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# *Safeguarding Policy for Children*

## *Guidance and Procedures*

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**Index**

# Thames Valley Adventure Playground

## Policy and Procedures

<b>Policy</b>	Page 3	Aims
		Objectives
		Designated Persons and Contact Details
		Legal Responsibility
	Page 4	What is Safeguarding
		Responsibility and Review
	Page 5	Financial Implications
		Registration and Personal Details
		Safer Recruitment Practices
		Induction and Training
		Supervision
	Page 6	Whistle Blowing
A safe Environment		
<b>Procedures</b>	Page 7	Good Practice Guidance
	Page 8	Personal /Intimate Care Guidance
	Page 9	Definitions of Abuse
	Page 10/11	Signs of possible Abuse
	Page 12/13	Guidance on Responding to Disclosure
		Guidance on Managing Concerns
	Page 14	Reporting Procedures
	Page 15	Guidance on allegations about you
Concerns about visiting staff		
Support		
Page 16	Glossary	
Appendix 1	The Prevent Duty. D of E (June 2015)	
Appendix 2	Staff Guidance	



# **Thames Valley Adventure Playground**

## **Policy and Procedures**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there are adequate systems in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our users in compliance with the Children Act and best practice.

### ***Aims***

The Thames Valley Adventure Playground Association has produced this document as a statement of its belief in the right of every child to be valued and treated with dignity and respect. It affirms its desire to promote the welfare of all children, 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 children and young 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 the children 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)

Or Call the Buckinghamshire First Response Team on 0845 4600001

If you are concerned about a vulnerable adult please call 01296 383204

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)..

### ***Legal Responsibility***

The Board of Trustees accept their responsibilities under the Children Act 1989 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 the children 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 the children. This register will also include the dates on which the individuals received Safeguarding Training.



### **What is Safeguarding?**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes
- Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Any Child with a disability is regarded in law as a 'child in need' under section 17 of the Children Act. This policy recognises that children 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 other children.
- Parents and carer's own needs and coping strategies may conflict with the needs of the child.

In addition to the universal indicators of abuse or neglect children with disabilities may be subject to the following abusive behaviour.

- Force feeding / lack of choice and control in feeding and drinking
- Unjustified physical restraint
- Extreme behaviour modification constraints such as depriving liquids, food or clothing.
- Misuse of medication or sedation.
- Invasive procedures against the child's will.
- Deliberate failure to follow prescribed medical protocols and regimes.
- Ill fitting equipment such as callipers, wheelchairs and aids which may cause pain and injury or limit the child's choice and control.

Where a child 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 children with special needs in the belief that they will be less likely to be detected.

'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013' sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and how practitioners should conduct the assessment of children.

### **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.

Nobody should be allowed access to the site without legitimate reason to be here.

Care Plans (if required), personal details forms, medical consents and appropriate training must be obtained and completed prior to any respite being given.

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 and volunteers will be subject to comprehensive pre-employment checks and supervision during induction.

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 welfare and supervision of children using the Playground in groups or with their 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)



### ***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

For advice you can also contact the Ofsted Whistleblower Hotline on 0300 123 3155 (Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 6.00pm).

### ***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
- Registration



### Safeguarding Procedures

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#### **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 children and young people with dignity and respect.
- Always put the welfare of the child first.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance, avoid unnecessary body contact.
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empower the children.
- Involve the children, parents and carers as much as possible; encourage them to take responsibility for their own intimate care.
- When helping a child with intimate care staff should always work in twos and ideally intimate care should be carried out by staff of the same sex as the child.
- Ensure that there is a balanced staff team in terms of gender and ability.
- Be a safe role model, encourage the children to keep themselves safe.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than criticism.
- Recognise the developmental needs of the child and treat them as individuals.
- 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 children 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 children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child, 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 and acted upon.

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 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.



### ***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.

Their changing strengths and needs will be identified by the Thames Valley Adventure Playground staff, in particular these will be included in the Care Plans of the children and young adults attending the Adventure Playground. These should be referred to for up-to-date guidance in individual cases.

