



# Running Children Activities Guidance & Policy Document

## 0. Introduction

Every group that is run in the centre has a duty to safeguard the children and young people that attend. This includes making sure that all children who attend events and activities are kept safe, whether they are regular or one-off.

This document aims to act as a guide for any activities that are run at the centre by community members for children and young people from 0-18 years of age and includes procedures that must be followed when running sessions.

Groups are also required to adhere to Oblong's child safeguarding policy whilst using the centre.

### **0.1. Why it matters:**

When working with children, we should recognise that they need and want to take risks when they play. Children cannot grow and thrive without learning to cope with the possibility that things can sometimes go wrong. As volunteers and staff, we need to successfully manage risks and keep children and young people safe, while simultaneously providing the benefits of adventurous and healthy activities. In this way, we can enable those we work with to take control of their own activities and thus learn to negotiate some of life's risks and challenges.

### **0.2. You may find these principles helpful:**

0.2.1. Distinguish between serious risks to children's health (like head injuries, spinal injuries, burns and scalds) and more minor injuries that are simply part of growing up for active children (like grazed or bruised knees). Focus most of your energies on preventing serious accidents, such as those that lead to hospital admission.

0.2.2. Understand that accidents are closely linked to children's ages and stages of development. This will help your group to understand how children and young people can suffer accidental injury – and to keep one step ahead as they grow and develop.

0.2.3. Think about which accidents are most likely to cause serious injury to children and young people. This will help you to focus on preventing the most common serious accidents for those in your group (like hot drink scalds). It may also enable you to model safe behaviour, which young people and families can maintain on an everyday basis.

0.2.4 Take account of the fact that children's understanding of risk and consequences develops over time. While helping children to develop skills to recognise and manage risks, you need to protect them from serious harm that they may not yet understand. For example, children aged under nine find it hard to judge the speed of traffic, so will need help from an adult crossing the road. But there is a lot you can do while out walking with younger children to help them build road safety skills.

0.2.5. Weigh up the risks and benefits of activities and, where there are clear benefits, consider options that will recognise both. Some activities can lead to injuries but can also be great fun and can yield benefits in terms of children's health, confidence and wellbeing. Rather than banning them altogether, is there a way of supporting and educating children to learn how to do them safely?

0.2.6. When working with young people with additional care and support needs, it is important to understand whether and how their needs impact on their capacity to assess risk and live independently. It is also important to use this knowledge in such a way as to maximise their choices and independence.

## **1. Organisational Duties**

### **1.1. Vetting Volunteers Working With Children**

The volunteers leading groups that work with children should be adequately vetted, below are the procedures that must be followed to enable this

#### **1.1.1. Verifying references**

References can help us make an informed decision about an applicant's suitability to be a volunteer lead working with children.

References should be taken from people who know the volunteers in a professional capacity (not friends or family)

Ask referees about the potential volunteers:

- suitability and ability to work with children and young people
- knowledge and understanding of child protection and safeguarding.

Ensure information provided in the reference is consistent with the information provided by the candidate. Follow up any discrepancies, concerns, or vague statements.

#### **1.1.2. Enhanced with barred list checks**

Volunteers leads working with children at the community centre will either need to have an Enhanced DBS with Childrens Barring check or be supervised by a volunteer or staff member who has one.

It is advisable that at least two volunteers at any session being run have an Enhanced DBS with Childrens barring check.

### **1.2. Letting third parties use our premises**

We have a responsibility when third parties are using our premises to make sure they are taking the right steps to keep children safe.

This applies regardless of the size of the room(s) people are using and whether or not they are paying us to use the venue.

### **1.2.1. Sharing policies and procedures**

We need to ensure that the groups using our facilities are doing everything they can to safeguard and protect children.

We will:

1.2.1.1. Ask groups to share their safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures with you and check that these are adequate.

1.2.1.2. Share our own safeguarding and child protection policy with the groups and ask them to comply with it.

Groups must put adequate health and safety measures in place, carry out risk assessments and have the right insurance. Please see and complete Appendix 1 to confirm.

