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Safeguarding Policy for Vulnerable Adults

Guidance and Procedures

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The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there are adequate systems in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our adult users.

Aims

The Thames Valley Adventure Playground Association has produced this document as a statement of its belief in the right of every adult to be valued and treated with dignity and respect. It affirms its desire to promote the welfare of all vulnerable adults, irrespective of gender, ethnic background or ability, acknowledging their right to be safe and their need to flourish in an atmosphere of trust.

This policy applies to all Trustees and staff employed by TVAPA, all volunteers sanctioned by TVAP. In addition it is the responsibility of all staff to ensure, to the best of their ability that the contents of this policy are applied to all users and visitors.

This policy has been designed to meet the needs of all adults using the Thames Valley Adventure Playground.

This policy will be implemented through Induction, training, assessment and refresher training.

Objectives

1. All TVAP users, Trustees and staff will have a collective understanding of Safeguarding issues and that our shared commitment is communicated to all users.
2. This policy will form the basis upon which all staff and volunteers work with the users of TVAP.
3. TVAP will be a place that actively challenges abuse and one in which young people and adults feel trusted and able to communicate any fears or concerns appropriately and in safety.

Designated Persons

If you have concerns or worries about any users of TVAP you should speak to:

Gary Warrington – Playground Manager 01628 628599

Debbie Farnfield – Trustee (Telephone number available from reception)

If you are concerned about a vulnerable adult please call 01296 383204 (Out of Hours – 0800 999 7677)

Further helpful contacts are listed at reception and on our www.tvap.org.uk

If any of these people are unavailable or involved, you can talk to the Senior Play Worker on Duty or a member of the Board of Trustees (Phone numbers available at reception).

If you cannot get a response you can call the police on 101

Legal Responsibility

The Board of Trustees accept their responsibilities under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and places a legal duty of care on all employees to work within the terms of this policy and all current legislation.

All staff and volunteers who work unsupervised with our adult / Young people will need to have an enhanced DBS check. These checks will be redone every 3 years.

A central register will be kept by the Playground Manager of all staff and volunteers cleared to have unsupervised access to our adult users. This register will also include the dates on which the individuals received Safeguarding Training.



What is Safeguarding?

This policy recognises that adults with disabilities may have a higher risk of abuse due the following:

- The need for practical assistance in everyday life, including personal care from what may be a number of carers.
- Carers and staff may lack the ability to adequately communicate with the individual.
- Infrequency of visits which will make it harder to identify behavioural changes which could be indicators of abuse or neglect.
- Physical and/or mental reduction in ability to reduce or recognise abuse.
- An increased risk of social isolation
- Lack of access to or understanding of 'keep safe' strategies available to others.
- Parents and carer's own needs and coping strategies may conflict with the needs of the vulnerable person.

Where a person is unable to tell someone of abuse or neglect he or she may convey anxiety and distress in some other way and staff should be alert to this.

Some sex offenders may target people with special needs in the belief that they will be less likely to be detected.

There are 3 key definitions used in adult safeguarding:

1. Vulnerability

Vulnerability is defined as someone who is or 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 themselves, or protect themselves from significant harm or serious exploitation.

Therefore a vulnerable adult may be a person with:

- A mental health problem (including Dementia)
- A physical disability
- Drug or alcohol related problems
- A sensory Impairment
- A learning Disability
- A physical illness
- An acquired brain injury
- Frailty or temporary illness
- Self-harm tendencies

A vulnerable adult could live at home, with a friend / family, in a residential setting, attend a day centre or be without a permanent home.

2. Significant harm

'Harm' should be taken to include not only ill-treatment but also the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, physical or mental health; and the impairment of physical, emotional, social or behavioural development.

3. Adult abuse

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological; it may be an act of neglect or a failure to act. It may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they have not consented or cannot consent.



Responsibility and Review

It is the duty of all employees, volunteers and Trustees to play an active role in safeguarding our users and to work within the limits of this policy and *current legislation at all times*.

This policy and its implementation (including training) is the responsibility of the Playground Manager.

This policy will be reviewed annually or when required through changes in law or working practices.

Financial Implications

Costs associated with this Policy and its implementation is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees.

