

## Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy (HR\_P1)

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| <b>Document version:</b>                             | V3  |
| <b>Policy owner:</b>                                 | Head of Business Support  |
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| <b>Signed:</b>                                       |  |
| <b>Print name:</b>                                   | Peter Tallantire  |
| <b>Position:</b>                                     | Chair   |
| <b>Reviewed:</b>                                     | August 2024   |
| <b>Amendments:</b>                                   | Updated in line with RSWT Safeguarding review                                     |

### 1. Named Safeguarding Leads

Designated Safeguarding Lead – Becky Vernon-Clinch

Deputy Safeguarding Lead – Lea Ellis

Trustee Lead for Safeguarding – Jackie Hunter

### 2. Accompanying Documents

HMWT Safeguarding Procedure

The Wildlife Trusts Safeguarding Commitment Statement

Online Safety Guidance

Safer Recruitment Policy

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

### 3. Introduction

This policy outlines Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust's ("the Trust") commitment to Safeguarding Children and Young People from abuse, maltreatment or neglect. The Trust is committed to enabling safe and supported access for a range of audiences to our sites, and activities in a range of settings including nature reserves, community areas and on private land.

The Wildlife Trusts movement believe that everyone has a responsibility to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk. As a movement we are committed to ensuring their safety and wellbeing is at the heart of our engagement with people. Please refer to The Wildlife Trusts Safeguarding Commitment.

#### **4. Definition of a child**

In England, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Child protection guidance points out that even if a child has reached 16 years of age and is:

- living independently
- in further education
- a member of the armed forces
- in hospital; or
- in custody in the secure estate

They are still legally children and should be given the same protection and entitlements as any other child (Department for Education, 2018).

#### **5. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy and the associated *Safeguarding Procedure* is to provide clarity to all staff, trustees, volunteers, and members of the public on the Trust's approach to Safeguarding Children and Young People.

The Trust is committed to the highest standards of charity governance for safeguarding and this policy is the foundation of a universal approach across the organisation that puts safeguarding at the heart of the Trust's engagement with children and young people.

The Trust has a duty of care to children and young people, their parents, carers and/or families that take part in our activities. We endeavour to provide a safe and friendly environment that celebrates all achievements. We will achieve this by ensuring that employees, volunteers and trustees comply with all legal, contractual and professional standards and responsibilities in their work with children – whether within a group situation or one to one, and ensuring the Trust provides appropriate training.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and trustees working on behalf of Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust. Where the Trust undertakes activities with third parties, staff shall have due regard to the safeguarding policies of the third-party provider, and the third-party provider will meet our minimum standards.

This policy will be reviewed annually or in line with key legislation updates or changes, and will be promoted through induction, training and ongoing supervision and support.

#### **6. Context**

In England where the Trust operate there are child protection systems, laws and guidance to help keep children and young people safe. These are the Children Act of 1989, 2004 and subsequent Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance 2018.

In their simplest forms the laws and guidance are there to:

- ensure children's voices are heard
- set out when a child can take part in various activities
- make sure children have access to education
- provide for children having a safe home
- provide support for children who need to leave home
- make sure children are safe if they decide to get a job
- make sure children's personal information is safe

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or 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

All of the legislation and guidance across the UK is very clear that as a charity working with under 18's, we have a duty to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

This responsibility is two-fold. We will:

- ensure our staff, volunteers and trustees can recognise the signs of abuse, neglect and maltreatment and understand when we need to share these concerns with professionals to help keep children and young people safe
- through safer recruitment, training and governance structures we will take all reasonable steps to have the appropriate and trained people in place to keep the children and young people in our care safe from harm.

At the Trust we engage with children and young people in the following situations including:

- Events
- Engagement activities
- Work Parties
- Work placements / work experience

- School visits

In line with the purpose of this policy we are committed to providing a safe and friendly environment that protects children and young people. Each activity is carefully planned and risk assessed to consider both the safety of our beneficiaries as well as our staff and volunteers.

Many of these activities are supported by youth workers or school staff, or children attend with their parents. Those activities whereby the Trust has direct supervision of a child or young person, consent is required ahead of the activity taking place as well as completion of thorough risk assessments.

## **7. Safer Recruitment**

The Trust want to ensure that we choose the best people for our roles and our *Safer Recruitment Policy* helps us to ensure we recruit like-minded people who care for wildlife and nature as well as being committed to protecting children and adults at risk from harm. Please refer to the Trust's *Safer Recruitment Policy*.

