

SAFEGUARDING POLICY & PROCEDURES

UPDATED: APRIL 2025

VALID UNTIL: APRIL 2026



YOUR ADVENTURE
IN SAFE HANDS

WELCOME

OUR EXPERIENCE MAKES THEIRS A BETTER ONE.

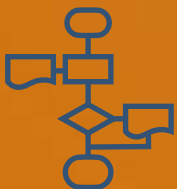
We are an Adventure Challenge Event organiser & provider of exceptional DofE Expeditions, driven by quality.

An Approved Activity Provider (AAP) who is respected for organising professionally delivered DofE Expeditions for schools, groups and individuals.

Priding ourselves on using the outdoors as an adventure playground, we deliver exceptional and inspiring challenge events for charities and companies, nationwide. These events offer a unique and bespoke outdoor activity opportunity and can be used help raise much needed funds for essential causes.



BEN KEEN
Owner / Director



Meticulous planning
with eye for detail.



The best
equipment
available.



3 decades of
adventure event
experience.



For Schools,
Groups, Charities,
companies and
individuals.

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

- Opening Statement
- The Purpose of this Policy
- Definitions
- Legal Framework
- This Safeguarding Policy key principles

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

- Introduction
- Procedure Aims
- Definitions
- Definitions of Abuse
- How to Respond to and Report Abuse
- Concerns about the Behaviour of Staff
- Safeguarding Good Practice Guidelines
- Use of photographic/filming and digital imaging equipment
- Participants with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Recruitment and Training of Staff and Volunteers
- Recruitment
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CODE OF PRACTICE FOR SLEEPING ARRANGEMENT

- Sleeping arrangements when camping
- Sleeping arrangements when staying in a hostel, or similar accommodation
- Transgender and Gender Neutral arrangements

INTRODUCTION

We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults

They are entitled to protection from physical, sexual and emotional harm and have the right to a safe, positive and enjoyable environment when involved with any of our programmes.



SECTION CONTENTS

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The Adventure Element Ltd encourages children's, young people's and vulnerable adults' participation and enjoyment in adventurous outdoor activities in the following ways:

- Through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award
- Through participating in activities with family and friends.
- By interacting with The Adventure Element Ltd on our social media platforms

We want children to enjoy their involvement with The Adventure Element Ltd and we must operate safely, with safeguarding as the top priority. We also recognise that we may have incidental or targeted interaction with vulnerable adults and their carers, and need to act, and be seen to act, appropriately at all times.

We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. They are entitled to protection from physical, sexual and emotional harm and have the right to a safe, positive and enjoyable environment when involved with The Adventure Element Ltd.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY:

- To provide protection for children and vulnerable adults who undertake activities with The Adventure Element Ltd.
- To provide staff with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or vulnerable adult may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

The policy applies to all staff, including freelance staff, Contractors, students, or anyone working on our behalf.

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved with The Adventure Element Ltd. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the Company.

DEFINITIONS

- A Child is defined as an individual under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).
- A vulnerable adult is "A person who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation"

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- A Child is defined as an individual under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).
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THIS SAFEGUARDING POLICY IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING KEY PRINCIPLES:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children will have a positive, enjoyable and safe experience with The Adventure Element Ltd.
- All participants, regardless of age, disability, gender identity or gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnicity, or national origin), religion and belief, sexual orientation, ex- offender status or socio-economic background, have the right to protection from harm, abuse or exploitation.
- All allegations, suspicions of harm or abuse and concerns will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately.
- Everyone will work in partnership to promote the welfare, health and development of children and vulnerable adults.
- Our safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and regulatory requirements wherever we operate as a charity.

The Adventure Element Ltd acknowledges that some children or vulnerable adults, including those who are disabled can be particularly vulnerable to abuse, and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

All staff regardless of their role (or anyone working on behalf of The Adventure Element Ltd) have a responsibility for understanding our policy and implementing our safeguarding approach.



