SNOWDONIA ADVENTURES

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Operational Standards, Field Protocols & Statutory Reporting Procedures

Document Owner	Snowdonia Adventures	**Target Audience**	All Staff, Freelancers & Volunteers
Effective Date	November 2026	**Review Cycle**	Annual (Next Due: November 2027)
DSL Officer	Reece Robinson	**Deputy DSL**	Appointed Senior Instructor
Statutory Authority	Cyngor Gwynedd Children's Services	**Police Jurisdiction**	North Wales Police (Heddlu Gogledd Cymru)

1. Policy Statement & Principles

Snowdonia Adventures recognises its moral and legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people (under 18 years of age) participating in outdoor instructional courses, guided activities, and adventurous sessions. Every child, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, has equal rights to protection from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The welfare of the child is paramount in all circumstances and operational decisions, superseding commercial, logistical, or performance considerations across all mountain, crag, gorge, and coastal venues.

- **Universal Entitlement:** All young people have the right to feel safe, respected, and supported while participating in adventurous activities.
- **Collective Responsibility:** Safeguarding is a collective duty shared by every team member, instructor, freelancer, and volunteer representing Snowdonia Adventures.
- **Proactive Risk Management:** Clear operational protocols and positive intervention ensure that risks are identified and addressed decisively before harm occurs.

2. Legal & Regulatory Framework

This policy complies strictly with statutory legislation, national safeguarding guidance, and adventure industry standards across the UK and Wales:

- **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014:** Forms the primary statutory foundation for child welfare and multi-agency working in Wales.
- **All Wales Safeguarding Procedures:** Standardized inter-agency procedures mandatory across local authorities, emergency services, and licensed providers in Wales.
- **The Children Act 1989 & 2004:** Statutory duties regarding care, protection, and children in need.
- **Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations (AALA):** Licensing requirements ensuring robust safety, leadership, and welfare standards across trekking, climbing, and watersports.
- **Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR:** Governs the secure handling, transmission, and retention of sensitive child medical records, consent documentation, and incident logs.

3. Key Roles & Safeguarding Responsibilities

Safeguarding responsibilities are distributed across operational tiers to ensure complete accountability:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Maintains policy compliance, acts as the primary contact for safeguarding disclosures, preserves confidential safeguarding logs, oversees safer recruitment vetting, and executes statutory referrals to Cyngor Gwynedd Social Services and North Wales Police.
Operational Instructors & Freelancers	Enforce dynamic field safety, maintain professional boundaries, implement safe harness/PPE fitting protocols, monitor young people for signs of harm or distress, and immediately escalate concerns or disclosures to the DSL.
School Teachers & Youth Group Leaders	Maintain primary pastoral care and supervisory responsibility for school groups, provide verified participant medical/consent records, and assist with group management during transitions and overnight stays.
Parents & Legal Guardians	Provide complete, accurate medical histories and dietary requirements; sign activity and photography consents; and ensure timely drop-off and collection of unaccompanied minors.

4. Safer Recruitment & Staff Training

Snowdonia Adventures implements rigorous recruitment checks to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children:

- **Enhanced DBS Verification:** All personnel engaging in regulated activity must possess a verified Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List check. Freelancers must provide certificate evidence or allow verification via the DBS Update Service annually.
- **NGB Qualifications & Competencies:** Instructional credentials from Mountain Training, British Canoeing, or equivalent National Governing Bodies (NGBs) are independently authenticated prior to deployment.
- **Outdoor First Aid Compliance:** Instructors must hold an active 16-hour Outdoor First Aid award, renewed triennially.
- **Safeguarding Training:** Mandatory induction covering this policy and completion of recognised training (e.g., UK Coaching / NSPCC Child Protection in Sport).

5. Code of Conduct: Good Practice in the Field

5.1 Physical Contact & PPE Safety Adjustments

Adventurous activities like climbing, scrambling, coasteering, and gorge walking involve technical equipment and active terrain where touch may be required for safety. Touch must always be appropriate, safe, and governed by strict guidelines:

- **Visual Demonstration First:** Instructors must demonstrate harness, helmet, and buoyancy aid fitting on themselves or via visual demonstration first. Encourage self-adjustment.
- **Verbal Warning & Explicit Consent:** If manual adjustment or tightening is required, the instructor must explain what they are doing and why, and obtain verbal consent from the participant ('I need to tighten your leg loop strap here, is that OK?').

- **Open Sightlines:** Harness and strap checks must be performed in full view of the group or another leader. Instructors must never adjust intimate buckles in secluded settings.
- **Emergency Support:** Physical support during slips, deep-water spotting, or technical belaying must be functional, professional, and limited strictly to ensuring safety.

5.2 Changing Facilities, Toileting & Remote Venues

Protecting privacy during transitions and gear changes is essential:

- **Separate Changing Areas:** Staff must never change in the presence of children or share private cubicles/tents with youth participants.
- **Restricted Access:** Staff must not enter changing rooms while children are changing unless there is an emergency (fire, severe injury, or distress).
- **Remote Staging Protocols:** At coastal, roadside, or mountain staging points lacking permanent cubicles, instructors must brief participants on using towel robes/dryrobes, ensuring privacy and maintaining dedicated, separated changing spaces for boys, girls, and adults.

