

# Heckington and District Radio Group

## Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

### Background

Our motto at Heckington and District Radio Group ('H&DRG') is 'Radio for all!'. H&DRG membership is open to all regardless of age and ability. This includes young children, persons who may have some mental or physical disability, and others who may consider themselves to be vulnerable.

H&DRG has a duty of care towards all those attending the Group's meetings and events and who take part in our activities. We take this duty seriously. We want everyone to enjoy their membership and to be able to do so safely. To achieve this, we assess risks and make reasonable adjustments, where required and to the extent that we reasonably can.

### Anti-social behaviour on the air

While not directly covered by this policy, exposure to anti-social behaviour on the air can be a risk. H&DRG encourages the use of the PMR446 and CB Radio bands to make the group's on-air activities as accessible as possible to the whole community. These are, however, public, licence free bands which anyone can use.

While we obviously cannot guarantee the behaviour of everyone who uses these bands, H&DRG promotes responsible, friendly and respectful behaviour. We ask our members to use appropriate language on the air and to be mindful of the potential presence of young children.

We say "no" to anti-social behaviour on the air and have published guidance which addresses the issue of safety, on our website: -

<https://www.heckingtonradiogroup.com/safety-on-the-air/>

### Children

Children are the future of our hobby, and we encourage them to use radio, particularly PMR446 which provides an excellent entry point. However, the use of PMR446 does have the potential to expose children to unsupervised contact with others, including adults who may be unknown to them.

As with other forms of social media, there are potential risks that may arise from radio use by children where they are unsupervised by a responsible adult. While it is important not to scare monger, we cannot help to mitigate these risks if we do not acknowledge their existence. Risks may include, but are not limited to:-

- bullying and intimidation, including by other children
- grooming by adults
- exposure to inappropriate language
- exposure to adult subjects.

Because radio is open and accessible to anyone, H&DRG cannot remove these risks. It is firstly the responsibility of every child's parent or guardian to decide on the appropriate level of supervision when their child is using a radio. However, we are all responsible for the safety of children and as a responsible group, H&DRG asks its members to: -

- Exercise caution and care when interacting on the air with children, especially those they don't know or who are unknown to the Group
- Consider limiting interaction to nets and conversations where more than one adult member is monitoring
- Always avoid the use of adult language and subjects over the air
- Be aware of and vigilant to any risks, including those discussed above and bring any concern to the attention of the Group's Safeguarding Officer ('SO') (details below)
- At group events or meetings, ensure that children are accompanied by a parent or guardian, who remains responsible for their child, at all times
- Avoid unsupervised access to children, at any such event.

Where the SO is made aware of contact with a child/ren, the SO will make reasonable efforts to try to establish contact with the child's parent or guardian. The purpose of such contact will be to make them aware, to introduce the group to them and provide a contact point should there be any concerns.

Once again, it is important not to exaggerate these issues and the potential risks that may flow from them. Radio has much to offer children, not least by teaching them about the sciences and communications technology. We don't wish to dissuade anyone, young or old, from picking up a radio and using it. We certainly don't wish to dissuade our members from encouraging children to do so. We want to welcome children to the hobby. But doing so safely means being aware of the risks, doing everything we reasonably can to mitigate them, and dealing with any concerns with due care and attention, if they arise. Protecting children should always be our paramount concern and at H&DRG we always treat this issue with the seriousness, care and understanding that it deserves.

### **Other members**

Safeguarding isn't just about children. It is about doing what we can, so that everyone, including vulnerable adults or those with special needs is able to safely take part in the group's activities or, if there are risks, these are stated in advance so that suitable arrangements can, if possible, be made to mitigate them.

Our cold/wet weather venue for meetings is in a public building with wheelchair access and purpose-built toilet facilities. There is plenty of hard-standing parking available. Access to the site by road and footpath is good, though uneven in places. There is presently no hearing loop at this location, though we understand that the Parish Council are investigating this.

Our summertime venue for meetings is at a private lake with uneven parking and walking surfaces and limited toilet and other facilities. Assisted wheelchair/mobility scooter access may be possible for some but is very limited, especially if it has been wet. We advise all members to take care when using this site. Particular care should be taken if using a wheelchair or scooter, or if you are unsteady on your feet. Some assistance may be available but please note that we cannot guarantee it.

### **Asking for assistance**

Individual members may provide voluntary help of an appropriate kind dependent on circumstances. Individuals will not necessarily have any formal relevant training or experience. Where members who have specialist skills are willing and available, their experience should be used but they are under no obligation.

### **Provision of specialist equipment**

H&DRG does not currently own any specialist equipment. Please bear in mind that The Radio Amateur Invalid and Blind Club ([RAIBC](#)), a UK registered charity, has considerable experience in this area and can and does loan suitably modified equipment.

### **Criminal records**

H&DRG does not currently undertake any activities through which our members would have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable people. We do not therefore routinely undertake DBS checks on our volunteers. However, we ask any member who has a criminal record which may be, or be seen to be a risk to children or other persons, or which might be damaging to the good reputation of the group, to declare it to the SO. The Committee reserves the right to terminate membership in the light of any information so provided.

### **The H&DRG Safeguarding Officer ('SO')**

**Andy Mellett Brown**

**Contact: [andy@heckingtonradiogroup.com](mailto:andy@heckingtonradiogroup.com)**

**Phone: - 07506 697249**

Specific guidelines for safeguarding can be found on the RSGB website [here](#). Further information about training can be found on our Training web page and at the RSGB website [here](#).

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