

POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS, including CHILDREN,

Implemented from 1st April 2016, reviewed January 2021

FULL NAME OF ORGANISATION: Outdoor Studios CIC

Directors; Martin Brockman, Lucy Medhurst, Amanda Thesiger and Laura Thomas.

Members: Peter Cook, Andy Evans, Tracey Falcon, Hope FitzGerald, Gemma Gottelier, Tim Norris, Chris Rutter, Laura Thomas and Sara Trillo.

1) POLICY STATEMENT

Outdoor Studios CIC (OS) is committed to the principles and practice of child protection, which safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm. Children have a right to be safe and happy in the activities that they, or their parents or carers choose, and parents have a right to believe that OS presents a safe environment for children to participate in these activities. Whilst the primary responsibility for children's welfare rests with the supervising adults, Outdoor Studios recognises their responsibility, collectively and as individuals, to provide services and facilities, which present a safe environment for children.

This Policy is a foundation for raising awareness and promoting understanding across the organisation of our responsibility to provide safe environments for children. Child Protection principles will inform OS's approach to its practices and physical environments, ensuring appropriate measures are put in place to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm.

This Policy is a legal requirement and OS to have a sensible understanding of risk. It contributes to a safer environment and helps to protect children in our care. It also protects our members and creates better adults. It encourages good practice, which is important for our reputation. Outdoor Studios will strive to make sure there is a uniform approach across areas of our work where we come into contact with children and vulnerable adults.

Definitions

Child protection is concerned with the prevention or detection of any act that may involve child abuse. Child abuse may be physical, emotional, sexual or through neglect.

In law, a child is defined as under the age of 18 as per the Children Act 1989. In addition, the organisation recognises that it has a duty of care in relation to 'vulnerable adults' who, because of certain disabilities, may be considered as being of child age.

2) PURPOSE & FUNCTION OF OUR ORGANISATION

Outdoor Studios is a CIC Limited by Guarantee and a collective of artists and creative education professionals. These include; printmakers, painters, writers, textile artists, photographers and film-makers, researchers, sculptors, craftspeople, sound and ceramic artists; many of whom work across different disciplines and specialise in connecting groups to both natural and urban environments. The collective came together through Stour Valley Arts – an arts organisation based in King's Wood, Challock, which closed in March 2015. Keen not to lose the valuable learning and experience gained in over 20 years working with a variety of contexts, the group have formed Outdoor Studios with the mission to continue devising programmes and working with partners and groups of all ages and backgrounds. Our expertise is in connecting creativity with landscape and responding to place.

TO WHOM DOES THIS POLICY APPLY:

This policy relates to children under the age of 18 years and members of vulnerable groups of any age who are identified to the organisation. The lead contact for a group working with Outdoor Studios should provide information about any vulnerable individuals prior to the activity that is taking place. Outdoor Studios' requires Visiting Group Leaders to complete an enquiry form, which prompts information about any vulnerable individuals coming on a visit or a longer term project.

In recognising the differing needs of vulnerable people from all ethnic groups and those who are disabled, Outdoor Studios actively seeks to meet needs notified to us by parents/guardians/carers and/or teachers, social and care workers.

THE ENVIRONMENT WE WORK IN:

The activities of Outdoor Studios will benefit targeted communities in the South East, specifically Kent, East Sussex and London, who would not otherwise have access to experiential arts and environmental activities by delivering innovative educational programmes.

The activities of Outdoor Studios will sustain a programme of community participation in and awareness of the unique artistic and environmental values of King's Wood, an important community asset and of other geographic locations and environments in Kent, East Sussex and London to include; country parks, gardens, woodlands, landscapes of historic and environmental value, including community allotments, gardens, school grounds and parks. We will draw on the 21 years of outdoor learning and arts engagement in King's Wood and use this expertise to offer our services to children, young people and adults, including those who are vulnerable or with specific needs.

Our offer is also being extended to professional development days for the education and corporate sectors.

