



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

This policy applies to all Officers, Members, Event Leaders, Volunteers, and anyone acting on behalf of The Bedfordshire Natural History Society (BNHS).

The **Purpose of this policy** is:

- To protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who attend BNHS events or events run by other organisations at which BNHS members act as volunteers. This includes the children of adults who attend these events.
- To provide BNHS members, event leaders and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

The BNHS believes that a child, young person or vulnerable adult should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to take all reasonable steps to protect and safeguard the welfare of all children, young people or vulnerable adults involved in BNHS activities. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

Children and young people are encouraged to attend BNHS events, especially field meetings advertised as 'family friendly', but must always be accompanied by a responsible adult. BNHS members also regularly engage with children and young people when presenting the society display stand and nature table at events run by other organisations, or acting as volunteers at events such as the annual 'bug labs' organised by the Greensand Trust. On all occasions contact should occur in the presence of a parent, teacher or group leader who retains primary responsibility for the welfare of the child or young person.

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children, young people and vulnerable adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, vulnerable adults, their parents and/or carers and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.

We will seek to keep children, young people and vulnerable adults safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Adopting a code of conduct for members, event leaders and volunteers.
- Sharing information about child and vulnerable adult protection and good practice with children, parents, carers, and BNHS members.
- Sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents, carers, children and vulnerable adults appropriately.

Code of Conduct:

BNHS members and volunteers are expected to:

- Treat all people, including children and vulnerable adults, with respect.
- Provide a good example of acceptable behaviour.
- Recognise that they may be seen as a role model, and act accordingly.
- Respect everyone's right to privacy.
- Show understanding when dealing with sensitive issues.
- Use risk assessment for all activities, including those which present hazards that relate to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Take appropriate action to report any incidence of abuse they become aware of to one of the Honorary Officers of the Society. This should be done confidentially and in writing.

BNHS members and volunteers should not:

- Permit abusive behaviour.
- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others.
- Jump to conclusions or make assumptions about others without checking facts.
- Make suggestive or inappropriate remarks or actions.
- Deliberately place themselves or others in a compromising situation.
- Either exaggerate or trivialise issues.
- Let suspicion, disclosure or allegations go unrecorded or reported.