**Safeguarding Policy – Children and Young People**

Hitchmough’s Riding School fully accepts its legal and moral obligation under The Child Care Act (1991) and The Children Act (2001), to provide a duty of care to protect all children and safeguard their welfare, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, parental or marital status, pregnancy, religion or belief, creed, sexual orientation, and gender reassignment.

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (the Child Care Act 1991).

Hitchmough’s Riding School fully adopts the Horse Sport Ireland Safeguarding Code of Ethics (Children and Young People), the full policy can be downloaded from the HSI website <https://www.horsesportireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Horse-Sport-Ireland-Code-of-Ethics-2019.pdf>

**Aims**

The aims of the Hitchmough’s Riding School Safeguarding policy are:

* TO ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation to provide children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst at Hitchmough’s Riding School, allowing them to participate in a fun, safe environment and in an atmosphere of fair play.
* TO take all reasonable, practical steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and respect their rights, wishes and feelings.
* TO ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and are provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify, and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns to children and young people.
* To ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern. All concerns or allegations of poor practise or abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. It is the responsibility of child protection experts to determine whether or not abuse has taken place, but it is everyone’s responsibility to report it.
* To ensure that confidential, detailed, and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
* To maintain high standards of behaviours and good practise through compliance with Horse Sport Ireland codes of conduct produced for instructors, coaches, parents/guardians, junior members, and volunteers. The policy and procedures are mandatory for everyone involved with Hitchmough’s Riding School. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from Hitchmough’s Riding School.

The policy will be reviewed every three years, or in the following circumstances:

* + Changes in legislation and/or government guidance.
	+ As required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, HSI or Sport Ireland
	+ As a result of any other significant change or event.

**Centre Safeguarding Officer**

 Hitchmough’s Riding School will appoint a Centre Safeguarding Officer (CSO).

**The role of the CSO is:**

* To ensure that Hitchmough’s Riding School staff and volunteers, are aware of the Safeguarding Policy, procedures, guidelines, and codes of conduct and adopt them as appropriate.
* Be the first point of contact at Hitchmough’s Riding School for staff, volunteers, young people, or parents/guardians for any issue concerning safeguarding, child protection or welfare, poor practise or potential/alleged abuse.
* To have access to contact details for Children’s Services, the Gardai and the HSI Lead Safeguarding Officer.
* To follow the information in the HSI Safeguarding Policy for procedures for recording and reporting information as required.
* To advise the HSI Lead Safeguarding Officer of any allegations or complaints made in relation to child protection and safeguarding and to implement HSI’s Safeguarding procedure as appropriate.
* To respond to any allegations or complaints made from within Hitchmough’s Riding School in accordance with the agreed protocols detailed in the HSI Safeguarding Equestrian Sport.
* To ensure that Under 18 clients and their parents/guardians are aware of Hitchmough’s Riding School Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and how to access them.
* To facilitate and promote education and training in safeguarding for staff and volunteers.
* To ensure that procedures on recruitment of staff and volunteers are followed and for those roles which undertake regulated activity or regulated work, please see Garda Vetting guidance documents.
* To ensure that codes of conduct are in place for staff, volunteers, junior members, and their parents/guardians
* To ensure confidentiality is maintained and information is only shared on a ‘need to know’ basis.

**It is not the role of the CSO to be a Child Protection expert or to determine whether a serious incident has taken place, rather to record the details and seek guidance if necessary.**

**Communication**

Hitchmough’s Riding School will make available its Safeguarding Policy and Procedures to all staff, volunteers, junior members and their parents/guardians and it will appear in full on the Hitchmough’s Riding School website.

Hitchmough’s Riding School will circulate to all new clients and their parents/guardians if they are under the age of 18, the name and number of the Centre Safeguarding Officer.

All individuals involved with Hitchmough’s Riding School, no matter what role they participate in, must adhere to the Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

All individuals involved with Hitchmough’s Riding School must all sign to agree to uphold the Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

**Training**

Instructors/coaches and staff and volunteers working with children must undertake the HSI approved safeguarding training (or recognised equivalent) course within the last 3 years. Refresher training must be completed every three years via either the HSI approved online training portal or a further face to face course. Any new appointments of under 18 instructors/coaches and staff and volunteers working with children will undertake an approved Safeguarding training course (or recognised equivalent) as part of their initial training/induction unless they can evidence that they have undertaken the course with another member body in the last three years. They will then refresh their training every three years as detailed above.

**Criminal Record checks**

Instructors who teach/coach Under 18s, staff and volunteers working with children at Hitchmough’s Riding School must hold a current Garda Vetting Certificate.

Certificates must be renewed every three years.

**Further information and links**

Hitchmough’s Riding School Safeguarding Officer details:

Niall Buckley

info@hitchmoughs.ie

HSI Lead Safeguarding Officer

Paul Hayes

045 - 854 524

safeguarding@horsesportireland.ie

**Documents** <http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/CF_WelfarePracticehandbook.pdf>