King's Wood/ Milton Creek Country Park, Oare Gunpowder Works Country Park

Visits by groups can involve a guided walk round the site, or a guided walk followed by an artist-led workshop. A named OS artist will be the designated Visit Leader for such activities. Groups are advised that Outdoor Studios holds Directors' public liability insurance and operates as a co-operative of freelance artist educators: each artist holds their own PLI insurance arranged through Hencilla Canworth, with a limit of £5,000,000 per artist. Details can be presented on request.

Before any group goes into the forest they will be given a talk about Health and Safety to make sure that they are aware of any risks, but for more detailed information, groups should refer to the **Visiting Groups Information Sheet** so we can make sure that all visitors have a comfortable and safe visit. Risk assessments are carried out in advance of all group visits, and the lead contact of the group will be consulted by the OS Visit Leader when preparing the risk assessment. Visits are monitored throughout. Workshops at Kings Wood take place in the outdoor studio, which is essentially a large clearing in the forest. There are no buildings at all in the forest. There is often a physical aspect to the workshops as well as the use of hand-tools. Groups will be made aware if this is a part of the activity they will be undertaking. The artists working with groups will often make a demonstration of a method or process during a workshop. At no point will unsupervised 1 to 1 working take place. King's Wood is open to the public at all times and at no time should anyone venture unaccompanied out of sight of the main group or climb any of the trees.

This information is set down to ensure that parents/guardians/carers/teachers/staff and volunteers understand the environment.

PERSONNEL:

The membership of Outdoor Studios is comprised almost entirely of freelance education artists who plan and run workshops and other activities. All our artists undergo an enhanced DBS check. Records are kept on file, including the date and number of an artist's check, and these can be supplied on request. We arrange for any new or renewed DBS checks as needed and encourage our members to add the extra portability element. Freelance staff will be given job descriptions, along with their contract, and training. At the start of a period of working with Outdoor Studios, any new member will be observed and monitored during sessions and this will continue, even when cleared to work unsupervised; creating an ethos of openness where children and young people, artists and others are listened to and know who to go to if they have any concerns. Any artist brought in to help temporarily with an activity will need to provide an up-to-date DBS and will not be working without an existing OS Visit Leader present. If running an activity in another venue, the Outdoor Studios member will check in advance who's policy they are operating under, whether a public place or not. When booking an activity, the members will ask about the policy, and who is responsible for disciplining. Outdoor Studios has Codes of Conduct for its artists and members.

6) PARENTS/ GUARDIANS/ CARERS/ TEACHERS' PART IN OUR POLICY FOR SAFETY AND CARE:

Outdoor Studios does not have a policy for the arrival and departure of children and vulnerable adults from site locations and are never "in loco parentis". Schools and other organisations must have a duty of care throughout the visit. Outdoor Studios will offer only a support role to carers who are responsible to the teacher or group leader. If an accompanying parent behaves inappropriately, Outdoor Studios will report that behaviour to the teacher or group leader and the matter is then their responsibility. Parental consent is required for images and schools must deal with permissions.

Schools and other organisations have a duty of care to ensure the proper ratio of children to adults for the activity.

WORKSHOP AREAS

As our *Visiting Groups Information Sheet* states, King's Wood, Milton Creek and Oare Gunpowder Works are open to the public at all times, 365 days a year, including workshop areas. This area is routinely checked to make sure it is fit and safe for groups to use.

WORKING AREAS IN OTHER PLACES SUCH AS YOUTH GROUPS/ SCHOOLS/ GALLERIES

If Outdoor Studios artists are running an activity in a place other than King's Wood, Milton Creek or Oare Gunpowder Works, we will check in advance for the host's Policy for Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults and for any Codes of Conduct for visiting staff. We will ask to be notified in advance of any particular individuals to be aware of and when booking an activity will ask about who has responsibility for any disciplining and adherence of the Policy.

