

Safeguarding Policy

Business Name: Good Buoy Dog Training
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1. Purpose of This Policy

This policy outlines how Good Buoy Dog Training safeguards and protects children and young people (under 18) who attend classes, workshops, or sessions. It applies to all activities delivered by the business, whether indoors, outdoors, or in public spaces.

This policy complies with:

- Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2017)
- Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR, and EU GDPR (where applicable)
- Guidance from the NSPCC, Barnardo's, Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI), and Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)

The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration in all circumstances.

2. Commitment to Safeguarding

Good Buoy Dog Training is committed to:

- Providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all children and young people
- Preventing harm, abuse, or exploitation
- Responding promptly and appropriately to safeguarding concerns
- Working in partnership with parents, guardians, and statutory agencies
- Maintaining clear professional boundaries at all times
- Ensuring that dog-related risks are assessed and managed in line with NI child-safety expectations

3. AccessNI and Supervision Requirements

- Good Buoy Dog Training does **not** currently provide unsupervised services to minors.
- Until an **AccessNI Enhanced Disclosure** is obtained and verified, **all minors must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian at all times.**
- The parent/guardian remains fully responsible for the child's supervision, behaviour, and safety throughout the session.

- No group or one-to-one work with an unsupervised minor will take place without:
 1. A completed AccessNI Enhanced Disclosure
 2. Written parental/guardian consent
 3. Appropriate safeguarding procedures in place

Good Buoy Dog Training is actively working with safeguarding professionals to ensure all checks and procedures meet NI standards. Once an AccessNI check is completed, parents/guardians may request proof in writing via email. A copy will be provided within 24 hours.

4. When Children May Be Present

Children and young people under 18 may attend:

- Group training classes
- Workshops
- Private sessions where a parent/guardian is present
- Events or demonstrations

Children/young people are not permitted to attend sessions without the knowledge and consent of a parent/guardian or the trainer.

5. Behaviour and Conduct Expectations

To maintain a safe environment:

- Children and young people must remain within sight and supervision of their parent/guardian at all times.
- Children must not approach or handle other participants' dogs without explicit permission from both the trainer and the dog's owner.
- Children who cannot remain calm or follow safety instructions may not be permitted to attend, as unpredictable behaviour increases safety risk around dogs.

No exceptions. These expectations align with NI safeguarding guidance on **safe adult-child interactions** and **risk reduction in mixed-age group settings**.

6. Photography, Video, and Social Media

To protect children's privacy and safety:

- Recognisable images of minors are never taken or used by Good Buoy Dog Training for social media or promotional purposes.
- Images may only be taken by the parent/guardian or with their explicit written consent and the child's informed agreement.
- Images where the child is not identifiable (e.g., back of head, blurred face) may be used only with parental consent.

- No other participant may photograph or film a child without the parent/guardian **and** child's consent.
- Any breach will result in immediate removal from the session and may be reported to the PSNI.

This aligns with NI guidance on **digital safeguarding** and **image-sharing risks**.

7. Data Protection and Privacy

Good Buoy Dog Training follows strict data protection rules:

- Only the child's first name, surname, and age are collected, and only when necessary for class grouping or safety.
- All other information collected relates to the parent/guardian and their dog.
- No sensitive personal data about the child is collected.
- All data is processed in line with the Privacy Policy, UK GDPR, EU GDPR, and the Data Protection Act 2018. The Privacy Policy can be found on the Good Buoy Dog Training website or requested by emailing goodbuoydogtraining@gmail.com

8. Recognising Signs of Abuse or Harm

The trainer is aware of the signs of:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation
- Online or digital harm
- Situational risks involving dogs (e.g., unsafe handling, coercion, or exposure to dangerous animals)

If a concern arises, the trainer will follow the reporting procedures below.

9. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

If a child is at immediate risk of harm, the trainer will contact **PSNI** without delay.

For non-emergency concerns:

- Concerns will be documented factually and confidentially.
- The parent/guardian will be informed unless doing so places the child at further risk.
- Advice may be sought from:
 - Gateway Services (Health and Social Care Trust)
 - NSPCC Helpline
- Records will be kept securely and shared only with statutory agencies when required.

Good Buoy Dog Training will always act in the best interests of the child **before** the best interests of the dog.

10. Safe Environment and Risk Management

To ensure physical safety:

- Training spaces are assessed for hazards before each session.
- Dogs must be managed to prevent accidental injury to children. It is the full responsibility of the dog owner and the parent/legal guardian of the child to ensure that children are safe.
- Safety equipment (e.g., muzzles) may be required where appropriate.
- Dog equipment must be checked regularly and fit for purpose.
- Clear instructions are given to parents/guardians regarding safe handling and positioning of children around dogs.
- Children are not permitted to attend classes with dogs who show signs of reactivity or aggression toward children or other dogs.
- For classes involving minors, a pre-assessed dog may be provided by the trainer where necessary.

11. Code of Conduct for Adults Attending Sessions

To manage risk:

- Children under 16 and dogs showing reactivity will be placed in separate groups.
- Classes will be grouped by appropriate age ranges and ability.
- A full assessment of each dog's behaviour will be completed before grouping.

Adults attending sessions must:

- Respect the safety and privacy of all children present
- Follow instructions from the trainer
- Not photograph or film any child without consent
- Not use threatening, abusive, or inappropriate language
- Not handle or approach other participants' children
- Maintain full control of their dog at all times
- Report any dog with a history of aggression toward children

Any adult who:

- (a) Is legally restricted from interacting with minors and knowingly attends a family-oriented group; and/or,
- (b) Brings a dog known to have shown aggression toward a child

will be reported to the PSNI and/or the Dog Warden as appropriate.

The trainer takes dog and child safety extremely seriously. Anyone who behaves inappropriately or allows their dog to show aggression toward a child will be removed immediately. Safeguarding referrals may be made where necessary.

12. Complaints and Concerns

Parents/guardians may raise concerns directly by email to goodbuoydogtraining@gmail.com.

Concerns will be handled promptly, respectfully, and in line with safeguarding best practice.

13. Review of This Policy

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Legislation changes
- Safeguarding guidance is updated
- A safeguarding incident occurs
- The nature of services changes

