



Safeguarding Policy

The Walrus Cruise is committed to safeguarding from physical, sexual/emotional harm, neglect or bullying the children taking part in its activities. We recognise that the safety, welfare and needs of the child are paramount and that all children, irrespective of age, disability, race, religion/belief, sex, sexual/gender identity or social status have a right to protection from discrimination and abuse.

As defined by the Children Act 1989, for the purposes of this policy anyone under the age of 18 should be considered a child. All Leaders are made aware of this policy, and it is published on The Walrus Cruise website.

The Walrus Cruise takes all reasonable steps to ensure that, through appropriate procedures and training, young people participating in activities organised by The Walrus Cruise do so in a safe and enjoyable environment.

These guidelines are based on the 2023 RYA publication "Safeguarding Policy for RYA affiliated clubs" such as The Walrus Cruise... to help everyone feel secure, have great fun sailing and gain in skill and confidence.

The Walrus Cruise Welfare Officer

The Welfare Officer is: *Abigail Curran, 7 Cave Close, Cawston CV22 7GL, 07715 109375*

Leaders

All Leaders whose role brings them into regular contact with young people provide references and apply for an Enhanced DBS check. They are asked to follow the good practice guidelines below and in attached documents:

1. Planning to minimise situations where child abuse may occur

- Leaders plan activities on the cruise to minimise the opportunities for harm
- Mixed Cruises always have both male and female Leaders
- Activities where a single young person and one adult are working together alone in a situation are avoided unless the activity is easily observed by others
- It is particularly inappropriate for a male Leader to meet with a female young person on his own (or vice versa), especially in counselling or pastoring situations

2. Crew may talk to... including an independent person

- There are specified Leaders to whom a person can go if they wish to talk about an abuse situation as listed on the "If you want to talk about..." poster on each boat and in each Boat Handbook. This list preferably includes both female and male Leaders.
- Leaders can go to these people if they have concerns about other Leaders and child protection. The Commodore's role includes support of, and liaison with, other Leaders.

3. Agreed procedures for protecting young persons from Leaders

All reasonable steps are taken to exclude child abusers from Cruises. To this end, all Leaders are DBS checked and references are taken from those serving as Leaders for the first time.

4. Leaders have clear roles

Leaders of the Cruise have clearly defined jobs so that both they and the crew understand their roles. This is specified in the Boat Handbooks and includes:

- who they are responsible to
- who they are responsible for
- what they will undertake with the young people

5. Use of supervision as a means of protecting young people

The event Leader (such as the Commodore) checks from time to time on those responsible to them for working with young people. An occasional report back needs to be given to the person being supervised. Clear steps need to be taken in dealing with those in Leadership roles who are perceived to be doubtful cases.

6. Leaders are treated like job applicants

Whilst Leaders are volunteers, they are still treated in many ways like job applicants and the following information is sought:

- full name, current address, telephone numbers and date of birth
- details of any previous experience of working with young people
- details of church involvement
- relevant qualifications such as first aid, food hygiene and RYA sailing certificates
- Details of any convictions for criminal offences, especially those against young persons, including any spent convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

7. Reference from a person with experience of the applicant's work, paid or voluntary, with young people

For each Leader, we obtain at least one reference from someone with first-hand experience of the person's work or voluntary contact with young people. Ideally this should be someone who has worked with them, and it is preferable for all references to be written, though notes from a phone reference are acceptable when short of time.

Where the person has no experience of work with young persons, then a reference is obtained on the applicant's character and relationships with others. It is made clear that the reference is required for a voluntary position working with young people and their suitability for such work. If anything in the reference causes doubts about the applicant's suitability, the referee is contacted in person or by telephone to discuss the matter further.

8. Exploring an applicant's experience of working or contact with young people in an interview before appointment

The preferable pattern is for all potential Leaders to be interviewed personally but this can be difficult and the interview may be delayed until, for instance, the AGM Leaders' Meeting before confirming their appointment.

9. All appointments are conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period

This is difficult to do on The Walrus Cruise, but it is made clear that there is no automatic position in a subsequent Cruise as Leadership positions are by invitation only. The Commodore's decision is final.

10. Leaders are trained in safeguarding Crew by issuing guidelines on the disclosure or discovery of child abuse

Safeguarding is brought to the attention of the Leaders during the preparation time for a Cruise by ensuring that each Leader is asked to read and agree to this policy, including "A Leader's guide to handling a concern raised with you" and "What do we mean by 'child abuse'?" (see following pages).

11. All information is treated as confidential and only shared with those who need to know

If an allegation or suspicion concerns someone within The Walrus Cruise, only the child's parents/carers, the person in charge of the Cruise (unless they are the subject of the allegation) and the relevant authorities are informed. If the alleged abuse took place outside the Cruise, the Police or Children's Social Care will decide who else needs to be informed, including the child's parents/carers. It should not be discussed by anyone within The Walrus Cruise other than the person who received or initiated the allegation and, if different, the person in charge.

