

## Safeguarding Policy Statement

River's Rodents and Reptiles provide live Animal Handling sessions to nurseries, schools, care homes and youth groups; also at birthday parties and fairs, fetes and charity events. A variety of different participants can take part in an Animal Handling session including children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The purpose of this policy statement is to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive River's Rodents and Reptiles services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our service. It also protects staff and volunteers, as well as children, young people and vulnerable adults and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection. River Lismer is the only staff member in River's Rodents and Reptiles who is responsible for implementation of this policy.

This policy applies to anyone working or volunteering on behalf of River's Rodents and Reptiles.

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seek to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults in England.

### Legal framework and definition of safeguarding

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

River's Rodents and Reptiles believe that children, young people and vulnerable adults should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young adults and vulnerable adults, to keep them safe and to practice in a way that protects them,

We recognise that the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount in all the work that River's Rodents and Reptiles does and in all the decisions we take. All children, young people and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion, belief or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.

River's Rodents and Reptiles will seek to keep children, young people and vulnerable adults safe by valuing, listening to and respecting them. By also following the Safeguarding Policies and Child Protection Procedure of each registered venue.

River's Rodents and Reptiles will record, store and use information professionally and securely, in line with Data Protection Legislation and guidance. We will ensure children, young people, vulnerable adults and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern. We use the Safeguarding Policies and Child Protection Procedure to share concerns and relevant information with agencies; who need to know, and involving children young people, vulnerable adults, parents, families and carers appropriately. Additionally, River's Rodent and Reptiles aim is to build a Safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people, vulnerable adults

and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

River's Rodents and Reptiles will use our procedures to manage any allegation against staff and volunteers appropriately. In addition we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.

We will ensure an anti-bullying environment is created and maintained through our service, and have a policy and procedure in place to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise. Also, we will provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people and vulnerable adults, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

Supporting documents –

1. Dealing with disclosures and concerns about a child, young person or vulnerable adult.....	3
2. Managing allegation against staff and volunteers. ....	3
3. Recording concerns and information shared.....	4
4. Code of conduct for staff and volunteers. ....	4
4.1 Key responsibilities are –.....	4
4.2 Key rights – .....	5
4.3 Key Relationships –.....	5
4.4 Key Respects - .....	5
4.5 Details of unacceptable behaviour when working with children, young people and vulnerable adults include – .....	6
4.6 Upholding this code of behaviour. ....	6
5. Behaviour codes for children, young people and vulnerable adult.....	7
5.1 Children, young people and vulnerable adults should – .....	7
5.2 Children, young people and vulnerable adults should not – .....	7
5.3 Minor or first time incident. ....	7
5.4 Formal warning.....	8
5.5 Final warning .....	8
5.6 Child Protection Procedures.....	8
5.7 The role of parents and carers .....	8
6. Photography and sharing images guidance.....	8
6.1 Storage of images .....	9
7. Anti-bullying. ....	9
8. Safer Recruitment. ....	10
9. Whistleblowing. ....	10
10. Health and Safety. ....	10

## **1. Dealing with disclosures and concerns about a child, young person or vulnerable adult.**

River's Rodents and Reptiles will continuously review child protection policies, practice and procedures. I will display information about Childline and NSPCC so that children, young people, vulnerable adults, parents and carers know where they can go for help and advice.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult tells River Lisper they have experienced abuse, it is important to reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling me, making sure they know abuse is never their fault.

Reporting any disclosures and concerns must first be made to the senior member of staff at the venue who has booked my service; and then following the venues own Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedure.

## **2. Managing allegation against staff and volunteers.**

If an allegation is made against anyone working or volunteering for River's Rodents and Reptiles the response must be sensitively and promptly dealt with.

All facts of the allegation must be gathered and written down in relation to –

- Behaving in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Committed a criminal offence against, or related to a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Behaved towards a child, young person or vulnerable adult in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

River Lisper will liaise with the Local Child Protection Service, NSPCC and in serious allegations the police.

Every effort should be made to maintain the confidentiality of all parties while an allegation or concern is being investigated. Considerations on how best to support the child, young person or vulnerable adult involved, their parents or carers, and the individual who have has an allegation made against them, will be discussed with the Local Authority Child Protection Services.

### **3. Recording concerns and information shared.**

River Lismar will make accurate and detailed notes about any concerns there are for a child, young person or vulnerable adult and will share these with the senior member of staff at the venue who has booked the service.

- The child's, young persons or vulnerable adults name, age and address.
- What the child, young person or vulnerable adult said or did that gave you cause for concern.
- Any information the child, young person or vulnerable adult has given about the alleged abuser.
- Details of how the allegations have been followed up and investigated.
- Decisions made about the allegation and the actions taken.

