



BDS CHILD PROTECTION POLICY 2008

It is the policy of the BDS to take all reasonable steps to safeguard the welfare of all participants, spectators and anyone else involved in BDS activities and all candidates for assessment by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm. This is especially important where the person involved is not yet a legal adult and/or is in any way vulnerable.

It is the policy of the BDS to take all reasonable steps to:

- ensure fair play in competition,
- provide opportunities to participate, compete, receive training and have the opportunity to achieve certificates and qualifications which are available to everyone providing this can be achieved without compromising the health and safety of the participant or of other people nor the welfare, health or safety of any horse,
- to guard young and vulnerable people against being prevented or discouraged from participation in competition, training or the opportunity to achieve certificates or qualifications as a result of harassment, discrimination, bullying, disparaging remarks, etc

It must be recognised that there are many competitive and achievement-related elements to harness horse driving, and this policy is not intended to be a barrier to competitiveness or achievement.

Young and/or vulnerable people should not be 'given' a placement in competition or an award, certificate or qualification solely on the grounds of their youth or vulnerability. Whilst youth, disability or vulnerability may be taken into account, competition placements, certificates and qualifications must be awarded on the standard of the person's performance or abilities. To do otherwise would compromise and diminish the quality of the placement or award.

In practice, this means that every person is judged on their own merits and performance.

A child or young person competing with older people, including adults, may be placed higher because they have demonstrated ability and skill in advance of their age, but not solely because they are the youngest person in the competition.

A disabled or vulnerable person may be awarded a 'special prize' for demonstrating that they have achieved parity with non-disabled/similarly vulnerable people, but not solely because they are disabled or vulnerable.

Awards of qualifications and certificates may take into account youth, vulnerability or physical or mental challenges, but must not be awarded solely because the candidate is young, vulnerable or disabled, and must always be awarded in accordance with the BDS Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

In other words, whilst the BDS is committed to providing equal opportunities for competition, training, and qualification to everyone, it is not the policy of the BDS to patronise young, vulnerable or disabled people.



The BDS is committed to:

- Safeguarding the interests and well-being of young and/or vulnerable people in all our activities
- Respecting the rights, wishes and feelings of the young and/or vulnerable people who participate or are in any way involved in BDS activities, including any young and/or vulnerable person participating in or otherwise involved in BDS training and/or assessment.
- Taking all reasonable practicable steps to protect them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and
- Promoting the welfare of young and/or vulnerable people and their protection within a relationship of trust.

Working Safely with Young and/or Vulnerable People

- A 'child' is defined as any person who has not yet attained their 16th birthday.
- A 'young person' is defined as anyone who has attained their 16th birthday but has not attained their 18th birthday.
- A 'vulnerable person' is anyone who is a child or young person and/or has any kind of physical and/or mental impairment, and/or any special educational needs or learning difficulties and/or is emotionally immature. A vulnerable person may be a legal adult (18 years old), or a person who has attained the age of legal sexual consent (16 years old).

Adults have a responsibility to ensure that young and/or vulnerable people are protected from harm. It is the responsibility of each adult to ensure that they:

- demonstrate appropriate behaviour at all times
- observe the rules established for the safety and security of young and/or vulnerable people
- follow the procedures following suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse
- recognise the position of trust in which they have been placed; and
- demonstrate that in every respect, the relationships they form with young and/or vulnerable people in their care are appropriate

All Adults working with young and/or vulnerable people in the BDS, including LHHIs, Preliminary Teachers, BDS Approved Training and Assessment Centres and their staff and helpers, Young Driver's residential Camps, Young Driver's training, fun days, etc, and any training day or other event in which young and/or vulnerable people participate, and anyone who works or volunteers to help in any way with young and/or vulnerable people in harness horse driving activities of any description, must accept and understand this policy. They must also agree to put the BDS's policy on child protection into practice.