AS PART OF OUR SAFEGUARDING POLICY, THE ADVENTURE ELEMENT LTD:

- Promotes and prioritises the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable adults.
- Ensures everyone working with children and vulnerable adults clearly understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate training opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and vulnerable adults.
- Ensures appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support is provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.
- Ensures that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- Prevents the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals to roles involving working with children or vulnerable adults.
- Ensures robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

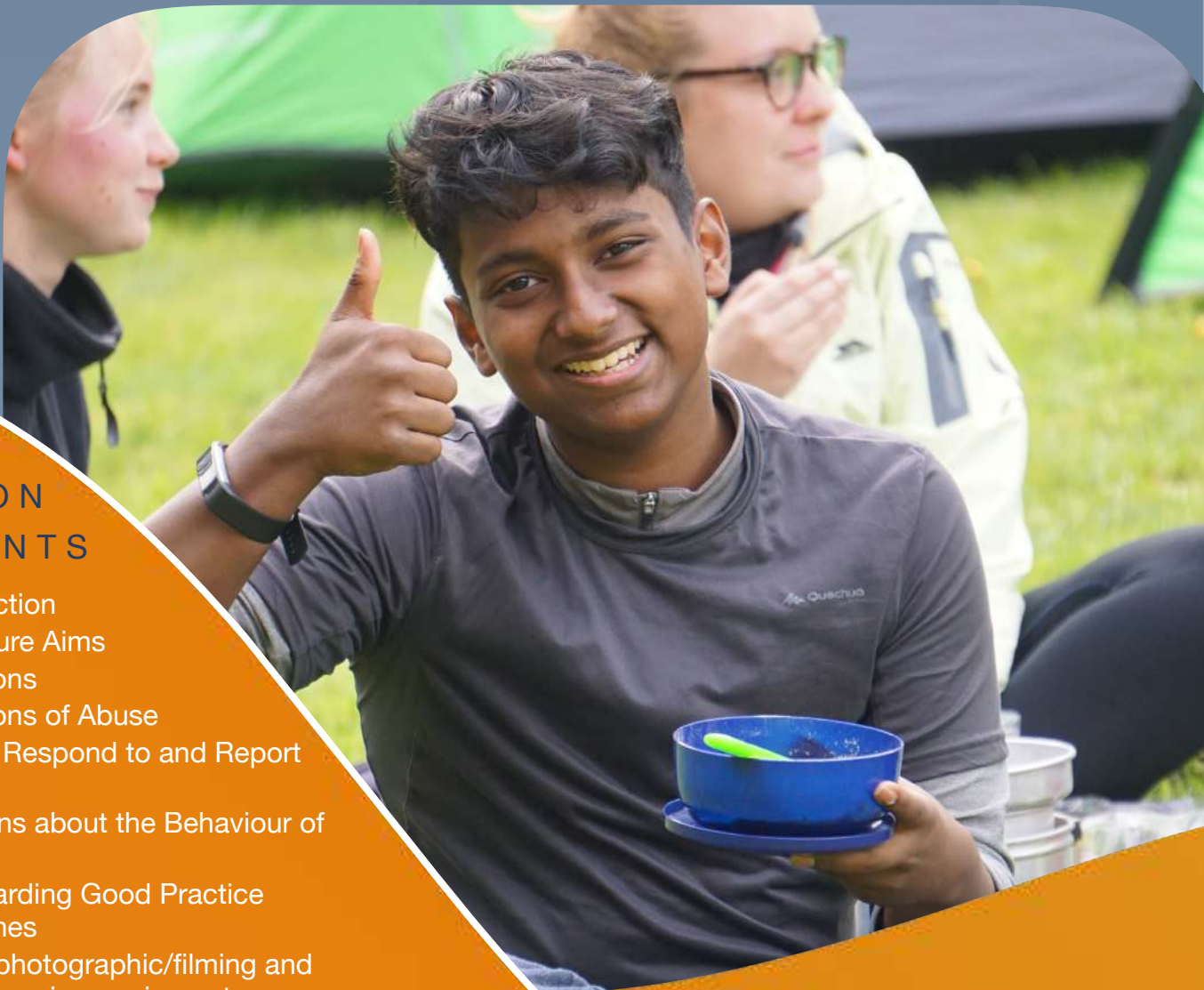
WE SEEK TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS BY:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting children and vulnerable adults.
- Adopting child protection and vulnerable adult guidelines through appropriate procedures and a code of conduct for staff.
- Recruiting responsibly, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, parents, carers, vulnerable adults and staff.
- Sharing information about concerns with appropriate agencies who need to know, and involving carers, parents, children and vulnerable adults appropriately.
- Providing effective leadership and management for staff working with children and vulnerable adults through supervision, support and training.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff appropriately.

