

# **CHILD & VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY**

**Updated March 2022**



**River Bourne Community Farm** is committed to ensuring the safety of children and vulnerable adults participating in activities, workshops, volunteering and educational schemes run by the organisation.

All staff at River Bourne Community Farm should read and adhere to the child protection policy at all times. It complements other policies and guidance at the farm including:

- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Positive Handling Policy

A child is anyone under 18 years of age (when we refer to young people in this document we include children in this category). A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation (*No Secrets*, Department of Health/Home Office 2000).

All children, young people and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse. River Bourne Community Farm will ensure that the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults is paramount when planning and carrying out activities.

In order to put this into practice River Bourne Community Farm will take account of and comply with current legislation and best practice.

**In this document, the term 'staff' may be taken to include employees and volunteers, workshop leaders and educational practitioners working on behalf of the farm.**

## **1. Recruitment and training of staff**

### ***Recruitment***

- Staff recruited to provide or supervise activities with children, young people or vulnerable adults will be DBS checked and subject to an Enhanced Disclosure.
- All new staff whether paid or unpaid, will be provided with the Farm's Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Policy.
- Freelance workshop leaders should be appropriately qualified or experienced to ensure the safe teaching of skills and use of equipment.
- All Farm staff must be mindful of protection and safeguarding issues at all times and be alert to the behaviour of others.

### ***Training***

- The member of staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding and protection (currently the Education Manager) will have access to regular training and advice to enable the Farm's policy and procedures to be updated. They will also have access to

the resources necessary to organise training and briefings for all staff and volunteers working with children and vulnerable adults.

- Staff training will be designed to ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of their own and others' responsibilities in terms of protection and safeguarding issues and of the procedures to be followed.

***FOR MORE DETAILED GUIDANCE PLEASE REFER TO THE SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY***

## **2. Conduct of staff**

All Farm staff must adhere to the following procedures at all times. If these standards are not followed, disciplinary action may be taken.

- Children and vulnerable adults should be treated with respect at all times.
- Staff should provide a secure and welcoming environment and be friendly, positive and approachable.
- Workshop leaders should carefully plan activity sessions to take into account the care and safety of participants.
- No physical punishment should be undertaken by Farm employees or volunteers.
- Staff must not use racist, sexist or homophobic language or any language that might undermine the confidence of any child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Staff must not engage in any rough, physical or sexually provocative behaviour with, or in front of, children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Staff should work in pairs, respect the privacy of individuals and avoid situations where they are working with a child or vulnerable adult unobserved. Staff should ideally never be left alone with a child or vulnerable adult. If this is unavoidable, another member of staff should be informed.
- When working with schools or other educational establishments, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that there is always a member of their staff present throughout the session.
- Workshop leaders should make themselves aware of the farm's emergency and evacuation procedures and should communicate relevant information to participants in an appropriate manner.
- Equipment must meet current safety standards.

### ***Photography***

- River Bourne Community Farm will ensure that the use of video or photography of children or vulnerable adults is undertaken only with the permission of a teacher, parent, carer or guardian, where the individual could be identified from the photograph. A standard consent form will be used.  
Staff photographing children and/or vulnerable adults will be designated to do so and will have a current DBS disclosure certificate.

***FOR MORE DETAILED GUIDANCE PLEASE REFER TO THE BEHAVIOUR POLICY AND POSITIVE HANDLING POLICY***

## **3. Parents**

Parents / persons with parental responsibility are ultimately responsible for their children's welfare at all times, and they should be assured that their children are involved with a credible organisation. We achieve this by:

- Publicising information on all our primary, post-primary, youth and parenting work.
- Publishing a full copy of the Child Protection Policy on the internet site [www.riverbournecommunityfarm.org.uk](http://www.riverbournecommunityfarm.org.uk)

#### **4. Definitions of abuse and how to recognise the signs**

It is not the responsibility of River Bourne Community Farm's staff to decide if abuse has occurred but it is their responsibility to act on their concerns. Farm staff must take all allegations or suspicions of abuse extremely seriously and must follow the procedures outlined in the rest of this document.

There are different kinds of abuse. Abuse can occur:

- Through neglect or through physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, financial or discriminatory harm.
- In an institutional or a family setting by a person known to the victim, or by a stranger.
- By inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm

#### ***How would you recognise the signs of abuse?***

There are many ways in-which-abuse may manifest itself. The list below is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of these is not necessarily proof that abuse is actually taking place. Abuse may be indicated by:

- Unexplained bruising or injuries.
- Unexplained behaviour over time e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or behaviour
- Changes in appearance, e.g. becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt
- Someone else, a child or adult, expressing concern about the welfare of another child or vulnerable adult.

#### **Our Procedures**

##### **5. Responding to suspicions or allegations of abuse**

The Farm member of staff with lead responsibility for safeguarding and protection and who should be informed of any incidents of abuse, or suspected abuse, is:

#### ***Sara-Jane Hancock, Education Manager***

This member of staff will ensure that the Farm Chairman is also informed of any incidents or allegations of abuse. It is our responsibility to report all such instances to Social Services.

#### ***What to do if you witness or suspect abuse***

- If a member of Farm staff should see or suspect abuse of a child or vulnerable person they should report the incident and/or their concerns to the member of staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding and protection (as named at the top of this section), who will then make the person with legal responsibility for the child or person aware of the problem as appropriate.
- If this is not appropriate staff must refer the concerns to the appropriate agency as soon as possible- usually the Social Care helpdesk (see section 6 below).
- Always keep a written record of what was witnessed and who was involved; try to preserve any evidence.

