Safeguarding

NIC 100541

It is the duty of the NI Squirrel Association to safeguard the welfare of all members by protecting them from neglect and from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

The Northern Ireland Squirrel Association Policy for Safeguarding is based on current relevant Child Protection policies and NSPCC and Government guidance.

All Leaders must attend Child Protection/safeguarding training offered by local Scouting and this must be updated every 5 years. Church or local community groups may also offer additional training.
Each adult should ensure that:

- Their behaviour is appropriate at all times.
- They observe the rules established for the safety and security of young people.
- They follow the procedures following suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse.
- They recognise the position of trust in which they have been placed.
- In every respect, the relationships they form with the young people under their care are appropriate.

We have adapted some **DOs and DON'Ts** from The Scout Association's 'Young People First - Safeguarding - a code of practice' making them more appropriate for adults in contact with under 18s helping in the Drey and children aged 4 – 6 years.

DO keep to this code at all times and remember that you are a role model at ALL times, in and out of Squirrels
DO treat everyone with dignity and respect
DO treat all young people equally - do not show favouritism
DO follow the recommended adult-to-young people ratios for meetings and activities
DO remember that you have been placed in a position of trust – do not abuse this
DO respect a young person's right to personal privacy
DO create an environment where young people feel safe to voice their concerns
DO avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour, for example tantrums or 'clinginess'
DO make everyone - young people, parents and carers, Young Leaders and other helpers - aware of our safeguarding arrangements
DO act within appropriate boundaries even in difficult circumstances or sensitive moments, for example when helping someone who has been bullied, bereaved or abused
DO tell other Leaders where you are and what you are doing, encourage an open and transparent culture
DO ensure if assisting with toileting, washing, dressing, etc. that the child's safety, dignity and privacy are maintained at all times and never on a one-to-one basis
DO remember someone else might misinterpret your actions, even if you mean well
DO report all allegations, suspicions and concerns immediately

DO NOT trivialise abuse or let it go unreported
DO NOT overstep the boundaries between yourself and young people (Squirrels and Young Leaders) by engaging in friendships or romantic or sexual relationships
DO NOT plan to be alone with a young person - ensure to plan activities that involve more than one other person being present, or at least are within sight and hearing of others
DO NOT drink alcohol when you are directly responsible for young people
DO NOT allow bullying or activities that may encourage bullying behaviour
DO NOT join in physical contact games with young people
DO NOT use inappropriate, suggestive or threatening language
DO NOT rely just on your reputation or position to protect you

If you suspect a young person is being abused, a young person confides in you, someone has a concern or makes a complaint about any adult, it is your duty to report it and follow the procedure of the NI Squirrel Association.

If a young person tells you they are being abused, you should do the following:

1. Allow them to speak without interruption and accept what they say. Where possible, ensure another Leader is present.
2. Be understanding and reassuring but do not give your opinion.
3. Tell them that you will try to offer support but that you must pass the information on.
4. Write careful notes of what was said, using the actual words, wherever possible. Sign and date them. The NI Squirrel Association Safeguarding Report form will be of support in recording information. Any witnesses should also sign and date the record to confirm it.
5. **Inform** the NI Squirrel Association by emailing the Secretary at squirrelinfo@scoutsni.org

There is further information in the document - 'Safe & Sound – How we keep your child safe in Squirrels – Information for parents and carers'. This is available in the Squirrel section of the NI Scout website – www.scoutsni.org

If there is a concern, complaint or allegation about a member of the Leadership team or yourself, you should do the following:

1. Write a careful record of what you have witnessed, heard or were told. Sign and date it.
2. Any witnesses should also sign and date the record to confirm it.
3. Inform the Group Scout Leader and contact the NI Squirrel Association immediately by emailing the Secretary at squirrelinfo@scoutsni.org The NI Squirrel Management Committee will advise on further action to be taken.
4. Ensure there is no further risk to the welfare of the young person or young people in the Drey.

NB *Any adult in Squirrels has the right to report concerns or suspicions about another member in confidence and free from harassment.*

If a young person is at immediate risk of significant harm, contact the police - 101 (non-emergency) or 999 (emergency), NSPCC 24-hour counselling service 0808 800 5000 or the Gateway Team in your local Health & Social Care Trust. You must advise the NI Squirrel Association immediately that you have done this.

If you are in any doubt about what to do, contact the NI Squirrel Association at squirrelinfo@scoutsni.org

There are 4 areas of abuse:

- **Neglect**
- **Physical abuse**
- **Sexual abuse**
- **Emotional abuse**

Signs of possible child abuse and neglect may include:

- **Significant changes in a child/young person's behaviour**
- **Deterioration in a child/young person's general well-being**
- **Unexplained marks or bruising**
- **Comments made by child/young person which give cause for concern**

Be aware of any inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of the Drey Leadership team (leaders, adult helpers or under 18s helping in the Drey). This could be obvious favouritism, inappropriate physical contact or abusive, sexual or racial comments or 'rough' play.