



ZooLab Limited
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
(England, Scotland and Wales)

1. Statement of Intent

ZooLab Limited is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people, regardless of where our services are delivered. We believe that all children and young people have the right to be safe, protected from harm, and treated with respect, dignity, and fairness.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff, volunteers, contractors, and anyone working on behalf of ZooLab Limited share a duty to protect children and young people from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm.

The welfare of the child is paramount.

2. Purpose of ZooLab's Service

ZooLab Limited provides mobile educational presentations and activities for children and young people in educational and community settings across England, Scotland, and Wales.

Our services aim to:

- Provide a safe, welcoming, and engaging environment
- Support children's learning, development, and confidence
- Promote respect for animals, the environment, and each other

ZooLab staff work under the safeguarding procedures of the host venue while also following ZooLab's internal safeguarding arrangements.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All ZooLab employees (including presenters and animal handlers)
- Volunteers, seasonal staff, and contractors
- Managers and senior leaders
- Anyone acting on behalf of ZooLab Limited

4. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy is informed by relevant legislation and statutory guidance across all nations in which ZooLab operates.

England

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (where applicable)

Scotland

- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- *National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland* (2021)
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

Wales

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- *Working Together to Safeguard People* (Wales)

All Nations

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- SEND Code of Practice (0–25 years)
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Information Sharing guidance relevant to safeguarding

5. Key Safeguarding Principles

ZooLab recognises that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children have the right to protection from harm
- Some children may be more vulnerable due to disability, additional needs, communication barriers, previous experiences, or contextual factors
- Safeguarding requires effective information sharing and partnership working
- Early help and timely intervention are essential

6. Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

Child Protection Lead (ZooLab)

ZooLab Limited has appointed a Child Protection Lead:

Name: Nicola Stephenson

Email: nicolasteph@zoolabuk.com

Telephone: 01324 667330

Responsibilities include:

- Acting as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns

- Ensuring this policy is implemented and reviewed
- Maintaining secure safeguarding records
- Liaising with venue safeguarding leads and statutory agencies
- Supporting staff with safeguarding advice and supervision
- Ensuring concerns are escalated appropriately and without delay

7. Working with Venues and External Agencies

ZooLab staff will:

- Follow the safeguarding procedures of the host venue
- Report concerns immediately to the venue's safeguarding lead
- Also report concerns internally to ZooLab's Child Protection Lead

Where required, concerns will be escalated to the appropriate statutory body, including:

- Local Authority Children's Services (England & Wales)
- Social Work Services (Scotland)
- Police or emergency services if a child is at immediate risk

ZooLab recognises the importance of multi-agency working, in line with national guidance in each jurisdiction.

8. Information Sharing

ZooLab staff understand that:

- Information sharing is essential to safeguard children
- Information must be shared lawfully, proportionately, and promptly
- Consent should be sought where appropriate, but lack of consent must not delay safeguarding action
- Only relevant information should be shared with those who need to know

All records are stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

9. Safer Working Practice and Staff Conduct

Staff must:

- Conduct a dynamic risk assessment (venue checklist) on arrival at each venue
 - Ensure a member of venue staff is present at all times
 - Avoid being alone with a child wherever possible
 - Ensure teenage assistants are supervised at all times
 - Maintain professional boundaries and appropriate behaviour
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10. Child Safety During Activities

Staff must ensure:

- Activity areas are safe and suitable
 - Group sizes comply with venue guidance
 - Emergency procedures are understood, including fire safety, first aid, and incident reporting
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11. Safer Recruitment

ZooLab Limited is committed to safer recruitment, including:

- Application and interview processes
- Exploration of employment gaps
- Verification of identity
- References obtained prior to employment
- Enhanced DBS or PVG checks as appropriate to role and location

- No unsupervised access to children until checks are complete
 - Probationary periods and ongoing supervision
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12. Training and Awareness

ZooLab ensures that:

- All staff receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role
 - Training is refreshed regularly
 - Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities across different nations
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13. Recognising and Responding to Abuse

If a child discloses information or a concern is identified, staff should:

- Listen carefully and take the child seriously
- Reassure the child they have done the right thing
- Avoid leading questions
- Explain that information may need to be shared
- Record the concern accurately and promptly
- Report immediately to venue staff and ZooLab's Child Protection Lead

Staff must **not** investigate concerns themselves or promise confidentiality.

14. Allegations Against Staff

Any concern or allegation regarding a ZooLab staff member must be reported immediately to:

- The venue safeguarding lead
- ZooLab's Child Protection Lead

Appropriate procedures will be followed, including referral to relevant safeguarding authorities (e.g. LADO in England, equivalent processes in Scotland and Wales).

15. Whistleblowing and Complaints

ZooLab encourages staff to raise concerns about unsafe practice. All whistleblowers will be supported and protected from victimisation.

16. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.

Last reviewed: 20/1/26

Next review due: 20/1/27

Signed on behalf of ZooLab Limited:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "N. Stephenson .".

Nicola Stephenson