Confidential information must be stored securely. It is recommended that it should be retained for at least 3 years and destroyed by secure means, e.g. by shredding or burning.



A Leader's guide to handling a concern raised with you

The safety, welfare and needs of Crew members are paramount and The Walrus Cruise wants to help everyone feel secure, have great fun sailing and gain in skill and confidence.

A complaint, concern or allegation may come from several sources, such as a: Crew member, parent or Leader. It may involve the behaviour of one of our volunteers or something that has happened perhaps at home or school. Young people may confide in adults they trust, in a place where they feel at ease.

An allegation may range from mild verbal bullying to physical or sexual abuse. If you are concerned that a Crew member may be being abused, it is NOT your responsibility to investigate further and only ask questions to confirm whether you need to refer the matter to someone else. BUT it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and for them to be reported to the appropriate statutory authorities. For guidance on recognising abuse, see the other side of this sheet.

Always:

- stay calm... ensure that the Crew member is safe and feels safe
- show and tell the young person that you are taking what they are saying seriously
- reassure the Crew member and stress that they are not to blame
- be careful about physical contact, it may not be what the young person wants or what is appropriate
- be honest, explain that you will have to tell someone else to help stop the alleged abuse
- make a record of what has been said as soon as possible afterwards, using the exact words as much as possible
- follow The Walrus Cruise's Safeguarding Policy (of which this sheet is a part)

Never:

- rush into actions that may be inappropriate
- make promises you cannot keep (i.e. you won't tell anyone)
- ask leading questions ("did X hit you?" instead of "how did you get that bruise?")
- take sole responsibility - consult someone else (ideally the Commodore, Welfare Officer, the person in charge or someone you can trust) so that you can begin to protect the young person... and gain support for yourself!

You may be upset about what the Crew member has said, or you may worry about the consequences of your actions. Sometimes people worry about a child being removed from their family as a result of abuse but, in reality, this rarely happens. However, **one thing is certain - you cannot, and must not, ignore it.**

If you need it, seek help (but confidentially).

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If the alleged abuse took place outside the Cruise, the Police or Children's Social Care will decide who else needs to be informed, including the child's parents/carers. It should not be discussed by anyone within The Walrus Cruise other than the person who received or initiated the allegation and, if different, the person in charge.

What do we mean by 'child abuse'?

The Walrus Cruise understands child abuse to include the following categories based on the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2023.

Physical abuse may involve adults or other children inflicting physical harm:

- hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating
- a parent or carer fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately inducing, illness in a child

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve:

- conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate
- not giving the child opportunities to express their views
- allowing a child to see or hear the ill-treatment of another person
- serious bullying

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child.

Sexual abuse. Sexual abuse involves an individual (male or female, or another child) forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve:

- physical contact (e.g. kissing, touching, rubbing, touching outside of clothing, masturbation, rape or oral sex)
- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in a sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child for abuse.
- Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse..

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing or shelter
- protect a child from physical harm, emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- respond to a child's basic emotional needs

Neglect in a sport situation might occur if an instructor or coach fails to ensure that a child is safe or exposes them to undue cold/heat or risk of injury.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs and wants. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable - including the young - by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination, or to justify discrimination. Extremism is defined as the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Bullying (not included in 'Working Together' but probably more common in a sport situation than some of the other forms of abuse described above). Bullying (including online bullying, for example via text or social media) may be seen as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated or sustained over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. The bully is often another young person. Although anyone can be the target of bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious or insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons, being overweight or physically small, being gay/lesbian/trans, having a disability or belonging to a different race, faith or culture.

Bullying can include:

- physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc
- name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation or the continual ignoring of individuals
- posting of derogatory or abusive comments, videos or images on social network sites
- racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, sectarianism
- sexual comments, suggestions or behaviour
- unwanted physical contact.

The acronym STOP – Several Times On Purpose - can help you to identify bullying behaviour.

The following are possible early warning signs of abuse:

- Aggressive behaviour; severe tantrums
- An air of attachment or don't care attitude
- Overly compliant behaviour, watchful attitude
- Sexually explicit behaviour e.g. playing games and showing awareness inappropriate for the child's age
- Continual open masturbation; aggressive and inappropriate sex play
- The young person seems happy only away from home or is continually kept at home by a parent
- Does not join in school social activities and has few friends
- Does not trust adults, particularly those who are close
- Tummy pains with no medical reason
- Eating problems, including overeating or loss of appetite
- Disturbed sleep; nightmares; bedwetting
- Running away from home, suicide attempts, self-inflicted wounds
- Reverting to younger behaviour; depression; withdrawal
- Relationships between adults and young persons that are secretive and exclude others

There can be many reasons for some of the behaviour listed here. So, proper diagnosis of abuse must be left to the professionals, those who are medically qualified and/or Social Work (Child Protection) qualified...

...and **The Walrus Cruise Leaders do not have an investigative role but a supportive one!**