

Safeguarding Policy

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Safeguarding Policy

Document Metadata

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| Author | Dan Gwalter |
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1. Purpose

This policy outlines the commitment of the Western Equestrian Society (WES) to safeguard the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults participating in its activities. It sets out how WES prevents harm, responds to concerns, and creates a safe, inclusive environment at events, clinics, shows, and online.

WES believes that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility — not just those working directly with young people.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All WES members under the age of 19
- Any adult member considered vulnerable due to disability, mental health, or other factors
- Council members, volunteers, WES Professionals, clinicians, judges, event staff

- All Society activities, including events, communications, training, and digital platforms

It covers:

- Prevention and risk management
- Safe conduct and supervision
- Responding to concerns and allegations
- Reporting and record-keeping

3. Definitions

- **Child / Young Person:** Anyone under the age of 19
- **Vulnerable Adult:** A person aged 19+ who is unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation
- **Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO):** The named person responsible for safeguarding within WES
- **Disclosure:** When someone shares a safeguarding concern directly
- **Allegation:** A concern or report that someone has caused, or may cause, harm

4. Policy Statement

WES is committed to safeguarding all members. We will:

- Provide safe, supervised environments
- Set clear behavioural expectations for adults and young people
- Respond to concerns promptly and confidentially
- Ensure all role-holders understand their responsibilities
- Review and improve our approach regularly

5. Roles and Responsibilities

| Role | Responsibility |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Welfare / Youth Officer | Acts as DSO; receives concerns, provides advice, maintains records |
| Secretary | Supports policy compliance, record handling, and reporting |
| Chairperson | Escalation point for serious or unresolved safeguarding concerns |
| Council Members | Understand policy; model safe and appropriate behaviour |

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| WES Professionals | Adhere to safeguarding standards in clinics and events |
| All Adults | Raise concerns, avoid risky behaviour, act in the best interests of young people |

6. Policy Detail / Procedures

6.1 Prevention and Risk Reduction

- All events involving youth participants must be risk-assessed and supervised appropriately
- Clinics and shows must provide adequate adult supervision, with at least one person DBS-checked where youth are in attendance without a parent
- 1:1 interactions must take place in an open or observable environment
- Overnight accommodation or transport arrangements are the responsibility of parents, not WES

6.2 Behaviour and Conduct

- All adults must behave respectfully, avoid inappropriate language, and maintain professional boundaries
- Physical contact must be appropriate, non-invasive, and only with consent or necessity (e.g. emergency aid)
- WES Professionals and officials must not initiate private digital or social media communication with youth members

6.3 Responding to Concerns or Disclosures

If a young person discloses harm or concern:

- Listen calmly — do not promise confidentiality
- Record what was said — date, time, and your exact response
- Report to the Youth Officer (DSO) within 24 hours
- If a child is at immediate risk, call 999 and inform the DSO afterwards

6.4 Allegations Against Adults

- Any allegation that an adult has harmed, or may harm, a child or vulnerable adult must be passed to the Chair and DSO immediately
- WES will consult with external safeguarding authorities or the police where appropriate
- The subject of the allegation may be suspended from role pending investigation

6.5 Safeguarding at Events

- The Event Lead is responsible for identifying the Safeguarding Lead for the day
- All clinics, camps, and shows involving youth members must include the DSO or named contact in attendance or on call

- All safeguarding issues at events must be recorded on the Incident Reporting Form and submitted to the Youth Officer

6.6 DBS Checks

- Any Officer or volunteer in regular unsupervised contact with under-19s will be required to undergo a DBS check
- The Youth Officer will maintain a DBS Register and renew checks every 3 years

6.7 Record-Keeping and Confidentiality

- All safeguarding concerns will be logged and held securely by the Secretary
- Access is limited to the Youth Officer, Secretary, and Chair
- Records will be retained for **10 years** after case closure or last known contact with the Society

7. Related Policies and References

- Code of Conduct
- Volunteer Management Policy
- Data Protection (GDPR) Policy
- Safeguarding Concern Form (Templates and Tools folder)
- WES Youth Participation Guidance
- NSPCC and Sport England Safeguarding Standards

8. Compliance and Breach Handling

Any adult found to have breached this policy may face disciplinary action and be removed from their role. In serious cases, concerns will be referred to external safeguarding authorities and/or law enforcement.

Non-action in response to a known concern is also a breach of this policy.

9. Review and Version Control

| Version | Date | Author | Changes Made |
|---------|------------|--------|--------------------------------|
| 0.1 | 23/07/2025 | DG | Initial Draft |
| 0.5 | 08/10/2025 | DG | Updated post Chairman's review |

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|-----|------------|----|-----------------------------------------|
| 1.0 | 06/11/2025 | DG | Published after review by Youth Officer |
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10. Approval Record

| Approved By | Date | Notes |
|--------------|------------|----------------------------|
| Full Council | 06/11/2025 | Approved for immediate use |