

This Child Protection Policy sets out a framework for ensuring the safety of children and Young People on WEC Camps and a structure for handling allegations of abuse both during and prior to camp. This is a supplement to the Safeguarding Policy of WEC International UK, which can be viewed on request. We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that everyone in the organisation has a part to play. Everyone who works for or on behalf of WEC, whether staff or volunteers are required to act in accordance with the relevant policies, procedures and codes of conduct as outlined here.

- 1** The Camp's leadership takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to the Camps' care.

We believe:

- All people are precious in the eyes of God, their creator, and are made in his image
- We live in a sinful and fallen world where, abuse, exploitation and oppression are all too common
- As Christians we should follow the example of Jesus in his compassion and care for everyone, including children and adults who may have vulnerabilities or support needs, or who may be isolated or disadvantaged in some way by society at large
- Every Christian community should be a sanctuary of safety and peace that displays the character of God
- Christian communities are not places where sinless and perfect people gather, but rather communities of grace, where imperfect but forgiven believers seek to encourage one another to grow in faith and obedience to God
- We are called to encourage and challenge each other lovingly and to spur one another on to greater holiness and obedience to God in an attitude of humility, grace, and forgiveness
- God hates injustice and the abuse of power and as Christians, we should stand, and speak out against injustice, including abuse, exploitation, oppression etc
- We should strive to protect all people from harm, abuse, or neglect, and to love, care for, and support all who have been affected by such damaging behaviour
- We are to honour those that God has set in authority over us and to live as responsible and good citizens in the time and place to which God has called us

- 2** WEC Camps has therefore adopted the policy contained in this document which sets out agreed guide lines relating to the following areas:-

- Responding to and reporting safeguarding concerns and disclosures,
- Appointing camp workers,
- Supervision and practice issues.

- 3** The policy is formulated to help camp leaders and workers respond appropriately when possible or actual safeguarding concerns are identified and to help them achieve a high standard of safeguarding practice. Where the term 'children' or 'child' is used it also refers to young people.

- 4** The following procedures provide clear guidance as to how the policy is implemented and covers:-

A copy of the WEC Camps Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is held by WEC UK's Safeguarding Committee and is complimentary to the Safeguarding Policy of WEC International UK. (WEC International (UK), PO Box 6461, Coventry, CV3 9NR)

#### **4.1 SUSPICION THAT ABUSE MAY HAVE OCCURRED.**

This procedure applies to allegations of abuse taking place at camp or prior to camp.

4.1.1 Immediate action – does the individual concerned require any first aid or other medical need if so ensure this is a priority.

4.1.2 Concerns must be reported to the nominated Co-ordinator or in their absence, the Deputy. There should be no delay if the person is at immediate risk.

They are:-

	<b>Co-ordinator</b>	<b>Deputy</b>
Warrior Camp	Camp Leader	Deputy
Teen Camp	Camp Leader	Camp Co-ordinator

4.1.3 Suspicions should not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.

The Co-ordinator will record the incident on form F1. In all cases the disclosure or concern including self harm will be recorded and passed onto the Co Ordinator. The coordinator will contact 31:8 or WEC's Safeguarding Officer SO for advice. If there is a high level of concern the coordinator could decide to contact the local social services to the child to refer and ask for advice.

4.1.4 If it is considered that the Co-ordinator or Deputy has not responded appropriately when concern is expressed, it is the legal right, as a citizen, of the individual expressing concern to make direct referrals to relevant Social Services. We hope however our approach demonstrates the commitment of the camp's leadership to effective safeguarding.

4.1.5 At the earliest opportunity a record of any allegation and of action taken or not taken by the Co-ordinator will be lodged at WEC Headquarters (with the Safeguarding Officer/ Committee) At the earliest opportunity he/she will inform the WEC Youth Co-ordinator that this procedure is being implemented.

#### **4.2 WRITTEN RECORDS.**

The adult who heard the allegation should make a accurate written report as soon as possible, as much as possible note the words used of important details. It is recommended that it be written within 30 minutes of hearing the allegation, if at all possible, and it should include the following information: This can be completed with the coordinator on form F1 but original notes should be kept.

