

**Best practice guidance for young people/vulnerable adults wishing to undertake voluntary work at *Bracken Hall Countryside Centre* (BHCC) as part of the *Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme* (DofE)**

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## **Introduction**

*Baildon Town Council* (BTC) manages BHCC. Neither BTC or BHCC are DofE *Licenced Organisations* (see below for explanation of this term). However, BTC and BHCC take the safeguarding of their staff, volunteers and visitors very seriously, and the information provided in this document is intended to outline the safeguarding procedures that BTC and BHCC have in place, how they relate to the DofE’s requirements, and how DofE candidates apply to be volunteers at BHCC.

All BHCC volunteers are provided with and should read the BTC *Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy* (2019). DofE participants and their parent, carer or guardian must read these *Best Practice* notes, engage with the suggestions, and satisfy themselves that appropriate measures have been put in place by BTC and BHCC before considering applying for a volunteering role at BHCC as part of the DofE programme.

## **DofE approach to safeguarding**

The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award accepts and promotes that in all matters concerning child protection, the welfare and protection of the child is the paramount consideration.

It is the policy of The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award to ensure that the welfare of all young people regardless of sex, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, disability, religion or beliefs, race, age or personal characteristics who are involved in DofE activities are safeguarded by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

When young people sign up to do their DofE they do so with a Licensed Organisation. We only license reputable organisations, like schools and local authorities, to run DofE because they have a clear requirement placed upon them to safeguard their young people, with their own policies and procedures in place for safeguarding and health and safety etc.

However, when a young person does their DofE activities they’re likely to come into direct contact (i.e. not through a Licensed Organisation) with many other organisations and individuals such as charity shops, music instructors, sports clubs and expedition providers.

It’s the responsibility of DofE participants over 18 and parents/carers/guardians of: participants under 18; participants with additional needs; or vulnerable adults, to check that the activities done with these organisations, including [approved activity providers] AAPs, are delivered in a safe and proper manner.

So, before starting any activity, we recommend you make a few basic checks to see how the organisation keeps young people safe. You could ask to see relevant policies, like a child protection policy or staff code of conduct. You could find out who the main point of contact is, to speak to if you have any concerns.

You should feel satisfied that an activity is safe, for yourself or your son or daughter, before getting started. If you’re a parent, carer or guardian and would like further information on child protection, [NSPCC has a helpline that offers advice and support](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/get-advice-and-support/).

(Source: <https://www.dofe.org/run/safeguarding/>)

## **BHCC staff, volunteers and working practices**

The *Bracken Hall Manager* is responsible for recruiting and vetting the suitability of prospective volunteers with assistance from colleagues and/or longstanding BHCC volunteers as required. A standardised application procedure is used. Prospective volunteers complete a BHCC volunteer-specific application form, two references are obtained, and a standardised interview is conducted.

If these are appropriately completed, a 2 to 3-hour induction session will be held to outline the important procedures and practices at BHCC. Only after successfully completing this process can someone become a BHCC volunteer. This same process applies to DofE volunteers with two additional requirements (see below).

DBS checks are not necessary for our volunteers in accordance with Government guidelines. However, volunteers don’t work alone and it is mandatory that at least two volunteers / staff members are present to open BHCC to the public.

BHCC operates according to the guidelines of the aforementioned BTC *Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy*, a copy of which is available on request.

## **Application procedure to be a DofE volunteer at BHCC**

1. Candidates should ideally develop their own ideas for the type of volunteering they would like to do at BHCC. Informal discussions with the *Bracken Hall Manager* (by appointment/email) and/or BHCC volunteers (available during normal BHCC opening hours – midday to 4pm each Saturday and Sunday) are encouraged at any time during the application process
2. Candidates complete the BHCC *Youth Volunteer Application Form* and the BTC *Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form*, available on request from the Bracken Hall Manager
3. References are obtained from the two nominated referees
4. Informal interview with Bracken Hall Manager and a colleague or BHCC volunteer. NB parent/carer/guardian to be present. An informal discussion of volunteering opportunities will be included, and copies of the BHCC *DofE* *Youth Volunteer Project Form* and BHCC *DofE Youth Volunteer Agreement* forms will be provided
5. A 2 to 3-hour induction session, tailored specifically for DofE candidates, will be held at BHCC at a mutually convenient time. Each session will ideally be held for a number of DofE candidates. (NB parents, carers or guardians may be present). Candidates submit completed *DofE* *Youth Volunteer Project Form* and BHCC *DofE* *Youth Volunteer Agreement* – these are checked, adjusted and countersigned by the Bracken Hall Manager and parent/carer/guardian, and the candidate’s DofE coordinator.
6. Young people / Vulnerable adults will be appropriately supervised.