Ascend Adventure – Safeguarding Policy

1. Policy Statement

Ascend Adventure is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all individuals who engage with our work. This includes children, young people, and vulnerable adults participating in or supported through our activities.

We believe that everyone has the right to be safe from abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, and harm. Ascend Adventure takes a zero-tolerance approach to abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to act promptly and appropriately where safeguarding concerns arise.

This policy applies to all Ascend Adventure activities, including projects such as Worldgrown and International Edventures.

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2. Scope

This policy applies to all directors, employees, volunteers, contractors, and partner organisations working on behalf of Ascend Adventure. It covers all activities delivered in person, online, within the community, or in partnership with external agencies.

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3. Definitions of Safeguarding and Abuse

Safeguarding refers to the actions taken to protect individuals from harm and to promote their welfare. This includes protection from:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Financial or material abuse
- Discrimination, harassment, or exploitation

Safeguarding concerns may arise in person, online, during activities, or through third-party involvement.

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4. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Board of Directors**
  Holds overall responsibility for safeguarding and ensuring this policy is implemented and reviewed.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**
  Responsible for overseeing safeguarding practice, responding to concerns, maintaining records, coordinating training, and liaising with statutory safeguarding agencies.
- **Staff, Volunteers, and Partners**
  Have a duty to uphold this policy, act in a way that promotes safety and dignity, and report safeguarding concerns immediately.

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5. Safer Recruitment, Training and Supervision

Ascend Adventure is committed to safer recruitment practices. Roles involving direct contact with children or vulnerable adults may require appropriate checks, including references and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

All staff and volunteers receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role and responsibilities. Safeguarding is included in supervision and ongoing support where relevant.

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6. Reporting and Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

All safeguarding concerns must be taken seriously and acted upon promptly.

If a concern arises:

- The concern should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- If there is immediate risk of harm, emergency services (999) should be contacted without delay.
- The DSL will assess the concern and determine whether escalation to statutory safeguarding authorities (such as local authority safeguarding teams or the police) is required.
- Confidentiality will be respected but cannot be guaranteed where someone may be at risk of harm.

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7. Safeguarding Concern Process

Ascend Adventure follows a clear safeguarding process:

1. **Concern Identified** – A safeguarding concern is recognised or disclosed.
2. **Reported to DSL** – The concern is shared immediately with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
3. **Assessment** – The DSL assesses risk and gathers relevant factual information.
4. **Escalation** – Where appropriate, concerns are referred to external safeguarding authorities, including local authority safeguarding teams or police.
5. **Recording** – All concerns, decisions, and actions are recorded securely and confidentially.
6. **Follow-up** – The DSL ensures appropriate support; reviews practice and implements any learning.

This process applies across all Ascend Adventure activities, including referrals and partnerships with councils or other organisations.

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8. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information related to safeguarding concerns will be shared only where necessary and in line with data protection legislation. The safety and welfare of the individual will always take precedence over confidentiality where there is risk of harm.

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9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required due to changes in legislation, organisational activities, or following a safeguarding incident.

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10. Implementation

All directors, staff, and volunteers are required to read and adhere to this policy. Ascend Adventure maintains additional internal safeguarding procedures and guidance to support safe practice.