## **What to do if someone tells you about abuse**

It is possible that a child, young person or vulnerable adult who is suffering or has suffered abuse will confide in a staff member. This is something you should be prepared for and must handle carefully. The following action should be taken if there are concerns about abuse of a child, young person or vulnerable adult. Please also see flow chart on page 5.

- Remain calm and in control but don't delay acting.
- Listen carefully to what is said. Allow the person to tell you at their own pace. Ask questions only for clarification; don't ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Respond in a caring, non-judgmental way.
- Explain that you will need to share the information with others. Do not promise to 'keep it a secret'. Make it clear that you will only tell the people who need to know and who should be able to help.
- Reassure the child, young person or vulnerable adult that they did the right thing in telling you.
- Tell the child, young person or vulnerable adult what you are going to do next.
- As soon as possible after the disclosing conversation, record exactly what the child, young person or vulnerable adult has said to you in a legible and accurate format. As far as possible use their own words. Stick to the facts and do not give your opinion. Note the date, time, any names that were involved or mentioned and who you gave the information to. Make sure you sign and date your record.
- Report the incident and/or their concerns to the member of staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding and protection who will then make the person with legal responsibility for the child or person aware of the problem as appropriate. If this is not appropriate, they will contact Social Services or talk directly to the person in the educational, youth or care setting who has designated responsibility for safeguarding and protection.

## **6. Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately: The procedure for reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse**

In any case where an allegation is made, or someone at River Bourne Community Farm has concerns, a record should be made. Details must include, as far as practical:

- name of child or young person
- age
- home address (if known)
- date of birth (if known)
- name/s and address of parent/s or person/s with parental responsibility
- telephone numbers if available
- is the person making the report expressing their own concerns, or passing on those of somebody else? If so, record details
- what has prompted the concerns? Include dates and times of any specific incidents
- has the child or young person been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, record details of who has this been passed on to, in order that appropriate action is taken? E.g. School, designated officer, social services etc
- has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details

## **7. Confidentiality and sharing information**

Staff should ensure that records, policies and procedures that are required for the efficient and safe management of provision and to promote the welfare and learning of children and vulnerable adults are maintained. Where records are kept, privacy and confidentiality will be kept in line with the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts.

## **What to do if you are asked for information by another organisation**

### **• If the information relates to a child**

The legal principle is that 'the welfare of the child is paramount'. This means that considerations of confidentiality that might apply to other situations should not be allowed to override the right of the child to be protected from harm. Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned both when the allegation is made and whilst it is being investigated. However, although the Data Protection Act 1998, Human Rights Act 1998 or common law duty of confidence would need to be considered, the welfare of the child would normally override the need to keep the information confidential.

### **• If the information relates to a vulnerable adult**

The same principle as for child protection applies - that the safety and wellbeing of the vulnerable adult overrides considerations of confidentiality. RBCF will follow procedures as recommended in the *Policies and Procedures for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults in Wiltshire and Swindon*, which is itself based on *No Secrets*, the Department of Health guidance.

## **8. Useful contacts:**

Social services will liaise with the relevant departments on a need-to-know basis and will, if appropriate, inform the police. It is the responsibility of the authorities to determine whether abuse has occurred. The designated Farm person should contact Social Services as soon as possible using the following contact details:

### **Children and young people:**

- Referral and Assessment Team 0300 456 0108
- Out of hours Emergency Duty Team 0300 456 0100

### **Vulnerable adults:**

Wiltshire Council Social Care Help Desk (office hours)

Weekdays: Mon – Thurs - 08:30 – 17:20 Fri - 08:30 – 16:20 0300 456 0111

- **Textphone:** 01225 712501

- **Email:** [customeradvisors@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:customeradvisors@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Wiltshire Police Vulnerable Adults Unit

**Weekdays 8am – 4.30pm** 0300 456 0111

**Weekends and weekdays 4.30pm – 8am** 0845 607 0888

In an emergency dial 999 (Please note that your call will be recorded)

### **South West Child Protection Procedures**

[www.wiltshirelscb.org](http://www.wiltshirelscb.org) or [www.swcpp.org.uk](http://www.swcpp.org.uk)

### **Wiltshire Council webpages on safeguarding vulnerable adults:**

[www.wiltshire.gov.uk/healthandsocialcare/adultcare/safeguardingadults.htm](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/healthandsocialcare/adultcare/safeguardingadults.htm)

**POLICY AGREED BY FARM COMMITTEE ON:** .....01.07.21.....

**SIGNATURE OF DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION:** .....Chris Gill.....

**SIGNATURE OF EDUCATION MANAGER:** .....Sara-Jane Hancock.....

**Date of Review:** .....July 2022.....

# What to do if you suspect that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being abused or neglected

Behaviour or appearance gives cause for concern; or  
The individual has unusual physical injury; or  
The individual themselves confides about abuse

**It is not your responsibility to investigate abuse - you must report it**  
Make a record of what was said and of your observations and actions  
(this may be used as evidence later)

Pass on the information to the Farm's designated person (the Farm Office Manager)  
or other responsible member of staff

Is abuse suspected?

**YES**

**NO**

Observe the individual in case of future suspicions  
Pass details recorded to the Farm's designated person

**You or the designated Farm person should contact Social Services as soon as possible:**

## **Children and young people:**

- Referral and Assessment Team 0300 456 0108
- Out of hours Emergency Duty Team 0300 456 0100

## **Vulnerable adults:**

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