Saxon Dressage Group

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy

Safeguarding Lead: Anna Thurman
Policy date: September 2026
Review date: September 2027, or sooner if legislation or guidance changes

1. Our commitment

Saxon Dressage Group is a grassroots equestrian group providing friendly dressage competitions and activities for *children, young people, families and adults*.

Our aim is to provide an inclusive, welcoming and *stress-free environment* where riders can enjoy competing, develop their confidence and have a positive experience with their horse or pony.

Saxon Dressage Group is committed to ensuring that everyone taking part in our activities is treated with dignity and respect and is protected from abuse, neglect, bullying, harassment and avoidable harm.

The British Horse Society (BHS) states that children and young people should be able to enjoy horse riding in a fun, safe environment and that safeguarding children and adults at risk is everyone's responsibility. [bhs.org.uk], [bhs.org.uk]

The welfare and wellbeing of the child, young person or adult at risk will always be our primary safeguarding consideration.

2. Safeguarding Lead

The designated Safeguarding Lead for Saxon Dressage Group is:

Anna Thurman
Safeguarding Lead, Saxon Dressage Group
Email: anna_thurman@hotmail.co.uk
Telephone:**07801827065**

Anyone who has a safeguarding concern should speak to Anna as soon as possible.

If the concern relates to Anna, or she is unavailable and the matter cannot wait, the concern should be reported to another senior organiser and/or directly to the appropriate statutory safeguarding service.

An emergency must never be delayed while attempting to contact the Safeguarding Lead.

3. Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to everyone involved with Saxon Dressage Group, including:

- children and young people;
- parents and carers;
- adult competitors;
- adults at risk;
- committee members and organisers;
- volunteers;
- judges;
- stewards;
- scorers;
- photographers;
- coaches or instructors engaged for activities;
- contractors; and
- visitors and spectators.

For safeguarding purposes, a *child or young person is anyone under the age of 18.* This definition is also reflected in equestrian safeguarding guidance. BHS Safeguarding Policy

4. Everyone's responsibility

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Anyone involved with Saxon Dressage Group who sees, hears or becomes aware of something that causes concern should *report it rather than assume someone else will do so.*

The British Horse Society recommends that equestrian organisations which have regular contact with children and adults at risk have safeguarding policies, train relevant staff and volunteers, report concerns and establish clear expectations regarding appropriate behaviour. [bhs.org.uk]

No person needs to prove that abuse has taken place before raising a concern.

If something doesn't feel right, please say something.

5. What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding means taking appropriate steps to protect children, young people and adults at risk from harm and creating an environment in which people can participate safely.

A safeguarding concern could include:

- physical abuse;
- emotional or psychological abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- neglect;
- bullying, including online bullying;
- harassment;
- discriminatory behaviour;
- inappropriate physical contact;
- grooming;
- exploitation;
- inappropriate communication with a child;
- domestic abuse affecting a participant;
- concerns about an adult's behaviour towards a child;
- unsafe coaching or supervision practices; or
- other behaviour which places somebody at risk of harm.

A concern may arise from something a person *sees, hears, is told about or notices over time*.

6. Our approach to children and young riders

Children are an important part of Saxon Dressage Group and should be able to enjoy dressage in a supportive and encouraging environment.

We expect adults involved in our activities to:

- treat children fairly and respectfully;
- encourage rather than intimidate;
- use appropriate language;
- respect personal boundaries;
- avoid unnecessary physical contact;
- behave openly and appropriately;
- avoid being unnecessarily alone with an unrelated child;
- listen when a child says they are uncomfortable or worried;
- never humiliate a child because of their riding ability, score or behaviour;
- recognise that mistakes are part of learning; and
- report safeguarding concerns promptly.

This supports current British Equestrian safeguarding principles, which state that the safety and enjoyment of children and young people participating in equestrian activities are of the utmost importance.

7. Parents and carers

Saxon Dressage Group is a competition group rather than a childcare provider.

Unless a specific activity states otherwise, *parents/carers remain responsible for the supervision and welfare of their children while attending our events.*

Parents and carers are expected to:

- supervise their children appropriately;
- ensure children follow event and venue safety rules;
- provide appropriate emergency contact information;
- inform organisers of relevant medical, accessibility or additional needs where necessary for safe participation;
- treat organisers, volunteers, officials, other competitors and children respectfully;
- raise concerns with the Safeguarding Lead; and
- avoid photographing or sharing images of other children in circumstances where they have been asked not to do so.

8. Adults at risk

Our safeguarding responsibilities are not limited to children.

An adult may be at increased risk of abuse or neglect because of their circumstances or care and support needs.

We will treat concerns about adults sensitively and respectfully, taking account of the individual's wishes and capacity wherever possible while recognising that there may be circumstances where information needs to be shared to protect someone from harm.

British Equestrian's safeguarding framework covers both children and adults and expects participants to be treated with dignity and respect.

9. Bullying and inappropriate behaviour

Saxon Dressage Group aims to offer a friendly, low-pressure environment.

We will not accept:

- bullying;
- threatening behaviour;
- humiliation;
- aggressive shouting;
- discriminatory comments;
- sexual harassment;
- intimidation;
- deliberately excluding or isolating someone;
- malicious online comments connected with the Group; or
- inappropriate behaviour towards a child or adult at risk.

This applies to competitors, parents, spectators, officials, volunteers and organisers.

Where behaviour falls below the standards expected by the Group, an organiser may speak to the individual concerned and, where necessary, ask them to leave an event.

Serious safeguarding concerns will be referred appropriately.

10. Photography, video and social media

Photography and video are common within equestrian sport and can be an enjoyable way to celebrate competitors' achievements.

However, the welfare and privacy of children must be considered.

