



Safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults

Policy Statement, Responsibilities & Procedures

Policy Statement

The Friends of Sharphill Wood Group values all young people and vulnerable adults as individuals, regardless of their ethnic, cultural or socio-economic background, their abilities, health status, gender or sexual preferences.

This policy applies to all volunteers attending a meeting, work party or other event organised by the Friends of Sharphill Wood. Adherence to the policy by volunteers will be the responsibility of the Friends of Sharphill Wood Chair, Vice Chair or group leader at the meeting, work party or other event.

The purpose of this Policy Statement is:-

- To protect children and young people who take part in activities organised by Friends of Sharphill Wood from harm including the children of adults who participate.
- To provide all volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection

This policy was drafted in accordance with Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004, Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Childcare Act 2006, (key legislation and Guidance available from nspcc.org.uk/childprotection). It will be reviewed every 3 years from November 2024. It should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents

Systems and Procedures

When working with young people or vulnerable adults, the Friends of Sharphill Wood will require:

- all children under 16 to be accompanied by a parent or guardian
- all children between the ages of 16 to 18 to have the written permission of a parent or guardian to attend meetings or work parties
- all vulnerable adults to be accompanied by their carer

In this document we use the following definitions:

- **Young people** – persons under the age of 18 years old.
- **Vulnerable adults** - persons aged 18 years or over who are or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who are or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Our responsibilities

When working with young people or vulnerable adults, the Friends of Sharphill Wood will:

- appoint a group leader at the start of each work party (normally the Work Party Co-ordinator or other Officer of the Group)
- give the group leader the final decision on the continued presence at the work party of anyone not following this policy.
- require all those in attendance to sign an attendance register. Parents, guardians or carers of young people or vulnerable adults must sign in for themselves and those in attendance for whom they have responsibility.
- carry out a risk assessment for the work party
- brief all in attendance on the health and safety issues of the tasks to be undertaken
- brief all in attendance that volunteers should seek permission of the group leader before taking photographs of young people or vulnerable adults
- supervise any young people without their parent or guardian present
- never work alone with any young people or vulnerable adults. A commonsense approach should be taken, however. Brief one to one periods may be necessary from time to time, but other volunteers (preferably the group leader) must be within sight or hearing of the volunteer and young person or vulnerable adult or be informed of the one to one activity and likely duration.
- when leaving the work party for the day, volunteers should inform the work party coordinator.

Volunteer responsibilities

When attending a work party, with or without young people or vulnerable adults present, volunteers must:

- sign the adult register when arriving
- not act in a way that distracts from, or undermines the group leader
- only ever take photographs of young people or vulnerable adults with direct permission from the group leader *and* from any individuals and/or their parents involved
- avoid touching any child in a way that could be misunderstood
- not swear or use any suggestive language or gestures
- avoid being alone with any child who is not their own
- not smoke or attend sessions whilst they are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs
- never smoke or vape in front of, and under no circumstances, give or buy cigarettes or vapes for young people and vulnerable adults or provide matches or lighters
- be alert to anything that has the potential to cause accident or injury to group members
- inform the group leader about anything that causes them concern for the safety or welfare of young people at the group

Young people or vulnerable adults responsibilities

When attending a work party, young people or vulnerable adults must:

- when under 16, be signed in by their parent, guardian or carer
- follow instructions given by the group leader
- not behave in a manner that has a potential to cause injury to themselves or other group members
- report anything that causes them concern for their safety or welfare to the group leader

Health and safety when working with young people and vulnerable adults

This procedure and guidance must be followed in all activities involving young people and vulnerable adults

1 Risk assessments

Hazards should be identified by completing a risk assessment in advance for the site and activities planned. The risk assessment should be completed or checked by the group leader (even if it has been organised by someone else) and should involve a site visit if necessary.

Activities and equipment should be organised to achieve the aim of the activity and be suitable for the abilities of the participants. For example, young people should not be expected to walk too far or carry anything that is considered too heavy for them.

- Leaders and participants should be suitably equipped for the activity and conditions.