We will give everyone hiring our venue the contact details for the child protection lead.

### **1.2.2. Sharing information and resources**

We will:

1.2.2.1. Arrange an induction to familiarise the club/activity leader with the venue and share relevant safety information, for example where the fire exits and fire extinguishers are located.

1.2.2.2. Share our safeguarding and child protection policies with the groups using our premises, to make sure they are taking the right action to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

### **1.2.3. Shared facilities and toilets**

Children's and adult's groups should always have separate spaces. Make sure adults from other groups cannot walk through rooms where children and young people are meeting.

1.2.3.1. We do not have separate facilities such as toilets for children and adults, groups should consider this before they start to use our premises.

1.2.3.2. You should wait until adults have left the bathroom before children and young people use them, and vice versa.

1.2.3.3. When going to the toilet, children below the age of 13 should be supervised by an adult who has had the appropriate checks. There must be enough adults to supervise the activity and take children to the bathroom. For older children, a risk assessment should be carried out to consider if it is appropriate for them to go to the bathroom unsupervised. The child's age, ability and development stage and the location of the bathroom should be taken into consideration.

## **2. Planning & Running A Session for Oblong - Things to consider**

Whenever a session is going to be run, it is important that a staff member works with volunteers to plan and risk assess. There are generic requirements for running sessions with children that apply to all organisations and settings and some that are specific to Woodhouse Community Centre. There are also policies and procedures in regards to health and safety.

Some activities may present additional challenges and risks, which make safeguarding more complex. For example, if an event:

- includes larger numbers of people than you are used to working with, requires you to take children to a different venue and location, sometimes for an overnight stay, or involves activities that are less structured than your normal programme

- is organised with other groups, companies and/or individuals who may not be used to working with children and young people.
- A group in which there is a significant age range between the eldest and youngest children.

## 2.1. Safeguarding and child protection plan

The volunteers leading the activity will be required to speak with the Safeguarding lead to draw up a safeguarding and child protection plan for the activity.

### 2.1.1. What to cover

The safeguarding and child protection plan should include information about:

2.1.1.1. Oblong's overarching safeguarding and child protection policy.

2.1.1.2. who has overall responsibility for child protection at the event or activity and how to contact them on the day

2.1.1.3. how staff and volunteers should respond to any welfare or child protection concerns that may arise during the event or activity

2.1.1.4. how we will respond to any allegations of abuse made against an adult or a child involved with the group during the event or activity.

2.1.1.5. our whistleblowing procedures

2.1.1.6. where to go for safeguarding advice and guidance during the event or activity (for example the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or the number of your local child protection services).

All staff and volunteers who will be taking part in the event or activity must be aware of and understand this plan.

## 2.2. Parental consent and attendance registers

It is a requirement that parental consent forms are completed when children take part in a group or activity so that we have the relevant information for each child, such as parental/carer contact details and whether the child has any particular needs, such as Special Educational Needs, regular medication or allergies. We have a standard form that needs to be completely filled out before children can take part in activities.

2.2.1. All information we collect will be securely held in line with our [data protection policy](#).

<https://www.woodhousecommunitycentre.com/privacypolicy>

2.2.2. If a child has any particular needs, make sure you discuss how you will address these with parents and carers

2.2.3. A register of attendance must be taken each day/session

## 2.3. Emergency information

**You must:** Create a list of emergency contact numbers for each child and make sure this is easily available to the staff or volunteers who are responsible for the child.

2.3.1. Make sure group leaders know the procedures for contacting the emergency services if they need to. Give parents and carers a number they can call if they need to contact you or their child in an emergency.

## 2.4. Health and safety & Risk assessments

Staff members will work with volunteers running activities, to understand health and safety procedures in the community centre and complete a comprehensive risk assessment for the group, activity or event.

2.4.1. As part of this it is good practice to make sure parents or carers know about all the activities their children will be involved in, any risks that might

occur and what steps you've taken to keep children and young people safe. For example, explain what you will do if there are adverse weather conditions that would make an outdoor activity more dangerous. Remind parents or carers about any special kit their child will need, for example safe footwear or waterproof clothing.

