

How do we ensure Safer Working Practice?

Safe working practice means working professionally and together to create a safe space.

What is a safe space? It's where:

- we offer young people a transparent and open environment where they can develop, learn and explore
- they can be confident that the Code of Conduct/Policing ethics are embedded within the culture and challenge is accepted
- the building of an open and strong professional relationship, is encouraged

Safeguarding practice is not just about having a Child/Adult protection process, but a way of working that is embedded in everything we do and the way that we do it. As such, all of us must ensure the following happens, whatever part of VPC we work in:

- that all cadets, adults and parents/carers have all the information they need to make an **informed decision** before choosing whether to take part in activities, events, trips and overseas visits.
- that electronic communication between adults and young people follows strict guidelines so that we don't place anyone at risk of harm.
- that when **working with partner organisations (schools, colleges and councils)**, a term of our agreement will be that they state: *"We confirm that we have read and understood VPC's Safeguarding Policy and agree to abide by it."*
- that we encourage volunteers and staff to discuss **their concerns** with their named person, Force Co-ordinator or through supervision.
- that cadets **have access** to adults that they trust or are clear on how to report their concerns.
- that you **familiarise** yourself as leaders with all our policies and procedures, which are updated from time to time

It is important that we understand how to manage effectively any risks associated with any activity, event or project involving young people by:

- Completing a risk assessment
- Implementing the required actions identified by the risk assessment
- Ensuring that appropriate DBS or basic disclosures checks are conducted depending on the eligibility of the role
- Requiring all workers, and/or individuals involved in working with young people and adults at risk familiarise themselves with the content of this policy and the associated code of behaviour and relevant training

Ensure at all times, the correct ratio between child:adult is actively enforced (see our Ratios guidance) . VPC has defined the correct ratio as 1:10 at weekly meetings, 1:8 for outdoor activities for 13-18 year olds unless there are additional considerations such as disability, behaviour, environment, age mix, or any other variance identified.

However, at all times groups of young people should be supervised and **2 adults** should be present this is to ensure the safety of all staff and volunteers as well as the cadets.

Sometimes adults have their own needs that may affect their behaviour, and their ability to look after the safety and welfare of others. It is our policy to make every effort to safeguard leaders from physical, sexual, emotional harm and neglect while participating in activities.

The National (Safeguarding) Hub Team take all reasonable steps to ensure that, through relevant procedures and training, young people, staff and volunteers taking part in activities, do so in a safe environment. If you have a concern about the safety and welfare of any cadet, or you have concern about the behaviour of a member of staff, you must tell your named person or Force Co-ordinator.

However, we expect you to ensure you are working as safely as possible so here is a list of good practice when working with young people and adults at risk:

Leaders MUST not:

Give cadets lifts except in emergency and never without prior knowledge of both the parents/carers and the named person. If this situation arises leaders should wherever possible arrange for another leader to accompany them.

Work alone with cadets on a regular but non-planned basis unless they have discussed and agreed this with the named person.

Use of Social Media –

Communication with cadets, for police cadet purposes, should always be made using your cadet management tool (Marshall or similar platform). Social Media **MUST NOT** be used for communication between adult volunteers and police cadets.

You must not contact cadets under the age of 14years directly – communication should be with the parents/carers. When you contact parents/carers or cadets over 14 years by email or online you should:

- Use language that is suitable. Try to avoid any words or phrases that could be misinterpreted or misconstrued
- Ensure that any images you send are appropriate and that external hyperlinks you include do not lead to inappropriate content
- Always copy a parent/carer in to any messages you send to a cadet. Individual instant messaging between young people and leaders is discouraged.