2. Using tools

When using tools the following tool hierarchy guidance is suggested. The use of tools with young people and vulnerable adults is determined by:

1. How well the individual is known
 2. How capable the individual is
 3. Whether the individual is part of an ongoing Scouts/Duke of Edinburgh programme over a period of time
- Individuals using tools should be organised into small groups, with at least one adult in charge of each group or individual and their tools. Ratios depend upon the tool, the task and the young people. Each group or child/adult team should be given a defined area to work in, and there is to be at least two arm lengths and two tool lengths between young people when the work involves cutting and arm swinging.
 - Adults who are supervising individuals must ensure the young people or vulnerable adults stay within sight at all times and where the individuals are using tools, leaders are to remain focused on those using the tools. In most circumstances, **power tools** (chainsaws, strimmers etc) **must not** be used with or near young people or vulnerable adults (and never by a volunteer who is responsible for supervising them). Young people and vulnerable adults that have certificates and appropriate insurance for power tool use (e.g. strimmers) can use them.

- Activities involving tools should be supervised by appropriately trained people – if necessary, training sessions for volunteers should be arranged.
- Consideration should be given to how the tools are kept before, during and after use. They should not be left unguarded.
- All tools and equipment should be checked for safety and removed if found to be defective. They should also be cleaned after each activity – this can be done with the group as part of the activity to ensure they are kept safe.
- It should not be assumed that adults know how to use a tool properly or how to supervise tool use. A tool safety talk should always be given to both young people and adult helpers. The talk must include the safe use of tools, carrying tools, first aid procedures, site hazards and a check on clothes and footwear. Young people or vulnerable adults should carry only one tool at a time, which must be within their physical capabilities. Tools should have appropriate safety guards. Individuals should not be allowed to run with tools.
- Clear roles and responsibilities should be given to all volunteers, particularly with regard to accident and emergency procedures and behavioural expectations.
- Information on the times, meeting places and nature of events, as well as the clothing and equipment required, should be communicated properly to volunteers.

3. Working Alone with a Child or Vulnerable Adult

Volunteers should avoid being alone with a child or vulnerable adult. However there should be a commonsense approach to this. Wherever possible, volunteers must not work alone with a child or vulnerable adult, however where it causes more of a problem or harm to insist on this then the volunteer should:

- Conduct a simple risk assessment to review the situation and take any actions to minimise any risk which are highlighted in that risk assessment
- Ensure that the volunteer alone with the child/vulnerable adult is known and trusted by the Friends.
- Ensure that the one to one situation is as brief as possible
- Ensure that the parents, guardians or carers are aware of and are happy with the situation.

It is recognised that it may not be possible to carry out all these checks in every situation, particularly in an emergency, but every effort must be made to do so.

Complaints

In the event of a complaint about the behaviour of a volunteer or member of the public towards a young person or vulnerable adult at a work party or meeting, the work party coordinator or other officer of the Friends should be informed. The complainant should discuss any worries or anxieties and, depending on the circumstances, appropriate action should be taken immediately. Should the issue not be resolved immediately and the complainant wishes to take the matter further with the Friends, the Group Compliments, Suggestions, and Complaints policy on the website should be followed:- <https://sharphillwood.org/compliments-suggestions-complaints/>

USEFUL CONTACTS

Rushcliffe Designated Lead Officer for Child Protection

Dave Banks Tel. (Rushcliffe BC switchboard) **0115 981 9911**

Recommended starting point for safeguarding referrals & information in the County:-

<https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/environmental-health/community-safety/multi-agency-safeguarding-hub/>

Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership ¹

<https://nscp.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/>

Nottinghamshire District Councils and Borough - Children & Adults Safeguarding Policy

<https://nottsdistrict.trixonline.co.uk/#vulnerable>

Notts County Council Safeguarding Adults

Contact Customer Service Centre online or telephone 0300 500 8080 or see above link

South Nottinghamshire Division Police - **0115 940 0999**

Nottinghamshire Police HQ **0115 9670999**

Police Emergency **999** Ambulance Emergency **999**

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline (freefone) **0800 800 5000**

Childline (freefone) **0800 1111**

¹ The Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership provides the safeguarding arrangements under which the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies work together to coordinate their safeguarding services. The partnership is responsible for identifying and responding to the needs of children in Nottinghamshire, commissioning and publishing local child safeguarding practice reviews and providing scrutiny to ensure the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements.