

Health and Safety policy

Introduction

1. PALS promotes healthy and safe play for its members. We want you and your children to have a great time with us. Safe play is happy play, and play is sometimes risky.
2. PALS is a charity run by volunteers with ASN children of their own to supervise at events. Those volunteers are a mix of parents and PALS trustees and are collectively referred to as "PALS contacts" in this policy.
3. All children attending events and activities must always be properly supervised by their parents and carers to ensure events and activities can be fully enjoyed by all.
4. Our Health and Safety procedure, below, sets out in more detail how we can keep you safe and how you can help us keep you safe. Please familiarise yourself with it and do not hesitate to contact us to ask any questions you might have.
5. PALS uses venues and activity partners who are well known and with no obvious safety concerns. If you have any concerns, please raise these with any of the PALS Contacts as soon as you can and we will be happy to chat to you about these.
6. PALS relies on having updated contact details for you. By being able to contact you, this helps us keep your children safe and well. If you haven't updated your contact details with us for a while, please email info@playandlearningsupport.co.uk.
7. Like all good policies, this is a living document and it will change with the charity and with our members. We will review this at least annually at our board meetings, or sooner if we need to. It is next scheduled for review at our April 2027 Board meeting.
8. If you think there is something that should be covered by this policy or procedure we will be happy to review it sooner than that. Please do not hesitate to contact us at info@playandlearningsupport.co.uk.

PALS Trustees

30 April 2026

Health and Safety procedure

Activities and play generally

1. We want to encourage our members to learn and grow through play. Our activities are aimed towards the interests and skills of the children attending and are not intended to be risky or dangerous activities.
2. Even in the normal course of play, unfortunately sometimes children can be hurt or upset. We encourage all our parents and carers to be mindful of their children and their appetite for risky play, and to discourage them from doing too much beyond their capability. You know your children best!
3. If a parent or carer thinks the play is becoming too risky, the parent or carer must in the first instance speak to their own child to try to control the behaviour or remove the child from the situation.
4. If the position involves other people's children please speak to a PALS contact in the first instance. The PALS contact will take steps to address the situation. It is important that all parents and carers listen and follow the PALS contact's instructions.
5. If it is not possible to return play to a safe comfortable level then the activity may be stopped and/ or the parent/ carer may be asked to leave with their child(ren).
6. We use third party suppliers for many of our activities. When we book activities we think about ways to keep you safe. When you are on an activity, please continue to monitor your children and listen to the advice of the PALS contact and the host.

Parents and carers

7. All are welcome at PALS events, which are all 'stay and play' events which means the adult stays to supervise while the child plays. Our policy on staying with your children is outlined in our application form and again in the welcome pack.
8. All parents and carers must actively supervise their children and engage where needed with a PALS contact. All parents and carers must listen to the advice of PALS contacts. Failure to do so or disrespectful behaviour towards PALS contacts or other parents or children will not be tolerated. It creates a safety risk as it prevents us carrying out our duties.
9. If a member arrives accompanied by an adult, PALS will reasonably assume that the adult has been informed of the requirement to actively supervise and listen to instructions.

10. It is absolutely ok for adults to bring children that are not theirs provided this is agreed between the families. Parents and carers must actively avoid being alone on a 1:1 basis with a child that they have not been placed in a position of responsibility towards that child by their parents or carers. If you find a child who is alone, please bring this to the attention of the PALS contact.

Food and drink/ hot drinks/ allergies

11. We will provide snacks and drinks at certain events. Sometimes it is possible for parents and carers to help themselves to hot drinks. Please tidy up after yourself wherever possible as our venues are staffed by volunteers. Of course this does not apply to our parties and Christmas meals!

12. Please take care with food and drink not to create trip or slip hazards. Sometimes our children like to play with their food! That is absolutely ok, provided parents and carers are mindful of this and can alert PALS contacts so we can take steps to keep everyone safe.

13. Hot drinks create burn risks. If you have a hot drink be careful not to have it placed in such a way that could scald you or another person.

14. Allergies are a real danger to many. Our activities are peanut free zones for this reason. Please do not consume anything with peanuts at PALS events and activities.

15. If your child has allergies and you have concerns, please speak to the PALS contact.

Venues

16. Our venues are safe and secure. Sometimes however we will lock the doors just to ensure that other people cannot wander in off the street. If we do this, we will ensure we let you know.

17. Our venues have entrances and exits which you must use in cases of emergency such as a fire drill. Please ensure you remember the way out when you get to our venues and if you're not sure, please ask the PALS contact.

18. If the fire alarm goes off, please make your way to the exit with your child(ren) and follow any instructions provided by the PALS contact or other person in authority. Do not stop to pick up jackets or other personal items and do not block doorways, corridors or exits.

19. If there is an accident or near-miss please let your PALS contact know about this straight away. We will report this to the venue and discuss how we can prevent this happening again.

20. If someone is hurt, please let your PALS contact know straight away.

21. If someone is lost, please let your PALS contact know straight away.

Set up and put away of play equipment

22. PALS contacts will do our best to ensure that activities and events are fully set up before the start time. Sometimes life gets in the way and there may be a delay in getting everything ready. If that happens we'd ask for your patience while we get things ready for you.

23. We welcome the assistance of parents and carers with set up and putting away, but we do not expect this from you, especially if this gets in the way of you keeping your children safe. Please feel free to go at the end of your session.

24. Any parents and carers assisting PALS contacts to set up or put away do so at their own risk. Please be careful, particularly with the steps at the storage at Sacred Heart RC Church. These are steep and dark and our equipment is heavy.

25. Please do not be offended if the PALS contact asks you to take care, or to step back from helping. We are trying to look after you!

Bouncy castle

26. We have a bouncy castle which our children love to play on! If the bouncy castle is in operation, you can be assured that the operator has been trained in the safe operation of the bouncy castle.

27. It is your responsibility as a parent or carer to ensure your child is safe on the bouncy castle. This means no shoes, no eyeglasses, no loose jewellery (consider removing studs), no sharp objects on or near the bouncy castle. We do not have a strict maximum number of children for the bouncy castle, but to keep things safe and fun, we will allow usually a maximum of 6 children, fewer if they are older or bigger children.

28. Bouncy castles are fun and that can sometimes lead to rough play. Please do not be offended if we ask you to take your child off the bouncy castle. This will be for their safety and the safety of others. We will aim to get your child back on either in that event or a future event.

29. If there are repeated incidents of rough play or failing to abide by the advice of the bouncy castle operator or PALS contact, then you and your child(ren) may be asked to leave.

PALS contact training and supervision

30. All our PALS contacts have up to date PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) scheme checks carried out by Disclosure Scotland. These background checks, updated regularly, are to give you peace of mind that your children are safe with us.

31. Some of our PALS contacts are first aid trained and will be happy to provide first aid where required. While we encourage PALS contacts to become first aid trained, this is not a condition of volunteering for PALS.

32. If you have any questions or concerns about any PALS contacts, please do not hesitate to raise this with the Chair (Laura Costello). If your concern is about Laura, please do not hesitate to raise this with the Vice-Chair (Fiona Michie).

Smoking/ vaping

33. There is a total ban on smoking or the use of e cigarettes and vapes within PALS events and activities.