

Safeguarding Policy and Volunteer Code of Conduct

Safeguarding Policy

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award USA has zero tolerance for harassment or exploitation of Award participants, partner organizations, staff, and volunteers.

The Award Unit is committed to:

- Ensuring the interests and well-being of children, young people, and vulnerable adults are considered in all activities and that their rights, wishes, and feelings are respected.
- Promoting the health, wellbeing, protection, and welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.
- Taking all reasonable and practical steps to protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults from neglect, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.

Award Units are licensed subject to a set of standards, one of which requires staff and volunteers working with participants to be vetted for suitability in compliance with organizational policies and local, state, and federal laws. To this end, the Award Unit agrees to and shall take all necessary actions to promote and prioritize the safety and wellbeing of participants by:

- Ensuring that the organization and adults delivering the Award understand and comply with all local, state, and federal child protection, health, safety, and mandatory reporting laws, standards, guidelines, and legislation.
- Reviewing child protection and mandatory reporting laws, standards, guidelines, and legislation annually, and making any necessary amendments or revisions to its code of conduct or internal policies.
- Ensuring that all Award staff and volunteers understand their roles and responsibilities regarding the protection of children, young people, and vulnerable adults, and are provided with appropriate training for this purpose.
- Taking appropriate action if an adult observes, suspects, or receives a disclosure of harm, neglect, physical, sexual, emotional abuse or exploitation of children, or any other violations of its child protection policies or applicable laws, standards, guidelines, or legislation.
- Maintaining detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns and securely storing such records as confidential information for an appropriate time period.
- Vetting Award staff and volunteers in accordance with local, state, and federal laws, standards and guidelines, and preventing the employment and/or deployment of unsuitable individuals, including having an appropriate background check on file for Award Leaders, Adventurous Journey Supervisors, and Adventurous Journey Assessors, at minimum.
- Ensuring that robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

Adults involved in the delivery of the Award are committed to ensuring that:

- In every respect, the relationships they form with the children, young people, and vulnerable adults under their care are appropriate.
- They observe the rules established by the Award and their organization for the safety and security of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.
- In compliance with local, state, and federal laws, they follow the procedures of their organization regarding the suspicion, disclosure, allegation, or observation of neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.
- They recognize the position of trust in which they have been placed.

Volunteer Code of Conduct

All adults involved in the delivery of the Award are expected to adhere to this Code of Conduct. The Award Unit agrees to:

- Provide a role description and explain the rights and responsibilities of volunteers, as well as provide support, supervision, and training to enable effective delivery of these roles.
- Vet Award volunteers and staff in accordance with local, state, and federal laws, standards and guidelines, including, at minimum, having a background check on file for Award Leaders, Adventurous Journey Supervisors, and Adventurous Journey Assessors.
- Abide by data protection and privacy policies regarding participants, volunteers, and staff.
- Treat volunteers with respect and in line with equal opportunity requirements.

As a volunteer, I confirm that I am aware of my obligation to follow the Code of Conduct. I will:

1. Exercise due care and diligence in carrying out my role and responsibilities.
2. Complete all necessary training and adhere to the guiding principles when delivering the Award, as outlined in the International Handbook for Award Leaders.
3. Treat everyone with dignity and respect and maintain a person's right to personal privacy.
4. Set an example for others to follow. Never use inappropriate language when writing, phoning, emailing or using the internet.
5. Allow young people to talk about any concerns they may have. Encourage others to challenge attitudes or behaviors they do not like.
6. Avoid favoritism. Avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behavior. Never make suggestive remarks or threats to a child, young person or vulnerable adult, even in fun.
7. Tell other adults where participants are and what they are doing, when appropriate. Someone else might misinterpret actions, even if they are carried out with good intention.
8. Comply with the requirements of Award USA, the Award Unit, and with local, state, and federal child protection, health, safety, and mandatory reporting laws, standards, guidelines, and legislation, as well as organizational and Award USA safeguarding policies.
9. Ensure at least one other person is present, or at least within sight and hearing of others, when working with participants. Follow any supervisory ratios stipulated by your organization.
10. Provide separate sleeping accommodation for participants and adults. Adhere to any additional rules stipulated by your organization or the organization responsible for an activity.
11. Avoid unacceptable situations within a relationship of trust. Never form a relationship with a young person or vulnerable adult that is an abuse of their position of power or influence over the other. Never take part in inappropriate behavior or contact, whether physical, verbal or sexual. A sexual relationship between an Award Leader or assessor and any Award participant, even one who is over the legal age of consent, would be unacceptable.
12. Make everyone (young people, parents, care givers, Award Leaders, Adventurous Journey Supervisors, and Award Assessors) aware of applicable local, state, and federal child protection, health, safety, and mandatory reporting laws, as well as organizational and Award USA safeguarding policies and procedures, when appropriate.
13. Never trivialize abuse or allow abusive activities, e.g. initiation ceremonies or bullying.
14. Take any allegations, concerns or observations of neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse seriously. Immediately follow the reporting processes in use within your organization, and in compliance with local, state, and federal laws.
15. Keep to this Code of Conduct at all times, including sensitive moments such as when helping someone who may have been bullied, bereaved, or abuses, or when online or digital methods of communication.

Name:			
Signature:		Date:	