

Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk



Whitlingham
Charitable Trust

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1. Introduction

The Trust are the managers and conservators of Whitlingham Country Park, 35 hectares of parkland and open water located just outside of Norwich. The park consists of the Great and Little Broads and the wider areas of Whitlingham Woods, Trowse Woods and Trowse Water Meadow.

Whitlingham Charitable Trust believes that all children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to be safe, happy and healthy and deserve protection from abuse and exploitation. The Trust is committed to safeguarding from harm all children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in any of its activities, and to treat them with respect.

2. Policy Purpose & Scope

This Policy commits all Trust members, park staff and volunteers regardless of their role; to report and refer any concerns they may have regarding the safety of any young person or vulnerable adult.

This policy seeks to ensure that Trustees, staff, volunteers, and contractors undertake their responsibilities regarding the protection of children and Adults at Risk (AAR) from abuse and will respond to concerns appropriately. The policy establishes a framework to support Trustees, staff and volunteers in their practices and explains the Trust's expectations.

The Trust comes into contact with children and adults at risk through the following activities:

- Contact with children during workshops/open public events organised by the park (all children to be accompanied by adult).
- School visits (supervised by school staff).
- Work experience groups from local colleges

- Contact with adults at risk through volunteering days with external organisations
- Older unaccompanied students from local schools and colleges on work experience
- The general public accessing the park and its facilities.

The purpose of the policy is:

- To provide protection for the children and Adults at Risk who receive Whitlingham Country Park's services.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt if they suspect a child or Adult at Risk may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.
- To protect Whitlingham Country Park staff from allegations of abuse by defining professional boundaries.
- Create a culture of safeguarding.

3. Responsibilities

All trustees, staff and volunteers have the responsibility to follow the guidance in this policy and related policies, and to report any safeguarding suspicions or concerns using the procedures outlined.

We expect all trustees, staff and volunteers to promote good practice by being excellent role models, contribute to discussions about safeguarding and to positively involve people in developing safe practices.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is the first point of contact for all matters relating to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk.

This person's responsibilities are:

- Ensure the policy is accessible.

- Ensure the policy is implemented.
- Ensure the policy is monitored and reviewed.
- Ensure that sufficient time and resources are available to ensure the policy can be implemented effectively.
- Ensure that the safeguarding of children and adults at risk is promoted.
- Ensure that all trustees, staff and volunteers have access to appropriate training where necessary.
- To receive all concerns about safeguarding and respond to them appropriately.
- To keep up to date with local arrangements for safeguarding and DBS.
- To develop effective links with appropriate agencies.
- To take forward concerns about responses.

Trustees, Staff and Volunteers

It is expected that everyone will lend support with the DSL responsibilities and are familiar with the relevant policies and legislation and undertake Adult and Child safeguarding training annually.

Contractors

All contractors either have their own policy and procedures or agree to read and follow this policy. They should have a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and WCP's reporting procedures.

4. Implementation

The scope of this Safeguarding Policy is broad-ranging, and in practice it will be implemented via a range of policies and procedures within the organisation. These include the Equality and Diversity Policy and the Health and Safety Policy, Bullying and Harassment, and Whistleblowing. We will create a culture of safeguarding through:

Safe recruitment:

The Trust ensures safe recruitment through the following processes:

- Staff and volunteers' induction
- Staff and volunteers' training
- DBS checks where advised by NSPCC
- Health and Safety training
- Data protection
- Disciplinary procedures

Training and support for staff

The Trust commits resources for induction, effective communications and support mechanisms in relation to Safeguarding.

Onboarding of new staff and volunteers

The induction process will include:

- Discussion of the Safeguarding Policy and confirmation of understanding.
- Discussion of other relevant policies.
- Ensuring of familiarity with the reporting process and the roles of the lead officer and Chair.

Communications and discussion of safeguarding issues

Commitment to the following communication methods will ensure effective communication of safeguarding issues and practice:

- At Team meetings
- At Board meetings
- At AGM
- Encouraging open discussion
- Refresher meetings

Support

We recognise that involvement in situations where there is risk or actual harm can be stressful for staff and volunteers concerned. The mechanisms in place to support staff include:

- Debriefing sessions
- Recommendations for counselling

An effective culture of safeguarding should be one of vigilance. This means accepting that issues can, and may well, occur in our organisation.

5. Professional Boundaries

Purpose

This section outlines the behaviour expected of Whitlingham Country Park staff and volunteers. This code has been developed to provide advice which will not only help to protect children and Adults at Risk, but will also help identify any practices which could be mistakenly interpreted and perhaps lead to false allegations of abuse being made against individuals.

Following this good practice code will also help to protect Whitlingham Charitable Trust by reducing the possibility of anyone using their role within the organisation to gain access to children and Adults at Risk in order to abuse them.

When working for the Trust with children and Adults at Risk, all staff and volunteers are considered to be acting in a position of trust. It is therefore important that staff and volunteers are aware that they may be seen as role models by children and must act in an appropriate manner at all times and follow the code of conduct. The Trust expects staff and volunteers to protect the professional integrity of themselves and the organisation.

The following professional boundaries must be adhered to:

- Staff and volunteers should not give or receive gifts from members of their user groups unless part of a planned activity.
- Personal relationships between staff and volunteers and vulnerable user groups are prohibited, including through social media.
- The Trust prohibits the use of abusive, sarcastic or insensitive language to children and Adults at Risk.
- The Trust prohibits behaviour and language that is sexist, racist or otherwise intolerant of disability, religion, belief or gender choice.
- The Trust prohibits the use of punishment or chastisement.
- You must not patronise children or Adults at Risk.
- Never allow allegations to go unreported.
- Do not act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive.
- The Trust prohibits the passing on of service users' personal details except where permitted by the user when dealing with research enquiries.
- The Trust keeps staff and volunteers contact details and personal information confidential, away from service users and out of sight in public areas, in accordance with the Data Protection Regulations 2018.

If the professional boundaries and/or policies are breached this could result in disciplinary procedures or enactment of the allegation management procedures.

If there is an incident or allegation of abuse, we will:

- handle and record it in a secure and responsible way
- follow our safeguarding policies and procedures
- act quickly, ensuring we stop or minimise any further harm or damage
- report it to all relevant agencies and regulators when required
- plan what to say to staff, volunteers and the media if appropriate
- be as open and transparent as possible, so that we build the Trust's reputation for acting with integrity while protecting confidentiality appropriately
- review what happened to understand how to stop it from happening again

6. Reporting Procedures

6.1. Purpose and aim of the procedures

A reporting procedure is a set of detailed guidelines that tell everyone what to do if they are concerned about a child or Adult at Risk. It is very important to have clear instructions to ensure that there is a quick and effective response for dealing with concerns about a child or Adult at Risk. The procedures detailed in this section apply to all members of the Trust, staff and volunteers.

6.2. Recognising Abuse

It is vital for all staff and volunteers who are involved in groups or projects that work with children and Adults at Risk to have a basic understanding of child protection issues. This requires staff to have an understanding of the different categories of abuse and how to recognise the signs of maltreatment.

The term abuse is used to describe a form of maltreatment of a child or Adult at Risk. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children or Adults at Risk may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.

Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children or Adults at Risk may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

There are four main categories of abuse recognised in children. These are:

1. Physical abuse
2. Sexual abuse
3. Emotional abuse
4. Neglect

There are ten forms of abuse recognised in adults. These are:

1. Physical Abuse
2. Domestic Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Psychological Abuse
5. Financial or Material Abuse
6. Modern Slavery
7. Discriminatory Abuse
8. Organisational Abuse
9. Neglect and acts of omission
10. Self-Neglect

Common indicators of abuse include:

- Becoming isolated
- Weight gain or loss
- Change in appearance
- Physical changes
- Poor personal hygiene
- Becoming withdrawn, reluctant to make eye contact
- Becoming anxious or tearful
- Bruising or other physical injuries in unusual locations
- Behaviour changes

6.3. How to respond to reports of abuse or witnessing abuse

It is not the responsibility of anyone working for Whitlingham Charitable Trust, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility for all to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. The Trust will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern that a child/AAR may have been abused.

6.3.1. If a child/Adult at Risk reports abuse to you, you should:

- React calmly
- Reassure the child/AAR that they were right to tell you and that they are not to blame
- Take what the child/AAR says seriously
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- Don't ask about explicit details.
- Reassure but do not promise confidentiality, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments
- Inform the child/AAR what you will do next
- Do not attempt to discuss the matter with parents/carers
- Make a full and written record of what has been said/heard as soon as possible

The report should include as much of the following as possible:

- The child/AAR's name, age and date of birth
- The child/AAR's home address and telephone number
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- Details of witnesses to the incidents
- The child/AAR's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how bruising or other injuries occurred
- In relevant circumstances, have the parents/carers been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details

- The report should be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead they will then make a referral to Norfolk County Council via the links on the safeguarding board website

If it is not possible to report to the designated safeguarding lead, then information should be passed on to a member of the Senior Management Team. The name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded and the referral should then be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.

