

# BALANCED HORIZON

## Safeguarding Policy

**Working with Children, Young People, Adults at Risk, and All Participants**

**East Lothian and Scotland**

### 1. Our Commitment

Balanced Horizon is dedicated to restoring and protecting Scotland's coastal and marine environment through initiatives like the Forth Marine Hatchery, Scottish Coastal Clean Up, and Muir to Forth. We engage with schools, volunteers, families, fishers, and local communities across East Lothian and the Firth of Forth.

We believe safeguarding is a collective responsibility, and we are committed to creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all participants in our activities. Our approach emphasizes prevention, a culture of safety, thorough planning, and clear behavioral expectations.

#### **This policy applies to:**

- Trustees
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Anyone representing Balanced Horizon

#### **Informed by:**

- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021, updated 2023)
- The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Getting it Right for Every Child
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.

## 2. Who This Policy Protects

For the purpose of this policy:

- **A Child:** Anyone under 16 years of age.
- **A Young Person:** Anyone under 18 years of age.
- **An Adult at Risk:** Individuals aged 16 or over who are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights, or interests and are at risk of harm.
- **All Participants:** This includes any individual engaging with Balanced Horizon's activities, regardless of age or vulnerability.

We acknowledge that vulnerability can be situational and may not be solely determined by age or disability.

## 3. Safeguarding in the Context of Our Work

Balanced Horizon engages in various activities, including:

- Beach cleans throughout East Lothian
- Marine restoration initiatives
- Educational workshops in schools
- Outdoor shoreline events
- Hatchery visits and placements
- Volunteering opportunities
- Online engagement and digital content creation

### Key Risks Include:

- Physical hazards on beaches and rocky shorelines
- Lone working in remote areas
- Interaction between young volunteers and adults
- Photography and social media usage
- Transport arrangements
- Emotional distress related to environmental concerns
- Allegations of inappropriate behavior
- Bullying or harassment among participants

We manage these risks through comprehensive planning, constant supervision, clear codes of conduct, and thorough risk assessments.

## 4. Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is: **Stuart McKill, Chair**

### **Responsibilities of the DSL Include:**

- Receiving and assessing safeguarding concerns
- Making referrals to Police Scotland or East Lothian Council Social Work as required
- Liaising with Disclosure Scotland
- Maintaining secure safeguarding records
- Reporting serious incidents to the Board

If the concern involves the DSL, reports should be made to another Trustee.

## **5. Reporting Procedure**

Everyone must know how to raise a concern about safeguarding.

### **If you are worried about a child, young person, adult at risk, or any participant:**

1. Ensure immediate safety if there is urgent danger; call 999 if needed.
2. Report the concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
3. Document what you have seen or heard using exact words where possible.
4. Do not investigate or confront the alleged person.
5. Do not promise confidentiality.

### **The DSL will:**

- Assess immediate risk
- Seek advice from East Lothian Social Work or Police Scotland where appropriate
- Make a formal referral if required
- Maintain secure written records
- Inform the Board as necessary

All safeguarding records are stored securely and separately from general personnel records.

## **6. Code of Conduct**

Everyone representing Balanced Horizon must:

- Treat all participants with dignity and respect.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries at all times.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- Never be alone in a private enclosed space with a child.
- Avoid personal relationships with young participants.
- Use appropriate language at all times.
- Not share personal contact details with children.
- Not communicate privately with children through social media.

- Challenge inappropriate behaviour and report concerns immediately.

Participants are encouraged to voice any behaviour that makes them uncomfortable. Non-compliance with this code may result in removal from duties and disciplinary action.

## **7. Recruitment and PVG**

For roles involving regulated work, Balanced Horizon will:

- Clearly state PVG requirements in job advertisements.
- Require membership of the PVG scheme for relevant positions.
- Follow Disclosure Scotland procedures thoroughly.
- Maintain confidential records and documentation.
- Conduct three-yearly PVG rechecks as a good practice.

We recognize our legal obligation to make referrals to Disclosure Scotland when required.

## **8. Online and Digital Safeguarding**

Balanced Horizon utilizes social media and produces digital content. We will:

- Obtain consent before using identifiable images of children.
- Avoid naming children in public posts.
- Moderate online comments and interactions.
- Not engage in private messaging with children.
- Ensure online educational sessions are supervised by an adult.

Online safety is treated with the same seriousness as in-person safeguarding.

## **9. Planning and Risk Management**

All activities involving children, young people, adults at risk, and all participants must:

- Have a comprehensive risk assessment.
- Ensure appropriate adult supervision is in place.
- Include clear meeting and collection arrangements.
- Provide first aid provisions.
- Consider weather and environmental conditions.

For open shoreline activities, we pay special attention to tides, unstable ground, marine hazards, and changing weather.

Safeguarding risks are included within the charity risk register, which is reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.

## **10. Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers**

All allegations are treated seriously. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Ensure the immediate safety of all involved.
- Follow disciplinary procedures as necessary.
- Seek external advice where required.
- Avoid assumptions of guilt.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process.

Malicious complaints will also be taken seriously and investigated.

## **11. Whistleblowing**

Anyone who feels unable to raise a concern internally may report it directly to:

- Police Scotland
- East Lothian Council Social Work
- Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)

No one will face penalties for raising a genuine safeguarding concern.

## **12. Training and Awareness**

Balanced Horizon will:

- Provide safeguarding induction training for all staff and volunteers.
- Ensure those in regulated roles understand their PVG responsibilities.
- Offer refresher awareness sessions annually.
- Review safeguarding practices at the Board level every year.

## **13. Annual Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.

- All changes will be documented.
- Staff and volunteers will be informed of updates.
- The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored through incident reviews and updates to the risk register.