Registration and Personal Details

- TVAP staff will operate a rigorous registration regime, checking everybody on and off the site.
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- Nobody should be allowed access to the site without legitimate reason to be here.
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- Care Plans (if required), personal details forms, medical consents and appropriate training must be obtained and completed prior to any respite being given.
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- All information and shared Data must be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and Local Information sharing Protocols.

Safer Recruitment Practices

All staff, Volunteers and Trustees will be recruited, interviewed and employed following the procedures detailed in the TVAP Safer Recruitment Policy.

Induction and Training

All staff and volunteers will receive induction training that will include Health and safety and Safeguarding.

From this training the staff and volunteers should be able to:

- Respond appropriately to disclosures.
- Recognise signs of abuse and know the appropriate reporting systems for this.
- Information regarding this policy should be disseminated to all users.

Supervision

The supervision of adults with special needs using the Playground in groups or with their carer's/families will remain with the parent / carer or group staff. TVAP will provide, whenever possible at least 1 member of staff to supervise the site as a whole. Levels of supervision for activities will be maintained at an adequate level so as to ensure the safety of all involved. If this cannot be done then the activity will be suspended.

A supernumerary member of staff will be available to supervise respite activities and help out as needed when there are children using the playground as part of our short break schemes.

Supervision levels of children left in our care (Loco Parentis) will depend on the needs of the child, determined through assessment. TVAP operates 4 ratios for Respite (see Respite Policy)



Capacity and Consent

The Mental Capacities Act (2005) states that individuals will be assumed to have the capacity to make decisions unless it is established that they 'lack capacity'. The act further states that 'a person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision unless all practicable steps to help them to do so have been taken without success'. Vulnerable adults should be supported to make their own decisions based on their awareness of the available choices. Where there is evidence that a person is unable to make a particular decision the decision must be made for them with their best interests at heart.

Whistle Blowing

TVAPA recognise that it can be difficult to raise concerns about your work colleagues but all staff have a responsibility and a duty to do this if they are worried.

TVAP has a comprehensive Whistle Blowing Policy which encourages all concerns to be raised through the appropriate and confidential channels. All staff should be given a copy of the policy at induction

A Safe Environment

TVAP should ensure as safe an environment as possible. This does not only mean a physically safe playground but also one which is emotionally safe and one in which the children feel secure and able to have a voice.

See also:

- Safer Recruitment
- Health and Safety Policy
- Fire Risk assessment and Procedures
- First Aid Policy
- Social Media / Internet Policy
- Photograph Policy
- Information Sharing and Personal Data
- Admissions



Safeguarding Procedures

Good Practice Guidance

The risks from abuse can be reduced through using the following straightforward common sense working practices:

- Always work in an open environment, avoid private or obscured areas and situations.
- Encourage an open communication with our users, between staff and with all users; with no secrets.
- Treat all adults and young people with dignity and respect.
- Always put the welfare of the vulnerable adult first.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance, avoid unnecessary body contact.
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empower.
- Involve the playground user, parents and carers as much as possible; encourage them to take responsibility for their own intimate care.
- When helping a person with their intimate care staff should always work in twos and ideally intimate care should be carried out by staff of the same sex as the person receiving the assistance.
- Ensure that there is a balanced staff team in terms of gender and ability.
- Be a safe role model, encourage our users to keep themselves safe.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than criticism.
- Recognise the developmental needs of the individual.
- Securing Loco Parentis, in writing, for administering of emergency first aid and medication.
- Keeping a written record of accidents, incidents and near misses, along with any action taken.
- Using the care card system to record information received from and given to parents / carers.
- The vulnerable individuals should be taught how to seek help.

The following have not been sanctioned and must be avoided:

- Engaging in rough and tumble or sexually provocative games.
- Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allowing the use of inappropriate language to go unchallenged.
- Making sexually suggestive comments, even in fun.
- Reducing a child to tears, rage or frustration as a form of control or through lack of communication / respect.
- Using excessive physical force, even in fun.
- Allowing disclosures made by a child to go unrecorded or acted upon.



Personal /Intimate Care Guidance

Our users have a right to a Playground which will enable them to be as independent as possible, and the opportunities to exercise this in their self-care.

