

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE MINES RESEARCH GROUP
CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE 3
SAFEGUARDING POLICY

This revised policy was reviewed and agreed at the SGMRG Committee on 20 August 2018. Latest review was on 9 May 2022.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. SGMRG is committed to the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and will take action to ensure their safety and wellbeing when in contact with SGMRG as members, visitors or otherwise.
- 1.2. SGMRG will take any allegation of abuse seriously and will respond to such allegations quickly.
- 1.3. SGMRG considers that in any mine and mining heritage activity safety of the participants and conservation of the site is of paramount concern at all times.
- 1.4. If an individual in their role as an SGMRG volunteer is to be put in a position of trust for the care, supervision or personal needs of young people or vulnerable adults, such that a Disclosure and Barring Service disclosure is appropriate we will ensure that takes place. We will give proper consideration to the level, frequency and context of activities. However normally, SGMRG will seek to ensure that individuals are not put in that position.
- 1.5. Underlying this it must be borne in mind that SGMRG does not proactively promote the participation of young persons or vulnerable adults in mining site exploration and conservation, although they are welcome at Open Days on managed sites under the custody of a responsible adult vis parent or companion. SGMRG takes this stance for a number of reasons:-
 - mining site exploration and conservation can often be a strenuous activity requiring a mature physical and mental approach;
 - a working knowledge of how the inherent dangers of former industrial and mining sites can be vital for safe exploration;
 - mining heritage is a strictly limited physical resource that deserves a mature appreciation of its conservation requirements.

2. What to do if there is a suspicion of abuse

- 2.1. Under no circumstance must a volunteer carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. It is the responsibility of the authorities to determine whether abuse has occurred. It is not the responsibility of the SGMRG to take responsibility for the resolution of any abuse matter or to make a judgment of any sort. Such responsibilities rest with the responsible authorities.
- 2.2. It is however the responsibility of all adults to take necessary actions to ensure that the appropriate agencies are made aware of allegations once they have been made. Any person so reporting an allegation of abuse is advised to retain a written record of

their report, together with the date, time and relevant details of the person reported to.

2.3. The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to the SGMRG Safeguarding Co-ordinator who will refer the matter on to the statutory authorities.

2.4. In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to the SGMRG Chairman.

2.5. Although false allegations against adults tend to be rare they do occasionally occur and due care must be exercised at all times when dealing with disclosure to ensure matters are kept confidential to protect the victim, the person reporting concerns and the person against whom the allegation has been made.

3. What Happens Next?

3.1. Once you have reported your suspicions you should not discuss your suspicions with anyone in the meantime.

3.2. You may be requested to attend an interview and this will be arranged in absolute privacy.

3.3. Keep a copy of any report or item submitted.

3.4. Details of the person who reported the suspicion of abuse will be kept from the alleged abuser at all times.

3.5. Access to the file and records of the alleged abuser will be limited to those with specific interest in the issue. Records will be stored securely and destroyed after 10 years, unless there is a good reason for keeping them for a longer time.

4. SGMRG - RECOMMENDATIONS TO ITS MEMBERS

4.1. SGMRG recommends that in any activity involving children, there should be at least two adults present at all times.

4.2. SGMRG does not currently have **regular** activities with children or vulnerable adults. Should such a project develop, the group will ensure all involved are fully aware of best practice in responding to alleged or possible child abuse and it will be followed in the selection, vetting and recruitment of the participating adults.

5. GUIDANCE NOTES - GENERAL DUTY OF CARE - The Legal Framework and What it Means

5.1. The law places a broad duty of care upon **all adults** where the abuse or potential abuse of children or vulnerable adults is concerned. The term "children" for this purpose includes all young persons under the age of 18 years.

5.2. This includes including "sexual", "emotional" and "physical" abuse and also "neglect". Neglect in terms of mine exploration, must be taken to include failing to ensure physical safety, adequate/ appropriate nutrition and protection against hypothermia, injury through falling, etc.

- 5.3. It should be recognised that any adult who is in charge of children may place themselves in a position of special trust whereby abuse in other spheres of a child's life such as the home may be disclosed to them and this must also be handled appropriately.
- 5.4. Where 'employment' is concerned the law makes no distinction between paid, part-time, contract or totally volunteer persons. All are covered by this legislation. In the mining setting this takes in not only officers, but additionally all members who regularly take responsibility for children/young persons (under 18's) in mine exploration training activities or the mine environment under the general auspices of the group.
- 5.5. In all activities, whether above ground training or within mines it is considered good practice that there should always be more than one adult present. Where there are a number of children or young persons involved then the ratio of adults to children should be carefully considered bearing in mind the precise nature of the venture being undertaken.
- 5.6. Before planning to take children onto mining sites, careful consideration should be given to their physical & mental maturity, environmental awareness and mine conservation. The trip should then be arranged accordingly, bearing in mind the nature of the site, the experience of the adults, the physical and mental abilities of the children or vulnerable adults concerned and the prevailing weather and ground conditions, in preference to the wishes of adults.
- 5.7. Bear in mind some children or vulnerable adults may give all outward appearances of being fully competent and comfortable in the environment, but inwardly be quite the opposite. It is for example important to ensure children are not exposed to ridicule when attempting to pull the coal sledge.
- 5.8. The privacy and safety of children and vulnerable adults means they must not be photographed without permission from an appropriate person.