

# WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY

Snowdonia National Park Authority



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## 1.0 Policy Statement

1.1 Snowdonia National Park Authority wishes to ensure that children and young people enjoy their experience in Snowdonia given it is important that we nurture an awareness and a sense of excitement about the work that we do here. Through this policy, we commit to the highest possible standards relating to child protection and we will take the necessary steps to ensure the health and well being of the children and young people with whom we work through

- Work experience
- Visits to schools/colleges/centres
- Tour / field work
- Overnight course
- Events

The aim of the Policy is to prepare clear and specific guidelines that the 'Working with Children and Young People' process can build upon. The policy is relevant to all SNPA staff who have contact with children and young people. By implementing this policy we can work more confidently with children and young people by taking the appropriate measures to ensure that children and young people are safe and that procedures are in place to deal with any situation that may arise.

1.2 "Children and Young People/Persons" for the purposes of this policy mean persons under 18 years of age.

1.3 "Teachers" for for the purposes of this policy mean responsible adults who are responsible for the children. It does not include SNPA staff.

1.4 "Staff" for the purposes of this policy mean staff that are employed or represented by the Snowdonia National park Authority.

All staff will be informed about the policy and the guidelines within it to ensure their protection as well as the protection of children.

## **2.0 Appropriate Staff**

2.1 The Authority has registered with the Criminal Records Bureau and will where appropriate use this to conduct checks on current and new staff to ensure that they are not disqualified from working with children and young people. All members of staff who work directly with children and young people or have or are likely to have relevant unsupervised access to children and young people in the course of their employment will be subject to such checks prior to the commencement of their employment or the placement. The level of disclosure applied for will be according to the guidelines provided by the CRB for each particular job.

2.2 The Authority will conform with the new legislation (2009) controlled by the Independent Safeguarding Authority in relation to registering staff who work with children and young people.

2.3 Where a member of staff or a prospective member of staff is employed or to be employed in a Regulated Position as defined by Section 36 of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 then the Authority will require the member of staff to comply with an enhanced disclosure requirement. If a Member of staff fails to comply with such a requirement then he or she will not be employed or will not be permitted to continue to work in a Regulated Position.

## **3.0 Work Experience**

The Authority welcomes children and young people from local schools/colleges/centres on work experience placements with the Authority; both to learn about employment opportunities, and to be made aware of the impact of the Authority's work on the National Park environment whilst taking the necessary steps to safeguard both the children and young people and National Park Authority staff during that time.

3.1 The Authority will only accept work experience placements from children and young people from schools/colleges/centres listed as "local", that is, within or close to the National Park boundary.

3.2 Schools/colleges/centres on the list will be informed of the contents of this policy and will be expected to conform to it and to ensure that the policy is adhered to. The Authority will work closely with local schools/colleges/centres to ensure placements during their allocated work experience week.

3.3 All work experience placements must be processed by the Administration Department. No member of staff will directly arrange a work experience placement.

3.4 Children or young people who apply for work experience through their educational establishment will receive a 'Work Experience' form from the Authority which needs to be completed and returned promptly as part of the application process. Information about the individual is requested, subjects studied, interests, school/college/centre and home contact numbers and any health/medical problems that the individual may have which may affect the work experience placement. The children or young person's personal details remain confidential to the Personnel/administrative services unless there are medical or safety reasons which require the information to be disclosed.

3.5 Children or young people accepted on work experience will receive a confirmation letter noting the location of their work experience, where to meet on the first day, start and finishing times, appropriate dress code and lunch arrangements.

3.6 Members of staff who undertake supervision of work placements will be provided with training and guidance on safe working with children and young people before the placement is undertaken. This will include location risk assessments, transport arrangements and emergency procedures.

3.7 When the children or young people arrive at the location, the emergency procedure will be explained to them. This will include procedures both for inside a building and also how to deal with emergencies out in the field. They will also be told what to do if they become ill and unable to attend on a given day or become ill during a placement day.

3.8 Every effort will be made to place a youngster at a desired location. This location may change on a daily basis so that they may experience a wider range of work situations.

3.9 Either the child / young person's parents or school/college/centre will be responsible for ensuring that the child/young person reaches that destination in the morning and is collected at the end of the working day at a pre-agreed location.