- All children and young adults 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 a child or young adult.
- Children should be treated in an age-appropriate manner.
- Children 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
- The child has right to express what he/she thinks and feels and to volunteer an opinion regarding the supervision of his/her self-care. This may relate to the age of the child and gender of the member of staff. Consultation with parents also takes place regarding the supervision of each child's personal care.

Personal care will always be undertaken primarily by the child or young person him/herself, or by parents/carers/staff attending the site with a child or young person, with a member of the Adventure Playground staff offering support when necessary. Adventure Playground staff must not under any circumstances undertake personal care of children and/or young adults unless another adult is present. Volunteers should not be involved in children's and/or young persons' personal care arrangements.





### ***Definitions of Abuse***

There are four recognised types of abuse and it is important that all staff and volunteers know what they are and how to recognise them. The following definitions are based on those from Working Together to Safeguard Children (Department of Health, Home Office, Department for Education and Employment, 1999)

#### Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to, a child whom they are looking after. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick child. Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

#### Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

#### Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual on-line images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.

#### Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born it may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers) or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.



### ***Signs of Possible Abuse***

Physical signs of abuse:

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them,
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls or games,
- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body,
- Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching),
- Cigarette burns,
- Bite marks,
- Broken bones,
- Scalds,
- Injuries which have not received medical attention,
- Neglect-under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care,
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation,
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts,
- Flinching when approached or touched,
- Reluctance to get changed, for example, wearing long sleeves in hot weather,
- Depression,
- Withdrawn behaviour,
- Running away from home.

Emotional signs of abuse

The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- A failure to thrive or grow particularly if a child puts on weight in other circumstances: e.g. in hospital or away from their parents' care,
- Sudden speech disorders,
- Persistent tiredness,
- Development delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- Obsessions or phobias,
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration,
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults,
- Being unable to play,
- Attention seeking behaviour,
- Fear of making mistakes,
- Self-harm,
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour.



### Sexual Abuse

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital/anal area,
- Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas,
- Sexually transmitted disease,
- Vaginal discharge or infection,
- Stomach pains,
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down,
- Pregnancy.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming withdrawn or aggressive,
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people,
- Having nightmares,
- Running away from home,
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level,
- Sexual drawings or language,
- Bedwetting,
- Eating problems such as over-eating or anorexia,
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts,
- Saying they have secrets they can not tell anyone about,
- Substance or drug abuse,
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money,
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence),
- Acting in a sexually explicit way with adults.

### Neglect

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children,
- Constantly dirty or smelly,
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight,
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time,
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments,
- Having few friends,
- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised.



### ***Guidance on Responding to a disclosure***

DO:

- Do treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the child as if you believe what they are saying.
- Do tell the child 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 child 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 child – it is not your job to carry out an investigation – this will be up to the police and social services, who have experience in this.
- Don't cast doubt on what the child has told you, don't interrupt or change the subject.
- Don't say anything that makes the child 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 children 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

If you have an open, clear understanding with the parents about your role and responsibilities you will find it easier to deal with more awkward situations as they arise. Parents 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. The parent 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

Sometimes children 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 a child's 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



# *Thames Valley Adventure Playground*

## *Policy and Procedures*

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.

- Know the Child
- Be Alert - Observe
- Record and consult

Sharing concerns

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

For advice, you can speak to your Manager or Buckinghamshire First Response Team on 0845 4600001 (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 a child 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 children 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 child'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 First Response on 0845 4600001.
- 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 ensure that the child is safe and take action to ensure the immediate safety of the child. They will then contact Buckinghamshire First Response Team and take advice.

If it is thought that returning the child home would put a child in danger then the designated Person or their deputy should seek immediate advice from the Buck's first response team on 0845 4600001

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 Social 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 then your involvement at this stage is complete.

If, however, you are unhappy with any decisions that are being made you must inform the Playground Manager (or Senior Play Worker on Duty) that you are unhappy and contact the Buckinghamshire First Response Team on 0845 4600001 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 children 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 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

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