PHOTOGRAPHS, FILM, VIDEOTAPES, PRESS PHOTOGRAPHY AND WEBSITE:

The school or centre must inform Outdoor Studios if there are any individuals in the group whose picture should not be taken. This information must be noted before the visit by the OS individual visiting the site. Outdoor Studios has its own separate photo permission form and will use this to seek specific consent from the school or setting for the use of any images of children, young people or vulnerable adults. OS will never re-produce any image without the permission of the school or setting. This also applies to Outdoor Studios staff/volunteers taking photographs during a visit. With older children, Outdoor Studios will seek their permission directly as well as asking their parent or carer. If the school or group tells Outdoor Studios not to photograph a specific individual, Outdoor Studios will immediately inform the person with the camera. If a photo of someone is taken by mistake, the school or setting will need to vet the material.

A picture of a child will never be identified by name on any publicity, posters or website under any circumstance. Any identifying badge or label that shows in a photograph means that the

image is unusable. In all cases, permission is for the specific use only. Outdoor Studios staff will clearly label and date the image/s, and note the agreed use. If Outdoor Studios want to use them again for a different purpose, new permission is necessary.

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA:

In the event that Outdoor Studios sets up a Facebook Youth Group, this would be a closed group only and Outdoor Studios would be the administrator through work profile/s only.

IN CASE OF A PROBLEM:

Every problem will be taken seriously. If a problem arises, the child or vulnerable adult can talk to anyone who is wearing a tag. That person will either be Outdoor Studios member or artist. If that person is not the main Outdoor Studios contact, they should tell the main contact immediately. The Outdoor Studios main contact will speak immediately to the person who has designated responsibility for the safeguarding of children, young people or vulnerable adults on that occasion. The child or vulnerable adult making the report will have it clearly explained that the disclosure needs to be shared with a responsible adult once they have been able to relate in their own words, and without prompting, what has happened. The Outdoor Studios artist will document what the child is saying (in their words) asap in the incident book and make sure it is correctly dated. Information will then be supplied to the person in the school/educational, youth or care setting who has designated responsibility for the protection of children, young people or vulnerable adults.

If a child makes a complaint about a member of Outdoor Studios to the person with designated responsibility for them, that person will immediately approach the Outdoor Studios main contact. If a child makes a complaint about a member of school staff, Outdoor Studios will report this to the responsible person, as above.

All information will be treated as confidential at all times. Outdoor Studios artists and members will respect the need for discretion.

THE LEGISLATION THAT SUPPORTS THIS POLICY:

The Children Act 1989; The Police Act 1997; The Data Protection Act 1998; The Protection of Children Act 1999; The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000; The Children Act 2004; The Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Order 2007

11) POLICY REVIEW: Implementation of Policy

The Child Protection Policy will be put into practice through:

- the establishment and enforcement of clear Child Protection Procedures
- familiarising all Outdoor Studios artists and members with Child Protection Procedures which relate to their work
- adoption of a Code of Conduct which all staff and volunteers individually agree to and abide by

- The Directors will have responsibility for the Child Protection Policy and associated procedures and will:
 - uphold the child protection responsibilities, widely communicating Child Protection Policy, Procedures and Codes of Conduct and raising awareness of our obligations;
 - monitor achievement of child protection objectives
 - manage any alleged allegations of harm caused to children as and when they arise in accordance with informal procedures, formal procedures and lawful practice
 - establish relationships with external organisations to inform our approach to and management of child protection objectives.

- internal promotion of the child protection obligations and procedures through: briefing/ Induction Programme

- communicating child protection principles, distributing and making widely accessible relevant policy and procedures

- external promotion of OS child protection obligations and procedures through:
 - communicating OS policy and procedures in safeguarding children's welfare
 - communicating the obligations of supervising adults in safeguarding children's welfare
 - communicating to children safeguards in place to protect their welfare
 - implementing and enforcing clearly defined procedures for recruitment and selection of reducing the likelihood of putting children at risk from the outset.
 - ensuring child protection principles inform all relevant OS policy, specifically: Recruitment and Selection Training and Development
Equal Opportunities
Anti Harassment
Health and Safety
Security

- ✧ ensuring ongoing monitoring of policy, procedures and incident management to ensure best practice standards are met and/or exceeded. Policy, Procedures and Code of Practice will be monitored, evaluated, reviewed, updated and communicated annually by the Directors. In improving and enhancing the policy, Outdoor Studios will look to NSPCC and government guidelines