

# Code Of Behaviour for Child Protection

for the

## National Parks and Wildlife Service Education Program

*Version 16/05/08*

*The practices and procedures as laid out in this document are supplementary to, and should be read in conjunction with, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's Child Protection Guidelines and are in keeping with the "Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children" that was introduced by the Department of Health and Children in 1999.*

*The following guidelines for good practice and procedures are for all education staff in the NPWS who come into contact with children during the course of their work. Normally this will be guide grades working in the education programs but other grades (e.g. Conservation rangers) may also be involved.*

### **General Guidelines:**

- The child's welfare and safety will always be put first.
- Education staff will insure, to the best of his/her ability, that every child remains safe and experiences our education service positively.
- Management will provide and the Education staff will participate in recognised and appropriate Child Protection Training.
- Education staff will apply the practice and procedures as outlined in their training.
- All young people will be treated with dignity and respect.
- All Education staff will give children enthusiastic and constructive feedback.
- Education staff will receive appropriate First Aid Training and hold valid First Aid certificates.
- All Education staff will have a complete First Aid kit near by them at all times when in the company of any programme participants.
- Education staff will keep a written record of any incident that occurs to a child, along with an outline of any action taken by them.
- Responsible adults (e.g. teachers, parents, guardians, leaders) who accompany groups of children or individual children participating in any NPWS activities have the primary responsibility for the welfare and behaviour of each child in their care and on whose behalf the appropriate registration forms were signed by them.
- Responsible adults (e.g. teachers, parents, guardians, leaders) who accompany groups of children or individual children participating in any NPWS activities have the duty to make the Education staff aware of any medical or other condition of any participant that they "need to know" of in the interests of the child and the group.

### **Registration:**

NPWS Education Program Booking forms are the official registration forms that are provided for groups and individual children participating in any education program activities and as such staff must insure that they are fully completed before being accepted for processing and stored (or an exact copy) in the specified record keeping facility.

Any member of staff who is taking a booking must insure that teachers / responsible adults for individual children or groups of children participating in any form of education program / activity complete, sign and date the booking form or relevant registration form / book before permitting them to participate in the program / activity.

The procedure above is particularly relevant for events such as open days, summer projects, etc when the child is not participating as part of a pre-existing group.

### **Recording Incidents including Accidents:**

All accidents and other incidents ( e.g. near misses) that occur should be fully recorded, signed dated and stored appropriately by the staff member on duty as soon as is reasonably possible after the incident. The Accident / Incident Report Form must be counter signed and dated by a Safety Officer as soon there after as is reasonably possible.

### **Records:**

The education centre office must have a secure locked filing cabinet that will contain the following information, dated and signed by the appropriate person(s):

- Booking / Registration Forms
- Incident / Accident Report Forms, if required
- Consent of parents or school to use photographs or other material that relates to children participating in any NPWS activities, if required.

All Education staff must record data for groups they book or work with. The Head or Supervisor guide must ensure that records are kept up to date.

### **Locations:**

The following practices and procedures are outlined for NPWS Education Staff to minimise the possibility of children who participate in our program, coming to harm of any sort when they are:

- On NPWS premises
- In their own school grounds
- Visiting a site that is not one of the above (e.g. visiting a woodland or bog whether it is an NPWS site or the property of another agency or individual).

## **A. On NPWS premises**

### Practice:

Education staff will insure that:

- ❖ The official registration form is completed and stored in the appropriate file, for the individual, group or groups attending the centre before they use the centre facilities.
- ❖ They respond appropriately to the information regarding the medical or other conditions of the participants given to them by the accompanying responsible adult.
- ❖ They note the total number of participants that actually attend on the day of the visit.
- ❖ The total number of participants [not including supervising / responsible adults] visiting the centre at any one time does not exceed the maximum designated for that centre by the Safety Officer.
- ❖ Insure that there are at least two responsible adults accompanying the participants and maintaining a supervisor to child ratio of not less than 1:10.
- ❖ They have a complete First Aid kit close by at all times.
- ❖ The accompanying responsible adult is reminded, as appropriate, that:
- ❖ They are the "responsible adult(s)" for each participants welfare and behaviour and the management of the group as a whole.
- ❖ They must stay with their participants at all times.
- ❖ If a child or children need to leave the main group at anytime, it is they who must accompany their child / students (e.g. to avail of toilet facilities, retrieve forgotten items from another location, or attend A and E departments, etc.)
- ❖ They must adhere to the instructions of Education staff in relation to site or activity specific safety instructions.