2.4.2. Talk to children and young people and explain how you expect them to behave. This is especially important if their behaviour might have an impact on their safety, for example whilst travelling to a venue or taking part in an adventurous activity.

## 2.5. Supervision

You should:

Make sure you provide the right number of adults to supervise the children and young people participating, depending on their age, group size, the activity they are involved in and any specific needs that the children may have.

Never allow anyone under the age of 18, or without an enhanced DBS check, be in sole charge of other children.

Take into account what would happen if a member of staff or volunteer has to leave e.g. to accompany a child to hospital.

## 2.6. Who's who

You should:

Make it clear which adults are 'working' (whether paid or volunteers) and which are not. This is important in case of an emergency. It also helps children and young people recognise trusted adults they can talk to if they have any concerns.

### 2.6.1. Recommended adult to child ratios

We've put together some best practice guidance to help work out how many adults are needed to supervise children safely.



We recommend having at least two adults present when working with or supervising children and young people. We recommend the following adult to child ratios as the minimum numbers to help keep children safe:

- **0 - 2 years** - one adult to three children
- **2 - 3 years** - one adult to four children
- **4 - 8 years** - one adult to six children
- **9 - 12 years** - one adult to eight children
- **13 - 18 years** - one adult to ten children

Depending on the needs and abilities of the children, and the nature of the activity, you may need to have more adults than the minimum.

At least two adults need to be present, even with smaller groups.

If young people are helping to supervise younger children only people aged 18 or over should be included as adults when calculating adult to child ratios.

## 2.7. Children with additional needs or disabilities

If you are working with children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) you may need more supervision than the minimum ratios above.

For each activity you should undertake a risk assessment to help you decide on supervision ratios. The assessment should take into account children and young people's behaviour, ability and mobility. As far as possible, include input from children and young people and their parents and carers in risk assessments to ensure children's needs are met.

## 2.8. Toilet ratios

Adults who haven't previously volunteered and haven't had the necessary vetting checks shouldn't be left alone with children or take them to the toilet unaccompanied.

In larger groups of children, encourage groups to take a comfort break together with one responsible adult while the other adult(s) supervises the remaining children and keeps a head count.

## 2.9. First aid ratios

We recommend that at least one adult is trained in first aid.

If you're running one-off events you will need to carry out a first-aid and medical risk assessment.

## 2.10. Lost or missing children

Think about what measures you can put in place to prevent children getting lost and make sure you have clear procedures to follow if children go missing during your event or activity. Things you should consider include:

2.10.1. whether you will have a designated meeting point for lost children, where this will be, how you will make sure children know about it and how it will be supervised

2.10.2. how you will contact parents or carers to inform them that their child is lost or has been found

2.10.3. how you will verify that adults coming forward to collect a child are the child's parents or carers

2.10.4. whether any of the children you are working with might need extra supervision to prevent them going missing, for example if they have a history of running away, or if a learning disability means they get confused in unfamiliar places

2.10.5. who will coordinate the initial search for a missing child

2.10.6. who is responsible for contacting the police if necessary, and when this should happen.

You may wish to contact your local safeguarding agencies, who should be able to provide you with more detailed advice.

## Appendix 1 - Confirmation document for Co-ordinators of Children's events

I ..... have read and understood this policy and had a chance to discuss its implications on the group I run.

I confirm that I have the relevant insurance in place to to run this group.

I confirm that I have the required safeguarding policies and procedures in place.

I have a done a risk assessment, which takes into account the specific risks highlighted by Oblong's Risk assessment.

Any additional risks I have identified and assessed have been brought up with Oblong staff, including discussion of any mitigations.

Group supervisors have Enhanced DBS checks including Children's Barring. Oblong has seen DBS check & photo ID for named organiser.

Signed:

Print name:

Group / booking name:

### Staff use:

I have seen and discussed Risk Assessment and mitigations. .... (initial)

Date: / / 20

I have seen the DBS check and ID of named organiser ..... (initial)

Date: / / 20