

Walberswick Common Lands Charity

1 Safeguarding Children Policy

1.1 Introduction

Walberswick Common Lands Charity (WCLC) carries out some activities that may bring our personnel, partners, suppliers, and volunteers (including Trustees) into contact with children and this policy applies to them all. WCLC is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment and ensuring all reasonable steps are taken to prevent harm.

The term 'personnel' in this policy relates to all staff, freelancers, contract and seasonal personnel and volunteers involved with WCLC in any capacity and in any setting.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy and associated procedures is to provide clarity to all on how they should engage with children when working for, on behalf of, or in partnership with WCLC. It is also to help us make sure that employees, volunteers, and other representatives are protected. It is intended to help us to have a common understanding of safeguarding issues and to develop good practice in our charity.

1.3 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy and related procedures, the following terms and definitions apply:

Child: means anyone up to the age of 18 years and legally includes babies, children, and young people from birth up to 18 years.

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child or young person. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children or young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

1.4 Confidentiality

All information regarding children is highly confidential and should be always treated as such. Any relevant information that needs to be kept on file will be securely stored with access limited and should be shared only within appropriate professional contexts and in accordance with law. Please refer to WCLC's Data Protection Policy¹

1.5 Training

WCLC will ensure an appropriate level of safeguarding training is available to its Trustees, Personnel, Volunteers and any relevant persons linked to the organisation who requires it (e.g. contractors).

For anyone volunteering with children, this requires them as a minimum to have awareness training that enables them to:

- Understand what safeguarding is and their role in safeguarding children.
- Recognise a child potentially in need of safeguarding and act.

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- Understand how to report a safeguarding issue.
- Understand dignity and respect when working with children.
- Have knowledge of the Safeguarding Children Policy.

1.6 Designated Safeguarding Leads

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has responsibility for:

- Acting as the main contact within WCLC for the protection of children
- Providing information and advice to WCLC personnel on the protection of children
- Supporting and raising awareness of this policy and related procedures.
- Ensuring all relevant information under this Policy is communicated to all relevant people.
- Keeping abreast of developments and understanding the latest information on data protection, confidentiality, and other legal issues that impact on the protection of children.
- Where necessary, establishing and maintaining contact with local statutory agencies including the police and social services.
- Working to maintain confidential records of reported cases and actions taken and liaising with the relevant statutory agencies to ensure they have access to all necessary information.
- Taking the lead with specific allegations where there are suspicions of abuse, harm or neglect of a child with respect to WCLC activities.

Designated Safeguarding Lead Contact Details

Karen Lewis Tel: 07516 798 094

1.7 Consent

WCLC will obtain parent/carers' permission for children under 16 and a self-certification form for 16 & 17 year olds to attend WCLC organised events where the parents are not in attendance. Relevant forms can be obtained from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

When Parents and Carers are not in attendance they should:

- Give their written consent for their child's attendance at any event organised by WCLC
- Provide information about any medical needs/allergies that the child may have and provide sufficient medication for the event if necessary
- Where the child is disabled, provide information relating to any care needs; consent must be given if intimate care needs to be provided
- Provide details about any specific dietary requirements
- Provide accurate emergency contact details

1.8 Safe recruitment of WCLC personnel who work with children

WCLC is committed to the safe recruitment of personnel. This also includes ensuring the appropriate checks are made and records kept. WCLC will:

- Ensure that safeguarding information is part of the induction programme for new personnel.
- Maintain a record of all personnel who have completed a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check
- Ensure that DBS disclosures and references are kept secure and confidential.
- Renew DBS checks at least every three years.
- In consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, make referrals to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) where there is a requirement.

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Trustees will monitor the personnel they line manage to ensure this policy and procedures are adhered to. They:

- Are responsible for making sure that their personnel are aware of, understand and act in accordance with this policy and related guidance, regardless of the hours their personnel work.
- Must make sure that any contractors, agents or other representatives whom they engage to undertake duties on WCLC's behalf, which involve contact with children understand and comply with this policy.
- Ensure that, when alcohol is present with children for whom they are responsible, steps are taken to prevent consumption.
- Will ensure DBS checks are made for all appropriate posts and renewed at least every three years.

Trustees have a collective responsibility to ensure that safeguarding is prioritised within the organisation. Trustees must ensure appropriate risk assessments are undertaken to mitigate risks as far as reasonably possible.

