



Working with Children & Young People

Volunteer Guide



CLAPA staff come from a range of backgrounds and have a variety of experiences. Some have more experience than others in working with CYP and particularly in organising events. This guide will give you the tools and knowledge to feel confident in running (and supporting) CLAPA events for children and young people.



Who has overall responsibility for Children & Young People (CYP)?

It is important to be clear on who is in charge and takes overall responsibility for the group.

As we talked about earlier, ultimate responsibility sits with the lead member of CLAPA staff. They will go through an event briefing with you either before or on the day so you are clear on your role and responsibilities. If you have any questions or concerns ahead of or across the event, this person would be your first point of contact.

The lead member of staff will have training in the safeguarding of children and young people and you should refer concerns and report any incidents to them. This member of staff will have information about all of the young people and will share relevant details with you. i.e. if a young person has support needs or a disability.



First aid



The lead member of staff will always be trained in First Aid and other CLAPA staff members may also be trained. They will carry a first aid kit throughout the event. Centre staff will usually be first aid trained too (depending on the venue) but the lead member of staff should always be contactable should you need assistance. We would record any accidents or incidents on the event report and accident book.

In the event of a situation where a young person needs to be taken to hospital, we would report to the off-site contact and potentially ask a volunteer to take over responsibility for the group while the lead member of staff goes to hospital. As soon as family arrive, CLAPA staff would return to the group. This would be an exceptional situation and the volunteer would have support from the off-site contact (by phone).

We will talk to you before the event about this role and whether this is something you feel you would be comfortable to take on if the situation arose (which is unlikely in our experience so far).

Safeguarding yourself and others – what to do & what not to do

Avoid being 1-1 with young people wherever possible. Ensure that either a staff member or another young person is present if you can. When on an adventure weekend and needing to visit a dorm room, always knock before entering and leave the door open. Let another member of the team know where you are at all times.

Some examples of where being 1-1 might be unavoidable and the action you should take:

If everyone is out at an activity and one of the young people needs the toilet. It might not be possible for another staff member to go with you supervising the group. Let another volunteer or staff member know where you are going and ideally take another young person with you as well. If this isn't possible, wait outside the building, avoid going into the toilets.

If a young person needs to revisit their dorm for something they have forgotten or because they are cold and need more layers (happens all the time!) The same issue as above might apply. Let a volunteer or staff member know where you are going and go back with the young person, but stay outside of their dorm room and ask that they keep the door open.

You should have already completed online safeguarding training and will also receive a briefing ahead of the event, but please get in touch with your CLAPA contact if you have any questions regarding safeguarding yourself and young people or any other issues.

Follow CLAPA guidelines on what to do if a young person makes a disclosure of abuse (or other safe guarding issues).

Remember the 3 R's:

- Recognise – The CYP may not be aware of the inappropriate nature of their experience, or may not be clear when intentionally disclosing.
- Record – Explain to the child you want to take notes to help you understand, and record what is being said. Try to quote.
- Report – what a young person tells you/what you see or hear, if they cause you concern and you believe a young person to be at risk of harm.

Emergency situations and what to do

CLAPA have an off site contact process for adventure weekends. A member of staff (not part of the event) will be contactable at all time should there be an emergency where the lead member of staff needs assistance.

The emergency might be:

- A major fire
- A CYP has to hospitalised
- An accident involving a large number of the group
- The lead member of staff is seriously ill and unable to continue working
- A terrorist attack

In any of these situations you or any other member of the staff team should contact the off-site contact and make a plan of action.

Roles and responsibilities

The NSPCC recommends there is one member of staff for every eight young people (aged 9-16). Due to the nature of activities we will try to have one staff member for six young people. There will usually be a minimum of two volunteers and one CLAPA member of staff at events for children and young people. The CLAPA staff member will take overall responsibility for the group (Volunteers and Young people) and the event and will talk through with you what the responsibilities of each of the roles are.

All staff and volunteers are considered to be in a supervising role at the event and share some responsibilities for keeping the children and young people safe.

Everyone should:

- Have read and understood CLAPA's safeguarding policy. Make sure you ask any questions you may have.
- Report any concerns about a young person's well-being from both observations and any disclosures the young person may make (see CLAPA's safeguarding policy and procedure more details).
- Look out for the group and support and any young people who are lacking in confidence, need encouragement to get involved or aren't sure what they should be doing.
- Support other staff and volunteers across the weekend, including recognising if they are struggling with any aspect.
- Avoid being 1-1 with any young person, except in exceptional circumstances (more details in the safeguarding yourself and others section).
- Support the group leader to run games and activities, including bringing your own ideas (if you have any, additional ideas for games are included later on).
- Encourage the group to listen and follow instructions, including the group pact.
- Identify any unwanted or bullying behaviour between young people and report this.