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- Recruitment
- Induction and Training

INTRODUCTION

All staff working or helping within The Adventure Element Ltd. must ensure that:

- The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff (paid/unpaid) have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.
- All staff are aware that **Ben Keen** is the Managing Director of The Adventure Element Ltd. He is the designated Safeguarding Officer, and can be contacted on **07793 288647** or **01768 800212**.

PROCEDURE AIMS

The aim of the The Adventure Element Ltd's Safeguarding Procedure is to promote good practice:

- Providing children, young people and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of The Adventure Element Ltd.
- Allowing all staff /volunteers to make informed decisions and give confident responses to specific issues.

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DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g., via the internet).

Behaviours linked to the likes of drug taking, alcohol abuse, truanting and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images/or videos can be signs that children are at risk.

They may be abused by an adult, adults, another child, or other children. This is most likely to include, but is not limited to;

- Bullying (including cyber bullying)
- Physical abuse
- Sexual violence
- Sexual harassment
- Up skirting
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images/or videos
- Initiation/hazing type violence/rituals

Technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues and abuse can take place online or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Young people are at risk of abuse online as well as face-to-face. In many cases abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh," or "part of growing up". Staff should be constantly alert to signs of abuse to minimise the risk and should be aware of indicators, which may signal those children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. Staff should be aware that mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect, or exploitation.



HOW TO RESPOND TO AND REPORT ABUSE

All staff must follow this policy and refer any concerns of abuse to the Safeguarding Officer immediately. In some cases, the victim may not make a direct report but if staff have any concerns about a young person's welfare, they should act on them immediately. All staff must report:

- any concerns that a young person or a vulnerable adult presents signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect.
- any disclosure or hints of abuse or neglect received from the young person or vulnerable adult or from any other person.
- any concerns they may have regarding a person who may pose a risk to young people.

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STAFF MUST:

- Listen respectfully and carefully to the young person or vulnerable adult, keeping calm, offering reassurance and being non-judgemental.
- Never promise confidentiality - let the young person or vulnerable adult know immediately that if they make a Safeguarding disclosure you must speak to the Safeguarding Officer; explain that anything they say will be treated sensitively and only those who need to know will be informed.
- Observe and record bruises or self-harm where possible but should not ask a young person or vulnerable adult to remove or adjust their clothing to observe them.
- Allow the young person or vulnerable adult to lead the discussion if a disclosure is made, but do not press for details by asking leading questions, e.g., 'what did they do next?'
- Listen – do not investigate but use questions such as, 'Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?'. Staff should not view or forward illegal images of a young person or vulnerable adult.
- Not lay blame or criticise either the young person or vulnerable adult or the perpetrator and let the young person or vulnerable adult know that the law on child abuse is there to protect them and not criminalise them.
- Write up a thorough summary of the disclosure by completing the online **Safeguarding / Welfare Disclosure Form** This is shared through the WhatsApp chat group or via email prior to the programme commencing.
- Inform the Safeguarding Officer as soon as is practically possible

CONCERNS ABOUT THE BEHAVIOUR OF STAFF

If an allegation is made against anyone working with young people or vulnerable adult from The Adventure Element Ltd, all unnecessary delays should be eradicated. In the case of an allegation against a member of staff, sub-contractor or volunteer the information should be given to the Safeguarding Officer directly who will take any necessary steps to ensure the safety of the young people or vulnerable adult in their charge.