6.3.2. If you suspect that a child/AAR is being abused, you should:

- React calmly
- Make a full and written record of what has been observed as soon as possible
- Do not attempt to discuss the matter with the parents/carers

The report should include as much of the following as possible:

- The child/AAR's name, age and date of birth
- The child/AAR's home address and telephone number
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns of those of someone else
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- Details of witnesses to the incidents
- The child/AAR's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how bruising or other injuries occurred
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details

The report should be passed to the Operations Manager/Catering Manager in their roles as Designated Safeguarding Leads they will then make a referral to Norfolk County Council via the links on the safeguarding board website. If it is not possible to report to the Operations Manager, then information should be passed on to a member of the

Senior Management Team. The name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded and the referral should then be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.

6.3.3. How to respond to allegations of abuse against a member of staff

If you receive an allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer, you should:

- React calmly
- If allegations are made by the child/AAR, reassure the child/AAR that they were right to tell and that they are not to blame
- Take what they report seriously
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- Don't ask about explicit details
- Reassure but do not promise confidentiality, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments
- Inform the person making the report what you will do next
- Do not attempt to discuss the matter with the member of staff involved, the child/AAR, parents/carers, or other members of Trust staff
- Make a full and written record of what has been reported as soon as possible and pass this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The report should include as much of the following as possible:

- The name of the member of staff who is the subject of the allegation
- The child/AAR's name, age and date of birth
- The child/AAR's home address and telephone number
- The name home address and telephone number of the person making the report
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns of those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation, including dates, times other relevant information
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also, any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes

- Details of witnesses to the incidents
- The child/AAR's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how bruising or other injuries occurred
- In relevant circumstances, have the parents/carers been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details

Action to be taken by the Safeguarding Officer

All allegations should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer who will consult with the appropriate authority without delay to agree the need for further action including information sharing.

- Cases involving children will require a consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), you can do this by filling out the [LADO Referral & Consultation Form](#) and returning it to LADO@norfolk.gov.uk
- Cases involving Adults at Risk will require a referral to Adult Social Care
 - **Telephone:** 0344 800 8020 - this number is open 24 hours a day
 - **Text relay:** 18001 0344 800 8020 - for people with hearing or speech impairments.
 - In an emergency call 999
- The Trust will adhere to the relevant procedures set out in the Local Safeguarding Board Procedures
- The Trust will not investigate an allegation, advise the member of staff, or interview children or Adults at Risk until consultation has taken place with the relevant authority as doing so may compromise any police investigation.
- The Safeguarding Officer will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child/AAR in question, and any other child/Adult at Risk who may be at risk. This is likely to include raising the incident with the relevant member of Senior Leadership Team who may instigate the temporary suspension of the member of staff who is the subject of the allegation according to the WCT disciplinary process.

- The parents or carers of the child/AAR will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the relevant agency
- If the Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Chief Executive of the Trust.
- If, following consultation with the relevant authority, the allegation is agreed to be about poor practice, the Trust will deal with the incident as a misconduct issue.

Confidentiality

- Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only.
- Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Internal enquiries and suspension

- The Trust will make an immediate decision in consultation with relevant authorities about whether any individual who is the subject of an allegation should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the Trust Disciplinary Committee, appointed by the chair, will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Trust Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information, which could suggest that on a balance of probability it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child/Adult at Risk should remain of paramount importance throughout.
- The Trust will ensure that any disciplinary proceedings against staff relating to safeguarding matters are concluded in full, even when the member of staff is no longer employed. Notification of any concerns will be made to the Independent

Safeguarding Authority and any other relevant professional bodies and included in references where applicable. This notification responsibility will apply even if the Trust ceases to use the services of an agency worker or volunteer when there have been concerns as to unsuitability.

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse

- Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of help lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.
- Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for subject of an allegation.

Allegations of previous abuse

- Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made the procedures detailed above should be followed. This is because other children, either within or outside the activity of the Trust, may be at risk from this person.

7. Monitoring

The Trust will monitor the following Safeguarding aspects:

- Safe recruitment practices
- Identification checks for new staff and volunteers
- DBS checks where necessary
- References where necessary for new staff and volunteers
- Comprehensive safeguarding training every three years
- Annual safeguarding awareness training
- Monitoring whether concerns are being reported and actioned
- Checking this document and other policies mentioned are up to date and relevant
- Reviewing the current reporting procedure to ensure it is fit for purpose

7.1. Managing information

Information will be gathered, recorded and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Regulations 2018.