Ratios

We follow NSPCC best practice guidance for staff to CYP ratios at events. There should always be a minimum of two members of staff and volunteers.



- 0 - 2 years
1 adult to 3 children
- 2 - 3 years
1 adult to 4 children
- 4 - 8 years
1 adult to 6 children
- 9 - 12 years
1 adult to 8 children
- 13 - 18 years
1 adult to 10 children

Risk assessments

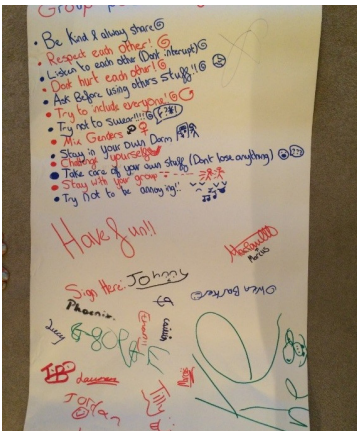
We need to have a risk assessment (RA) in place for each event. The leader will have completed this prior to arrival of the CYP, and is responsible for updating the RA. All supporting staff and volunteers should have sight/a copy of the RA and be familiar with everything in it, in particular any specific and named areas of responsibility.

We all risk assess on daily basis, when we chose when it is safe to cross a road or balance all of those boxes in the cupboard. We are all more familiar than we might realise in assessing risk. A RA just formalises this assessment and documents what we are doing as an organisation to minimise the risk to ourselves and to others.

Behavior management

Managing behaviour within the group is a shared responsibility. The lead member of staff will take ultimate responsibility and will liaise with centre staff and parents, if this is necessary (if we see really extreme and inappropriate behaviour). However, generally speaking, all staff and volunteers can help in encouraging young people to behave safely, kindly and appropriately.

We do not want to be like school, with lots of rigid rules, but we do want everyone to be able to enjoy themselves in a safe and supportive environment, which means there has to be a limit on behaviour we'll accept and equally a level of expectation on young people to follow some guidelines. To help the CYP we have implemented the idea of a group pact which all CYP and staff are a part of at the beginning of an event, please refer back to this with any young people who need a reminder. You can refer anything you need to, to the group leader, but please also feel confident to talk to young people yourself. You're part of the leadership team for the weekend, young people should listen to all staff and volunteers– remind them of the group pact, suggest a timeout or take them to one side and chat to them about their behaviour and what isn't acceptable, if this is necessary.



Boundaries

It's really important that you set boundaries. It is important that young people get to know you and feel safe around you but this should not extend to (for example) them knowing lots about your personal life or following/friending you on social media.

Keep a professional boundary at all times.

As a volunteer with personal experience of cleft you are invaluable to CLAPA and the young people you will support at the event. They will likely be able to relate to you in a different way to people without a cleft. You will probably find that some young people will ask you about your cleft related experiences, i.e. type of cleft you have, past surgeries, whether it's stopped you getting your dream job, having friends and meeting a partner and maybe having a family or even bullying. This is most likely on an adventure weekend, where you will spend more time with young people and they may feel comfortable to ask you questions and share their own experiences and cleft related feelings.

Please feel welcome to talk about your experiences – your childhood, growing up with a cleft, becoming an adult and how cleft has influenced your life. Please be honest (but only share what you are comfortable to share). Try not to focus on very negative experiences and where possible try to include a positive outlook / outcome.

For example:

If a young person asks if you have been bullied, please be honest if this happened to you, but focus on how you managed this situation, found a way through it and what you learnt. Try not to be too descriptive of the bullying or talk a lot about how much you were bullied and how it affected you as this could have a negative effect on the young person.

Dealing with inappropriate conversations

You might find that while chatting with young people you become part of or overhear conversations, which you feel are inappropriate. Please bear in mind the age of the group, the maturity levels and who else might be around and listening, before deciding if you need to intervene. We'd encourage you to step in yourself, rather than report to a CLAPA staff member, as this will help young people to understand that you are part of the leadership team for the event. Please feel confident to take action and make decisions yourself as you are a valued member of the volunteer team.

An experienced volunteer suggests; 'One way I do this is change the topic and ask question such as "does anyone play fortnite or xbox" etc. Then the conversation changes.'

Times when you might need to take action:

We often have a large range of ages at events (from 7 – 15). Whilst young people are mostly considerate of others there might be times when you find older young people talking about things of a sexual nature, which aren't appropriate for younger or less mature young people in the group. Please intervene here, remind people of the group pact (asking them to be kind and respect each other) and explain that we need to be considerate of everyone in the group.

We don't encourage phones/tablets at CLAPA events. As well as not being able to assure that they won't be lost/broken, there is also the temptation to view inappropriate material for other age groups. We also hope there will be conversation and focus on the event if phones and tablets are left at home!

