Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Summit Explorers Ltd.

Policy owner	Dr James Wilkinson, Director and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Approved/reviewed	September 2026
Review cycle	Annual, and immediately following a material change in law, national guidance, local safeguarding arrangements or Company activity
Applies to	All employees, directors, self-employed leaders, contractors, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of Summit Explorers Ltd.

1. Purpose, scope and status

Summit Explorers Ltd. provides outdoor education, DofE expedition support, climbing and related activities for children and young people. Their welfare is paramount. This policy sets out how we prevent harm, recognise concerns, respond promptly and work with families, schools, local authorities and other agencies.

KCSIE is statutory guidance for schools and colleges, rather than for an independent outdoor provider. Summit Explorers adopts its relevant safeguarding and safer-recruitment principles as best practice and complies with the safeguarding procedures of each client school or organisation. This policy does not replace a client school's procedures or local multi-agency arrangements.

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; staff act in the child's best interests and do not wait for proof before raising a concern.
- A child may be at risk inside or outside the home, in the community, during an activity, on a journey or online. Concerns may overlap and can include extra-familial harm.
- We take a trauma-informed, child-centred approach. A child who reports a concern is listened to, believed and never made to feel they are causing a problem.

2. Key contacts and immediate action

DSL	Dr James Wilkinson, Director. Contact details are held in the staff emergency contact sheet and event plan.
If the DSL is unavailable	Contact the client school/organisation's DSL where applicable. If there is no client DSL or the matter is urgent, contact the relevant local authority children's social care service directly.
Emergency	Call 999 when a child is at immediate risk of harm, a crime may have been committed, or urgent medical/police assistance is required.
Allegation about the Director/DSL	Do not report it to the Director. Contact the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) directly and notify the client organisation's DSL where appropriate.
Whistleblowing	Staff may contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline: 0800 028 0285 or help@nspcc.org.uk.

Event plans must name the client DSL (where relevant), host/local authority referral route and out-of-hours contact details. Staff must have access to these before an event starts.

3. Legislative and guidance framework

This policy is informed by the following current guidance and legislation, as applicable:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE), especially Part One, Parts Two and Four, and its safer-recruitment principles.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and the safeguarding arrangements of the relevant Local Safeguarding Partnership.
- Keeping children safe in out-of-school settings: guidance for providers; the Children Act 1989 and 2004; the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006; the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012; and the Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR.
- Prevent duty guidance, where applicable; statutory guidance on FGM; and current DBS guidance on regulated activity and barring referrals.

All staff, including those not routinely working directly with children, must read KCSIE 2026 Part One in full (or an equivalent Company briefing that covers its required content where the individual is not employed by a school/college), confirm understanding at induction, and receive at least annual safeguarding updates. The former KCSIE Annex A short version is not an alternative to Part One.

4. Roles, training and professional conduct

The Director is the Company DSL and is responsible for safeguarding culture, training, records, referrals, liaison, case oversight and review. The Director maintains appropriate DSL training and refreshes knowledge at least annually.

All personnel receive safeguarding induction before working with children and then regular updates. Training includes recognising abuse and neglect; child-on-child abuse; online safety; exploitation; radicalisation; responding to disclosures; recording; information sharing; professional boundaries; low-level concerns; and the specific risks of remote supervision, transport, overnight stays, accommodation and changing areas.

All personnel must follow the Staff Code of Conduct. They must use approved communication channels, avoid one-to-one secluded situations where reasonably possible, never exchange personal social-media contact details with participants, and only take or share images in accordance with consent and Company procedure. Staff must not use alcohol or illegal drugs while responsible for children.

5. Responding to a concern or disclosure

Any member of staff who sees, hears, receives or suspects a safeguarding concern must act without delay. They must:

- Make the child safe; call 999 if there is immediate danger or a crime may have been committed.
- Listen calmly. Do not promise confidentiality, investigate, ask leading questions, confront an alleged perpetrator or contact parents/carers if that could increase risk.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing and explain that the concern must be shared with people who can help.
- Make a factual, dated and timed record as soon as possible, using the child's own words where relevant. Record observations, action taken, witnesses and who the concern was passed to. Do not include opinion as fact.
- Report immediately to the DSL. On a school activity also report to the school's DSL, but do not allow uncertainty over responsibility to delay emergency action or a referral.

The DSL will decide, with the appropriate client DSL where applicable, whether the matter requires monitoring, early/Family Help, a referral to children's social care, police involvement or other support. Any person may make a referral directly if they believe a child is at risk and the DSL is unavailable or action is being delayed. Staff must escalate respectfully if they believe a child remains at risk.