## **B. In their own school grounds**

### Practice:

Education staff will insure that:

- ❖ The official registration form is completed and stored in the appropriate file, for the individual, group or groups attending the School
- ❖ They respond appropriately to the information regarding the medical or other conditions of the participants given to them by the accompanying responsible adult.
- ❖ The accompanying responsible adult is reminded, as appropriate, that:
- ❖ They are the "responsible adult(s)" for each participants welfare and behaviour and the management of the group as a whole.
- ❖ They must stay with their participants at all times.
- ❖ If a child or children need to leave the main group at anytime, it is they who must accompany their child / students (e.g. to avail of toilet facilities, retrieve forgotten items from another location, or attend A and E departments, etc.)

### C. Visiting a site that is not one of the above

#### Practice:

Education staff will insure that:

- ❖ The official registration form is completed and stored in the appropriate file, for the individual, group or groups visiting the site, before the visit commences.
- ❖ That the supervisor to child ratio is strictly adhered to. Education staff may, at local managers discretion, be included in the calculation of sufficient supervisory personnel, provided at least two responsible adults accompany the participants. In addition, Education staff will ensure that there are at least two responsible adults accompanying the participants, even when the group is less than 20.
- ❖ They note the total number of participants that actually attend on the day of the visit.
- ❖ A limit of 30 participants in a group per Education staff member is not exceeded
- ❖ One responsible adult remains at the rear of the group and that all participants must stay in front of this person at all times.
- ❖ They respond appropriately to the information regarding the medical or other conditions of the participants given to them by the accompanying responsible adult.
- ❖ They have a complete First Aid kit close by at all times.
- ❖ They have some form of communication by which the emergency services can be contacted as soon as possible should the need arise.
- ❖ The accompanying responsible adult is reminded, as appropriate, that:
- ❖ They are the "responsible adult(s)" for each participants welfare and behaviour and the management of the group as a whole.
- ❖ They must stay with their participants at all times.
- ❖ If a child or children need to leave the main group at anytime, it is they who must accompany their child / students (e.g. to avail of toilet facilities, retrieve forgotten items from another location, or attend A and E departments, etc.)
- ❖ They must adhere to the instructions of the Education staff member(s) in relation to site or activity specific safety instructions.

## Procedures

### **Accident / Incident:**

*Note: It must be remembered that the "Responsible Adult" is primarily responsible for the welfare and behaviour of each child in their care and on whose behalf the appropriate registration forms were signed.*

- ❖ If at all possible two adults (one of whom must be a "Responsible Adult" other than the Education staff member) will remain with the injured child. If one adult is with the child, at least one other adult should remain at the scene.
- ❖ The appropriate emergency service should be contacted if necessary as soon as possible (Dial 999 or 112). The person making the contact will need to give location of incident and outline of incident and any injury detected. The contact person must await confirmation that the information given has been received.
- ❖ First aid is to be administered as appropriate by a competent person who holds a valid First Aid Certificate.
- ❖ Education staff member should inform the line manager (normally Head or Supervisor guide) of the incident as soon as possible and keep them updated.
- ❖ If there is a casualty, parents / guardians must be notified as soon as possible via the school personnel.
- ❖ Immediately after the incident an incident report sheet must be completed, dated and signed by the Education staff member(s) present, and presented to and signed and dated by a line manager.
- ❖ A copy of the Accident/Incident report will be submitted by the line manager (normally Head Guide or Supervisor Guide) to the Safety Officer as soon as possible. The SO will arrange for an accident investigation.

### **Missing Person(s):**

A quick **search** of the area is carried out by any available adult personnel but the remaining group members must stay together. The responsible Adult to Child ratio must be maintained within the group at all times.

- ❖ If the missing person cannot be located within a reasonable length of time, the appropriate emergency services must be contacted as soon as possible. The Education staff member should alert the line manager (normally Head Guide or supervisor guide) to the incident as soon as possible
- ❖ A missing person situation is an "incident" and should be reported as such, even if the person is swiftly found, and is unharmed.

### **Suspected Child Abuse:**

Suspicions of child abuse should to be reported directly to the Department's Employee Assistance Officer. The EAO will decide if there is sufficient grounds to formally report the suspected abuse to An Garda Síochána and/or the Health Service Executive. The EAO will inform the Safety Officer for the Region. If that person is implicated in the allegation the report should be made to the Safety Manager for the Division.