It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the child/young person/adult involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

- All users have a right to privacy and dignity. This applies to the use of the toilet and changing rooms and supervision should always take this into account. Whilst help may be needed with washing, this should not include touching the child - particularly his/her private parts.
- Care should be taken by members of staff who could unwittingly place themselves in vulnerable situations by being alone with the child in inappropriate situations. Staff at the Adventure Playground should avoid situations where they are alone in a room with a closed door with playground users.
- All users should be treated in an age-appropriate manner.
- Users should be taught strategies to engender a sense of dignity and self-respect. For example: - to close the toilet door, modesty/cover the body appropriately
- Our users have a right to express what they think and feel and to volunteer an opinion regarding the supervision of his/her self-care. Consultation with parents will also take place regarding the supervision of each child's personal care.

Under no circumstances will TVAP staff undertake personal care of children and/or young adults unless another adult is present. Volunteers will not be involved in children's, adults/young persons' personal care.



Definitions of Abuse

There are 7 forms of adult abuse outlined in the 'No Secrets' publication:

Physical abuse. Non-accidental physical mistreatment of one person to another. This may or may not result in physical injury. It may also be the use of force that results in a non-consented change in a person's physical state.

This may include; violence such as hitting, shaking, slapping, pushing, kicking, scalding, dragging, pinching or hair pulling.

It may be rough or inappropriate handling force feeding, inappropriate manual handling, restraint, physical intervention, isolation or confinement.

It could be medical mistreatment, Misuse of medication, withholding medication, inappropriate use of medical procedures or interventions.

Indicators of abuse may include:

Unexplained injuries / incomplete documentation of injuries, Physical pain or discomfort, loss of weight, self-neglect or harm, confusion, delays in seeking medical attention, changes in moods or patterns of behaviour.

Sexual Abuse. Direct or indirect involvement in any sexual activity to which a person does not give consent or cannot give valid consent.

This may include contact abuse such as rape, masturbation (of either party) or inappropriate touching of a person's breast, genitals, anus or mouth.

It may be non-contact abuse such as indecent exposure, inappropriate looking, photography, harassment, teasing, innuendo or pornography.

Indicators may include:

Genital or anal discharge, bleeding or pain, unusual incontinence, Sexually transmitted disease, bruising on inner thighs or anus, flinching at physical contact, overly sexualised behaviour, self-neglect/harm, Changes in behaviour or mood.

Neglect or acts of omission. This is the repeated deprivation of assistance that the vulnerable adult needs for important activities of daily living, including a failure to intervene in behaviour which is dangerous to them or to others.

This may include Ignoring physical or medical needs, Failure to access education or social care, Withholding or failing to provide adequate support for the necessities of life.

Indicators of abuse may include;

Pressure sores, ulcers, excessive weight loss, dehydration, excessive demands for food and drink, persistent complaints of unexplained pain, lack of care records, reluctance to involve other professional in care, increased apathy or social withdrawal.



Psychological / Emotional Abuse. This may be the use of threats, bullying, humiliation or other mental cruelty. Emotional abuse is any action which negatively affects the emotional wellbeing or impairs psychological development.

This type of abuse may include treating a person in a way inappropriate to their age/ cultural background, Threats or intimidation, ridicule, verbal taunts, shouting, swearing, enforced isolation, denial of human rights, privacy, choice and self-expression.

Indicators could include;

low self-esteem, lack of confidence, self-neglect/harm, compulsive behaviour, withdrawal, apathy, confusion, displays of overly compliant behaviour and need to please, changes in mood and behaviour.

Financial Abuse. This may include unauthorized and improper use of a person's funds, property or resources.

This may include theft, fraud, extortion, exploitation, misuse of money, pressure in connection with financial transactions, preventing an individual access to money, property or possessions.

The indicators may include;

lack of basic necessities, lack of proper accounting records or receipts, excessive secrecy about or restriction to financial records, inability to maintain control over own lifestyle.

Discriminatory Abuse. This may be harassment, unfair treatment, exploitation or denial of mainstream opportunities or services because of race, religion, culture, gender, age, sexuality or disability.

This type of abuse may be a motivating factor in other forms of abuse.

This type of abuse may include not providing food consistent with a person's culture or beliefs, Use of derogatory names, teasing, denial of appropriate social contacts, not allowing attendance at or observance of religious festivals.