- The name of the person writing the report.
- The alleged victim's name and the name of their parents.
- The nature and extent of any injury (if any).
- The present location of the abused child.
- The alleged perpetrator's name.
- How the information was obtained.
- Details of what was reported or suspected (dates, times, places, specifics of what happened). The spoken words should be quoted as exactly as possible.

- The date of writing the report.
- Who has been contacted and when.

During this reporting process, care must be exercised to protect both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator by restricting information access to those who need and have the authority to know.

#### **4.3 APPOINTING CAMP WORKERS.**

When appointing camp workers for the first time, enquiries will be made in writing about:-

- a. Their personal details.
- b. Their Christian experience.
- c. Any previous experience of working with children or young people.
- d. Any physical or mental condition or tendency, which may directly affect their work with children or young people.
- e. Any criminal convictions.

Written references will be required from two people, one of whom should be the applicant's pastor or appropriate church leader.

Applicants will be asked if they object to police records being checked and if necessary they may be asked to make personal application for any records about themselves on police computers. In the UK this means requesting an enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Records of camp workers will be regularly updated.

At least one person on COG (Camps Leadership team) will be trained in Safe Recruitment.

All volunteers will undergo yearly online camp safeguarding training to support them in their role and receive updates as needed on site.

#### **4.4 SUPERVISION AND PRACTICE ISSUES.**

As we are under canvas in a field, safety and security are of the utmost importance. Campers are organized in same sex groups. All campers and adults are accommodated in tents, with tent leaders housed in the 'village', in an adjacent tent to the campers. This is to ensure reasonable safety and security for the children. Staff patrol through the late evening and there is a member of staff on site at all times.

To safeguard both children and workers, the following operational safeguards are in place:

- a. All leaders and workers have a responsibility for the well being of the children on camp. Tent Leaders are either directly responsible to a staff member, or where a Village Leader is appointed, (as at Warrior Camp), to a Village Leader who is then responsible to a staff member. Village Leaders and Tent Leaders have particular responsibility for children in their village.
- b. A Village normally comprises of 2 or 3 Tent Leaders and up to twelve children who all sleep in three, four person bell or ridge tents. This arrangement can vary.
- c. Kitchen Workers are responsible to the Kitchen Chief.
- d. All adults with staff roles are responsible to the Camp leader / Boss who has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of the camp.
- e. The Camp leader / Boss is appointed by the Camps Leadership prior to camp.
- f. All organised activities will be supervised by a leader in a ratio of at least one adult to ten children, although normally on camps there is a far higher level of adult supervision.
- g. On camp one to one discussions between adults and children is normal. However there is rarely a need for an adult and child to be on their own out of public view. Where it is necessary, for example transporting a child, a staff member must be informed.
- h. Where one-to-one counselling takes place between an adult and child they should, wherever possible, be of the same sex.

i. It is acknowledged that physical contact between adults and children can be normal and healthy for the child and is acceptable in public places, but it is discouraged in private.

j. All leaders are instructed about the need to be careful about physical contact which must be considered in the light of:-

- Is it pleasing to Christ?
- Does it promote Christian love?
- Does it contribute to building up the body of Christ?
- Does it give dignity and self worth to a fellow member of God's Kingdom?

k. It is recognised that each person on site can be vulnerable to accusation by a young person. In order to avoid such a situation, all leaders are instructed not to engage in any of the following:-

- invading the privacy of children when they are dressing, washing, or toileting
- rough, physical games.
- sexually provocative games
- making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child, even in fun.
- inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form.
- any scapegoating, ridiculing or rejecting of a child.
- entering in to a romantic relationship with any child or young person.
- becoming involved in excessive attention seeking which is overtly physical or sexual in nature.

In the event of an accident or medical problem, leaders are instructed to follow this procedure:-

- Notify the first aider on duty.
- Give appropriate aid / assistance.
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of other children.
- Inform the leader of the activity, who should then inform the Camp Leader as soon as possible.

Records of all visits to the First Aider should be kept, alongside details of all medical incidents.

Decisions regarding the need to involve a doctor/hospital/parents should be taken by the First Aider. In certain circumstances e.g. when a group is out on a trip, this decision rests with the designated group leader.

