

## **Nautical Archaeology Society**

### **Policy for Child Protection**

**and**

### **Protection of the Welfare of Vulnerable Adults**

This statement describes the Society's Policy for protecting the welfare of children and other vulnerable persons who participate in the Society's activities, or otherwise come into contact with members of the Society during Society activities and operations. The Society takes its responsibilities under the United Kingdom's legislation for protecting vulnerable people very seriously. As well as being a legal requirement, it is very important to the reputation of the Society and to the success of our activities, that members of the Society are known to be trustworthy as well as respectful and caring of the needs and dignity of vulnerable people. The Society is committed to ensuring that young people and other vulnerable people are safe and secure when they come into contact with the Society.

Attached to this policy is a set of guidelines intended to ensure best practice to protect the vulnerable and guard against false allegations, whilst taking a pragmatic approach to ensure that activities that do not pose any risk to vulnerable people are not subject to unnecessary bureaucracy. The guidelines are not intended to be proscriptive but provide a framework for the planning and execution of activities so that a safe and welcoming environment is provided.

This policy requires that:

- All members of the Society, including staff, and all sub-contractors and volunteers shall abide by the provisions of this policy while carrying out activities for the Society and shall act appropriately in accordance with the attached guidelines.
- The Society's Executive Committee shall nominate a named member of staff or volunteer to act as the Society's Child Protection Officer.
- Any member of staff, sub-contractor or volunteer whose work for the Society is expected to involve significant contact with children or vulnerable people shall be required to complete a self-disclosure and CRB check and if the process of checking discloses that the person poses a threat to vulnerable people, the Society will not employ or utilize the services of that person.
- When carrying out Society activities that involve dealing with other organizations acting in loco parentis for young people, members of the Society, including staff, sub-contractors and volunteers shall familiarize themselves with the Child Protection Policies of such organizations and act in accordance with those policies.



- The Society encourages Adopt-a-Wreck groups to ensure that a suitable policy is in place for all Adopt-a-Wreck activities, based on this policy or on the policy of the respective recreational diving organisation.
- If at any time any one suspects that the welfare of a young or other vulnerable person is not being protected, they shall inform the NAS supervisor on-site or the Society's Child Protection Officer as soon as possible. NAS supervisors shall inform the Society's Child Protection Officer of any such reports as soon as possible.
- If any person fails to abide by this policy, the Society's Child Protection Officer shall report this to the NAS Management Sub-Committee which shall initiate an investigation. Such an investigation may result in disciplinary action in the case of an employee, termination and/or other contractual liabilities in the case of a sub-contractor and/or expulsion from the Society in the case of a member. In addition, if the investigation concludes that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that criminal activity is intended or has occurred, this will be reported to the police.

Signed:

Date:

Chair of Executive Committee



## **Guidelines on Protecting Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

### **Who needs to be protected?**

The Children's Act (1989) defines children as persons under the age of 18 or vulnerable adults having a mental age under the age of 18. The Care Standards Act (2000) defines a vulnerable adult as someone who has a mental disorder or a significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning or has a physical disability or is suffering from a physical disorder.

### **What do vulnerable people need to be protected from?**

People who are vulnerable are not necessarily able to recognise threats or take steps to protect themselves in the way that a non-vulnerable adult would. Therefore responsible adults should take steps to protect the welfare of the vulnerable. A young person or a physically disabled person may be frail and more vulnerable to physical affects such as cold. Psychological harm to a young person can have a profound impact on their personal and social development. Threats include:

- Sexual or physical abuse.
- Bullying, verbal or emotional abuse or harassment.
- Neglect of safety and welfare.

### **The Role of the Society's Child Protection Officer**

The Society appoints a named person as a Child Protection Officer. This is someone who:

- Is familiar with good practice in protecting the welfare of vulnerable people
- Is able to give practical advice to NAS supervisors in how to plan activities
- Can, and should, be contacted by anyone who thinks that child abuse has happened or is concerned that it could happen in connection with the Society's activities.
- Reports to the NAS Management Sub-Committee concerning the Society's provisions and track record in protecting the vulnerable.
- Is subject to CRB check.

The name and contact details of the Society's Child Protection Officer should be notified to all NAS supervisors, included in information about events for participants (e.g. in joining instructions) and briefed to all participants of Society activities.

### **The benefits of participating in archaeology**

This policy is about protecting the welfare of vulnerable people, including children. It is important to remember that learning about archaeology and participating in archaeological activities with a broad cross section of other people are extremely valuable in the personal, social and educational development of young people. While steps must be taken to protect vulnerable people from harm, a sensible balance is



needed to ensure that young and vulnerable people are not excluded from enjoyable activities that can be of great benefit to them.

