

WLT Safeguarding Policy: Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults

WLT recognises the vital role of engaging children in its conservation work and encouraging their innate enthusiasm and interest in the natural world. WLT interacts with children through its outreach programme (working with schools, youth clubs and associations), its fundraising activities and events, and social media channels.

This policy confirms WLT's commitment to safeguarding the welfare and interests of all children and vulnerable persons with whom it interacts in any capacity. The policy applies to all staff, volunteers, members of WLT's governing structures, ambassadors, and any others who work on behalf of WLT.

Our Safeguarding Policy is based on the key principles that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children will have a positive, enjoyable and safe experience with WLT.
- All allegations, suspicions of harm or abuse and concerns will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately.
- WLT engages with all persons in line with its anti-discriminatory principles, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.
- All staff or anyone working on behalf of WLT who may have contact with children are aware of their responsibilities for understanding and observing the policy and procedures.
- Staff whose responsibilities include working with children are recruited safely, and that appropriate checks are made.

Outreach (schools and young persons' clubs/associations)

- All arrangements, including the programme and any activities, will be agreed in writing with the responsible teacher, member of the school's staff or youth club/association co-ordinator or team member;
- WLT will ensure, in liaison with the school or association, that the agreed programme takes into account any requirements for participants with special needs;
- WLT staff must ensure as far as is possible that an appropriate teacher, member of the school's staff or youth club/association co-ordinator or team member attends the event, and that WLT staff are not left unattended with the children.
- WLT staff will observe all Safeguarding procedures in place at the venue.
- WLT will only take and use photographs of the children with the express written authorisation of the parent or legal guardian, obtained via the school or association. Any related publicity material will be submitted in advance to the school or association for comment/correction.

Fundraising & data protection

WLT welcomes donations from all persons of all ages, but affords particular protection to young people under the age of 16. WLT is committed to safeguarding the privacy and rights of children whose personal data we may collect and process. This applies to all young persons under the age of 16 where WLT has been made aware of their age.

- WLT will collect only personal data which is freely given by the young person themselves, or an appropriate responsible adult (for example, parent or legal guardian, close relative or teacher);
- Where a young person under the age of 16 discloses their age to WLT, this will be noted in their record on the WLT database to ensure that appropriate safeguards are observed;
- WLT will inform the young person and where possible, their parent(s) or guardian of the lawful basis for processing their data;
- WLT will wherever possible seek parental consent or the consent of an appropriate responsible adult to process the personal data of young persons under the age of 16 who creates an online account on a WLT website;

- WLT will not knowingly send direct marketing communications to a young person under the age of 16; printed communications will be sent on request; for children under the age of 13 parental consent will be requested for electronic communications;
- Permission from parent or appropriate responsible adult is required before the personal details and photos of any young person under to age of 16 may be published on the WLT website;
- Where WLT has reason to be concerned about the source of a donation from a young person under the age of 16, it may make further enquiries before accepting the donation;
- WLT will require parental consent (or consent from an appropriate responsible adult) before knowingly accepting direct debit instructions from a young person under the age of 16.

Vulnerable Adults

WLT is committed to ensuring that we treat all who support our work fairly and with respect, and that we are responsive to the individual needs and circumstances of our donors, particularly those who may be vulnerable or in a vulnerable situation.

Where WLT staff have reason to suspect that a donor may be vulnerable, whether through age, disability or personal circumstance, particular care will be taken to ensure that the donor fully understands and is happy with the decisions they are making. Staff will be given specific guidance to help them to identify people who may be vulnerable, and what steps they can take to help them make an informed decision.

Procedures for reporting concerns/incidents

If a WLT staff member or other person working on behalf of WLT at an outreach event (such as a school fundraising event) has cause for concern over the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult, the concern should be raised in the first instance with the responsible person (such as the teacher, head-teacher or co-ordinator), and the safeguarding policies of the venue will apply.

In all other cases, concerns or instances should be reported immediately to the Director of Communications and Development, who will ensure that a prompt and thorough investigation is made into any allegation or concern, from whatever source, and recommend further course of action, which may include appropriate disciplinary action. In the event that the issue raised concerns the Director of Communications & Development, the initial report should be made to the CEO. In all events, the CEO should be notified immediately that a concern has been raised, and a report made to Trustees.

Where there may be suspicion of criminal activity, or risk of harm to a child, an immediate report should be made to the Police, NSPCC child protection helpline on 0808 800 5000, or Suffolk County Council Customer First on 0808 800 4005.

Advice for people working with children, and how to respond to concerns, can be found on the Suffolk Safeguarding Children website at <http://www.suffolkscb.org.uk/>.