2 Data

Only personnel with appropriate permission and security clearance levels (i.e. DBS checks) will have access to restricted, personal sensitive data regarding children. This data should be treated as sensitive and handled in accordance with WCLC's Data Protection Policy¹

3 Implementation, monitoring and review of this policy

WCLC's Chairperson has overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy, which will be reviewed on a regular basis following its implementation and specifically whenever there are relevant changes in legislation or to WCLC's working practices. Any queries or comments about this policy should be addressed to the WCLC Chairperson.

4 Safeguarding Code of Conduct

4.1 Purpose

Following this code will help protect children from abuse and inappropriate behaviour. It will also help personnel maintain the standard of behaviour expected of them and will reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse being made against them.

4.2 Upholding this code of behaviour

All personnel are expected to report any breaches of this code to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Any breach of the code involving a volunteer or member of personnel from another agency may result in them being asked to cease working with WCLC.

Serious breaches may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the police, the local authority children's social care department and/or the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

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4.3 Communication

Communication with children is vital in establishing relationships built on trust. Those working with children should listen to what they are saying and respond appropriately. Children are entitled to the same respect as everyone else. WCLC encourages their personnel to demonstrate the standards of communication listed below:

- Listen to and respect children at all times.
- Avoid favouritism.
- Treat everyone fairly without prejudice or discrimination.
- Value and take participants' contributions seriously, actively involve children in planning activities wherever possible.
- Always ensure language is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory.
- Provide examples of good conduct.
- Recognise that special caution is required when discussing sensitive issues with children

Personnel must not:

- Patronise or treat children as if they are silly.
- Cause distress by shouting or using derogatory names.
- Make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children.
- Make inappropriate promises to children, particularly in relation to confidentiality.
- Act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive.
- Smoke, drink alcohol or use offensive language directly in the presence of a child.
- Discuss inappropriate aspects of their personal life.

4.4 Physical contact and professional boundaries

There are occasions when it is appropriate for personnel to have physical contact with children, but it is crucial that it is only done in ways that are appropriate to their professional role. Personnel should therefore always use their professional judgement. WCLC encourages personnel to demonstrate the standards listed below:

- Ensure any contact with children is in relation to the activity.
- Ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children.
- The extent of the contact should be made clear to the parent/carer and once agreed, should be undertaken with permission of the child.
- If a child is hurt or distressed, the personnel member should do their best to comfort or reassure the affected person without compromising his/her dignity or doing anything to discredit the person's own behaviour.
- Respect a child's right to personal privacy.

Personnel must not:

- Hold a child in such a way that causes them pain.
- Physically restrain a child except to protect them from harming themselves or others.
- Encourage or take part in "horseplay" or rough games.
- Do things of a personal nature for that child that they can do for themselves – this includes changing their clothing or going to the toilet with them unless another adult is present.

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4.5 Confidentiality and Information Sharing:

WCLC expects all personnel to maintain confidentiality. Information will only be shared in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection Laws.

However, information should be shared with the Local Authority if a child is deemed to be at risk of harm or contact the police if they are in immediate danger, or a crime has been committed.

5 Procedure for children at possible risk of abuse

This procedure applies to any WCLC personnel who may be concerned about the safety and protection of a child

5.1 Purpose

We aim to ensure those children who come into contact with WCLC through its work receives the protection and support they need if they are at risk of abuse.

5.2 Different Types of Abuse

Children may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives. These threats can take a variety of different forms, including sexual, physical and emotional abuse; neglect; exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Whatever the form of abuse or neglect, practitioners should put the needs of children first when determining what action to take.

WCLC views the following as being the main categories of abuse:

Physical abuse
Sexual abuse
Emotional abuse
Neglect

5.3 Dealing with incidents and suspicions of abuse

Personnel should report, record, and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead if the following occurs:

- A child makes an abuse/harm/neglect disclosure (in this case refer to and inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead by telephone as soon as possible ensuring it is on the same day – see section 4.3 Dealing with abuse).
- A personnel member/another learner accidentally or deliberately hurts a child.
- First aid is performed on a child.
- A child seems very distressed.
- A child significantly misunderstands or misinterprets something that a WCLC member/another child has said.
- A child is restrained in self-defence.

A full record should be made using the designated cause for concern form and reported to WCLC's Designated Safeguarding Lead. This should include information relating to the date, time and place where the incident happened, the personnel member's name and the names of any others present, the

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name of the complainant and where different the name of the child who has been involved in the incident, the nature of the incident and a description of any injuries observed.

