

Safeguarding Under 18's (child/young person) Guidance

The term **child/young person** is anyone below the age of 18 years. Safeguarding children duties apply to any charity working with, or coming into contact with, anyone under the age of 18. Safeguarding children means to:

- protect children from abuse and maltreatment.
- prevent harm to children's health or development.
- ensure children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care.
- take action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

The RNLI is a charity that employs under 18's; recruits under 18 volunteers; supports under 18 apprentices; engages in under 18 youth engagement activities; supports under 18 work experience students; delivers educational material to under 18's; organises events and visits for the participation of under 18's; saves the lives of under 18's; (for reference the minimum age limit for the recruitment of operational lifeboat sea going and shore crew is 18 years old).

To ensure we safeguard all children and young people we come into contact with we must adhere to the below:

- Completion of the under 18 risk assessment when onboarding even when the activity is short term or temporary.
- Personal data collection and parental consent must be obtained.
- Emergency contact details must be obtained and stored in line with usual procedures.
- For under 16's all contact details and correspondence must be via the parental guardian (no personal contact details of the child should be held).
- For young people aged 16-18 parental guardian consent must be obtained for correspondence to be communicated directly with the young person and personal contact details to be held.
- For the recruitment of a volunteer under the age of 16 consultation on role suitability must be sought with the Safeguarding Team.
- For the recruitment of a volunteer under the age of 16 or a volunteer under 18 where there may be additional care and support needs suitable jurisdictional vetting will be required. Advice must be sought and agreed by the safeguarding team.
- Ensure all communications, including online, are transparent and open to scrutiny.
- Always supervise a child/young person within your area of responsibility and identify nominated supervisors.
- A child/young person should not be volunteering, working or participating in an activity or event and left alone.
- Always work, meet, advise, or provide a service to a child/young person in an open environment (avoid private or unobserved situations). In situations where urgent medical attention is required, consider the dignity and privacy of the child/young person, and provide care in a safe environment.

- Be an excellent role model – this includes not smoking, vaping, or drinking in the company of a child/young person.
- Do not take a child/young person in your vehicle, if you are required by exception, to transport them you must have explicit written parental guardian consent to do so.
- Do not share any personal information and not request, or respond to, any personal information from a young person.
- Do not share, view or manipulate pictures of young people unless expressed written consent for legitimate use of their photograph has been obtained by the parental guardian.

The following behaviour should never be sanctioned and will not be tolerated:

- Allow or engage in inappropriate physical (includes inappropriate touching), verbal, sexual, psychological, emotional, or financial behaviours, games or online content.
- Allow or engage in the use of inappropriate language, sexualised language, make sexually suggestive comments or engage in any sexualised conversation.
- Allow a child/young person to be exploited for the purpose of personal or group gratification.
- View, share, download, produce, sell, manipulate or create AI explicit images of a child or young person.
- Dismiss the concerns and or allow allegations made by a child or young person to go unrecorded, unreported, or not acted upon.
- Provide a child/young person with any illegal substances.
- Take a child/young person to a licensed premise without the parental guardian, purchase or provide alcohol to a young person.

You **must** report all Safeguarding concerns, allegations or incidents involving a child/young person to the Safeguarding team immediately and without fail.

Confidentiality is paramount in dealing with safeguarding concerns, therefore limiting the number of people who are aware of the concern.

The Safeguarding Team **must** report all safeguarding matters which involve a child or young person to the relevant authorities, including the Local Authority Designated Officer or relevant children's social service, within 24-hours of the concern being raised.

The Safeguarding Team will be the point of contact for external agencies on behalf of the RNLI on all safeguarding matters (unless otherwise directed).

Where matters reported are criminal in nature, the Safeguarding Team will report to all relevant external agencies in a timely manner.