3.10 No member of SNPA staff should be wholly responsible for a child or young person on work experience. Ideally, two members of staff should be present with the child or young person at any given time. If the staff leave the office on duty with the child / young person, they should inform the office where they are going, mode of transport and

when they expect to return. A risk assessment of the work location should be undertaken ahead of the visit and a copy of the assessment left at a central location.

3.11 Children and young people will not be transported to and from a work placement destination by another member of staff without the administrator of the work placements

- a) being made aware of the arrangement.
- b) ensuring that that member of staff has been checked by the CRB.
- c) ensuring that permission has been granted by the parent/guardian ahead of the visit.

#### **4.0 Schools, Colleges and Education Centre Visits and Events**

4.1 The Authority's Staff especially the Education Officers attend schools/colleges/centres within the Park and the surrounding area to inform and educate pupils (children / young people) of the work of the Authority. The staff will adhere to the guidelines of visiting a school/college/centre.

4.2 The member of staff will announce their arrival to the Head Teacher, deputy or relevant teacher and will comply fully with the school's/colleges/centre's procedures on behaviour and discipline. The officer will always be accompanied by the class teacher who is responsible for the children / young people and all pupil discipline matters will be dealt with by the class teacher.

4.3 SNPA staff organise and attend a range of events and shows including children's activities and demonstrations. Although these events are in a public forum, staff will need to be aware of the safety and well being of the children/young people and ensure the appropriate level of supervision and staff presence.

#### **5.0 Leading Tours / Fieldwork**

As part of its work at Plas Tan y Bwlch the Authority's staff lead groups of children and young people on field study visits. These provide pupils with experiences which are part of the environmental education which is offered promoting the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area. This requires staff members to take extra care for the safety of the group.

5.1 All the Authority's staff leading field study visits with children and young people will have been trained in risk assessment procedures and

will comply with those procedures. This will ensure that they are skilled in identifying potential hazards and dangers to the group or to individuals and consideration is given to any action that is required to reduce the risk. A copy of the written risk assessment will be made available to the school/centre/college and any field study visits conducted will be undertaken according to the county's guidelines on tour leading.

5.2 Staff who lead field study visits will have an appropriate level of training or experience to undertake such activities. Each officer leading a study visit will be a qualified First Aider.

5.3 The Authority does not undertake activities which are required to be licensed under the provisions of the Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995 (Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996) (See Annex 1). Where the Authority is requested to provide assistance to groups undertaking activities which require such a licence it will only do so when it is satisfied that, notwithstanding the presence of Authority staff, the activity is licensed and that the arrangements for the activity and its supervision wholly comply with the requirement of the licence.

5.4 The leader of the visit will inform school/centre/college groups of the standards of clothing and equipment required prior to the visit. The teachers will be responsible for ensuring that the children / young people are adequately equipped at the outset. Final inspection before the visit will be made by the staff and if a child or young person is inadequately equipped and alternative equipment is not available he or she will not be allowed to attend.

5.5 Staff leading a field study visit will leave a route map and itinerary at Plas Tan y Bwlch and a copy will have been sent to the school as part of the risk assessment. Staff will carry a rucksack containing a first aid kit, mobile telephone, plastic whistle, exposure bag, compass, site related OS map and torch.

5.6 Staff will ensure that groups on visits in any location have an adequate level of supervision and ratio of Authority staff / teachers to pupils as shown below.

AGE	RATIO
under 8 years of age	2 adults to 12 children/young person, thereafter 1 adult to every additional 8 children/young person
under 12 years of age	2 adults to 15 children/young person, thereafter 1 adult to every additional 10 children/young person
over 12 years of age	2 adults to 20 children/young person, thereafter 1 adult to every additional 10

5.7 The discipline of the children/young people during any field study visit will be the responsibility of the teacher in charge, the Authority's officer leading the group informing the teacher if any behaviour which may cause harm to themselves or others in the group is observed. The teacher will remain in loco parentis. The leader of the group will give advice on the conduct of the field visit throughout and if at any time, for whatever reason, the leader finds it inappropriate to continue he or she will terminate the field visit.

## **6.0 Residential Visits**

6.1 Any member of staff at Plas Tan y Bwlch will have received specific training relating to working with children and young people. This training will highlight the issues of working with children and young people, the legislation and how it impacts on the work of the individual and the centre. Any other members of staff who work alongside or instead of Plas staff and those working an overnight duty will also receive the appropriate training on working with children and young people. Staff on overnight duty will also be first aid qualified.

