

## Guidance - Mini Police Safe to Operate Guidance and Checklist

The Mini Police is an innovative police engagement programme aimed at 8–11-year-olds. The Mini Police scheme is a growing part of the VPC family within this younger age range and is operated as a partnership between local Police and Primary schools.

When working in Partnership with Primary Schools it is important that you have clear procedures and information sharing protocols in place to ensure that safeguarding and Child Protection is your number one priority. The guidance and checklists should be read alongside the main VPC Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection procedures. (LINK)

Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play in safeguarding. As a PCSO, PC or volunteer leader delivering Mini Police you will meet lots of children and their families and as such you have a responsibility to safeguard those children. Safeguarding legislation and government guidance say that safeguarding means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcome

Our Mini Police Units are a safe, fun and stimulating learning environment for the children and we ensure the needs and abilities of all the children involved in the project are met.

Participation in the Mini Police Unit should encourage a sense of personal responsibility and leadership amongst the children, as well as encouraging an appreciation of their community and the positive role that they can play in it, whilst gaining an understanding from different people's perspectives.

In your role as PCSO, PC or Volunteer lead you are vetted according to Force Policy and Procedure. Police Vetting involves a variety of checks but does not include a DBS check or DBS barred list check. You should therefore be treated as a visitor by the school and not left on your own with the children.

The DRO should be made aware that, as an arm of the VPC, they also have responsibility for the mini police programme  
A school member of staff is to **be present at all times.**

*If you have any concerns over the welfare or safety of a child you must contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at the school to discuss the issues, the DSL will then take any necessary further action in accordance with their school policy.*

*If you have concerns over the ongoing behaviour of a child involved in the Mini Police programme you will need to report these to the school member of staff involved in the programme. The Police Force will act on any information in accordance with legislation and / or Force guidelines.*

## Working in Partnership

When working in partnership it is very important that all the staff and volunteers in all partnerships have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and whose policies and procedures will be followed. In most cases the school's procedures will take precedence as it is their buildings you will be operating from, and it will be after school time and therefore, their responsibility will transfer over to you. In all cases you MUST ensure this is clear and in writing, before you undertake any work with them.

This usually takes the form of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) this lays out the principles of the partnership agreement. For Example:

The school has responsibility for:

- Obtaining permission for each child to participate in the Mini Police Programme
- Providing an appropriate number of staff to attend all activities relating to the Project during school time. There must be at least one member of school staff always present the care and control of the children during any of the relevant events or activities relating to the Mini Police programme
- Monitoring their children during their participation in the project activities
- Ensuring that all needs of the children are recognised in advance, are correctly communicated to the lead Police leader and appropriate risk assessments are put in place. For example: family distress, LAC, Care experienced, disability or behaviour issues. This should be an ongoing process or dialogue between the school and leaders.
- Ensuring that all identified medical and or allergy risks are considered when activities are being planned and are appropriately highlighted to the Police leader.
- Assessing the risks to the children and their staff in participating in Mini Police activities. This however should be a joint discussion, communicated to all adults present and reviewed at least termly.
- Ensuring all Health and Safety legislation is met, and appropriate evacuation, security and first aid exits and resources are clearly understood by all adult present.
- recording and storage of data

### **The Mini Police Unit Leaders have responsibility for:**

- providing the school with the necessary documentation to obtain consent for children to participate in the Mini Police programme
- providing the school (indirectly the parents/carers) with information around photo consent. You will need to be clear in terms of what photos will be taken, how they will be stored, who has access, their life span and the purpose of the photo. Our recommendation is from age 8 years upwards you should also have consent from the child. Copies of participation and photo consent must be sent to Mini Police at the start of the programme.
- If you have any concerns regarding a child taking part in the Mini Police programme, as stated earlier, you **MUST** report to the school DSL. You **ALSO** have a responsibility to report to the Force DSL overseeing Mini Police programme or the National Head of Safeguarding: details
- Ensuring the material, and activities are age appropriate and form part of the Mini Police Cadets curriculum.

## **Risk Assessing Activities**

### **The Citizens in Policing Team**

Have completed risk assessments for any centrally arranged visits to Force premises e.g. transporting children in force vehicles. These are available by contacting #Mini Police and should be shared with the school.

The CiP team will review these risk assessments on an annual basis, or earlier if required. When renewed the CiP team has responsibility for updating all Officers involved in the Mini Cadets programme and ensure they read, sign and return.

### **Guidance re use of Social-Media**

See also - [Volunteer Police Cadet & Mini Police Photo guidance](#).

Photos must be taken using either a Force device or a device provided by the school. Personal devices must never be used.

Photos can be uploaded and shared on Force social media accounts in accordance with the consent obtained and the Force Volunteer Police Cadet and Mini Police Photo Procedure. Photos taken on Force devices should be sent to the CiP Team at #Mini Police who will store and filter the photos in accordance with the Force Volunteer Police Cadet & Mini Police Photo Procedure. Photos should then be deleted from the Force device on which they were taken.

## Useful Checklist

### Do you Know? - **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- Have you seen the Health and Safety Policy?
- Do you know how to report an accident or near miss? And who to?
- Do you know what the fire evacuation procedure is? Where the nearest fire extinguishers are? And where is the nearest fire exit?
- Have you seen the risk assessment for EACH mini police activity? This is the responsibility of the school, but you should be aware of the contents.

### Do You Know? – **SAFEGUARDING**

- Have you seen the Safeguarding Policy?
- Do you know who the Designated Safeguarding Lead is?
- Do you know how to report a concern or disclosure?
- Is there a member of teaching staff that will be present for the whole of the session?
- Have you agreed with the staff member how challenging behaviour during the session will be managed?
- Has the member of staff delivering the session done the VPC safeguarding training?
- Has the member of staff delivering the session signed the code of conduct?
- Is there a permissions form in place (sorted by the school) for each child to take part in the programme and is the member of staff delivering the programme aware of any non-consent for photographs?

### Do You Know? **STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

- Has the staff member delivering the session had vetting refreshed in the last 3 years?
- Is the member of staff delivering the session appropriately trained and comfortable to deliver the session?
- Has the member of staff been specifically recruited to deliver the programme?
- Supervisors should conduct regular and documented observations of staff delivering the schemes.
- Is there a member of teaching staff that will be present for the whole of the session?

### Do you Know? **FOCUS ON YOUNG PEOPLE**

- Have the children been involved in choosing what community activities to be involved in?
- Have the children been involved in creating their own code of behaviour?
- Have the sessions been checked as being appropriate for the age group?