

## **Safeguarding Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

Milton Creek Country Park Trust (the 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. Aims of the Policy**

The Trust, in partnership with Swale Borough Council through it's ranger(s), have a duty of care and are committed to the protection and safety of everyone who enters Milton Creek Country Park (the Park), including trustees, volunteers, staff, contractors, children, young people, or vulnerable adults involved as visitors and/or participants in all activities.

This Policy commits all Trust and Swale Borough Council people, regardless of their role, to report and refer any concerns regarding the safety of anyone who enters the Park, or buildings within the Park, to the Park Ranger in the first instance, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) if not resolved by the Park Ranger or if incident referred by Park Ranger, then to Chairman of the Trust if not resolved by either the Park Ranger or the DSL. Contact details are on the Milton Creek Country Park website.

This policy defines how the Trust operates to safeguard children, young people, and adults at risk of abuse or neglect by:

- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all parties in the Park
- Supporting the promotion of a safe working environment in the Park and a culture of care in which the rights of all children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected and respected.
- Promoting and embedding clear guidance for trustees, volunteers, staff, and contractors working with children, young people and vulnerable adults in the Park, and ensuring through training and support that they are aware of these and able to implement them.

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## 3. Definitions

**Children and young people** are legally defined as any person aged under 18 years old, or up to the age of 25 where the person has a disability.

**Vulnerable adults** are defined as any person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of mental, physical or learning disability, age or illness unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation

This Policy and any related procedures and guidance applies to trustees, volunteers, staff, contractors and any other persons who have contact with children and/or vulnerable adults in the Park.

This policy does not cover health and safety issues in the Park. Health and Safety is the subject of a separate policy. This Policy should be used in conjunction with the Trust's other policies and procedures.

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:**

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health and development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

### **Adult at risk of abuse or neglect**

For the purposes of this policy, adult at risk refers to someone over 18 years old who, according to paragraph 14.2 of the Care Act 2015:

- has care and support needs
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- who, as a result of their care and support needs, is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

If someone has care and support needs but is not currently receiving care or support from a health or care service, they may still be an adult at risk.

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## Definition of abuse

A person may abuse a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them, by people working with them, or, more rarely, by a stranger.

**Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm, including by fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health.

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child or vulnerable adult's emotional development or self-esteem. It may involve conveying to the child or vulnerable adult that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed, causing the child or vulnerable adult frequently to feel frightened, or the exploitation or corruption of children or vulnerable adults. It may involve deprivation of contact, control, coercion, intimidation, or harassment.

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or vulnerable adult is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include involving the child or vulnerable adult looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development, such as failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to basic emotional needs. In respect of vulnerable adults this may appear to be as a result of self-neglect but still requires action.

**Financial abuse** is particularly relevant to vulnerable adults and may include theft, fraud, exploitation and pressure concerned with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions. It may include the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits by someone who has been trusted to handle their finances or who has assumed control of their finances by default.

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## 4. Review

The Policy will be reviewed annually and whenever there is a change in the related legislation. This will help ensure that the Policy is up to date and fit for purpose.

## 5. Policy Principles

There can be no excuses for not taking all reasonable action to protect adults at risk of abuse, exploitation, radicalisation, and mistreatment. All citizens of the United Kingdom have their rights enshrined within the Human Rights Act 1998. People who are eligible to receive health and community care services may be additionally vulnerable to the violation of these rights by reason of disability, impairment, age, or illness.

The Trust has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

The Trust recognises that under the Care Act 2014, it has a duty for the care and protection of adults who are at risk of abuse. It also recognises its responsibilities for the safety and care of children under the Children Act 1989 and 2004.

The Trust is committed to promoting wellbeing, harm prevention and to responding effectively if concerns are raised.

The Trust is aware of the work of their local safeguarding Board/Partnership and other support organisations on the development and implementation of procedures for the protection of adults vulnerable from abuse. The policy is about stopping abuse where it is happening and preventing abuse where there is a risk that it may occur.

The Trust is committed to the following principles:

- The welfare of the child, young person or adult at risk is paramount
- All children, young people and adults at risk have the right to protection from abuse
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: and
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse must be properly reported to the relevant internal and external authorities and dealt with swiftly and appropriately.

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## 5. Procedures

- a) All members of the Trust will have signed the Trustee Statement of Eligibility form for trustees which includes a declaration that they have no convictions in relation to abuse.
- b) All members of the Trust will familiarise themselves with safeguarding responsibilities, undertake training on safeguarding issues including whistleblowing where it is available and offered by their local safeguarding board/partnership or other local support organisation **and** ensure that they understand the principles set out in this policy at 3 above. All members will undertake refresher training every 3 years and when there are significant changes to legislation
- c) All members of the Trust will work together to promote a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting welfare to be addressed.
- d) All members of the Trust, helpers or other volunteers will not have unsupervised access to children or adults at risk unless appropriately vetted.
- e) The Trust and its partners will follow safe recruitment practices.
- f) A Trustee will be appointed as Designated Safeguarding Lead, to be responsible for child and adult at risk safeguarding matters. This person will have responsibility for reporting concerns that arise, as a matter of urgency, to the relevant safeguarding agency.

The named Trustee is Nick Vickers until 16 January 2025

- g) All suspicions or allegations of abuse against a child or adult at risk will be taken seriously and dealt with speedily and appropriately. The appointed person will know who to contact and where to go for support and advice in relation to an allegation a concern about the quality of care or practice or a complaint. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children or adult at risk who has:
  - behaved in a way that has harmed a child or adult at risk or may have harmed a child or adult at risk.
  - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or adult at risk; or
  - behaved towards a child or children or adult at risk in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

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- h) The Trust will ensure that all event organisers/ have signed an agreement. This will require all hirers who wish to use the facilities for activities which include children and adults at risk, to produce a copy of their Safeguarding Policy and evidence that they have carried out relevant checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).