6.2 It will be the responsibility of the teacher on duty to discipline the children / young people if necessary during any visit, particularly during 'free' periods. Authority staff will inform the teacher about any behaviour which may risk injury to another child/young person or him/her self or anyone else in the group. The teacher will be 'in loco parentis'.

6.3 Each school/centre/college will be responsible for ensuring the appropriate number of staff and maintain adequate staff/pupil ratio, in line with the overnight guidelines.

6.4 No member of staff will be allowed to enter children's/young person's bedrooms when occupied without a teacher being present. The exception to this is when an emergency occurs which requires immediate attention and relevant Emergency Procedures will be instigated.

6.5 When adult courses run parallel to school courses the children/young people will be accommodated in bedrooms which are not accessible to other adult attendees who are resident at Plas, other than teachers.

6.6 The Working with Children and Young People Policy and Plas Tan y Bwlch house procedures will be sent to the school/centre/college with the booking confirmation to inform headteachers and teachers of the

procedures in place regarding the Authority's staff working with children and young people.

6.7 Children/young people will not have access to the internet facilities at Plas Tan y Bwlch unless supervised by a Teacher.

## **7.0 Transport**

7.1 If the Authority offers to transport children and young people in the Authority's mini buses, the staff will

- Ensure that mini buses are regularly maintained and serviced and that the driver of the mini-bus ensures the safe condition of the vehicle before setting off, this includes checking the lights, brakes, water and oil, glass and tyres and for ensuring that the vehicle carries a stocked First Aid kit and Fire Extinguisher.
- Ensure that the driver of the mini bus holds a current and valid driving licence for the appropriate class of vehicle and that children/young people wear seat belts at all times.
- Ensure that children/young people cannot be left unsupervised in the vehicle and personal belongings or equipment must be packed securely without blocking the doors or gangways.
- Ensure that there is a second teacher or second adult onboard.

7.2 Children/young people will not be allowed to be driven by a staff member without the consent of the school/college/centre/parent and the staff member will be registered through the CRB.

7.3 Children/young people will only be transported in the Authority's vehicles if it is ensured that the children/young people are comfortable and safe.

Children/young people transported in other Authority owned vehicles or in an employee's own vehicle will be required to wear a seatbelt.

## **8.0 Ill treatment of Children and Young People**

8.1 Every effort will be made by the Authority to ensure that children and young people are not placed in a situation at risk to ill treatment by staff. Even though the main focus of the Working with Children and Young People Policy is to protect the children and young people in our care, we must also be aware that children and young people can make allegations of ill treatment against adults. These allegations can be made mistakenly or they can be malicious. By implementing this policy, the Authority aims to minimise the risk of such allegations being made.

8.2 If a child or young person makes an allegation against you as a member of staff, the Personnel Department should be informed as soon as possible. Such cases will be treated in confidence. Union members are also encouraged to contact their representative. The Authority will refer the matter to the appropriate Social Services who will investigate the allegation. Any investigation will be made with the complete co-operation of the SNPA. The Authority's Internal Disciplinary Procedure will also be implemented. During the course of the investigation, the member of staff will be moved to an area within the Authority where no contact with children/young people will be permitted.

8.3 If a child/young person states that he/she has been ill treated, or if you suspect that a child/young person has been ill treated, you should report the matter to the Personnel Department, noting your concerns. The Personnel Department will then give guidance on the matter.

## **9.0 Code of Conduct for Staff**

- You should take all necessary steps to ensure the health and well being of children and young people who come into contact with SNPA staff.
- Consider the needs of children and young people as those of adults. Do not force children or young people to undertake tasks unless they are comfortable in doing so.
- You should prevent another member of staff placing a child or young person at risk of injury.
- For the child's/young person's safety and your own, do not place yourself in a situation where you will be alone with a child/young person.

### **Note**

What does the Authority need to do to ensure that this Policy is implemented?

- Ensure that every member of staff receives a copy and reads it.
- Develop practical guidelines or documents, linked to this policy, stating clearly how the relevant Department will deal with specific situations.
- Offer training in risk assessments, transport arrangements and emergency procedures to those who are likely to be working with children and young people.
- Sustain procedures which ensure that no member of staff is placed in a situation where children or young people can make allegations against them.