

Section 2: Guidelines for Staff and Camp Leaders

Child Protection at Scripture Union Activities

Working on SU camps, and activities brings us into close contact with people under 18. They may see this as an opportunity to share their fears and concerns with a camp leader. Leaders need to be willing to listen and be attentive to what is being shared. People under 18 years old will look upon camp leaders as people to be trusted and may share personal fears and concerns or aspects of their home life with you, including issues such as bereavement, divorce, separation, or bullying.

On occasion, more serious matters may occur that constitute a threat to a person under 18's safety. As a representative of SU Ireland, it is crucial that any situation of abuse or suspected abuse are properly reported and managed. We all have a duty of care and responsibility to act where a person under 18 may be at risk of abuse.

Leaders at camps and events have a responsibility to be aware of and to show concern for people under 18 and families experiencing difficulties.

Camp leaders need to be aware the different types of abuse and how to recognise it (Section 1)

Safeguarding Practices and Procedures for camp leaders:

- Staff and camp leaders should be familiar with and follow the guidelines given in 'Our Duty to Care'. This online manual is produced by the Department of Health and Children.
- It is the policy of SU that no staff, camp leader or volunteer should ever be alone with anyone under the age of 18 in isolation from others, other than in an emergency. If circumstances necessitate that this will occur, then arrangements would need to be approved in advance by SU and the person's parents/guardians.
- On a residential activity, sleeping accommodation for the camp leader and volunteers will be separate from that used by the people under 18, but within easy reach. Separate sleeping accommodation will be provided for males and females (SU determine this to be the biological sex at birth). This will be supervised to ensure it is adhered to. In a possible exception where dormitory arrangements make this impossible, or when under canvas, there will be at least two adults with each group.
- No camp leader or volunteer will be accepted on an SU team without completing the SU Garda Vetting and Volunteer Application Process (Appendix 4)
- The camp leader is responsible for ensuring that a record is kept of all participants' attending their camp. The camp leader should make sure that a completed 'Parental Consent Form' containing the names, addresses and parent/guardian contact numbers has been received for each camp participant before the camp starts. These forms must be passed to the Youth Development Team administrator as soon as camp is over.

- Camp Leaders should also be aware of issues surrounding personal devices that can take photos, the use of phones etc.,. They must have read SU's 'Guidelines for Video Conferencing, Social Media, Photographic Guidelines and Online Interaction' (Section 8) and they must use the SU Ireland guidelines in relation to both the internet and photograph usage when formulating policy for the camp or activity they are running..
- It is the responsibility of SU staff and camp leaders to advise volunteers of appropriate forms of interaction with children. This should take place at a pre-event briefing.
- The camp leader will assign separate bathroom facilities for adult volunteers and inform them of which facilities are assigned for them.
- The camp leader should schedule a daily team meeting to review camp activities and opportunity for points of concern to be raised.
- A record is required for all incidents (not an allegation of abuse) that occur during a camp. The camp leader is responsible for the completion of an Incident Report Form (Appendix 3). This form needs to be returned immediately to the Youth Development Team administrator.
- Camp leaders should immediately report any suspicion that either a camper or volunteer is exhibiting signs of having a contagious illness. Upon notification, SU staff will initiate 'isolation' procedures, communicate with parents/family and make arrangements for a safe return home.
- All campers under 18 should have a signed parental/guardian consent form indicating that "in the event of illness or accident, having parental responsibility for the above named camper, I give permission for first aid to be administered where considered necessary by a trained first aider, or medical treatment to be administered by a qualified medical practitioner". In the event of a medical emergency, SU staff or the camp leader will endeavor to contact the parent/guardian of the person under 18 as soon as possible.
- The camp leader is responsible for contacting parents of a person under 18 that needs to return early from camp. The camp leader should confirm with parents that they are able to collect their child or arrange for their child to be collected as soon as possible. If the parents arrange for the person under 18 to be collected by a third party, the camp leader should request pertinent information for identification purposes.

Supervision

- SU staff and camp leaders are responsible to ensure that adequate supervision of people under 18 is provided and adhered to. The minimum adult/child (under 18) in any group should be 2 adults for the first 16 people under the age of 18 and 1 more adult for every subsequent 8 people under the age of 18. If the children are very young, more supervision will be needed, in which case, SU uses the adult/child ratios put forward by Tusla. Local circumstances, activities, special needs and the experience of leaders should also be considered when providing adequate supervision. This may require that the 1:8 ratio be lowered considerably.
- When dealing with group members of mixed gender it is recommended that there are sufficient adults of both genders to properly supervise activities and any premises in use.

Child Protection Practices and Procedures for camp leaders:

- All camp leaders and volunteers will receive 'Child Protection' training provided by Scripture Union. Each camp leader and volunteer should be familiar with the contents of the Scripture Union Child Protection Policy, Guidelines and Procedures.
- Camp leaders should also consider how these guidelines are to be applied at each camp and communicate this information clearly to all camp volunteers. Camp leaders should know how to deal with disclosures of abuse and the reporting channels
- A copy of the 'Scripture Union Child Protection Policy Guidelines and Procedures' document will be made available online and in the SU Office for all staff, camp leaders or volunteers to read.
- Camp leaders need to be prepared for dealing with a situation involving suspected abuse. They are the key link between the team of volunteers, the child and the SU head office.
- If **a volunteer reports a disclosure that a person under 18 has made** to them, Take time to
 - Allow the volunteer to relate exactly what has been said and in what context, and what is the basis of the concern.
 - Check thoroughly how the volunteer handled the situation and what commitments have been made. Ensure the volunteer made the child aware that the information may be passed on to a further authority.
 - Contact the National Leader or the Designated Liaison Person for guidance. Discuss with them the information you already have. Do not speak to the person under 18 yourself at this stage.
 - If it is agreed that the camp leader should investigate the matter more fully by talking with the child concerned it is vitally important that he/she does so with at least one adult witness.
 - Make arrangements for the person under 18 to be cared for. Encourage him/her to join in normal activities as much as possible, and request that the volunteer continue to monitor the person under 18's welfare.
 - Encourage the child not to talk to others about what he/she has shared in confidence.
 - As soon as the interview with the volunteer is over, complete the Disclosure Report Form (Appendix 1). This may be needed at some future date. Any written record should **be treated in the strictest confidence** and very carefully looked after. This record should include details of the person under 18 (name, date of birth, address), of the concerns (disclosures, signs or concerns of abuse) of the person to whom the concerns became apparent, and of the date and place. This form should then be posted, as soon as is practicable; to the Designated Liaison Person, Ovoca Manor, Avoca, Co. Wicklow and should be marked 'Strictly Confidential'. Disclosure Report Forms are found at the end of the SU CPP and online on the SU website.

It is the responsibility of the camp leader to respond to the disclosure, even if the initial disclosure was made to or noticed by a volunteer.