

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Practice Guidelines for RSCDS Branches and Affiliated Groups

This document contains information and advice for those running classes or events in Branches or Affiliated Groups.

Policy statement

The RSCDS policy is to foster inclusion and to ensure that any 'vulnerable people' (children, young people or adults), are protected and kept safe from harm whilst they are with members of the RSCDS, for example, attending events or classes run by the RSCDS/RSCDS members.

It is expected that:

- All members working with or having unsupervised access to 'vulnerable people' should hold the appropriate level of legal checks required in the country of operation. In the UK this is determined by the code of practice issued under section 122(2) of the Police Act 1997 requiring [Disclosure and Barring Service](#) (DBS) checks (eg through Disclosure Scotland, etc - see Appendix 1 for guidance on which Agency to contact in the UK).
- All members should have access to advice and support through their Branches to help them to understand and fulfil their role where this involves vulnerable people.
- Activities should take place in a safe and secure environment, which has been risk assessed as appropriate to the participating group and activity
- Appropriate action is taken in response to any concerns about abuse/ allegations of abuse as RSCDS members know the process to be followed.

RSCDS Branches and Affiliated Groups intending to/working with vulnerable people should have a Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy in place, along with procedures for members to follow and appropriate forms for them to complete in the event of concerns being raised about abuse/allegations of abuse.

A member of the Branch Committee or Affiliated Group Committee should take a lead role in liaising with the local officials holding responsibility for Safeguarding policy, procedures and practice, to understand how the procedures work locally (e.g. who to contact in an emergency) and to access useful training and support.

All relevant volunteers should be informed and supported in implementing good practice.

Definitions

For the purpose of this document (and as specified by The Police Act 1997 (Enhanced Criminal Record Certificates) (Protection of Vulnerable Adults) Regulations 2002:

- a child is a person under the age of 18, and
- a person may be considered a vulnerable adult if they are 18 years or over and have either a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness or drug/alcohol addiction or a reduction in physical or mental capacity which leads to reduced ability to protect themselves from assault, abuse or neglect.

Document Review History

Safeguarding policy and practice guidelines should be reviewed regularly, at least annually, checked against national legislative requirements and signed off by the Branch Chairman/Affiliated Group office bearer.

| Document Review History | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Review Date | Reviewed by | Signature |
| | | |

Practice Guidelines and Procedures

Good Practice for Branches and Affiliated Groups

All workers who deal directly with children and/or vulnerable adults should hold the relevant clearance for that country. They should receive information on good safeguarding practice. All workers should receive a copy of the RSCDS Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults policy procedures found on the RSCDS website under Policies and Procedures and a copy of the RSCDS Summary of Good Practice for teachers, musicians and helpers. [N.B. An FAQs section is to be added to the website.]

All workers should be informed about the process to be followed in the event of concerns being raised about abuse/allegations of abuse. This should include who to contact in an emergency.

An environment should be created and maintained in which vulnerable people feel able to share ideas, views and any concerns with workers and in which, if at all possible, safeguarding policies and procedures are displayed or, at the very least, made available to parents/carers on request.

Recruitment and screening of volunteers

All volunteers should complete a registration form and receive a job/role description, which includes the requirement for the appropriate level of disclosure to be obtained by the Branch or Affiliated Group.

Disclosure should be obtained prior to the volunteer engaging with vulnerable people on behalf of the Branch or Affiliated Group. It is also considered to be good practice to re-apply from time to time for disclosure on any volunteer continuing to work with vulnerable people (perhaps every 3 years)

All information held regarding volunteers is confidential and must comply with the Data Protection Act regarding retention and disposal of personal data.

Good Practice Guidelines for Workers

The following examples of good practice are recommended. The list is not exhaustive and should be tailored to fit local circumstances in each country:

- Always work in an open environment with at least one other adult present (avoid one-to-one or unobservable situations)
- Treat everyone with respect and dignity (no favouritism or discrimination)
- Always put the welfare of vulnerable people first
- Promote an open culture, to encourage discussion of ideas and concerns
- Maintain a safe and appropriate physical and psychological distance (avoid any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others)
- Deal immediately with abusive behaviour e.g. bullying, ridiculing or taunting
- Check facts – don't jump to conclusions or make assumptions
- Be aware of and deflect attention-seeking behaviour
- Provide enthusiastic and constructive, rather than negative feedback
- Be aware that suggestive remarks or actions are never acceptable, even in jest
- Involve parents and carers, as appropriate

- Check for any medical conditions e.g. asthma prior to the class
- Ensure there is a fully maintained first aid box on site
- Record any accidents or injuries and any action taken
- Obtain parental permission for any photos taken
- Aim to be a good role model in all aspects of behaviour
- Do not believe, 'it could never happen to me'
- If the RSCDS/Branch considers it absolutely necessary for SCD teaching, obtain written permission from parents/carers to hold, guide and direct vulnerable people. Tell vulnerable people exactly what you will do and why you will be doing it before any tactile demonstration, then ensure they agree and show no discomfort. Release the hold immediately after demonstration.

