

MILTON CREEK TRUST

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY (as amended 23/3/2016)

Introduction:

This document is the Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding policy for Milton Creek Trust (the Trust) which will be followed and promoted by all Trustees in relation to events and activities it organises at Milton Creek Country Park. The Trust notes that ownership and responsibility for maintenance of the Park rests with Swale Borough Council.

Trustees are committed to ensuring that children and vulnerable adults who attend events and activities organized by the Trust are not abused and that working practices minimise the risk of such abuse. Trustees have a duty to identify abuse and report it.

The Trust does not promote activities with children or vulnerable adults in the absence of their parents/carers. Parents/carers remain responsible for the welfare of children and vulnerable adults throughout all the activities promoted by the Trust. The purpose of this policy is to make sure that the actions of any Trustee in the context of the work carried out by the Trust is transparent and safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults.

Vulnerable adults are people who are over 18 years of age and are getting or may need help and services to live in the community. Vulnerable adults may be unable to take care of themselves and unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation by other people.

If any parent or carer has any concerns about the conduct of any Trustee this should be raised in the first instance with the Chairman of the Trust.

Relevant legislation includes the Children's Act 2004, the Care Act 2014 and the Working Together to Safeguard Children Act 2015.

Principles upon which the Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy is based.

- the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult will always be paramount.
- the welfare of families will be promoted.
- the rights, wishes and feelings of children and vulnerable adults will be respected and listened to.
- Trustees will work in accordance with the interests of children and vulnerable adults and follow the policy outlined below.

- Trustees will ensure that the same opportunities are available to everyone and that all differences between individuals will be treated with respect.

Safeguarding policy

1. Immediate Action to Ensure Safety

Immediate action may be necessary at any stage in involvement with children and vulnerable adults. If emergency medical attention is required this can be secured by calling an ambulance or taking a child or vulnerable adult to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department. If a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger the police should be contacted.

2. Photography

No photography of children is permitted without parental consent.

3. Recognition of Abuse or Neglect

Abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult is caused by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children or vulnerable adults may be abused in a public setting by anyone. Abuse can include:

- physical
- emotional
- financial
- psychological
- discriminatory
- sexual
- neglect
- *institutional*
- *domestic*
- *self neglect or self-injurious behavior*
- *inappropriate restraint*

Trustees need to be alert to the potential abuse of children and vulnerable adults. Trustees should know how to recognise and act upon indicators of abuse or potential abuse involving children and vulnerable adults. There is an expected responsibility for all Trustees to respond to any suspected or actual abuse in accordance with these procedures.

It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns. However, you must not discuss your concerns with parents/carers in the following circumstances:

- where sexual abuse is suspected
- where organised or multiple abuse is suspected
- where contacting parents/carers would place a child or vulnerable adult, yourself or others at immediate risk.

4. What to do if children or vulnerable adults talk to you about abuse

It is recognised that a child or vulnerable adult may seek you out to share information about abuse, or talk spontaneously individually or in groups when you are present. In these situations you must:

- listen carefully to the child or vulnerable adult. DO NOT directly question them.
- give the child or vulnerable adult time and attention.
- allow the child or vulnerable adult to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child or vulnerable adult who is freely recalling significant events.
- make an accurate record of the information you have been given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child or vulnerable adult's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed as evidence.
- use the child or vulnerable adult's own words where possible.
- explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
- reassure them that:
 - you are glad they have told you;
 - they have not done anything wrong;
 - what you are going to do next.
- explain that you will need to get help to keep them safe.
- Do NOT ask them to repeat their account of events to anyone.

5. Consulting about your concern

The purpose of consultation is to discuss your concerns in relation to a child or vulnerable adult and decide what action is necessary. You may become concerned about a child or vulnerable adult who has not spoken to you, because of your observations of, or information about, them.

It is good practice to ask a child or vulnerable adult why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused, or respond to a child or vulnerable adult wanting to talk to you. This practice can help clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action.

If you are concerned about a child or vulnerable adult you must share your concerns. Initially you should talk to the Chairman of the Trust. If that person is implicated in the concerns you should discuss your concerns directly with Social Services.

You should consult externally with your local Social Services Department in the following circumstances:

- when you remain unsure after internal consultation as to whether child or vulnerable adult safeguarding concerns exist
- when there is disagreement as to whether such concerns exist

- when you are unable to consult promptly or at all with your designated internal contact
- when the concerns relate to any Trustee.

Consultation is not the same as making a referral but should enable a decision to be made as to whether a referral to Social Services or the Police should progress.

6. Making a referral

A referral involves giving Social Services or the Police information about concerns relating to an individual or family in order that enquiries can be undertaken by the appropriate agency followed by any necessary action.

In certain cases the level of concern will lead straight to a referral without external consultation being necessary. Parents/carers should be informed if a referral is being made except in the circumstances outlined in Section 2 above. However, inability to inform parents/ carers for any reason should not prevent a referral being made. It would then become a joint decision with Social Services about how and when the parents/ carers should be approached and by whom.

IF YOUR CONCERN IS ABOUT ABUSE OR RISK OF ABUSE FROM SOMEONE NOT KNOWN TO THE CHILD OR VULNERABLE ADULT YOU SHOULD MAKE A TELEPHONE REFERRAL DIRECTLY TO THE POLICE AND CONSULT WITH THE PARENTS/ CARERS.

If your concern is about abuse or risk of abuse from a family member or someone known to the child or vulnerable adult you should make a telephone referral to your local Social Services Office.

7. Information required

Be prepared to give as much of the following information as possible (in emergency situations all of this information may not be available). Unavailability of some information should not stop you making a referral.

- your name, telephone number, position and request the same of the person to whom you are speaking.
- full name and address, telephone number of family, date of birth of child or vulnerable adult.
- gender, ethnicity, first language, any special needs.
- names, dates of birth and relationship of household members and any significant others.
- the names of professionals' known to be involved with the child or vulnerable adult eg: GP, Health Visitor, School.
- the nature of the concerns; and foundation for them.
- an opinion on whether the child or vulnerable adult may need urgent action to make them safe.

- your view of what appears to be the needs of the child or vulnerable adult.
- whether the consent of a parent with parental responsibility has been given to the referral being made.

Action to be taken following the referral

- ensure that you keep an accurate record of your concern(s) made at the time.
- put your concerns in writing to Social Services following the referral (within 48 hours).
- record the action agreed or that no further action is to be taken and the reasons for this decision.

8. Confidentiality

The Trust should ensure that any records made in relation to a referral should be kept confidentially and in a secure place. Information in relation to child and vulnerable adults safeguarding concerns should be shared on a “need to know” basis. However, the sharing of information is vital to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, therefore, the issue of confidentiality is secondary to a child or vulnerable adult’s need for protection.

If in doubt, consult.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the end of December.

Signed: Colin Jones (Secretary) Date: 23 March 2016