5.3 Digital Communication, Photography & Social Media

- **No Private Communications:** Instructors and staff must not communicate with young participants via personal mobile numbers, SMS, private social media profiles, or gaming platforms. All course communications must run through official company channels or parents/teachers.
- **Written Parental Consent:** Photographs or video may only be captured strictly with prior written parental/guardian consent.
- **Context & Decency:** Images must celebrate adventure achievements, featuring participants suitably dressed in full activity kit (wetsuit with buoyancy aid/helmet, technical clothing). No photography is permitted in changing areas, laybys during suit changes, or while resting in swimwear.

> **GOLDEN OPERATIONAL RULE: MAINTAIN GROUP SIGHTLINES**
> Never remain alone with a young person in an isolated area, vehicle, or tent. If a participant requires one-on-one assistance or needs to stop due to injury/exhaustion, position yourself in open view of the rest of the group or ensure a second leader/teacher is present.

6. Recognizing Abuse & Handling Disclosures

Staff must remain vigilant for indicators of physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual exploitation, or neglect. If a child confides in an instructor or discloses abuse:

- **1. Listen Calmly:** Give full attention. Do not show alarm, shock, anger, or disgust. Let the child talk freely without interruption.
- **2. Never Promise Secrecy:** Gently explain that you must share the information with the Safeguarding Lead so that steps can be taken to keep them safe. (e.g., 'Thank you for telling me. To make sure you are safe, I will need to talk to our safeguarding officer, but I will make sure you are supported.').
- **3. Do Not Interrogate:** Do not ask leading questions, examine injuries under clothing, or speculate. Use open prompts only: 'Tell me more', 'Explain what happened', or 'Describe that' (TED approach).
- **4. Reassure the Child:** Emphasise that they have done the right thing by speaking up and that they are not in trouble.
- **5. Immediate Verbatim Recording:** Document what was seen and heard immediately. Record the child's exact words in quotation marks, without interpreting or editing.

7. Incident Escalation & Reporting Procedure

All concerns, whether arising from direct disclosures, suspicious injuries, or observed inappropriate conduct, must follow the mandatory reporting pathway:

Stage 1: Field Safety	Instructor ensures the child's immediate physical safety and removes them from any immediate hazard without interrogating the child.
Stage 2: Documentation	Complete an official Safeguarding Incident Report within 2 hours. Record exact words, dates, times, locations, and any visible marks or witnesses.
Stage 3: DSL Notification	Notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately. Hand over the completed written incident log.
Stage 4: Statutory Referral	If a child is in immediate danger, dial 999 immediately. In other cases of significant harm, the DSL contacts Cyngor Gwynedd Children's Services MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) within 24 hours.
Stage 5: Allegations Against Staff	If an allegation is made against an instructor, the individual must be removed immediately from contact with children pending review. The DSL will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) / statutory authority. If the allegation concerns the DSL, notify the LADO directly.

8. Statutory Contacts & Emergency Escalation

Keep these emergency and statutory contact details readily accessible:

Agency / Contact	Contact Details	Operating Hours
Snowdonia Adventures DSL	Reece Robinson / 07930601137	24/7 Priority
North Wales Police (Emergency)	999	24/7 Immediate
North Wales Police (Non-Emergency)	101	24/7 General Enquiries
Cyngor Gwynedd Children's Services	01758 704455 (Daytime) 01248 353551 (Out of Hours)	Mon-Fri 08:30-17:00 Evenings / Weekends
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline	0808 800 5000 / help@nspcc.org.uk	24/7 Confidential Advice

9. Policy Review & Governance

This policy is formally reviewed annually in November or following any significant safeguarding and/or child protection incident, legislative revision, or AALA inspection finding. All amendments will be distributed to instructors.

Signed on behalf of Snowdonia Adventures:
Owner / Lead DSL

Name: Reece Robinson Signature:  Date: 03/11/2026

Appendix A: Safeguarding Incident Report

Record the incident or disclosure using this link Safeguarding Incident Report with the following details:

Date of Incident / Disclosure *	Day / Month / Year
Time of Incident / Disclosure *	Hour / Minutes
Activity *	
Location *	
Child's Full Name *	
Child's Date of Birth *	Day / Month / Year
Name of Person Completing Form (Staff / Freelance Instructor) *	
Email *	
Phone Number *	
Witness 1 — Name	
Witness 1 — Email	
Witness 1 — Phone Number	
Witness 1 — Role	
Witness 2 — Name	
Witness 2 — Email	
Witness 2 — Phone Number	
Witness 2 — Role	
Nature of Concern / Incident (verbatim disclosure, observed injury, behavioural change) *	
Action Taken Immediately by Staff (e.g., first aid, reassurance, safety separation) *	