Guidelines for responding to an Allegation of Abuse

Recognition of abuse

The following may be indicative of abuse, individually or taken together:

- Unexplained or suspicious bruises, cuts or burns inappropriate to the age of the child/adult, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally injured in accidents
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- A vulnerable person describes what appears an abusive act involving him/her
- Someone (of any age) other than the vulnerable person expresses concern about the welfare of a vulnerable person
- Unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming very quiet and withdrawn
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or sexually explicit behaviour
- Distrust of adults, especially of those with whom relationships might be expected to be close
- Difficulty in making friends

- Variation in eating patterns, including overeating or loss of appetite
- Loss of weight, without reason
- Pattern of unkempt/dirty/dishevelled appearance
- Inappropriate or inadequate clothing

What to do:

- If you suspect a vulnerable person is being abused emotionally, physically or sexually, you should report the matter to the nominated RSCDS individual/designated person in the Branch; alternatively the class teacher, event organiser, Branch Youth Coordinator or Branch Secretary. Do not discuss with anyone other than those who need to know - maintain confidentiality at all times.

Refer on – do not investigate

Disclosure by a child, young person or vulnerable adult

If a vulnerable person wants to talk to you about abuse you should:

- Respond positively and advise that they can talk to you in confidence unless the information they are sharing suggests to you that they are at risk, when you will have to pass on the information. Never agree to keep a secret.
- Allow them to speak without interruption
- Let them know you take them seriously
- Accept what is said. Do not investigate
- Listen, keep questions to a minimum, do not interrupt or push for information
- Do not ask leading questions (i.e. those which suggest an answer)
- Be supportive, reassuring and non-judgemental
- Decide whether you feel there is a need for you to take any further action and, if so, explain clearly what you are going to

do or what will happen next

- Make accurate notes as to what was said and what you did as soon as possible. Record date and time. Sign the notes and, if possible ask the child or vulnerable person to sign. Keep a copy for yourself
- Report the matter to the designated person in the Branch/Affiliated Group; alternatively the class teacher, event organiser, Branch Youth Coordinator or Branch Secretary.

Allegations made against RSCDS members or volunteers

- Immediately inform the designated person in the Branch or Affiliated Group; alternatively the class teacher, event organiser, Branch Youth Coordinator or Branch Secretary
- Ensure no-one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise
- Record the facts as you know them on the Recording and Referral form (see example below). Record date and time. Sign the form and keep a copy for yourself

APPENDICES

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults – Definitions

1. Definitions

As specified (in the UK) by The Police Act 1997 (Enhanced Criminal Record Certificates) (Protection of Vulnerable Adults) Regulations 2002

1.1.1 Child or Children

A person or persons under the age of 18

1.1.2 Vulnerable Adult

A person may be considered a vulnerable adult if they are 18 years or over and have either a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness or drug/alcohol addiction or a reduction in physical or mental capacity which leads to reduced ability to protect themselves from assault, abuse or neglect.

1.1.3 Disabled Person

The person can be considered to be a disabled person if they have a dependency upon others in the performance of, or a requirement for assistance in the performance of, basic physical functions, a severe impairment in the ability to communicate with others or impairment in the ability of a person to protect themselves from assault, abuse or neglect.

1.1.4. Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a person. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community

setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, a child or children or a vulnerable adult.

2. Responsibilities

Specific guidance on obtaining and completing a disclosure process should be sought from the relevant disclosure related organisation. For Branches outside of the UK advice should be sought from the relevant authority in your area.

UK related information:

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks should be obtained from the appropriate organisation:

For England and Wales the information is at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/dbs-check-requests-guidance-for-employers#the-code-of-practice>

For Northern Ireland the information is at: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/disclosure-and-barring-protecting-children-and-vulnerable-adults>

For Scotland the legislation is: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2007/14/contents>

Practical information for Scotland is at: <https://www.mygov.scot/disclosure-types/>

Disclosure Scotland runs the PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) Scheme <https://www.mygov.scot/pvg-scheme/>

3. Care Commission www.carecommission.com