6. Working with schools, parents and other agencies

Before a school-based activity, Summit Explorers and the client will agree who is responsible for pastoral support, medical and safeguarding information, reporting routes, emergency contacts, supervision arrangements and post-event handover. A school's DSL remains central to the school's safeguarding responsibilities; Summit Explorers retains responsibility for responding safely to any concern arising during its work.

We normally work openly with parents/carers. However, consent is not required to share relevant information for safeguarding purposes, and parents/carers will not be informed where doing so could place a child at increased risk or compromise an investigation. Information is shared lawfully, proportionately, securely and only with those who need it.

7. Safeguarding in outdoor and overnight activity

- Risk assessments and event plans must address safeguarding as well as physical safety, including group management, communication, emergency procedures, remote supervision, transport, accommodation, toilets/changing, medication and any individual needs.
- Accommodation arrangements must protect privacy and dignity. Tents are single-sex unless a documented, parent/carer-approved and risk-assessed exception is appropriate (for example, siblings). Staff must not share sleeping accommodation with participants except in an emergency where this is necessary to protect life or safety and is recorded and reported.
- Where participants navigate independently, leaders maintain planned contact, checkpoints and a clear escalation procedure. No child is knowingly left alone or without a safe supervision plan.
- Staff communicate only through approved work channels. Devices, photos and location information are managed in line with the Company's online-safety and data-protection procedures.

8. Child-on-child abuse and online safety

Child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, bullying, coercive behaviour, sharing nudes/semi-nudes and abuse online, is not tolerated or dismissed as banter. All allegations are taken seriously, recorded and reported to the DSL immediately. The child affected will be supported and safeguarded; the child whose behaviour is of concern will also be treated as a child in need of appropriate assessment and support. Staff will not promise outcomes or conduct their own investigation.

9. Safer recruitment, DBS and suitability

No one may begin unsupervised work with children until the Company has completed the checks appropriate to their role and risk assessment. For staff, leaders and regular volunteers this normally includes identity, right-to-work, employment history, qualifications/competence, references, relevant overseas checks and an Enhanced DBS check. Where a role is eligible for it, the Enhanced DBS check must include Children's Barred List information.

The Company assesses regulated activity against current law and DBS guidance for every role. KCSIE 2026 has removed its previous regulated-activity scope document pending update; therefore, roles must not be classified solely by an old KCSIE summary or informal assumptions about supervision. Where eligibility or the correct workforce is unclear, the Company will obtain specialist DBS/umbrella-body advice before deployment.

The Company maintains a secure recruitment and checks record for all personnel. Any positive disclosure, gap, overseas history or other suitability issue is risk assessed by the Director before appointment. Existing staff and contractors must promptly disclose any new conviction, caution, police investigation, safeguarding allegation or change that may affect their suitability.

10. Allegations, low-level concerns and whistleblowing

This section applies to all adults working for or on behalf of Summit Explorers, including employees, self-employed leaders, volunteers, contractors and visitors.

An allegation that may meet the harms threshold includes an adult who has: harmed or may have harmed a child; possibly committed an offence against or related to a child; behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm; or behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children. Report it immediately to the Director. The Director will seek LADO advice before an internal investigation, preserve relevant information and follow any agreed process. Historical allegations are referred to police.

A low-level concern is any concern, however small, that an adult may have acted inconsistently with the Staff Code of Conduct but does not meet the harms threshold. It must be reported promptly to the Director, recorded securely, reviewed for patterns and addressed proportionately. If in doubt, the Director will consult the LADO.

Where the concern concerns the Director, it must be reported directly to the relevant LADO. No one will suffer detriment for raising a safeguarding concern in good faith. The Company will make a DBS barring referral when the legal duty is met, including where a person has been removed from regulated activity because they harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child, or would have been removed had they not left.

11. Records, confidentiality and retention

Safeguarding records are kept separately from ordinary event records, access-controlled and retained in accordance with the Company retention schedule and any lawful direction from a school, local authority or police. Records include the concern, action, decisions, rationale, referrals and outcome. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis and data-protection law is never used as a reason to withhold information needed to protect a child.

12. Monitoring, review and related documents

The Director reviews safeguarding records, training, low-level concerns, recruitment checks and learning from incidents at least annually and after any serious incident. This policy is read alongside the Staff Code of Conduct, Safer Recruitment Procedure, Online Safety and Digital Communications Procedure, Health and Safety/Risk Assessment Procedure, Data Protection/Privacy Notice, Complaints Procedure and event-specific risk assessments.

Appendix A: Staff reporting checklist

- Is anyone in immediate danger? If yes, call 999 and make the child safe.
- Listen, reassure, do not promise confidentiality and do not investigate.
- Record facts promptly: date/time/location, child's words, your observations, action and witnesses.
- Report immediately to the DSL and, for school work, the client DSL. Escalate or refer directly if necessary.
- Keep information confidential and do not discuss the matter with people who do not need to know.