All adults working within the BDS Education Programme, or in any other BDS activity involving young and/or vulnerable people have a responsibility to :

- safeguard the welfare of the young and/or vulnerable people for whom they have a duty of care



- avoid compromising situations or opportunities for misunderstandings or allegations
- treat everyone with dignity and respect
- set an example they would wish others to follow
- treat all young and/or vulnerable people equally, showing no favouritism
- plan activities that involve more than one other person being present besides themselves, or at least ensure they are within sight and hearing of others
- follow recommended adult/young and/or vulnerable people ratios for meetings and activities
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- avoid unacceptable situations within a relationship of trust e.g. a sexual relationship with a young person under the age of consent
- have separate sleeping accommodation for young and/or vulnerable people, adults and supervisors/helpers on Young Driver's camps, or at any event where young and/or vulnerable people are sleeping overnight (unless sharing the same sleeping accommodation as their parents, adult family members or legal guardians)
- allow young and/or vulnerable people to talk about any concerns they may have
- encourage others to challenge any attitudes or behaviours they do not like
- avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour e.g. tantrums and crushes
- make everyone aware of our child protection and young and/or vulnerable people procedures
- remember this code even at sensitive moments e.g. when responding to bullying, bereavement or abuse – restraining, pushing, hugging or otherwise touching a young/vulnerable person could be misinterpreted
- keep other adults informed of where they are and what they are doing
- remember someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned
- take any allegations or concerns of abuse seriously and refer immediately
- **DO NOT** allow the consumption of alcohol by young and/or vulnerable people when they are under the care or supervision of BDS Officials, Teachers, Assessors, Training or Assessment Centres and Centre staff, supervisors, volunteers, helpers, etc.
- **DO NOT** allow the consumption of any drugs by young and/or vulnerable people when under BDS supervision (other than prescribed medication for which the young/vulnerable person's parents/adult family member/legal guardian has made the event organiser, or other appropriate person, aware they are using)
- **DO NOT** allow cigarette smoking by people under the legally permitted age
- **DO NOT** trivialise abuse
- **DO NOT** form a relationship with a young person that is an abuse of trust
- **DO NOT** permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, bullying, showing off with horses in a dangerous or hazardous manner
- **DO NOT** engage in inappropriate behaviour or contact, physical, verbal, sexual
- **DO NOT** make suggestive remarks or threats to a young person, even in fun
- **DO NOT** use inappropriate language, writing, phoning, email or internet
- **DO NOT** form any inappropriate personal relationships,
- **DO NOT** arrange to meet privately with any young or vulnerable person outside the sphere of BDS activities
- **DO NOT** enter into private correspondence/text messaging/e-mail with any young and/or vulnerable person(s), unless the subject matter is strictly about horses and/or harness horse driving activities. If so, ensure you regularly show the content of letters/text messages and e-mails to a third party, for your own protection



- **DO NOT** allow any correspondence/text messages/e-mails which you may have begun with all good intentions (eg: helping a young person with their studies) to turn into an inappropriate personal relationship
- **DO NOT** let allegations, suspicions, or concerns about abuse go unreported
- **DO NOT** just rely on your good name to protect you

It must be accepted that there may be a need for physical contact with a young and/or vulnerable person during driver training, general horse handling activities, whilst working with harness/horse drawn vehicles, etc.

This level of physical contact may be necessary to protect a young or vulnerable person from harm when handling a horse, or to demonstrate correct rein handling techniques, securing them in the carriage when going over rough ground, etc.

Adults should consider in advance the likely situations in which it may be necessary to engage in physical contact, and endeavour to keep this to the minimum necessary for the purpose. Adults should be particularly aware of the risks of touching a person on the legs, thighs, knees, chest, posterior etc, which could be misconstrued as inappropriate.

Adults are advised to inform people, preferably in front of other witnesses, that it may be necessary to touch their hands and fingers in order to correct their rein-handling techniques, and may also be necessary to steady them in order to secure them in the carriage when crossing rough ground, for example.