#### **4.5 DISCIPLINE**

Essential camp rules and the consequences of ignoring or breaking them will be clearly explained at the beginning of camp.

It is never acceptable for a camp leader or worker to smack, hit or physically discipline a child.

Shouting in anger or putting a child down is not acceptable. Leaders and workers should try and talk to an unruly child away from the group, not publicly.

The child should never be rejected, just the behaviour.

Being unable to control a child is not a failure. Please seek help or advice from your Village Leader or staff liaison as to how to deal with any particular child or circumstance. Remember we are a team and all are there to help all the children get the maximum benefit from their time in camp.

Camp literature will inform parent/guardians of the circumstances in which a child would be sent home.

## 5 INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOR LEADERS

### Listening to an Allegation

Often an allegation may be made in a very informal context and in a one-to-one situation.

- All children and young people should be valued and listened to.
- Their views and wishes regarding their safety and protection should be respected and taken into account.
- Create a safe environment in which they can share their concerns.
- React calmly so as not to further distress them.
- Listen carefully to what they say.
- Give them time to say what they want.
- Do not interrupt them or ask more questions than you need in order to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- Use open (not closed) questions, e.g 'Is there anything else you want to say?' or 'Can you tell me more about that?'
- Take seriously what you are hearing but avoid condemning the alleged abuser.
- Reassure them.
- Tell them that it is right to tell.
- Be aware that they may be frightened or may have been threatened and told not to tell what happened.
- Remember that most feel loyalty to their parents and other significant people in their lives and often find it difficult to say things that seem to incriminate them.
- Do NOT promise confidentiality. When appropriate, help them understand what is going to happen next.

## 6 Recognising Abuse

### 1. Signs of possible physical abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Injuries which have not received medical attention.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.
- Bruises, burns, bites, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation.
- Cuts, scratches and/or substance abuse.
- Self harm

### 2. Signs of possible sexual abuse

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or regular engagement in age-inappropriate sexual play.
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Sexually provocative or seductive behaviour with adults.
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.
- Eating disorders – anorexia, bulimia.

### **3. Signs of possible emotional abuse**

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy. Also depression/aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness.
- Obsessions or phobias.
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults.
- Attention-seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness.
- Running away/stealing/lying.

### **4. Signs of possible neglect**

- Undernourishment, failure to grow.
- Constant hunger, stealing or gorging food.
- Untreated illnesses, inadequate care.
- Dirty and unkempt appearance and clothing.

## **7 A word about Spiritual Abuse**

Linked with emotional abuse, spiritual abuse could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves. Examples:

- A leader intimidating and imposing their will on other people.
- A leader threatening dire consequences or the wrath of God if disobeyed
- A leader saying that God has revealed certain things to them and so they know what is right.

At Camp, while being clear concerning the gospel, the need for each person to commit their lives to Christ and the lifestyle Christians are clearly taught to live, we must be careful to ensure we are letting God's Spirit work and not using our position of authority and influence to force or strongly push young people into making decisions they are not yet ready to make. In the Christian Camp context this is an easy line to cross.

## **8 Cultural Differences**

We recognise that what is considered acceptable behaviour in one culture may differ from what is acceptable under WEC UK's Safeguarding Policy. We must comply with UK law and therefore seek to apply WEC's Safeguarding Policy in a sensitive way, but without condoning practices that are harmful or abusive to children and unlawful under UK law.

## **9 Protect Yourself**

- Give campers privacy when dressing and washing. (Wait outside while they dress or undress)
- Have one to one conversations where you can be seen. There is plenty of space on a camp field for this.
- Avoid rough, physical games, including 'just messing about'.
- Guidelines to allow 'healthy touch'.
  - Touch should be in response to the need of the child and not the need of the adult
  - Touch should be open rather than secretive.

- Touch must be 'age appropriate' and generally initiated by the child rather than the adult
- Touch such as shoulder to shoulder hugs may be appropriate in some contexts.
- Team members should monitor each other in the area of physical contact, helping each other by pointing out anything which could be misinterpreted.
- Transport. When transporting campers ensure all are wearing seat belts. If it is necessary to transport just one camper ask them to sit in the back of the car.
- Treat all campers (and other adults) with respect and dignity.

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