every three years, or in the following circumstances :

- changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- as a result of any other significant change or event

Issue date 31/07/2019

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Lead Signatory – safeguarding advisor)

signed \_\_\_\_\_ (IOMBOT Chairperson)

signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Honorary Secretary)

*On behalf of the IOMBO Management Committee*