Indicators of abuse may be;

Low self-esteem or self-worth, self-neglect/harm or compulsive behaviour. Confusion, apathy or withdrawal. Use of stereotyped views or attitudes by staff or those around the individual.

Institutional Abuse. This may include any of the above but is caused by an unsatisfactory regime of health, care and support. It occurs when routines, systems and norms of an institution override the needs of those it is there to support.

This may include; inflexible routines set around the needs of the staff rather than the service users. Lack of individual choice or person centred planning. Failure to ensure that there are adequate safeguards to protect the vulnerable person and to promote good care standards. Failure to respond to complaints in a timely and robust manner.

Indicators of abuse may be;

Reluctance or fear about making complaints, service users consistently regarded as 'difficult, demanding or attention seeking', poor training of staff, poor record keeping and poor liaison with appropriate support services



Guidance on Responding to a disclosure

DO:

- Do treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the individual as if you believe what they are saying.
- Do tell the individual they are right to tell you.
- Do reassure them that they are not to blame.
- Do be honest about your own position, who you have to tell and why.
- Do tell the individual what you are doing and when, and keep them up to date with what is happening.
- Do take further action – you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse – tell your nominated person immediately.
- Do write down everything said and what was done.

DON'T:

- Don't make promises you can't keep.
- Don't interrogate the individual – it is not your job to carry out an investigation – this will be up to the police and social services, which have experience in this.
- Don't cast doubt on what the individual has told you, don't interrupt or change the subject.
- Don't say anything that makes them feel responsible for the abuse.
- Don't do nothing – make sure you tell your nominated Safeguarding Children person immediately – they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice.

Guidance on Managing Concerns

It is the responsibility of everyone involved with our users to help protect them from abuse. This is not just a question of reporting concerns to the "proper authorities", however important that is, but also of helping parents under stress to care for their children adequately.

Maintain good channels of communication with the parents / carers and visiting staff.

If you have an open, clear understanding with the parents/ carers about your role and responsibilities you will find it easier to deal with more awkward situations as they arise. Parents/carers will be expecting you to want to share all kinds of information, including worries. You will both be used to the routine recording of minor incidents and events as part of sharing a planned approach to the care of the children and adults using the playground. The parent/carer will also know from the very beginning that you have a duty as a day care provider to seek further advice where you are at all unsure

The Child / young person / adult

Sometimes individuals offer brief words themselves about what has happened to them. The "offering" may well come because you have quite naturally asked something like "Oh dear! What has happened to your leg?" The answer may take you by surprise and make you uncomfortable.

It is important that you remain calm. Give whatever simple response you would normally use to acknowledge these words and to reassure them. Move on to something else as soon as the child is ready (often straight away).

- Resist interrogating!
- It is not usually a good idea to call in a witness
- Record and Consult immediately



Maintain accurate clear, consistent records

This includes day care records; permission forms; Accident forms, incidents and any other information you may wish confirmed as shared, e.g. agreements about special diets.

- Get to know the Child or vulnerable adult
- Be Alert - Observe
- Record and consult

Sharing concerns

In most cases this should be done with the parent's/carers knowledge though it may not always be with their consent.

For advice, you can speak to your Manager or Buckinghamshire Adult Alert on 0800 13 79 15 (out of hours – 0800 999 7677)

Make a note of the details of any call made or action taken. Include the name of the person to whom you spoke and when.

Respect and protect confidentiality

When you find that you are worrying about an individual in your care, it is natural to want to discuss it. However, it is vital to remember that any information is strictly confidential and should not be discussed openly, and not when our users are present if possible.

The Parent

Most day care arrangements continue even where concerns move to full investigation. They survive best where:

There has been an open relationship

The parent has not felt judged or accused by the carer.

The carer has only recorded and discussed what has been seen and heard, not what is thought.

On a remarkable number of occasions, the parents have welcomed the interest and support of the carer.

You

Where concerns need to be followed up, there is a set procedure which may not involve you beyond the earliest stages. You may not always know the outcome.



Reporting Procedures

The Young person's /adult's welfare and safety must have first priority.