Saxon Dressage Group will:

- use appropriate images of children;
- avoid unnecessarily publishing children's personal information;
- respect reasonable requests not to photograph a participant;
- respond to concerns about inappropriate photography;
- expect photographers working on behalf of the Group to behave appropriately; and
- not knowingly publish images that could place a child or adult at risk.

Parents/carers who do not wish their child to appear in photographs should notify the organisers.

11. Online communication

Communication with young competitors should be appropriate, transparent and related to Saxon Dressage Group activities.

Where reasonably possible, communications concerning a child should take place through or include their parent/carer.

Adults acting on behalf of Saxon Dressage Group should not use their position within the Group to develop inappropriate private online relationships with children.

The same behavioural standards apply to social media and electronic communications as apply at our events.

12. If someone tells you they are being harmed

If a child, young person or adult tells an organiser or volunteer something that raises a safeguarding concern:

DO

- stay calm;
- listen carefully;
- take what they say seriously;
- allow them to explain in their own words;
- reassure them that they were right to tell someone;
- explain that you may need to share the information with someone who can help;
- make an accurate written record as soon as possible; and
- report the concern promptly to **Anna Thurman, Safeguarding Lead**.

DO NOT

- promise to keep it secret;
- investigate the allegation yourself;
- repeatedly question the individual;
- confront the person who is alleged to have caused harm;
- make assumptions; or
- discuss the matter unnecessarily with other people.

The role of the person receiving information is to *listen, record and report*, not to investigate.

13. Reporting a safeguarding concern

Immediate danger

If a child, young person or adult at risk is in immediate danger:

Call 999 immediately.

If urgent medical attention is required, request an ambulance and explain that there is a safeguarding concern where appropriate.

British Equestrian and the The British Horse Society both direct people to contact the police on **999** where someone is in immediate danger.

Other concerns

Report the concern as soon as reasonably possible to:

Anna Thurman
Safeguarding Lead
Saxon Dressage Group

Anna will consider the appropriate next steps, which may include seeking advice from or referring to:

- the relevant Local Authority Children's Social Care service;
- Adult Social Care;
- the Police;
- the NSPCC;
- an appropriate equestrian governing or safeguarding organisation; or
- another relevant statutory agency.

British Equestrian advises that safeguarding concerns should be referred as soon as practical and that concerns involving immediate danger should go directly to emergency services.

14. Recording concerns

A written record should be made as soon as possible and should include:

- date and time;
- name of the person raising the concern;
- name of the child or adult concerned;
- what was seen, heard or disclosed;
- the person's own words where possible;
- details of any injuries or immediate risk;
- what action was taken;

- who the matter was reported to; and
- the name of the person making the record.

Records should be *factual rather than opinion-based.*

Safeguarding information will be kept securely and shared only with those who have a legitimate need to know.

15. Confidentiality

Safeguarding information is sensitive and must be handled appropriately.

Saxon Dressage Group will respect people's privacy but *cannot promise absolute confidentiality where somebody may be at risk of harm.*

Information will be shared on an appropriate need-to-know basis to protect the child or adult concerned or to meet legal safeguarding responsibilities.

Safeguarding matters should not become the subject of general discussion, gossip or social media conversation.

16. Safer recruitment and volunteers

Saxon Dressage Group will consider the safeguarding responsibilities of roles when appointing people to positions involving children or adults at risk.

Where a role is legally eligible for a Disclosure and Barring Service check, the appropriate level of *DBS check* should be obtained.

Importantly, a DBS check is not in itself a complete safeguarding measure. Appropriate recruitment, references where necessary, clear conduct expectations, supervision and safeguarding awareness should also be considered.

British Equestrian's Safe to Play guidance states that accredited coaches require an up-to-date criminal record check and safeguarding training, and describes a DBS check as a criminal record check.

17. Coaching and instructors

Where Saxon Dressage Group engages a coach or instructor, we will take reasonable steps to ensure that they are appropriately qualified, insured and suitable for their role.

Where they will regularly work with children or adults at risk, appropriate safeguarding training and DBS arrangements will be considered according to the nature of the role.

Coaches must maintain appropriate professional boundaries with participants.

18. Equality and inclusion

Everyone has the right to participate in a safe environment.

Safeguarding concerns will be taken seriously regardless of a person's:

- age;
- disability;
- sex;
- gender reassignment;
- race or ethnicity;
- religion or belief;
- sexual orientation;
- socioeconomic background; or
- riding ability.

Safeguarding practice in equestrian sport is intended to protect participants and ensure they are treated with dignity and respect.

19. Useful safeguarding contacts

Saxon Dressage Group

Safeguarding Lead: Anna Thurman
Telephone:**07801827065**
Email: **anna_thurman@hotmail.co.uk**

Emergency

Police/Ambulance: 999

Police non-emergency: 101

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000

The British Horse Society Safeguarding Team: 02476 840746 Or
safeguarding@bhs.org.uk

These are the safeguarding contact details currently published by the BHS.

British Equestrian Safeguarding

02475 313437

British Equestrian also provides it's **Safe to Play** service for safeguarding information and reporting concerns.

20. Policy review

This policy will be:

- available to competitors, families, volunteers and officials;
- communicated to people undertaking relevant roles for the Group;
- reviewed at least annually; and
- reviewed sooner following a significant safeguarding incident or material change in legislation or national equestrian safeguarding guidance.

British Equestrian's own safeguarding policy provides for annual review or earlier review where legislation or practice changes.

Policy statement

Saxon Dressage Group believes that everyone should be able to enjoy equestrian sport in a safe, friendly and supportive environment.

We will listen to concerns, take them seriously and act appropriately. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk is central to the way we run our activities.

Signed: __Anna Thurman_____
Anna Thurman, Safeguarding Lead

Date: ____28/10/2026_____