

# Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

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## 1. Policy statement purpose and scope

Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT) and its employees are committed to keeping children and vulnerable adults safe from harm and complies fully with its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. We believe that embedding and promoting a safeguarding culture is everyone's responsibility. This policy sets out how we ensure this happens.

### The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect children and vulnerable adults from harm, who access SWT activities
- To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children, vulnerable adults and their families, the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of SWT, including senior managers, trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, freelance contracted staff, agency staff, and work experience students; regardless of whether or not they directly work with children or vulnerable adults.

### Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

## 2. Glossary of terms

To provide clarity, this policy refers to the below terms as the following:

- **Children** – as per the Children Act 2004, this is a legal term that refers to all those who have not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Duty of care for this group may include those referred or accessing any SWT activity or project.
- **Vulnerable adult or adult at risk** – Adults, either volunteers or beneficiaries, with care and support needs may also at some point fall under safeguarding duties, becoming an 'adult at risk'. As per the Care Act 2014, adults at risk are defined as individuals aged over 18 who:
  - have needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
  - Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
  - As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.
- **Staff** – A paid individual with either an employment or freelance contract with SWT.
- **Volunteer** – An individual who is not paid a salary or fee by SWT. This would include: Trustees, adult volunteers, and work experience students. This does not include any beneficiary, regardless of age, who may be 'volunteering'.
- **Beneficiary** – Any individual taking part in any activity run by SWT
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** – relates to a person within the organisation who has ultimate responsibility for operational safeguarding processes and procedures.

- **Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)** – relates to one or more individuals who support the DSL, in a deputised role, to carry out their duties.
- **Trustee Safeguarding Lead (TSL)** – relates to a person on the trustee board who is responsible for ensuring organisational compliance to legislation and external regulators.

### 3. Legislative Framework

This policy, and related procedures, has been drawn up based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and vulnerable adults in England. A summary of the key legislation is listed below:

- The Children’s Act 1989 and 2004 revision (Children)
- The Care Act 2014 (Vulnerable Adults)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#), Department for Education (Children)
- [Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees](#), The Charity Commission (2017)
- [Charity law summary](#), NCVO
- The Sex Offenders Act 1997 and the Sexual Offences Act of 2003
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012)

### 4. Supporting documents

This policy statement should be read alongside SWT’s organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents, including:

- Responding to concerns about a child or young person’s welfare – Procedure
- Responding to concerns about a vulnerable adult’s welfare – Procedure
- Safeguarding Training Matrix
- DSO/DSL - Role Descriptions – **See 2 Glossary of terms**
- DBS – Details in SWT Recruitment Policy and here - <https://www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check>
- Working with adults with mental health issues and learning difficulties – Procedure
- Dignity at Work (Anti-bullying) - Policy
- Code of conduct for volunteers – Volunteer Handbook
- SWT Together Framework
- Photography and Sharing Images - Policy
- Recruitment - Policy
- IT Appropriate Use - Policy
- Grievance - Policy
- Whistleblowing - Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety - Policy
- Induction - Policy
- Running Safe Activities – Policy
- Appropriate Risk Assessments

## 5. Statement of Intent

SWT works with children in many ways, principally through the Wilder Learning and Wilder Communities directorate's work: school visits to our education centres, Forest Schools work, outreach visits to schools and community groups, holiday and after school activities, youth engagement and practical volunteering.

Through its community and volunteering work, SWT also works with adults with learning difficulties or mental health issues, who may be classed as vulnerable.

The Trust recognises that everyone has the right to feel safe. No-one should suffer from abuse, especially children and the vulnerable. Unfortunately, that is not the reality and SWT has a legal duty to ensure it does all it can to prevent abuse.