The designated Persons are:

Gary Warrington – Playground Manager and Debbie Farnfield. – Trustee Safeguarding and staff [link](#)

If you have concerns or worries:

- Discuss your concerns with the designated person (or in their absence the senior Play worker on Duty). If your concerns are about either of the designated people you should contact a Trustee and Bucks Adult Alert on 0800 13 79 15
- The designated person will evaluate the situation and collect the information from you.
- It is vitally important that any disclosure made is recorded factually as soon as possible; this is whether or not the matter is taken up by another authority.
- A Safeguarding Record and Referral Form should be completed for all concerns and/or disclosures. These forms are available from reception. If forms are not available please record the following detail for entry later:
 1. Date and time of what has occurred and the time the disclosure was made
 2. Names of people who were involved
 3. What was said or done by whom
 4. Action taken
 5. Where relevant, reasons why there is no referral to a statutory agency
 6. Names of person reporting and to who reported
- All forms and written information must be confidential and filed in a locked cabinet ~~locked~~ in the Playground Manager's office.
- The Designated person will take action to ensure the immediate safety of the individual. They will then contact Buckinghamshire Adult Alert Team and take advice.

If it is thought that returning the individual home would put them in danger then the designated Person or their deputy should seek immediate advice from the Bucks Adult Alert Team .

There are 3 possible outcomes of this process:

1. No further action is taken.
2. An initial Assessment is required. This will be carried out by Adult Services.
3. Emergency action may be taken to safeguard the child. This will be conducted by the Social Worker and may include other agencies i.e. Police.

If you are happy that no further action is required and that the process has been properly instigated then your involvement at this stage is complete.

If, however, you are unhappy with any decisions that are being made or feel that the situation should be escalated you must inform the Playground Manager (or Senior Play Worker on Duty) that you are unhappy and then contact the Buckinghamshire Adult Alert Team and discuss your concerns with them.

You will be kept informed of the process but not necessarily any action being taken or proposed. You will not automatically attend any further meetings unless requested to do so by the First Response Team.



Guidance on Allegations about you

Should you be in a position whereby an allegation is made against you this will be investigated immediately as per our Safeguarding Policy.

Please try to remember that we are all in this together and we will support you during this process, but not at the expense of our users.

We will never assume guilt but will always follow due process to protect both the vulnerable individual and you.

During any such investigation you have the right to outside representation of your choice.

During any investigation, up to the point of its conclusion, you will either be redeployed away from front line services, with restricted/supervised access to the site or suspended from duty, on full pay if appropriate.

If you are found guilty you will be immediately dismissed and may face criminal prosecution as defined by law.

If the allegation is unproven you will be able to return to normal duties immediately and no further action will be taken.

A record of the proceedings will be kept on your file with the outcomes clearly stated, you will receive a copy.

Concerns about Visiting Staff / Carers.

You have a responsibility not only to ensure that your own conduct is beyond reproach but also to report any concerns that you have about your colleagues or other staff's conduct.

If you have any concerns regarding the care being given to the children by visiting staff / parents or carers you must report these immediately to the Playground Manager, a Trustee or Deputy.

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse

Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189..



Glossary of Terms that you may hear in connection with abuse

abuse	mental, physical, sexual, medical or financial abuse, exploitation or neglect
assault	an unlawful personal attack
assertiveness	ability to express views in a clear, confident and direct manner, without denying the rights of others
battery	an attack where an actual blow is delivered
challenging behaviour	problem behaviour that is demanding and disruptive, which makes it difficult to provide quality support and care
defamation	falsehoods (libel or slander) which result in damage to a person's reputation or character
false documentation	entries in a personal record which are not true
libel	a written defamatory statement
break-away	techniques which allow a person to escape the grip of a violent attacker
control and restraint	techniques which use minimum force as a last resort for handling extremely aggressive behaviour
de-escalation	tactics which aim to calm an aggressor
negligence	Failure to give assigned care, or giving improper care which causes harm (such as failure to raise bedrails, resulting in someone falling out of bed)
non-compliance	refusal to do what one has been asked to do
paranoia	delusions (false perceptions) or persecution
slander	a spoken defamatory statement
self-disclosure	divulging personal information to another person
violence	the application of force, severe threat or serious abuse; severe verbal abuse or threat which is likely to turn into violence; serious or persistent harassment; threat with a weapon, major or minor injury