Welcoming young people - icebreakers + games



For many of the CYP it is their first time away from home, this can make them feel anxious, scared and in some cases teary and home sick. While the lead member of staff is usually taking care of paperwork and any medication with parents/carers, it is great if other staff and volunteers can welcome CYP when they arrive and make them feel part of the group. The best way to do this is through group games, activities and ice breakers! Check out the separate list of games you could play and the instructions on how to play them.

Social media

Only CLAPA staff (who have collected the correct consent on signed forms) can share photos/videos/stories of young people at CLAPA events. It is a breach of privacy and data protection to do this without consent and there are implications for safeguarding the wellbeing of that young person.

You should not hold photos/videos or stories of young people on your personal phone or camera, only CLAPA property and these should be deleted as soon as possible and only stored on CLAPA computers in a secure file.

Please avoid becoming friends with young people on your personal social media accounts. If young people ask to friend you on Facebook or follow you on Twitter or Instagram, please suggest they follow CLAPA on our children and young people's pages instead. We want all staff and volunteers to develop a good rapport with young people but it's not appropriate for you to be in contact with young people outside of our services as it makes the boundaries unclear.

Collecting feedback

Most CLAPA events for children and young people are funded through Children in Need or other trust and grants. As such it is important for us to gather feedback from young people and volunteers to evidence the impact of our events and activities. We usually gather this feedback at the end of an event and for adventure weekends we also ask some questions when everyone arrives.

Sometimes young people will need your support in completing this, so it is helpful if you understand what is needed and why.

Additionally, on adventure weekends, all CYP and staff take part in writing 'Shields' to help everyone remember their great experience at the event and to use as a tool to 'shield' their self esteem in the future– Positive feedback.

Can you give us an example of something you feel more confident about?

Being Special.



Training

To support your role when working with CYP we ask that all CLAPA staff and volunteers complete these two online courses. This is in addition to the NSPCC online safeguarding course, which you should have already completed ahead of being invited to be part of a CLAPA event (the courses below should take no more than about an hour each) and are a very important part of CLAPA's ethos. All of these training courses will provide you with useful skills that you can use in other aspects of your life.

- [PREVENT \(preventing radicalisation\)](#)
- [Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\)](#)

Additional courses specific to working with children and young people which will help you during the events and you may be interested in:

- Participation – how to involve children and young people in decision making
- Working with young people and developing a professional relationship
- Roles and responsibilities in working with children and young people
- Understanding Autism

You can browse online platforms containing hundreds of FREE online courses and materials covering a huge range of topics:

- <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses/full-catalogue>
- <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses>
- <https://www.vision2learn.net/courses>
- <https://www.bolc.co.uk/free-online-courses-with-certificate>



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- <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses>
- <https://www.vision2learn.net/courses>
- <https://www.bolc.co.uk/free-online-courses-with-certificate>

Games

https://insight.typepad.co.uk/40_icebreakers_for_small_groups.pdf

Some ideas for other games and activities:

- Gym ball balloon, feet on wall and pass along
- Hold hands in circle and move hoop along without breaking the circle
- Ball with questions/activities stuck on when you catch you perform/answer question, or to learn names say the persons' name when you throw the ball



Activities

- Take a pack of pompoms, split the group into two teams. They need to blow the pom poms across a table with straws. Winning team has the least number of pom poms on their side of the table!
- Give each team a pack of marshmallows & cocktail sticks/spaghetti and ask them to build the tallest tower they can. Highest tower wins!



FAQs

What do I do if a young person wants to hug me?

Feel welcome to hug them back if you would like to. Try not to make it a bear hug! Keep your distance by hugging them back with one arm, and only in the company of someone else.

Will I get a break over the weekend?

• Breaks for all staff and volunteers will be scheduled and please take them! Adventure weekends can be intense and very busy. It's important that you take breaks and get plenty of sleep so you can best support the group. Feel free to let the lead or other volunteers know if you need additional time out.



How do I claim back volunteer expenses e.g. travel costs?

We have grant funding to cover your travel costs at events for children and young people so please make sure you claim back your mileage or train ticket costs as you are entitled to this. You can access our expenses claim form on the volunteer resource centre

I have a complaint- who can I complain too?

- If you have an immediate complaint about the weekend, please speak to the CLAPA lead if this is appropriate. If your complaint is about the CLAPA leader, please escalate this to the off-site contact for the event, whose number you should have in your CLAPA contact sheet.
- If you have a concern or complaint after the event, CLAPA have a complaints procedure which you can follow, which you will find on the CLAPA website.

Ideas for things we should include in this guide

If you have any ideas about things we should add and anything you think is missing from this guide, please tell us your ideas and give us your feedback 😊

Contact Claire at claire.evans@clapa.com