If a member of staff or volunteer is being removed from the organisation because they pose a risk of harm, or they would have but the member of staff or volunteer has resigned or left. It is a legal duty to inform the relevant disclosure and barring agency, failure to do this is a criminal offence.

### **4. Code of conduct for staff and volunteers.**

This behaviour code outlines the conduct that River's Rodents and Reptiles expects from all staff and volunteers who undertake duties for the organisation, whether paid or unpaid.

The behaviour code aims to help protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse and reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations being made.

River's Rodents and Reptiles is responsible for making sure everyone taking part in our service has seen, understood and agreed to follow the code of behaviour, and that they understand the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

The role of River Lismar within River's Rodents and Reptiles is full duty of care towards the children, young people and vulnerable adults we work with. River Lismar is seen as a role model and is expected to act appropriately.

#### **4.1 Key responsibilities are –**

- To prioritising the welfare of children and young people
- To providing a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults, by ensuring equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose.
- Having good awareness of issues to do with Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedure and taking action where appropriate.
- To follow the policy and procedure written in this document
- To stay within the law at all times.
- To be a model of good behaviour for children, young people and vulnerable adults to follow.
- To challenge all unacceptable behaviour and reporting any breaches of the behaviour code to a senior member of staff at the venue.

- By reporting all concerns about abusive behaviour, following the Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures, this includes behaviour being displayed by an adult or child, young person or vulnerable adult and directed at anyone of any age.

#### **4.2 Key rights –**

- To treat children, young people and vulnerable adults fairly and without prejudice or discrimination.
- To understand that children, young people and vulnerable adults are individuals with individual needs.
- To respect the differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems; and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to the group or organisation.
- To challenge discrimination and prejudice.
- To encourage children, young people and vulnerable adults to speak out about attitudes or behaviour that makes them uncomfortable.

#### **4.3 Key Relationships –**

- Communication to children, young people and vulnerable adults are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect.
- To avoid favouritism.
- To be patient with others.
- To exercise caution when discussing sensitive issues with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- To ensure the contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults is appropriate and relevant to the work of the service.
- To ensure there is always more than one adult present during activities with children, young people and vulnerable adults. If a situation arises where River Lismer is alone with a child, young person or vulnerable adult, they must ensure that they are within sight or hearing of another adult.
- River Lismer will never be required to provide personal care to any child, young person or vulnerable adult, in an emergency a venue staff member will be alerted of the issue.

#### **4.4 Key Respects -**

- Children, young people and vulnerable adults should be listened to and respected at all times.
- Children, young people and vulnerable adults are valued and their contributions taken seriously.
- Children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to respect their personal privacy.

#### **4.5 Details of unacceptable behaviour when working with children, young people and vulnerable adults include –**

- Concerns or allegations must not go unreported.
- Smoke, consume alcohol or illegal substances is forbidden.
- The development of inappropriate relationships with children, young people and vulnerable adults is forbidden.
- Inappropriate promises must not be made to children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Any behaviour that is in any way abusive, including having any form of sexual contact with a child, young person or vulnerable adult is forbidden.
- Not letting children, young people and vulnerable adults have any personal contact details or have contact with them via social media.
- Any act that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive; including be patronising or belittling to children, young people and vulnerable adults is forbidden. In addition, to making sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexual suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

#### **4.6 Upholding this code of behaviour.**

River Lisper of River's Rodents and Reptiles will ensure that they follow this code of behaviour.

If anyone has a serious allegation or complaint about River Lisper with regards to their behaviour whilst undertaking a service under River's Rodents and Reptiles then the Local Authority Child Protection Services or the police must be informed.

NSPCC Helpline  
0808 800 5000

Kent County Council – Report abuse

Concern about an adult – 03000 416161  
Concern about a child or young person – 03000411111

Email [social.services@kent.gov.uk](mailto:social.services@kent.gov.uk)

Police Non Emergency – 101

## **5. Behaviour codes for children, young people and vulnerable adult.**

This code of behaviour aims to make sure everyone who participates in River's Rodents and Reptiles service knows what is expected of them and feels safe, respected and valued.

The 3 main rules, introduced at the beginning of every service are –

1. To keep voices quiet, no screaming or shouting
2. To remain seated, no standing or moving around
3. To wash hands at the end of the service.

River's Rodents and Reptiles will make sure that everyone who books a service will be made aware of the code of behaviour and they understand the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

We expect people who take part in our service to display appropriate behaviour at all times. This includes behaviour that takes place outside of our organisation and behaviour that takes place online.

### **5.1 Children, young people and vulnerable adults should –**

- Cooperate with others.
- Be friendly.
- Listen to others.
- Be helpful.
- Have good manners.
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Take responsibility for their behaviour.
- Talk to a responsible adult about anything that worries or concerns them.
- Follow this code of behaviour and other rules (including the law).
- Join in and have fun!

