

RESEARCH CODE OF PRACTICE

February 2014

Why do we have a Code of Practice?

All those who are involved in our work have the right to expect to be well informed about the purposes of our research and to understand the extent of their involvement in this. It is also necessary to demonstrate, in particular to those individuals who take part in our research, that we conduct our work in line with ethical and data protection principles.

What is our Code of Practice?

The Evaluation team's Code of Practice is a short document that outlines the key principles and policies that help us to ensure that our work is undertaken with the highest level of integrity possible. All our work is affected, or guided, by our Code of Practice, which is underpinned by the following key ideas:

- The **physical, psychological and emotional** well-being of those who participate in our research is the **most important priority** in our work.
- Ethical issues are central to all aspects of our work.
- The Evaluation team has an obligation to The Outward Bound Trust, the wider research community and society to maintain professional standards related to integrity, quality and honesty in the way in which research is conducted and reported on.
- All research participants should be able to exercise their right to decide whether or not they wish to participate in our research.
- The confidentiality of research participants should be maintained, except where their responses cause concern for their safety, or where we have obtained written permission to name, or otherwise identify, an individual or organisation.

Our Code of Practice sets out principles related to:

- Protecting research participants from harm
- Informed consent
- Data protection
- Maintaining research participants' anonymity
- The integrity of our work

Protecting research participants from harm

To help ensure that an individual or organisation is not harmed by how we work or what we report, we take the following steps:

- All members of the Evaluation team who have access to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, or data relating to them, undergo a criminal records check by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- We do not contact course participants directly about our research if they are under 16 years of age.
- When planning, conducting and reporting on our work, we take into consideration religious, cultural, gender and other differences within the research population.
- We respect individuals' and organisations' privacy.
- We do not ask research participants highly personal questions.
- When designing and conducting research, we do all that we can to minimise the demands we place on research participants. This includes minimising the amount of time young people and visiting staff members/teachers spend participating in our research at the end of their Outward Bound course and when they return to school.
- The Outward Bound Trust has a complaints procedure which outlines the standard way in which complaints are dealt with. This includes the timescale within which a complainant will receive a response from The Trust.

Informed consent

- We ensure that all research participants are informed of the nature and purpose of each of our data gathering exercises.
- All participants are informed of their right to opt-out of our research at any stage.
- Depending on the nature of the research and the age of the participants, we recognise that, as well as gaining consent from the individual, it may also be necessary to gain consent from a parent or guardian.
- In our reports, we only include photographs of young people who have provided their consent for us to do so (or, for young people under 18 years of age, only if a parent/guardian has provided their consent).

Data protection

The Outward Bound Trust is registered on the Data Protection Register. The Evaluation team undertakes its work in accordance with the eight principles of the Data Protection Act 1998. This states that:

1. Personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully.
2. Personal data shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes.
3. Personal data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed.
4. Personal data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
5. Personal data processed for any purpose or purposes shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes.
6. Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under this Act.

7. Appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.
8. Personal data shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.

We adhere to these guidelines to ensure that we collect, store, use and delete data in an appropriate and secure way. This applies to data on paper and data stored electronically. In practice, this means that:

Collection of data

- We only collect data that we need for a specific purpose.

Use of data

- We only use data that has been explicitly submitted by research participants.
- We only use data for the purpose for which it was collected and not for any other purpose.
- As data should be collected only for one or more specified purpose(s), we ensure that no data is passed on to anyone who may use it for a different purpose.
- We keep data up to date.

Storage of data

We take steps to ensure that personal data does not leave The Outward Bound Trust's secure computer network or the physical security of our offices:

- Data on paper is stored in an office that is either staffed or locked at all times.
- Data on paper is not removed from the office.
- All data that is stored electronically is protected by a password (including any data that is held on a portable storage device). Files and folders that contain data that could identify individuals (names, addresses etc.) are protected by an additional password.
- If we are required to transfer data to a third party, we ensure that this is done securely; for example, by using passwords, encryption or secure electronic transfer systems.

Deletion of data

- We delete data when it is no longer required.
- Any data on paper that could identify individuals is shredded when it is no longer required.
- Any data that is stored electronically that could identify individuals is deleted (from files and folders, and Recycle Bins) when it is no longer required.

Anonymity

- We endeavour to ensure that research participants cannot be identified in our reports by omitting or changing their names, or other information that could identify them, unless they have given us their permission to use this.

Integrity

In order to maintain the integrity of our work, we:

- Produce findings and judgements that are based on sound research evidence.
- Disseminate research findings openly, honestly and in accessible forms.
- Make the results of our research available to the individuals and organisations that have participated.
- Comply with copyright and intellectual property rights when we use secondary materials (e.g. research articles and other organisations' data).

We do not:

- Fabricate, or deliberately falsify or misinterpret, evidence.
- Plagiarise, misquote or claim credit for the work of other researchers or authors.

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