It is NOT WCLC's responsibility to investigate suspicions or decide whether abuse has taken place. WCLC's role is to act if there is a cause for concern and to report it to the appropriate authority to investigate and take any necessary action.

Any allegations of abuse made against any WCLC personnel will be thoroughly investigated.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will appropriately record an allegation or reported incident. He/she will be responsible for contacting the statutory child protection agency such as the Local Safeguarding Children Board or the police if necessary.

5.4 How to deal with the suspected abuse of children

In accordance with the NSPCC framework, the 4 R's should be followed when dealing with the suspected abuse of children. The 4 R's are **Recognise, Respond, Record and Refer**

Recognise

The ability to recognise signs that might indicate abuse is of fundamental importance. Personnel members should contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately if they have any concerns about the following:

Excessive tiredness	Aggressive behaviour
Nervous behaviour	Bite or burn marks
Lack of confidence	Stealing food
Fear of making mistakes	Self-harm
Flinching	Sudden behaviour changes
Frequent absences	Sexualised language
Hinting at secrets	Fear of a specific individual

Respond

No report or concern about possible abuse should ever be ignored. To determine the most appropriate response, the context of the disclosure must be determined.

Information received about a child might fall into one of the categories below:

- Suspicion/allegation of abuse, harm, or neglect where a person involved with WCLC is the alleged perpetrator.
- Suspicion/allegation of abuse, harm, or neglect where a child is the alleged perpetrator.
- Suspicion or allegation of abuse, harm, or neglect where a third party is the alleged perpetrator.
- Suspicion/allegation of inappropriate conduct.

It is vital to listen carefully to any information that a child discloses with reference to abuse, harm, or neglect.

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Whilst listening, the following good practice is essential:

During the disclosure:

- React calmly, try not to show disbelief or project other emotional reactions.
- Demonstrate you are listening by demonstrating attentiveness and concern.
- Do not ask leading questions; instead ask by repeating back what the person has said in their own words.
- Take all information given from the child seriously.
- Tell the child that they are never to blame for abuse and that they have the right to tell somebody.
- Reassure the child they have done the right thing in reporting their concerns, and state you will do everything you can to support them.

Do not:

- Make unrealistic promises.
- Introduce personal information from your own experiences.
- Apportion blame or pass judgement.
- Guarantee confidentiality
- Tell the child that 'everything will be alright'.

After the disclosure:

- Tell the child sharing the disclosure the concern they have raised will be recorded and passed onto a limited 'need-to-know' basis.
- Inform WCLC Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.
- Make a full record of what has been said, heard or seen. You can also conduct this while the disclosure is being made if appropriate and possible.
- Ensure that the complainant and the subject of the allegation are treated in line with this policy.

Do not:

- Verbally speculate about what might have happened, with anyone.
- Approach an alleged abuser or make comments about him/her to the child.

Record

The personnel member should report their concerns to the WCLC Designated Safeguarding Lead that working day. In the event this is not possible, they should report their concerns to the WCLC Chairperson. In all cases, the recipient of the report should, without delay and having carefully recorded the information, report this him/herself to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Once the person has reported concerns about the abuse to any of the colleagues mentioned above, the responsibility for taking any further decisions and/or actions resides with them. It is their responsibility to make further decisions. Once the person has spoken to a Designated Safeguarding Lead, they should make notes using the cause for concern form.

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Refer

This is the responsibility of a Designated Safeguarding Lead only – or Chairperson in extenuating circumstances.

Please note concerns should be discussed with the family unless:

- The view is that a family member might be responsible for abusing a child.
- Someone may be put in danger by the parents or carers being informed.
- Informing the family might interfere with a criminal investigation.

If any of these circumstances apply, consult with the local authority children's social care department, to decide whether discussions with the family should take place.

The only agencies that can investigate child protection cases are the police, social services, and the NSPCC.

6 Escalation of concerns

If a member of personnel or volunteer is in any way concerned that the disclosure or report which they have made has not been handled appropriately or sufficiently, they should refer to WCLC's Complaints Policy¹

6.1 Useful Contact Details for escalation of concerns

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Phone: 0300 123 2044

E-mail: LADO@suffolk.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.suffolksp.org.uk/assets/2020-07-28-SSP-LADO-Leaflet.pdf>

Police

Non emergency number – 101

NSPCC

Helpline: 0808 800 5000

E-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk

Website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS DIAL 999

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