Adults should make every effort to ensure that the person understands when and why they may be touched. Attention is especially drawn to the needs of people who have an especial resistance to being touched (those with autism, for example); the adult should take particular care to explain the need for physical contact.

The BDS Child Protection Training Programme

The BDS Child Protection Training Programme is designed for any adult whose involvement brings them into contact with young and/or vulnerable people during the course of any BDS activity or during any part of the BDS Education Programme.

Children and Young people are defined as: any person who has not yet attained their 18th birthday.

Vulnerable people are defined as: any young adult who you may have reason to believe is emotionally immature; any person with physical and/or mental impairment; any person with special educational needs; any person who is vulnerable to bullying, discriminatory language and/or behaviour; any person who is vulnerable because of their gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic origin, religious belief, social or economic status, lifestyle, family lifestyle, culture, language, inability or lesser abilities to communicate verbally or in writing, and/or any other condition which would render the person vulnerable to abuse and/or discrimination.

People who have a duty of care to young and/or vulnerable people within the BDS include (but are not exclusive to): teachers, Instructors, LHHIs, Preliminary Teachers, Training and Assessment Centre Heads and staff, Young Driver Camp teachers,



supervisors and helpers, BDS Assessors, Verifiers, Judges, Stewards, BDS Committee Members, BDS Council Members, Area Commissioners, Assistant Area Commissioners, employees of the BDS (whether full time, part time or casually employed), any person who is employed to or volunteers to work or assist in working or helping in any way with any BDS activity.

The BDS Child Protection Programme is intended to :

- Inform adults of their duty of care and responsibilities to young and vulnerable people
- Educate people who have a duty of care and/or responsibility for any young and/or vulnerable people in appropriate behaviour and language
- Help adults to protect young and vulnerable people from physical and/or mental abuse and/or harm
- raise awareness of the ways in which innocent actions/language/behaviour could be misinterpreted
- help adults to encourage young and/or vulnerable people to voice their concerns and to get help if they are afraid or at risk

The programme is not designed to train people to become child protection specialists. It provides training that complements and reinforces the BDS's child protection policy. It enables individuals to understand their own responsibilities in relation to child protection and emphasises the importance of following good practice guidelines when working with children and young and/or vulnerable people.

To this end, the BDS arrange regular Child Protection Courses, designed to :

- highlight Good practice framework;
 - explain why people should act;
 - definitions of harm;
 - signs & indicators of abuse;
 - effects of abuse;
 - facts/myths of child abuse
 - the BDS's responsibilities;
 - how to handle reports of abuse;
 - how to report your concerns, suspicions & allegations;
 - talking to parents;
 - handling inappropriate behaviour from colleagues;
 - managing your own feelings
 - Practical application of BDS policy
 - developing personal responsibilities;
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- If you have concerns about a child or young person, it is your responsibility to act upon them.
 - You must always report your concerns immediately. Never wait to see what happens. By the time you are completely satisfied, irreparable harm might be done to the young/vulnerable person.
 - If you develop an atmosphere of mutual support and care, this will help all adults involved in BDS activities and the BDS Education Programme. It will help them to be more comfortable discussing inappropriate attitudes and behaviour.



- Always ensure that your own behaviour is beyond reproach. Never believe that 'it won't happen to me'.
- You can help gain trust and confidence of parents and carers by always acting openly and frankly. Give parents/carers and young and vulnerable people information about what we do. Tell Them what the can expect from us. Let them know how to report their concerns if there is anything they are not happy about
- When running activities, always make sure that you have enough adults for the young people. Arranging the proper supervision of young people is a very effective way of keeping young people safe.
- All young people in your care must be treated equally, fairly and with dignity. At all times respect young peoples rights and their needs. Resist favouritism and never condone inappropriate behaviour in others.
- By following the rules of best practice and observing correct procedures, you will help everyone to enjoy safe activities. You will also minimise any chances of being inappropriately accused.