

Rise & Climb CIC – Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

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Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

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All safeguarding concerns, disclosures, incidents, or allegations must be reported immediately to the DSL.

Staff and volunteers must not investigate concerns themselves.

If a child or young person is in immediate danger, call **999**.

1. Policy Statement

Rise & Climb CIC believes all children and young people have the right to grow, develop, and participate free from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This includes access to activities that promote physical, emotional, social, mental, and overall wellbeing.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and underpins all aspects of our work.

All staff, volunteers, trustees, freelancers, and anyone working on behalf of Rise & Climb are responsible for promoting welfare and protecting children and young people, regardless of ethnicity, religion, sex, gender identity, age, disability, neurodiversity, or sexual orientation.

We recognise that some children and young people may have additional vulnerabilities due to inequality, discrimination, adverse experiences, disability, communication needs, or social circumstances.

We also recognise the value of **positive risk-taking** within climbing as a structured, supervised way of building resilience, confidence, emotional regulation, and independence.

2. Aims of This Policy

This policy aims to:

- Protect children and young people from harm
 - Ensure safe, consistent safeguarding practice
 - Provide clear guidance for staff, volunteers, and families
 - Support early identification and appropriate response to concerns
 - Ensure compliance with statutory safeguarding duties and local procedures
 - Promote a safe, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate climbing environment
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3. Legal and Local Safeguarding Framework

This policy aligns with:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

It follows guidance from:

- Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Safeguarding Children Partnership
 - Local authority safeguarding procedures delivered through Cornwall Council
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4. Safeguarding Principles

We operate in line with the core safeguarding principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- Prevention and early intervention
- Proportionality
- Protection from harm
- Partnership with families and agencies
- Accountability and transparency

5. Climbing, Risk, Mental State and Participation

Climbing is a physically and psychologically demanding, safety-critical activity involving inherent risk. Safe participation depends on attention, communication, emotional regulation, judgement, and the ability to engage safely with equipment and instruction.

Risk cannot be eliminated but is actively managed through training, supervision, systems, and dynamic decision-making.

5.1 Physical, Emotional and Developmental Capacity

Safe participation depends on a child or young person's ability to:

- Follow safety instructions consistently and in real time
- Understand and respond to group safety systems and boundaries
- Communicate needs, concerns, and stop signals appropriately
- Maintain awareness of height, movement, and equipment
- Engage safely with peers, instructors, and climbing systems
- Demonstrate appropriate judgement for their current level of activity

These abilities vary between individuals and may fluctuate day-to-day.

Decisions are always based on current presentation and functional capacity, not diagnosis, labels, background, or assumptions.

5.2 Mental State, Emotional Regulation and Functional Capacity (Safety-Critical Consideration)

Rise & Climb recognises that a child or young person's **current mental state, emotional regulation, and cognitive functioning** can directly affect their ability to participate safely in a climbing environment.

Because climbing is a **dynamic, height-based, safety-critical activity**, participation requires:

- Continuous attention and responsiveness to instruction
- Accurate perception of risk and spatial awareness

- Emotional regulation under pressure or challenge
- Safe judgement in real time decision-making
- Clear communication with instructors and belayers
- Ability to pause, stop, or seek help when needed

Mental state is considered only in terms of present functional capacity to engage safely, not diagnosis, behaviour history, or any form of labelling. Rise and Climb staff are not responsible for mental state examination - instead, staff will communicate with the individual to understand their needs, and will liaise with people involved in their care if necessary, and/or parents/carers.

Factors that may temporarily affect safe participation include:

- Acute distress, panic, or emotional overwhelm
- Significant dysregulation or inability to self-regulate
- Heightened anxiety affecting judgement or communication
- Dissociation, shutdown, or reduced awareness of surroundings
- Sudden behavioural change impacting cooperation or safety
- Difficulty processing or retaining safety instructions
- Sensory overload or fatigue affecting attention and reaction time
- Conflict or emotional disturbance affecting group safety dynamics

These states are understood as fluid and changeable, not fixed characteristics.

Staff are not mental health professionals - if someone presents with higher risk/needs, we will need to be in contact with their medical/mental health support team. Staff may need access to a crisis plan to know what signs to look out for that may indicate deterioration or increased risk.

