



Safeguarding and Child Protection policy

It is not anticipated that Knutsford Hosts volunteers will be working with children or vulnerable adults unsupervised during their voluntary role as Knutsford Hosts nor will they have access to sensitive records, and therefore any risk to those vulnerable groups is deemed to be minimal. Should a partner organisation request help from Knutsford Hosts with activities that could involve safeguarding issues, that organisation will be responsible for ensuring that Knutsford Hosts meet their own protocols.

However, Knutsford Hosts aims to ensure the safety of all children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom they come into contact. It is the responsibility of any facilitating third party organisation or event organiser to protect children and vulnerable adults from all forms of abuse and discrimination as far as is reasonably practical; that said, Knutsford Hosts are informed via the policy (online) of the different forms of abuse, how to recognise these and to inform a member of the Knutsford Hosts steering group if suspecting or receiving any indications that abuse is or has taken place. This policy includes what is deemed to be good practice and behaviours to adopt when working with children and young people.

This policy has been prepared with reference to information obtained from various support organisations including NSPCC and The Youth Federation. The purpose of this policy is to explain the obligations of volunteers involved with Knutsford Hosts ensuring the safety and well-being of children and young people and vulnerable people with whom they may come into contact.

It is important that Knutsford Hosts are aware of the different forms of abuse, how to recognise these and that when suspecting or receiving any indications that abuse is or has taken place, there is a need to notify the Knutsford Hosts volunteer coordinator or a member of the steering team.

A copy of this policy is provided online at www.knutsfordhosts.co.uk.

This Policy has been produced to establish the following principles:

- The welfare of the child, young person and vulnerable adult is principal
- All people, without exclusion, have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to quickly and appropriately
- All volunteers have a responsibility to report and record concerns
- All volunteers have a responsibility to read and to be aware of the safeguarding and child protection guidelines that are available online at www.knutsfordhosts.co.uk

Safeguarding and Child Protection guidelines

What is Abuse?

It is an unfortunate and distressing fact that not all adults conform to what is regarded in society as acceptable ethical standards in their relationships with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Abuse is the term used to describe ways in which these people are harmed, usually by adults, and often by people they know and trust.

Knutsford Host acknowledges that we have a responsibility to report any concerns with relation to abuse the appropriate bodies. This following list highlights some the indicators of abuse. It is vital to note that although a person may show some of these signs or be behaving in some manner which gives cause for concern it may not mean that they are actually suffering from abuse.

Definitions of the four different forms of abuse:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child/ young person/vulnerable adult whom they are looking after.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on that person's emotional development. It may involve conveying that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children/young people/vulnerable people frequently to feel frightened or in danger. Emotional abuse also covers the exploitation or corruption.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact or non-contact activities.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child/ young person/vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs: adequate food, shelter and clothing; protection 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 basic emotional needs.

Definitions supplied by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

What you can do

Be active at all times. Recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse. If you suspect or if you're informed that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is experiencing abuse NEVER try to explore further. Always keep to the guidelines as set out for reporting an allegation and seek further advice. Do not pass judgement on what has been said. Try to support the person. Do not ask questions about what you might be suspicious about.

Make it clear that you are available to listen and offer support but that you MUST pass on the information. Remember DO NOT try to sort it yourself.

Always

- Treat the person with respect
- Respect and defend individual rights

- Show tolerance; however insults or abuse need to be challenged, as they occur
- Be aware of the damaging effects of sarcasm, insults and inappropriate jokes and put downs on the fragile ego and self-respect of some people
- Be available for all people
- Exercise due care in all activities so that people are not exposed to risk through adult negligence or incompetence
- Make sure that any group of children/young people are supervised by at least two volunteers at all times (preferably mixed genders)
- Respect the confidentiality of people's disclosures, and gain their permission before sharing their information. However disclosures of any type of abuse must be referred to nominated person and the person must be made aware of this obligation
- Respect confidential material that is collected on children/young people relevant to their address, dietary needs and medical needs etc., and only share the information between adults on a need-to-know basis

Protecting yourself as a Volunteer:

Always

- Make certain that another volunteer is present when you are in the company of children/young people/vulnerable people, ideally mixed genders.
- Be aware of the dangers of leaving yourself open to accusations.
- Remember that your actions and comments might be misinterpreted no matter how well intentioned.
- Recognise that caution is required when working with any people
- Be aware of the possible implications of physical contact with children/young people/vulnerable adults
- Refer any disclosures of abuse to the Knutsford Hosts volunteer coordinator, a member of the Knutsford Hosts steering group or the person in charge of the event or activity.

Never

- Allow yourself to be drawn into any inappropriate attention seeking behaviour
- Show favouritism towards any individual
- Provide ammunition for accusations against yourself through inappropriate or suggestive remarks or conduct
- Rely upon just your good name to protect you.
- Believe 'it could never happen to me' either dealing with abuse or being accused of it

If One-To-One contact with children/young people/vulnerable adults is unavoidable

- Ensure you are accessible to other volunteers.
- Tell another volunteer where you are, what you are doing and why, and establish that they support your actions.
- Make sure it is for as short a time as possible.
- Try to move with the child/young person/vulnerable adult to an area where there are more adults
- Try to avoid unnecessary physical contact especially if it may be misconstrued
- If you have to touch the child/young person/vulnerable adult get their permission first

Dealing with Aggressive Behaviour

Definitions of aggressive behaviour are very personal and our perceptions of aggression are influenced by our past experiences. What one person finds aggressive, someone else accepts as normal behaviour. It is very important to remember this when confronted with aggressive behaviour. The following list is a guideline of acceptable responses to aggressive behaviour:

- Never respond with aggression

- Try to diffuse the situation by talking to the parties involved
- Stay calm
- If possible, and safe to do so, remove the aggressive person from the situation
- Use non-threatening body language, e.g. use protective movements, be relaxed, have an outward welcoming posture, have a calm expression, make eye contact etc.
- Talk using a calm voice
- Do not shout
- Avoid physical contact
- Be honest
- If possible, and if appropriate, remove the victim of the aggression from the situation
- Never put yourself at unnecessary risk

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