## **8. Recognising the signs of abuse in Children and Young People**

It is important to be alert to the signs of abuse and maltreatment. The Trust supports a culture whereby if anyone feels something isn't right, or they question the behaviour of children, staff, volunteers, trustees or parents/carers, they are encouraged and supported to speak up and discuss concerns with the Trust's safeguarding lead or their Primary Contact.

Further details regarding conduct and recognising the signs of abuse in children and young people can be found in the *Safeguarding Procedure*.

## **9. Terrorism and Radicalisation**

The Prevent Duty was created under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and requires certain organisations 'to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. Whilst The Trust are not bound by the Prevent duty legislation, partner agencies such as Local Authority, Health and Social Care will carry this responsibility and we must be in a position to recognise warning signs in children and young people and notify the appropriate agencies if we have concerns regarding terrorism or extremism.

## **10. Bullying**

The Trust will not tolerate any form of bullying between children and young people who are part of our organisation or access our sites to take part in groups or activities. Bullying can become serious enough to be a child protection issue and, if so, it should be dealt with under the Trust's *Safeguarding Procedure*.

## 11. Online Safety

Just as the Trust take the safety of children and young people face to face extremely seriously, we also consider how to keep them safe engaging online too. Please refer to the Trust's *Online Safety Guidance* and *Safeguarding Procedure* for more information and guidance regarding online safety.

## 12. Photography and Filming

The Trust will not permit photographs, videos or other images of children or young people to be taken without consent. If the child is under 16, consent must be obtained from a parent/carer. Please refer to the Trust's *Safeguarding Procedure* for further guidance and a photography consent form.

## 13. Duty to Refer

All UK legislation states that professionals or organisations with contact with children and members of their families must make a referral to the Local Authority Children's Social Care if there are signs that a child, young person, or unborn baby has suffered significant harm through abuse or maltreatment, or is likely to suffer significant harm in the future.

Further details on making a referral and the information required can be found in the Trust's *Safeguarding Procedure*.

## 14. Allegations against Staff, Volunteers or Trustees

Despite every effort to recruit safely there may be occasions when allegations of child abuse are made against staff, volunteers or trustees. Please refer to the *Safeguarding Procedure* for further information and guidance.

## 15. Serious Incidents and Charity Regulators

In England and Wales the Charity Commission requires charities to report serious incidents. The responsibility for this lies with the Trustees, however operationally this may be delegated to the Chief Executive. The Safeguarding Lead must also be notified before any incident is reported.

Please refer to the *Safeguarding Procedure* for more information and guidance.

## 16. Roles and Responsibilities for Safeguarding within the Trust

| Role                          | Responsibilities   |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Trustee lead for Safeguarding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Taking an overall lead in this area on behalf of the Board of Trustees.</li><li>• Challenging any strategic decisions which adversely affect anyone's wellbeing.</li></ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the CEO, reporting serious incidents as necessary to the Charity Commission.</li> </ul>   |
| All Trustees                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the lead trustee in creating a positive safeguarding culture that works to protect children and adults at risk within the wildlife trusts</li> <li>• Approve safeguarding policy and procedures and ensure that safeguarding is considered at every stage of decision making within the movement</li> </ul>  |
| CEO of The Trust                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that safeguarding is embedded within all decisions made by the Senior Management Team by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- maintaining a clear strategic and operational focus on safeguarding children and adults at risk</li> <li>- ensure Herts &amp; Middlesex Wildlife Trust meet the required legislative standards</li> <li>- making sure everyone in the organisation is aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and knows how to respond to concerns</li> <li>- reporting serious incidents as necessary to the Charity Commission</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| Senior Management Team                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets weekly where safeguarding concerns and incidents can be reported, and outcomes tracked</li> </ul>  |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding subject expert and the point of advice throughout the Trust</li> <li>• Responsible for developing policy, procedure, training and reporting mechanisms as well as being a support for the safeguarding point of contacts</li> <li>• Responsible for ensuring that staff complete regular training appropriate to their roles</li> <li>• Responsible for making referrals and overall safeguarding case management</li> </ul>  |
| Safeguarding point of contacts           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They will be the point of contact for concerns for all staff and trustees and will be responsible for liaising with the local authority when referrals are necessary</li> <li>• They will offer support and advice</li> </ul>  |
| All Trust staff, volunteers and trustees | Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Everyone has a duty to understand and act upon any concerns they may have regarding children and adults at risk  |

The Health, Safety & Personnel Committee, and the Board of the Trust, meet quarterly where Safeguarding is a standing agenda item. The Head of Business Support and Designated Trustee take an annual review of Safeguarding to the Committee and to the Board.