Response and Safeguarding Approach

Where concerns arise about immediate safe participation, staff will respond in a calm, proportionate, and supportive manner.

Actions may include:

- Increased supervision or 1:1 support
- Temporary pause from climbing activity
- Step-down to ground-based or observational participation

- Reduced complexity or height exposure
- Time and space for emotional regulation
- Gradual reintegration into activity when safe capacity returns

Where appropriate, decisions may involve stepping a young person out of active climbing to maintain safety for them and others. If risk is deemed too high, staff may cease climbing sessions to maintain safety of the individual and others.

All decisions prioritise:

- Safety
- Dignity
- Inclusion
- Emotional wellbeing
- Proportionality

Decisions are made on **live risk assessment and observed presentation**, not assumptions.

5.3 Positive Risk-Taking

We actively support positive risk-taking to promote:

- Confidence and independence
- Emotional resilience
- Problem-solving skills
- Social development
- Self-awareness and regulation

All risk-taking is structured, supervised, and continuously reviewed.

5.4 Equipment Use and Support

Staff will:

- Support safe fitting of harnesses and equipment - maintaining a distance of arm's length where possible.
- Encourage independence where appropriate
- Conduct visual safety checks at all times

- Provide physical assistance only when necessary and always in view of others
 - Maintain clear professional boundaries
 - Explain all actions and adjustments clearly
 - Ensure staff are trained in equipment use and safeguarding procedures
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6. Safeguarding Procedures

All concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL.

Staff must not investigate concerns themselves.

The DSL will:

- Record concerns factually
- Assess immediate risk
- Take protective action where necessary
- Make referrals to Children's Social Care via Cornwall Council
- Liaise with safeguarding partners
- Ensure appropriate follow-up and documentation

Where there is immediate danger, emergency services must be contacted.

7. Anti-Bullying Procedures

Staff-to-Staff

- Report to directors or trustees
- Written statements may be taken
- Verified bullying may result in disciplinary action
- Support provided where appropriate

Staff-to-Participant / Participant Bullying

- Report to DSL immediately
- Statements may be recorded
- Verified bullying may result in exclusion
- Support offered to encourage behaviour change

8. Responsibilities

All Staff

- Follow safeguarding policy at all times
- Report concerns immediately
- Maintain safe practice
- Participate in training and supervision

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Responsible for:

- Safeguarding leadership and oversight
 - Managing referrals and safeguarding responses
 - Liaising with Cornwall Council and safeguarding partners
 - Ensuring staff training and safe systems
 - Maintaining safeguarding records
 - Promoting welfare of children and young people
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9. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

We comply with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Information will be:

- Stored securely
- Shared only on a need-to-know basis
- Shared without consent where necessary to protect a child or others

Staff must never promise confidentiality where safeguarding concerns exist.

10. Recording and Data Protection

All safeguarding records must be:

- Factual and accurate
 - Free from opinion or assumption
 - Dated and signed
 - Stored securely
 - Retained appropriately
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11. Recruitment, DBS and Training

Rise & Climb uses safe recruitment procedures including:

- Enhanced DBS checks where appropriate
- Reference checks
- Role suitability assessment
- Ongoing supervision and review

Safeguarding training is mandatory and includes:

- Recognising abuse and neglect
 - Responding to disclosures
 - Safe working in climbing environments
 - Boundaries and professional conduct
 - Reporting procedures
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12. Managing Allegations Against Staff

- All allegations must be reported immediately to the DSL
 - DSL will consult safeguarding partners via Cornwall Council
 - If allegation involves DSL, escalate to director or deputy
 - Protective action may be taken where necessary
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13. Whistleblowing

Staff and volunteers may raise concerns about unsafe or poor practice.

Concerns may be escalated externally if required.

No one will suffer detriment for raising genuine safeguarding concerns.

14. Monitoring and Review

We monitor safeguarding through:

- Training records
 - DBS and recruitment checks
 - Incident and safeguarding logs
 - Staff supervision
 - Policy review and external guidance updates
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15. Conclusion

Rise & Climb CIC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people.

We balance safety, inclusion, and positive risk-taking within a structured, supervised climbing environment.

We work in partnership with families, professionals, and the local authority, including Cornwall Council, to ensure children and young people are safe, supported, and able to thrive.

Safeguarding is central to everything we do