HILL ASCENTS LTD

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy for Hill Ascents Ltd

Date: 15/11/2026

Review Date: 15/11/2027

1. Introduction and Statement of Intent

Hill Ascents Ltd is committed to providing safe, supportive, and inclusive climbing and outdoor activities for all children and young people (anyone under the age of 18). We believe that every child has the fundamental right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

This policy outlines our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in accordance with relevant UK legislation and statutory guidance, including but not limited to:

- **The Children Act 1989 and 2004**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (updated 2024)**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026**
- **The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) guidance**
- **The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR**

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all staff, instructors, volunteers, contractors, directors, and trustees of Hill Ascents Ltd. It covers all activities, courses, and events organised or delivered by Hill Ascents Ltd, both on-site and off-site (including indoor climbing walls, outdoor crags, and high ropes venues), where children and young people are present.

3. Definitions and Types of Abuse

Staff and volunteers must be alert to the four statutory categories of child abuse as well as wider safeguarding risks:

- **Physical abuse:** Hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.
- **Emotional abuse:** Persistent emotional maltreatment causing severe and adverse effects on a child's emotional development, including bullying, humiliation, or unrealistic expectations.

- **Sexual abuse:** Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether contact or non-contact (including grooming and viewing/producing sexual imagery).
- **Neglect:** Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, including inadequate supervision, clothing, or medical care during activities.
- **Wider Safeguarding Risks:** Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE / County Lines), child-on-child abuse, online abuse, and radicalisation (Prevent duty).

4. Guiding Principles

- The welfare of the child is always paramount.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Staff and volunteers will be trained to recognise, record, and respond appropriately to signs of abuse and neglect.
- We will work in partnership with parents, carers, schools/youth organisations, and statutory agencies to safeguard children.
- All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to promptly and appropriately.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Graeme Hill — **Contact:** hillascents@hotmail.co.uk | 07939502991

The DSL is responsible for:

- Acting as the first point of contact for all staff, volunteers, parents, and participants with concerns about a child's welfare.
- Liaising with Local Authority Children's Social Care, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the Police, and other statutory agencies.
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers are aware of this policy and their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Overseeing secure, confidential record-keeping of all safeguarding concerns and referrals.
- Providing or arranging appropriate safeguarding induction and refresher training for staff and volunteers.

All Staff, Instructors, Volunteers, and Trustees:

- Are responsible for reading, understanding, and adhering to this policy and the Code of Conduct.
- Must report any safeguarding concerns or disclosures to the DSL immediately (and within the same day).
- Must attend mandatory safeguarding training upon induction and complete refresher training at least every two years.

- Must maintain clear professional boundaries and be aware of their own behaviour at all times.

6. Safer Recruitment and Vetting

We are committed to safer recruitment practices to deter and prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children. All staff, instructors, and volunteers who work with children will undergo a thorough recruitment process which includes:

- A formal application, exploration of any gaps in employment history, and structured interview including safeguarding questions.
- Satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, including a Children's Barred List check for roles in regulated activity.
- Verification of identity, right to work in the UK, and relevant climbing/instructing governing body qualifications.
- At least two satisfactory professional references (including from the most recent employer/organisation involving work with children).
- An assessment of their suitability to work with children and completion of safeguarding induction before unsupervised contact.

7. Responding to Concerns, Disclosures, and Allegations

Emergency Situations:

- If a child is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical attention, call the Police or Ambulance Service on 999 immediately, then notify the DSL as soon as possible.

Responding to a Disclosure:

- **Listen calmly:** Do not interrupt the child or show shock or disbelief.
- **Do not probe:** Do not ask leading questions or investigate yourself. Let the child speak in their own words using open prompts (e.g., "Tell me what happened").
- **Reassure the child:** Tell them that they have done the right thing by telling you, that they are not to blame, and that you will take them seriously.
- **Do not promise confidentiality:** Explain honestly that you **have to** share the information with the DSL to ensure their safety.
- **Record the information:** As soon as possible (and within 24 hours), make a factual, dated, and signed written record of what was said, using the child's exact words, and pass it securely to the DSL.

Responding to a Concern:

- If you have concerns about a child's welfare, even if they have not made a disclosure, you must report this to the DSL immediately.
- The DSL will assess the information and decide on the appropriate course of action, which may include making a referral to Local Authority Children's Social Care (MASH / Front Door) or the Police.

Responding to an Allegation or Low-Level Concern Against a Staff Member or Volunteer:

- Any allegation of abuse or concern that an adult working for Hill Ascents Ltd has harmed a child, posed a risk of harm, or behaved in a way that indicates unsuitability must be reported to the DSL immediately.
- If the allegation is about the DSL, it must be reported immediately to another Director/Trustee and directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- The DSL will report the allegation to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day (and immediately if a child is at immediate risk).
- The person against whom the allegation is made should not be informed until the LADO (and Police, if applicable) has been consulted.
- Hill Ascents Ltd will follow the LADO's guidance regarding suspension or redeployment while an investigation is ongoing, and will fulfil its statutory duty to refer relevant cases to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

8. Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

- Always act in the best interests of the child and prioritise their physical and emotional safety.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times.
- Do not use inappropriate, discriminatory, or suggestive language or humour.
- Avoid one-to-one unsupervised situations with a child wherever possible; ensure activities take place within sight and hearing of others.
- Treat all children with respect, fairness, and dignity.
- Do not engage in physical contact with children unless it is strictly necessary for their safety (e.g., fitting harnesses/helmets, spotting, belaying, or emergency rescue) or first aid, with clear explanation and consent where possible.
- Do not communicate with children using personal mobile numbers, personal email addresses, or personal social media accounts, and do not take photos/videos on personal devices without written parental consent and DSL approval.

9. Confidentiality, Information Sharing, and Whistleblowing

- All safeguarding records are kept strictly confidential and stored securely in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. Information is shared only on a need-to-know basis to protect a child.
- Hill Ascents Ltd operates an open whistleblowing culture: anyone who has concerns about poor safeguarding practice or staff conduct may raise them with the DSL, a Director/Trustee, the LADO, or the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line (0800 028 0285) without fear of reprisal.

10. Training and Awareness

All staff and volunteers will receive safeguarding induction upon joining and formal refresher training at least every two years. This will cover:

- Recognising the signs and indicators of different types of abuse and exploitation.

- The procedures for responding to disclosures and reporting concerns.
- Understanding their statutory and organisational role and responsibilities.
- Promoting a positive, inclusive, and safe climbing environment.

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually (or sooner following any legislative changes or safeguarding incidents) and updated in line with UK legislation and statutory guidance. The DSL is responsible for ensuring the policy remains current and effective.

Signed:

Graeme Hill 15/11/2026