

# Andover Trees United

## Children and Vulnerable Adult Safety Policy



Children working with Andover Trees United (ATU) at one-off events are always accompanied by teachers, parents or adults acting in loco parentis.

Vulnerable adults and students aged 12-16 working with ATU are accompanied by their own care and support staff. Where a long-term arrangement is made for a student or vulnerable adult to volunteer with ATU, the attached care worker or member of school staff might not continue to accompany if this is deemed to be in the interests of the volunteer. Where this happens, personal and individual arrangements are made with parents and/ or the relevant organisation with regard to the care needs of the volunteer. The ATU supervising volunteer and session leader is to have a current DBS check in place (*see Appendix 1*) and will be responsible for monitoring health and safety in line with risk assessments and the individual needs of the young people and vulnerable adults in his/ her care.

Arrangements for child safety during the annual planting weeks and community planting days at Harmony Woods and other sites & other activities forming part of the work of Andover Trees United:

- All planting during the annual Tree Planting Weeks takes place during the school day
- All children will take part in planting as part of organized school or youth group activities
- All children will be accompanied to site and on site by school staff and volunteers as arranged by the schools and youth groups
- Schools and youth groups will have completed off-site risk assessment forms either as part of Hampshire County Council's outdoor learning procedures or, if a youth group, in line with their own policies and procedures
- Andover Trees United provides a risk assessment to all schools and youth groups. The risk assessment is worked out in consultation with trained support volunteers and paid and members of staff
- Harmony Woods is securely fenced public land. Other sites will be similarly safeguarded wherever possible; where this is not possible, measures will be taken appropriate to that site. All activities will be carried out in view of all.
- Should a child or group of children need to be taken to use the on-site facilities, a member of the school or youth group staff/ care team will be instructed to have sole charge of those children
- Where weekend and school holiday activities take place, children and young people under the age of 16 are always accompanied by youth group organiser/s, parent/s or adult/s designated by parent/s to act in loco parentis

*This policy has been agreed by Andover Trees United Trustees and will be reviewed annually*

01-09-2022

# COPY OF Andover Trees United Safeguarding Children Policy



This document is the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for Andover Trees United, which will be followed by all volunteer and paid staff and members\* of Andover Trees United and followed and promoted by the Trustees and Designated Safeguarding Lead within Andover Trees United.

Andover Trees United is committed to creating an environment that enables children and young people to learn, develop, and express themselves in a safe, understanding and encouraging environment. We aim to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people participating in Andover Trees United activities.

Andover Trees United does not undertake activities with children in the absence of their teachers/ parents/ carers, but has the opportunity to observe the young person's/children's welfare within their family setting. Parents/ carers remain responsible for their children's welfare throughout all the work undertaken by Andover Trees United.

Andover Trees United wishes to encourage children to appreciate nature - children are the future and nature is the greatest teacher. As such Andover Trees United has not written a policy banning the climbing of trees, paddling in streams, building structures, collecting berries, lighting fires etc. There is however a risk involved with such activities and the level of risk will vary with each child's abilities, nature, experience and mood. It must therefore be up to the child's teachers/ parents/ guardians to gain an understanding of the risks involved and, with the child, decide on what each child may or may not do. It is also up to others to respect the parent or guardian's wishes to a certain extent whilst still keeping an eye out for neglectful guardianship.

Andover Trees United recognises that being a young person makes them vulnerable to abuse by adults. The purpose of this policy is to make sure that the actions of any adult, in the context of the work carried out by Andover Trees United are transparent and safeguard and promote the welfare of all young people.

Andover Trees United also recognises that adults can be at risk and that a child protection policy needs to consider the protection of those working with children:

- Never believe that "it could never happen to you"
- If you suspect that a young person is developing an inappropriate affection for you, discuss it with other leaders and explore constructive ways of dealing with it
- If you develop an abnormal affection for a young person withdraw from the situation and discuss the matter with a trusted friend
- Be aware that young people can fabricate stories that can place you in a bad light. Do not take any chances nor allow yourself to be in a situation where stories can be given credence
- Always report and record any allegations made by children. Do not let them go unchallenged.

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Andover Trees United provides guidelines on how to behave when working with children in order to promote a safe and caring environment for all.

## **DO's**

- Always be publicly open when working with children
- Avoid being alone with children unnecessarily. Where possible avoid taking children alone on car journeys unless there is no other option and the child's parents have given permission
- Where possible parents should take responsibility for their own children
- Set an example of appropriate behaviour. Young people learn by example
- Offer respect to the young person at all times and strive to be sensitive to their feelings
- Good behaviour should be positively encouraged

## **DON'TS**

- Never engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay. Nor engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Avoid using sarcasm or discrimination, direct criticism, labelling and unnecessary competition or comparison
- Never physically punish any young person
- Do not deprive any young person of, or force any child to consume food or drink
- Do not humiliate or frighten any young person

If any parent or young person/child has any concerns about the conduct of any member of Andover Trees United, this should be raised in the first instance with

James Blyth                      Tel: [07901 860024](tel:07901860024)  
Elizabeth Scrace (Trustee)    Tel: [07914 025741](tel:07914025741)

This document is written in accordance with 'Safeguarding and Child Protection Standards for the Voluntary and Community Sector' produced by the NSPCC in 2019.

