



Ironbridge Gorge Walking Festival

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Children Policy

APPROVED July 2024 at AGM (3rd July)

Introduction and Aims

This policy sets out how the Ironbridge Gorge Walking Festival (IGWF) operates to keep adults and children safe. We are committed to following good practice and maintaining a safe and positive environment for all walkers at our events.

The aim of this document is to provide all walk leaders, committee members and walkers with the fundamental values that guide our approach to safeguarding. It also aims to be proportionate and appropriate to the level of risk involved.

Why do we need safeguarding?

Abuse, harassment and harm can happen to anyone, it is not always visible and not often spoken about, but it is wrong, and we have a duty to do something about it. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and when everyone understands this and their right to be safe, it helps to protect those who are vulnerable.

Definitions

The Children Act 1989 definition of a child is: anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, even if they are living independently, are a member of the armed forces or is in hospital.

Adult at Risk:

- An adult who has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Child and Adult Abuse: Children and adults may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their daily lives. There are 4 main categories of abuse, which are: sexual, physical, emotional abuse, and neglect. It is important to be aware of more specific types of abuse that fall within these categories, they are:

- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child Criminal exploitation
- Child trafficking
- Domestic abuse
- Female genital mutilation
- Grooming
- Historical abuse
- Online abuse

Principles

- The welfare of children and adults is paramount in all events and activities carries out by the IGWF.
- It is important to value, listen to and respect all views and opinions.
- All children and adults, regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status have the right to be protected from abuse and poor practice and to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.
- We will seek to ensure that we are inclusive and make reasonable adjustments for any ability, disability or impairment, we will also commit to continuous development, monitoring and review.
- The rights, dignity and worth of all children and adults will always be respected.
- We recognise that ability and disability can change over time and that some children and adults may be additionally vulnerable to abuse, in particular those with care and support needs.
- We all have a shared responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of all and will act appropriately and report concerns whether these concerns arise within the IGWF or in the wider community.
- All allegations will be taken seriously and responded to quickly in line with our Safeguarding policy and procedure documents.
- The IGWF recognises the role and responsibilities of the statutory agencies in safeguarding and is committed to complying with their procedures.

Procedures

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, if you have concerns about anyone's safety or wellbeing you must act on these, do not ignore them.

The safeguarding procedure applies to everyone involved in the IGWF events and activities. This policy and procedure will be shared with all committee members and walk leaders.

As well as following steps to report any concerns, all those taking part in IGWF activities should adhere to our Code of Conduct (appendix 1). This sets out the behaviour we expect to help keep everyone safe.

Reporting Concerns

Any committee member, walk leader or other volunteer who becomes aware that an adult or child is or is at risk of being abused must raise the matter immediately with the designated safeguarding person.

The named responsible person for safeguarding duties is Amber Bicheno, vco@severngorge.org.uk.

If the adult or child requires immediate protection from harm, contact the police (999) and Adult/Children Social Care.

Recording and Record Keeping:

A written record must be kept about any concern regarding an adult/ child with safeguarding needs. This must include details of the person involved, the nature of the concern and the actions taken, decision made and why they were made. A copy of the Safeguarding Incident Report Form is attached at Appendix 2.

All records must be signed and dated. All records must be securely and confidentially stored in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Appendix 1: Code of Conduct

When participating in any Ironbridge Gorge Walking Festival events and activities, you agree to:

- Treat everyone equally with respect and dignity.
- Follow our safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Report all concerns, suspicions, and allegations immediately.
- Never use inappropriate, threatening, or suggestive language, either in writing or verbally.
- Support a safe, open and transparent culture by challenging and reporting inappropriate behaviour.
- Respect your position of trust and not abuse this.
- Ensure that children under the age of 18 are accompanied by an adult.
- Tell all walkers what to expect and warn of any hazards on the walks.
- Ask permission before taking any photographs and inform people of how they will be used.

When taking part in activities with children, young people and adults at risk, you agree to:

- Avoid being alone with them and will remain in sight and hearing of others.
- Not allow activities that encourage bullying behaviour.
- Not join in with physical games with children, young people and adults at risk.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries and avoid engaging in unsuitable friendships or sexual relationships.
- Not smoke, drink alcohol or use illegal substances, or allow children and young people to drink alcohol and use illegal drugs.

Appendix 2: Safeguarding Incident Report Form

Signed: _____ . Print: _____

Date: _____ **Person raising concern**

Counter Signed: _____ Print: _____

Date: _____ **Safeguarding Lead**

Date	
Name of person raising the concern	
Describe the incident/concern including the date the incident/concern occurred	
Define the type of Safeguarding concern or abuse (e.g., verbal abuse)	
If the incident concerns an adult at risk, what outcome do they want?	
Who else was informed (e.g., police/social services)	
Action Taken and by Whom	
Outline the Progress	
What was the outcome?	