### **5.2 Children, young people and vulnerable adults should not –**

- Be disrespectful to anyone else
- Bully other people (online or offline)
- Behave in a way that could be intimidating
- Be abusive towards anyone

This code of behaviour is part of our process for making sure everyone who takes part in our service receives the support they need.

### **5.3 Minor or first time incident.**

If there is behaviour that does not follow our behaviour code, River Lismar will remind the participants about it and ask for it to be complied with. They will give the participant an opportunity to change their behaviour.

## **5.4 Formal warning**

If the negative behaviour continues after the first reminder, or if the behaviour becomes more serious, River Lismer will alert a senior member of staff at the venue.

## **5.5 Final warning**

If the support we have put in place is not helping to change the behaviour, there will be a need to give a final warning. River Lismer and the senior member of staff at the venue is discuss the best plan for the safety of the other children, young people and vulnerable adults and of course the animals.

## **5.6 Child Protection Procedures**

If any member of staff or volunteer becomes concerned that any behaviour suggests a child, young person and vulnerable adult needs protection or that they may present a risk of harm to other children, young people and vulnerable adults, they will follow the Child Protection Procedure. This may involve making a referral to the local authority.

## **5.7 The role of parents and carers**

We see parents and carers as valuable partners in promoting positive behaviours and will involve them as appropriate.

## **6. Photography and sharing images guidance.**

River's Rodents and Reptiles has the following photography and filming policy statement to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who take part in River's Rodents and Reptiles service specifically those where photographs and videos may be taken.

- All staff and volunteers must not take photos or video of any child, young person and vulnerable adult on any device.
- Senior members of staff at the venues must gain their own consent for any photograph or videos taken on any device.
- Parents and carers are advised to only take photos or videos of their own children, young people and vulnerable adults on their own devices.
- Only photos or video posted online or emailed to River's Rodents and Reptile, by a senior member of staff, parent or carer, where permission is gained from within the venues own Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedure, can be used for promotional purposes.
- If consent cannot be gained from a child, young person and vulnerable adult, photos or video of just a child's, young persons and vulnerable adult's hands touching an animal is allowed.



## **6.1 Storage of images**

River's Rodents and Reptiles will store photographs and videos of children, young people and vulnerable adults that have been sent to us securely, on a password protected laptop and password protected mobile phone.

Images will be stored for a period of 5 years and then deleted from both password protected laptop and password protected mobile phone.

## **7. Anti-bullying.**

River's Rodents and Reptiles has the following anti-bullying policy statement –

- To prevent bullying from happening between children, young people and vulnerable adults who are a part of our organisation or take part in our service.
- To make sure bullying is stopped as soon as possible if it does happen and that those involved receive the support they need.
- To provide information to all staff, volunteers, children, young people and vulnerable adults and their families about what we should all do to prevent and deal with bullying.

This policy statement applies to anyone working on behalf of River's Rodents and Reptiles.

Bullying includes a range of abusive behaviour that is repeated or intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally. Children, young people and vulnerable adults should never experience abuse of any kind; and we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, to keep them safe and to practice in a way that protects them.

We recognise that bullying causes real distress. It can affect a person's health and development and at the extreme can cause significant harm. All children, young people and vulnerable adults regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse. Everyone has a role to play in preventing all forms of bullying (including online) and putting a stop to bullying.

## **8. Safer Recruitment.**

River's Rodents and Reptiles currently only has River Lismer as a member of staff. The following policy is in place for the occurrence of any volunteers assisting in the Animal Handling sessions, or when the time comes that River's Rodents and Reptiles expands.

All staff and volunteers are recruited under the following policy statement –

- Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures protects all children, young people and vulnerable adults by implementing robust safer recruitment practices.
- Identifying and rejecting applicants who are unsuitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Responding to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process.
- Responding to concerns about the suitability of staff and volunteers once they have begun their role.
- All staff and volunteers will participate in an induction to Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures.
- All staff and volunteers must apply for a DBS, which is less than a year old.
- Two referees must be provided to give a personal and profession overview of the candidate.
- Three proofs of identity must be provided, including Passport/Birth Certificate, Driving Licence and Proof of Address within the last 3 months.

## **9. Whistleblowing.**

Staff and volunteers should feel confident about challenging the behaviour of others and voicing concerns. They can make a report to the police or Local Child Protection Services, or by contacting the Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285 or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

## **10. Health and Safety.**

See separate Health and Safety and Risk Assessment file.

Contact details

River Lismer

River's Rodents and Reptiles

c/o 21 Fallowfield Close

Maidstone

Kent

ME14 5TW

Contact numbers 07763 810250

07918 931953

This policy statement came into force on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2020

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy statement and accompanying procedures will be reviewed in April 2021.

Signed.....RUELL OWEN.....

Date .....11/05/2020.....