### **In order to implement this policy, Sussex Wildlife Trust commits to:**

- Stop abuse or neglect wherever possible
- Prevent harm and as far as possible reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to children or vulnerable adults regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation
- Promote the wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults, recognising that some will be additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Raise awareness of safeguarding to ensure that everyone can play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect
- Work in partnership with children, vulnerable adults, families, carers, and other agencies – ensuring, wherever possible, that safeguarding is personal to the needs and wishes of the child or vulnerable adult
- Provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and how to raise a concern about the safety or well-being of a child or vulnerable adult
- Be pro-active in taking action against whatever caused the abuse or neglect

### **To achieve this, we will:**

- Provide an environment in which children and vulnerable adults feel listened to, safe and valued
- Build a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, vulnerable adults and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns
- Appoint a DSL, and appropriate number of DSOs responsible for dealing with any safeguarding concerns regarding children or vulnerable adults.
- The DSL and DSOs will be trained to Safeguarding Lead training standard in line with the Safeguarding Training Matrix. They will also endeavour to keep up to date on new

or revised national guidance, legislation and information pertaining to safeguarding and preventing abuse of vulnerable adults and children

- Appoint a DSL who will be responsible for overall safeguarding regulatory and legislative compliance including annually reviewing the policy together with the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Ensure that the DSL is appropriately trained to understand their role and responsibilities
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of this policy and related safeguarding procedures through induction and attend basic training in Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding, and periodic refresher training, in line with the Safeguarding Training Matrix
- Adhere to our Safer Recruitment Procedures in recruitment of new staff or volunteers – this includes trustees
- Ensuring that the Disclosure & Barring Service, in accordance with their guidelines, checks all staff and volunteers with responsibility for children or vulnerable adults (further details of this can be found here - <https://www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check>)
- Provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
- Ensure that the DSL and DSOs understand their responsibility to refer incidents and concerns of abuse to the relevant statutory agencies (police/social services)
- Always seek to gain consent from children or vulnerable adults before sharing information about them with another agency. If consent to share information isn't given by a child a decision based on their best interests may be made to do so anyway. If this is the case for a vulnerable adult, information may only legally be passed on in a 'best interests decision' where a person is in immediate danger, a child is at risk, or an unreported serious crime has been committed. Further information regarding consent and when to share information for vulnerable adults can be found in the Adult Safeguarding Procedures
- Use our Whistleblowing Policy and procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers
- Ensure that all activities are appropriate for the group of children or young people we will be working with, applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law, regulatory guidance (see Running Safe Activities Policy) and appropriate Risk Assessments.
- Record, store, and use information confidentially and securely, in line with GDPR legislation and guidance
- Ensure this policy and related procedures are publicly accessible via the website and to staff on the Breathe HR management system

## **6. Contact details**

SWT will ensure that the policy is implemented through a series of Safeguarding procedures, and by nominating a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputised Designated Safeguarding Officers to oversee that work, and co-ordinate its response should any safeguarding issues or concerns arise. This is the Safeguarding Team and each will each be subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Those representatives currently are:

Huw Morgan, DSL:	<a href="mailto:huwmorgan@sussexwt.org.uk">huwmorgan@sussexwt.org.uk</a> ,	3CX internal 7026
Nikki Hills, DSO	<a href="mailto:nikkihills@sussexwt.org.uk">nikkihills@sussexwt.org.uk</a>	7026
Rowan Bunney, DSO	<a href="mailto:rowanbunney@sussexwt.org.uk">rowanbunney@sussexwt.org.uk</a>	7026
Polly Kitson DSO	<a href="mailto:pollykitson@sussexwt.org.uk">pollykitson@sussexwt.org.uk</a>	7026

External Number : 01273 497503

All of the Safeguarding Team are also contactable via: [swtsafeguarding@sussexwt.org.uk](mailto:swtsafeguarding@sussexwt.org.uk)

This DSL holds overall management responsibility for safeguarding at SWT. In this respect, they supersede all others when making decisions regarding safeguarding, including the CEO and others that would ordinarily be senior to the DSL. The exception to this is the DSL's accountability to the TSL – more information on this can be found within the DSL's job description.

In the unlikely event that the safeguarding team as above are uncontactable, or a concern raised is regarding the DSL or the CEO, then the Trustee Safeguarding Lead (TSL) should be the immediate point of contact:

Martin Kyndt, TSL: [swttsl@sussexwt.org.uk](mailto:swttsl@sussexwt.org.uk)

## Document Control

SWT's DSL is the owner of this document and is responsible for ensuring that this policy is reviewed annually in line with the review requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation.

A current version of this document is available to all members of staff and volunteers via the Breathe HR management system, volunteer and employee handbooks, and the website at [sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk).

This policy was approved by the TSL and is issued on a version-controlled basis under her/his signature.

TSL Name: Martin Kyndt

Signature:

Date: 18/03/2025

