

## Section 3: Guidelines for Volunteers

Scripture Union is fully committed to the welfare and safeguarding of the people under 18 involved in our activities. Volunteers are expected to do all they can to protect those in their care from harm. Volunteers are expected to behave in a manner that is above reproach.

The following are some **safeguarding guidelines**:

- All SU volunteers will only be accepted after they have completed the application process which includes references, garda vetting and (if volunteering with people under 18) child protection training and education.
- Volunteers should always treat people under 18, and encourage them to treat each other, with dignity and respect. Volunteers should never allow inappropriate language or behaviour to go unchallenged.
- Volunteers should never be alone with someone under 18 other than in a medical emergency. Meetings with individual people under 18 should take place as openly as possible. If privacy is needed, the door should be left open and other volunteers informed of the meeting.
- Volunteers should never be alone in a car with a person under 18. If the situation is unavoidable, then the volunteer must obtain consent from a parent and inform the camp leader before starting the journey. An exception may be made in a medical emergency. The volunteer must always make every effort to be accompanied by another adult volunteer.
- Volunteers should avoid unnecessary physical contact with people under 18. There may be occasions when physical contact is unavoidable, such as when providing comfort and reassurance for a distressed person under 18. In all such cases, physical contact should take place only with the consent of the person under 18 and should always be initiated by them. Volunteers should never engage in rough physical games, including horseplay, other than sports activities which are properly organised and supervised.
- In extreme cases, it may be necessary for a volunteer to restrain a person under 18 physically to prevent injury to themselves or others. In such circumstances, along with another volunteer to act as a witness, no more than the minimum necessary restraint should be used for the minimum amount of time.
- Volunteers should never meet or communicate with children outside organised activities without the knowledge and consent of the person under 18's parents.
- Volunteers must have read SU's 'Guidelines for Video Conferencing, Social Media, Photographic Guidelines and Online Interaction' (Section 8)

- Volunteers should respect the person under 18's right to privacy. A volunteer must not invade their privacy when they are changing, showering, or using the toilet. They must be sensitive to people under 18 who may be uncomfortable in a communal changing or showering setting.
- SU staff, camp leaders and volunteers should be mindful and vigilant of actions that may lead to direct physical contact while working with people under 18 years old.
- Volunteers should never engage in sexually provocative games or activities and never make sexually suggestive comments about or to a person under 18 even in fun.
- Volunteers should never do things of a personal nature for a person under 18 that they can do for themselves. It may sometimes be necessary for volunteers to complete tasks of a personal nature for someone under 18, particularly if they are very young or disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full knowledge and consent of the person's parents, the person over 18 (when consent can be given) and the camp leader. If assistance is required in the event of an emergency, parents should be informed. In such situations it is important to ensure that the volunteer is sensitive to the person under 18 and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion. If possible, another volunteer of the same gender as the person under 18 should be present. Volunteers should avoid any close/intimate physical contact with the person under 18.
- There are sufficient bathroom facilities at Ovoca Manor to provide separate services for volunteers and campers. All volunteers must ensure that they are familiar with the location of the services assigned to them.
- If a staff or volunteer needs to enter a bathroom designated for people under 18 to use, they should knock first and announce who they are and wait for confirmation from the person under 18 before entering. Adults should only go into bedrooms assigned for people under 18 when necessary, and if possible, there should always be another volunteer present. If another volunteer is not present the door should be left open.
- Volunteers should avoid any situation that may be open to misinterpretation. If there is any situation with which you are uncomfortable, the volunteer should consult your camp leader.
- If an incident (not an allegation of abuse) happens, the volunteer present must help the camp leader fill out an Incident Report Form (appendix 3)
- Bullying is not tolerated on SU activities and camps. Volunteers must adhere to the SU anti-bullying policy (Section 10)

The following are some Child Protection Guidelines:

- It is not the role of volunteers to seek for and to identify symptoms of abuse. Nevertheless, it is vital that no child in need of help is ignored. All volunteers need to know how to recognise abuse and how to deal with a disclosure (Section 1)

- If a volunteer has any concerns about a child being abused, or if any such disclosures are made to you, you must report these immediately to the camp leader or, in exceptional circumstances, either to the Designated Liaison Person or the National Leader. Contact details for the DLP and the National Leader are on the SU website.
- If you have any further questions or concerns relating to Child Protection, please speak to your Camp Leader or the Designated Liaison Person or the National Leader.
- If you notice abuse taking place or a person under discloses abuse to you:

<b>Do:</b>	<b>Don't:</b>
<p><b>Stay calm.</b>  <b>Listen</b> and hear.  <b>Give</b> the child time to say what he/she wants.  <b>Reassure</b> the child that he/she has done the right thing in telling.  <b>Record</b> in writing what was said as soon as possible.  <b>Report</b> to your Camp Leader who must report to the National Leader or Designated Liaison Person  <b>Complete</b> the Disclosure report form in consultation with your Camp Leader.  <b>Always maintain confidentiality.</b>  <b>Continue</b> your relationship with the child as normally as possible</p>	<p><b>Panic.</b>  <b>Ask</b> leading questions.  <b>Promise</b> to keep secrets.  <b>Inquire</b> into the details of the abuse.  <b>Make</b> a child repeat the story unnecessarily.  <b>Make</b> any physical examination of the child.  <b>Refer</b> to the matter again unless the child initiates the discussion.  <b>Pursue</b> the matter any further</p>

## Junior Leaders

SU Ireland operates a process that allows young people who are aged 16 or 17 to volunteer as 'junior leaders'. The aim of this process is to help develop a young person's sense of belonging and responsibility in a leadership setting. Junior leaders are under 18 years old and will therefore only ever co-lead a group or activity with an adult leader. Junior leaders should not be assigned to camps where the campers are the same age. Junior leaders must undergo the same volunteer application process as adult volunteers. Junior leaders are still classed as 'children' for the adult/child ratios as outlined by Tusla.