Discussions should be recorded in writing and any communication with both the individual and the parents of the young people or vulnerable adult agreed. The Adventure Element must consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant suspension under:

“unacceptable professional conduct.”

or whether alternative arrangements should be put in place. If a member of staff is dismissed from The Adventure Element Ltd, or left due to risk/harm to a child The Adventure Element Ltd must promptly inform the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

If any staff have concerns of a low-level nature, they should share those concerns with the Safeguarding Officer.

The type of low-level concerns that do not meet the harm threshold but that still need to be reported are:

- Being over friendly with young people or a vulnerable adult
- Having favourites
- Taking photos of young people or vulnerable adults on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a young people or vulnerable adult on a 1:1 basis behind closed doors
- Using inappropriate language

If staff think they have had an experience that might be classed as a low-level concern they should report the incident to the Safeguarding Officer, so it is logged.



SAFEGUARDING GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

The Adventure Element Ltd has a duty of care to safeguard from harm all young people or vulnerable adults involved in any of our events and activities. All young people and vulnerable adults have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. The Adventure Element Ltd will ensure the safety and protection of all children and vulnerable adults involved in our activities and events through adherence to these Safeguarding guidelines.

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate:

- Avoid situations where you are alone with one young person/vulnerable adult.
- If any form of physical support/contact is required ask the participants' permission, explain what you are doing and why to both the young person/vulnerable adult and their parents/carers or teachers.
- Where possible ask parents/carers or teachers to be responsible for children/vulnerable adults in changing rooms. Always ensure that whoever supervises young people work in pairs.
- Don't allow physically rough or sexually provocative games, or inappropriate talking or touching. Conduct yourself in a professional manner.
- If it's necessary to do things of a personal nature for young person/vulnerable adult, make sure you have another adult accompanying you. Get the consent of the parent/carer and if possible the young person/vulnerable adult. Let them know what you are doing and why.
- If visiting staff, e.g. school teachers, are available and present, any allegations should be reported to them and the visiting Company's policies should be put in to action.
- Ensure that any claims of abuse by a child/vulnerable adult are taken seriously and that it is dealt with by people who know what to do. If you need urgent advice contact the **NSPCC Child Protection 24-hour Help Line. 0808 800 5000.**
- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treat all young people/disabled adults with respect and dignity.
- Build relationships based on mutual trust, which empowers young people or vulnerable adults to share in the decision-making process.
- Ensure that during residential events, adults should avoid entering a young people or vulnerable adults bedrooms and should never invite young people or vulnerable adults into their private rooms.



- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of young people with and without disabilities – avoiding excessive physical activity or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Secure parental consent in writing for the child's participation, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- Keeping a written record of any incident or accident that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- For unaccompanied walking groups, such as DofE expeditions, it is recommended that mobile phone numbers are exchanged for emergency use only. Any such use must be carefully recorded by the instructor/supervisor in the expedition log and returned to The Adventure Element Ltd. No other communication by phone/text/email etc. is permitted between children and adults working for The Adventure Element Ltd.
- Follow guidelines within The Adventure Element Ltd 'DofE Open Expeditions: Code of Practice for Sleeping Arrangements'. Appendix 1.

These guidelines have been compiled with reference to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, British Canoeing and British Mountaineering Council policies on protecting Young People and Vulnerable Adults. All The Adventure Element Ltd. Leaders are encouraged to read both of these policies in order to protect all participants, Leaders and other parties such as teachers or assistants. These policies are available to read at;

www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/

www.thebmc.co.uk/

www.DofE.org/

INCIDENTS THAT MUST BE REPORTED / RECORDED

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the company or to another colleague and record the incident. It may also be appropriate to ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a child or vulnerable adult
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner
- If a child or vulnerable adult appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- If a child or vulnerable adult misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC/FILMING AND DIGITAL IMAGING EQUIPMENT

All staff should be vigilant to ensure that outdoor activity events are not used as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled people in vulnerable positions, and any concerns should be reported to the company and the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Images of Children will only be taken and used with the written permission of their parent / guardian.

PARTICIPANTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

The Adventure Element Ltd positively encourages the participation of group members with disabilities and special educational needs. We aim to do this by close consultation with party organisers and/or individuals themselves to enable us to provide a challenging, rewarding and safe outdoor experience for all participants.

The information received prior to the running of the course allows us to use staff with experience of working with people with disabilities and special educational needs. The information allows us to programme suitable activities at appropriate venues, arrange for the use of aids or other specialist equipment and adjust staff: student ratios accordingly.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

The Adventure Element Ltd recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children or vulnerable adults in some way and that reasonable steps should be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children or vulnerable adults.

RECRUITMENT

All The Adventure Element Ltd staff are employed on a freelance basis. As part of the recruitment process all staff will:

- Have been personally recommended by an existing member of The Adventure Element Ltd freelance staff; or other reputable business or organisation for which they have worked.
- Have an extensive amount of experience of working in the outdoors and with the type of client for which they are employed to work with.
- Hold the relevant qualification(s) for the work they are being contracted to carry out.
- Undergo a telephone/video or in-person interview with the Managing Director – Ben Keen, or his deputy.

INDUCTION

All new The Adventure Element Ltd employees should receive formal or informal induction, during which:

- Their qualifications should be substantiated.
- Our requirements and their responsibilities should be clarified.
- They should agree to work within the Company's Health & Safety Policy and this Safeguarding Policy, in which procedures are explained.

TRAINING

In addition to Leader Engagement Process, the safeguarding procedure includes raising awareness through discussion to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Work safely and effectively with children or vulnerable adult.

THE ADVENTURE ELEMENT LTD REQUIRES THAT:

- All Leaders read the advisory information herein outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person or one young person to another.
- All Leaders are to be qualified First Aid practitioners, holding a current certificate to an appropriate level.
- All Leaders working for The Adventure Element Ltd should hold an Enhanced DBS certificate and be registered to the DBS Update Service, or obtained within the past 12 months.

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

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- Transgender and Gender Neutral arrangements

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

THE ADVENTURE ELEMENT LTD WILL:

Make all parties aware (e.g. participants and the parents / guardians of under 18's) who are booking on to an Open Expedition or Residential that participants may include 16-24 year olds.

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS WHEN CAMPING:

- Participants will only ever share and sleep in same sex tents.
- 2-person tents will be shared and occupied by either under 18s or over 18s.
- Where this is not practicable, a 3-person tent will be used so that under 18s are not sharing a tent alone with an over 18, or;
- Where this is not possible, participants will be offered the option of occupying a single tent.*
- Leaders will never share or occupy the same tent as participants.

*Arrangements will be made to support any individual sleeping in a single tent, with the carrying of the additional equipment that will be incurred.

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS WHEN STAYING IN A HOSTEL, OR SIMILAR ACCOMMODATION

Where practicable sole occupancy accommodation will be used. Where this is not practicable and shared use hostel accommodation is used, the following guidelines will be followed:

- Participants will only ever share single sex rooms.
- Where possible The Adventure Element Ltd's participants will have sole-use of a room (i.e. not share with members of the public).
- Wherever practicable, but always in the case of not having sole-use occupancy of rooms, rooms will be shared and occupied by either under 18s or over 18s.
- Where this is not practicable, rooms will be occupied by no less than 3 individuals of the same sex.
- The Adventure Element Ltd Leaders will never occupy the same room as our participants.

TRANSGENDER AND GENDER NEUTRAL ARRANGEMENTS

Careful consideration and preparation is needed regarding sleeping arrangements for residential trips. Each individual case and visit needs to be considered separately and discussions will happen well in advance, with all appropriate parties, linked to the accommodation available.

It may be required that parents of all parties (if under 18 years) are involved in discussions. Refer to: **Transgender and Gender Neutral Guidance.**





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