### **General guidelines for activities involving young and vulnerable people**

- Activity planning should ensure that health and safety arrangements take account of the needs of those who may not be competent to manage their own personal safety and welfare.
- Anybody who is expected to have significant contact with children, whether as a volunteer or as a paid activity should be CRB checked. The Society's Child Protection Officer is responsible for processing CRB checks through a suitable umbrella organisation.
- If there are grounds for suspicion that a NAS employee, sub-contractor or volunteer poses a threat to children or vulnerable adults they must not be allowed to assist in activities with vulnerable people.
- When there are children and adults present together, either the children should be in the care of their parent or carer, or there should be at least two responsible adults present.
- Children are not capable of giving informed consent so this should be obtained in advance from their parent or carer. In order to give such consent, the parent or carer should be given clear information about what will be involved, how welfare will be safeguarded, potential risks and any circumstances that might be misinterpreted (such as the need for physical contact during rescue).
- If an activity is intended to involve physical contact, do not mix children and non-related adults. For example, in rescue training, adults should practice on adults; children should practice on other children or with their parents or other family members.
- If an activity is residential, plan the sleeping arrangements so that children and non-related adults do not share accommodation. Residential arrangements should allow for children to sleep in accommodation with their family or to share with other children of the same sex.
- Try to arrange changing facilities (e.g. after diving) so that children and non-related adults do not use the facilities at the same time. Children can change with family members or a group of children of the same sex can change together.
- Recording by photograph is important in archaeology but photography of children can be abused by perpetrators of sexual crime. When taking photographs where children are present, ask permission first from parents or carers and avoid taking photographs that expose children's bodies. Extra care may be needed if taking photographs in a swimming pool or in hot weather outdoors.



- If the activity involves a young person diving ensure that any specific requirements of the relevant diving organisation that trained the young person are followed.
- Avoid one-on-one situations between a child and an adult. However, it may be the case that a vulnerable person who is suffering abuse from another source seeks an opportunity to confide in someone they have learned to trust. In such a case be sensitive to the needs of the vulnerable person and seek advice from the NAS Child Protection Officer or from another welfare officer or other professional at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Sexual horseplay is unacceptable as part of NAS activities.
- Sexual relationships between NAS supervisors/tutors and young persons under the age of 18 are unacceptable.

### **NAS activities planned for children or vulnerable people**

Where an activity is planned specifically for children or vulnerable people, at which parents and carers will not be present, the supervisors of the young or vulnerable people should be CRB checked.

These activities are often arranged jointly with another organisation that is acting *in loco parentis*, such as a school or scout group. Often it is the other organisation that provides the CRB checked supervisors. The NAS organiser should make clear to the other organisation which adults from NAS will be attending and whether these adults have been CRB checked. The NAS organiser should request a copy of the other organisation's Child Protection Policy and ensure that NAS activities will be compliant with that policy as well as with this NAS policy.

The NAS organiser should also ensure that the responsible persons from any organisation that is acting *in loco parentis* are given clear information about the nature of the activity, potential risks and safeguards. Written consent forms from parents or carers should be obtained in advance.

Where NAS staff members, volunteers or sub-contractors are expected to have regular or significant contact with children or young people e.g. in organising or teaching such activities, they should be CRB checked. Other adults who have not been CRB checked should not be given unsupervised access to the children or vulnerable people.

### **NAS activities involving the public**

Many NAS activities (such as National Archaeology Days, or having a stand at a show) involve contact with, and demonstrations to the public. It is to be expected that young or vulnerable people will attend such events accompanied by their parents or carers.

In planning activities and demonstrations, additional safeguards must be taken on the assumption that the general public are unlikely to be aware of any specific health and safety risks associated with archaeology or diving.

If activities are planned that children or vulnerable people may participate in, try to arrange the facilities so that it is easy and attractive for parents and carers to stay to watch, for example by arranging for seating and protection from the elements. Make it



clear that it is expected that parents or carers will remain on hand at all times and are responsible for supervision.

### **Other (participatory) NAS activities**

The majority of NAS training courses and projects do not involve young or vulnerable people. However, the Society welcomes the involvement of all sectors of society and arrangements should be made to welcome and provide a safe environment when young or vulnerable people wish to attend.

If the activity is not specifically designed for children or vulnerable adults then the young or vulnerable person should be accompanied by his or her parent or carer. It is important to identify in advance (e.g. at the booking stage) that a young or vulnerable person will be present so that any necessary additional arrangements can be made.

A parent or carer attending a NAS event solely to supervise a participating young or vulnerable person (i.e. the parent or carer attends as a spectator not as a participant), should only have to pay NAS for any costs directly incurred by their attendance (such as museum entry fees, cost of lunch etc).

Ensure that the parents or carers are fully briefed about activities involving the young or vulnerable people they are responsible for and have given written consent.

Although it is the parent or carer's responsibility to look out for the welfare of the young or vulnerable person, the NAS supervisor should also give consideration to any special needs or vulnerabilities, especially as the parent or carer may not be fully cognisant of the risks. For example, a spectator is unlikely to be aware of the likelihood of fatigue, hypothermia etc suffered by participants.

When planning activities, ensure that it will be possible for the parent or carer to provide effective supervision of the child or vulnerable person. If the participants are to be split into groups a vulnerable person must be in the same group as his or her parent or carer.

When the activity involves a young or vulnerable person in diving, the young or vulnerable person should normally be buddied with his or her parent or carer. If the parent or carer is not a diver, arrangements will need to be made in advance to provide an experienced diver qualified to at least CMAS 3 star as a buddy. In planning the diving activity, consideration should be given to the fact that there will be diver(s) present who are not fully competent adults and additional safeguards should be provided.