## **Principles upon which the Child Protection Policy is based.**

- The welfare of a child or young person will always be paramount.
- The welfare of families will be promoted.
- The rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their families will be respected and listened to.
- Those people in positions of responsibility within Andover Trees United will work in accordance with the interests of children and young people and follow the policy outlined below.
- Those people in positions of responsibility within Andover Trees United will ensure that the same opportunities are available to everyone and that all differences between individuals will be treated with respect.

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### **1. Immediate Action to Ensure Safety**

Immediate action may be necessary at any stage in involvement with children and families. IN ALL CASES IT IS VITAL TO TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IS NEEDED TO SAFEGUARD THE CHILD/REN ie:

- If emergency medical attention is required this can be secured by calling an ambulance (dial 999) or taking a child to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department.
- If a child is in immediate danger the police should be contacted (dial 999) as they alone have the power to remove a child immediately if protection is necessary, via Police Protection Order.

### **2. Recognition of Abuse or Neglect**

Abuse or neglect of a child is caused by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or more rarely by a stranger.

#### Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as, fabricated illness by proxy or Munchausen Syndrome by proxy.

#### Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child though it may occur alone.

#### Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (eg rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. This may include non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

#### Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Individuals within Andover Trees United need to be alert to the potential abuse of children both

within their families and also from other sources including abuse by members of Andover Trees United.

Andover Trees United members should know how to recognise and act upon indicators of abuse or potential abuse involving children. There is an expected responsibility for all members of Andover Trees United to respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child in accordance with these procedures.

Concern for a child's wellbeing, when that child is undertaking activities through arrangements with a school, will in the first instance be discussed with the school's Child Protection Officer.

When a child is taking part in Andover Trees United activities with a parent or carer, 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 fictitious illness by proxy (also known as Munchausen Syndrome by proxy) is suspected
- where contacting parents/carers would place a child, yourself or others at immediate risk.

### **What to do if children talk to you about abuse or neglect.**

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

- Listen carefully to the child. DO NOT directly question the child.
- Give the child time and attention.
- Allow the child to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a child 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's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed as evidence.
- Use the child's own words where possible.
- Explain that you cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
- Reassure the child 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 the child safe.
- Do NOT ask the child to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.

### **3. Consulting about your concern.**

The purpose of consultation is to discuss your concerns in relation to a child and decide what action is necessary.

You may become concerned about a child who has not spoken to you, because of your observations of, or information about that child.

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

If you are concerned about a child you must share your concerns. Initially you should talk to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as the overseer for child protection within Andover Trees United.

In Andover Trees United this person is: James Blyth Tel: [07901 860024](tel:07901860024)  
with support from: Elizabeth Scrace (Trustee) Tel: [07914 025741](tel:07914025741)

If one of those people 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 protection concerns exist
- when there is disagreement as to whether child protection concerns exist
- when you are unable to consult promptly or at all with your designated internal contacts for child protection
- when the concerns relate to any member of the Trustees.

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.

#### **4. 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

- where sexual abuse is suspected
- where organised or multiple abuse is suspected
- where fictitious illness by proxy (also known as Munchausen Syndrome by proxy) is suspected
- where contacting parents/carers would place a child, yourself or others at immediate risk.

However, inability to inform parents 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 should be approached and by whom.

**IF YOUR CONCERN IS ABOUT ABUSE OR RISK OF ABUSE FROM SOMEONE NOT KNOWN TO THE CHILD OR CHILD'S FAMILY, YOU SHOULD MAKE A TELEPHONE REFERRAL DIRECTLY TO THE POLICE AND CONSULT WITH THE PARENTS.**

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

#### **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 and siblings.
- 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/family eg: GP, Health Visitor, School.
- The nature of the concern; and foundation for them.
- An opinion on whether the child may need urgent action to make them safe.
- Your view of what appears to be the needs of the child and family.
- 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.
- With the support of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, put your concerns in writing to Social Services following the referral (within 48 hours).
- Accurately record the action agreed or that no further action is to be taken and the reasons for this decision.

#### **5. Confidentiality**


Andover Trees United 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 protection concerns should be shared on a "need to know" basis. However, the sharing of information is vital to child protection and, therefore, the issue of confidentiality is secondary to a child's need for protection.

***If in doubt, consult.***

This policy has been formally agreed and adopted by the Trustees of Andover Trees United at a meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019 This will be reviewed annually by the Trustees who are also responsible for the implementation of this policy.

Signed:  (Safeguarding Officer & Trustee)

Signed:  (Projects Coordinator & Trustee)

Date: 01-09-22

*Review Date: 01-09-23*