All staff and volunteers must be aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other agencies to safeguard children and adults at risk. The public interest in safeguarding children and adults at risk may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only, as judged by the designated safeguarding lead and safeguarding trustee.

7.2. Outcomes

As a result of following this policy and practising its procedures, we hope children will be better protected from the impact of abuse and neglect. Staff, trustees and volunteers will take reasonable steps to safeguard and protect children, including contacting the local authority, the police or other statutory agencies or/and discussing concerns with parents/carers, teachers, group leaders or mentors.

7.3. Reviewing the policy

The Trust will make staff, volunteers and park users aware of the Safeguarding Policy through the Website: www.whitlinghamcharitabletrust.co.uk

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees every year, following a serious incident, and when there are changes in legislation.

Appendix

1. Definitions

Safeguarding is embedding practices throughout an organisation to ensure the protection of children and/or adults at risk from abuse or harm wherever possible. Child and adult protection is about responding to circumstances that arise.

Safeguarding and **child protection** are different. Safeguarding is what we do to prevent harm, whereas child protection is how we respond when we believe a child is at risk of harm or has been harmed.

A culture of safeguarding means striving to create environments and cultures which keep children and AAR safe from all forms of harm and prevent maltreatment from happening. An effective safeguarding culture exists when safeguarding is found at the heart of a setting's ethos, practices and procedures.

Abuse is where a child or AAR is treated cruelly, violently or forcefully by an adult or another child, causing harm or distress. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture. Abuse is a form of maltreatment. Children and AAR can be at risk of abuse in the home, in social situations and online

Child and AAR maltreatment is the abuse and neglect of children. It encompasses all forms of ill-treatment, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Child and AAR maltreatment can seriously impair a person's health, dignity and development

Child

A child is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) as 'anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday'.

Adult at Risk (AAR)

An adult at risk is a person aged 18 years or over who:

Adults at risk are considered to be at greater risk from abuse and harm so are given more protection by law if: they have needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs are unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it. (Care Act 2014, section 42)

This may include a person who:

- Is elderly and frail
- Has a mental illness including dementia
- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Has a learning disability
- Has a severe physical illness
- Is a substance misuser
- Is homeless

DBS Barred List: A list of people who have been barred by the Disclosure and Barring Service from taking part in Regulated activities

Regulated activity

Regulated activity is work that a barred person must not do.

In summary this comprises:

- unsupervised activities: teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children or provide advice/guidance on well-being, or drive a vehicle only for children
- Work for a limited range of establishments with opportunity for contact: e.g. schools, children's homes, childcare premises
- Relevant personal care, e.g. washing or dressing: or health care by or supervised by a professional
- Registered childminding: and foster carers

Source: Regulated activity in relation to children: scope.

Factual note by HM government

2. Legislation

The principal pieces of legislation governing this policy are:

Adults

- The Care Act 2014
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Protection of Freedoms Bill
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- No Secrets 2000, a government White Paper
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998

Children

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.
- The Children Act 1989 (as amended).
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- The Education Act 2002.
- The United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child 1992.
- The Equality Act 2010.
- The Children and Families Act 2014.
- The Human Rights Act 1998.

3. How to Raise a Concern with Children's Advice and Duty Service (Norfolk)

<https://norfolklscp.org.uk/people-working-with-children/how-to-raise-a-concern>

If you are a professional, i.e. working with a child or young person in a formal or voluntary setting and not a family member or member of the public, you can contact the Children's Advice and Duty Service on their direct line: 0344 800 8021.

If you have an emergency, please call 999.

For any call raising concerns about a child, the Children's Advice and Duty Service will ask for:

- all of the details known to you/your agency about the child.
- their family composition including siblings, and where possible extended family members and anyone important in the child's life.
- the nature of the concern and how immediate it is.
- Any and what kind of work/support you have provided to the child or family to date.
- They will also need to know where the child is now and whether you have informed parents/carers of your concern.

Notice to Callers:

Consent: Please can you ensure you seek consent for the referrals unless the concerns being raised suggest that the child/children or someone else (including the referrer) would be placed at risk of significant harm, or it might undermine a criminal investigation if the parents/carers are informed. Reasons for not seeking consent should be clearly stated when speaking with Children's Advice and Duty Service and recorded on internal systems for your records