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The Box Moor Trust

Safeguarding Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults

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 **Introduction**

Unfortunately, children and vulnerable adults from every community can be hurt, put at risk of harm or abused, regardless of age, gender, religion or ethnicity. As we work with children and vulnerable adults at The Box Moor Trust, we have a responsibility to keep them safe from harm. Safeguarding is trying to ensure children and vulnerable adults do not get harmed and knowing what to do if anyone employed by The Box Moor Trust, paid or unpaid, is concerned about a child or vulnerable adult.

To clarify, a vulnerable adult is any person over the age of 18 years who may be unable to take care of themselves or who may be at risk of harm or serious exploitation. This may be because they have a mental health problem, a learning or physical disability, are old and frail or have an illness.

It is never the responsibility of anyone working or volunteering for The Box Moor Trust to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. There is, however, a responsibility for all to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. The Box Moor Trust will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who reports a concern in good faith that a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk.

This document sets out the procedures in place to ensure the safeguarding of the children and vulnerable adults involved with The Box Moor Trust.

**Safeguarding Policy Statement**

The Box Moor Trust believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or vulnerable adult to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults receiving The Box Moor Trust’s services, by committing to practice which protects them.

**We at The Box Moor Trust recognise that**:

* The welfare of the child/vulnerable adult is paramount.
* All children and vulnerable adults have the right to equal protection from all types of harm and abuse, regardless of their age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religion, sexual orientation or identity.
* We need to work in partnership with children/vulnerable adults, their parents/carers and other agencies to promote welfare.

**The purpose of this policy is:**

* To provide protection for children and vulnerable adults who receive The Box Moor Trust’s services.
* To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk of, or experiencing, harm.

This policy applies to all staff, including Managers, the Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers, students or anyone working on behalf of The Box Moor Trust.

**We will safeguard children and vulnerable adults by:**

* Establishing an environment where children and vulnerable adults feel secure and are valued, respected and listened to.
* Adopting our code of practice for working with children and vulnerable adults.
* Practicing safe recruitment and checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children and vulnerable adults, including ensuring that a CRB/DBS check is held for all those in contact with children.
* Ensuring all staff have received appropriate training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities effectively. This training will be refreshed at three yearly intervals.
* Identifying the Education and Community Team Coordinator as our Safeguarding Officer for children and vulnerable adults. This person is responsible for dealing with all worries or concerns about children and vulnerable adults and passing them on to the relevant authorities.
* Identifying a nominated Trustee (Chair of the Education Committee) to be responsible for child and vulnerable adult safeguarding and to be aware of the requirements this role entails.
* Keeping written records of any concern, even when the Safeguarding Officer decides there is no need for referral.
* Keeping all records secure and in locked locations in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
* Developing and following procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff, a volunteer or a Trustee at The Box Moor Trust.
* Always following The Box Moor Trust Code of Practice for Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults.

**Action Plan**

To ensure that everyone, including children and vulnerable adults, who work at or volunteer at or use The Box Moor Trust facilities is aware of and understands the safeguarding measures we have in place, The Box Moor Trust will:

* Ensure all members of staff and volunteers receive a safeguarding briefing as part of their induction and attend the half day ‘Safeguarding Children’ and the half day ‘Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults’ training courses where relevant to their role as soon as it is possible.
* Ensure the mentioned safeguarding training is refreshed every three years.
* Ensure this document is accessible to all staff on the shared network space.
* Ensure our Safeguarding Policy is available to members of the public through our Trust website.
* Operate safe recruitment practises, including ensuring appropriate DBS and reference checks are undertaken according to Government and Safeguarding Board guidance.

**The Box Moor Trust Code of Practice for Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults**

This outlines the code of behaviour expected of The Box Moor Trust staff and volunteers. This code advises on protection of children and vulnerable adults.

Following this code will help to protect The Box Moor Trust by reducing the possibility of anyone using their role within the organisation to gain access to children or vulnerable adults in order to abuse them.

When working or volunteering with children and vulnerable adults for the Trust, all staff and volunteers are considered to be acting in a position of trust. It is important that those staff and volunteers are aware that they must be seen as appropriate role models by children and act in an appropriate manner at all times, following our Code of Practice.

All staff or volunteers working with children and vulnerable adults require clearance through either the CRB (prior to 1st December 2012) or DBS (since December 2012) procedures. Although you may start undertaking a role with children whilst this is being processed, you should ensure you are **always** with an adult whom you know has definitely received clearance.

The Trust will ensure that staff and volunteers are aware that sexual relations between themselves and children and young people under 18 years of age are unlawful and could result in legal proceedings taken against them in line with the Sexual Offences Act 2003. (Abuse of position of trust).

A sexual relationship between any member of staff or volunteer and a vulnerable adult using the Trust’s services represents a serious breach of trust and is not permissible under any circumstances.

Any member of staff or volunteer is expected to report any breaches of this Code to The Safeguarding Officer for The Box Moor Trust. Staff members who breach this Code may be subject to Trust disciplinary procedures. Serious breaches of this Code may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the Police or Children’s Services Department.

**When working or volunteering with children and vulnerable adults it is important to**:

* Always adhere to The Box Moor Trust Safeguarding Policy Statement.
* Ensure there are always at least two adults present during activities with children or vulnerable adults.
* Listen to and respect children and vulnerable adults at all times.
* Avoid favouritism.
* Treat children and vulnerable adults fairly and without prejudice.
* Value and take children’s and vulnerable adults’ contributions seriously.
* Ensure any contact with children or a vulnerable adult is appropriate and relative to the activity.
* Always use appropriate, non-offensive and non-discriminatory language.
* Provide examples of good conduct that you wish others to follow.
* Challenge unacceptable behaviour and promptly report any allegations/suspicions of abuse.

**When working or volunteering with children and vulnerable adults you must never:**

* Patronise children or vulnerable adults.
* Allow allegations to go unreported.
* Develop inappropriate relationships such as contact with children or vulnerable adults that is not part of Trust work or agreed by a manager.
* Let children or vulnerable adults have your personal contact details (including mobile number, address or social networking details).
* Use sarcasm or insensitive comments.
* Act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive.
* Make inappropriate promises, particularly in relation to confidentiality.
* Make suggestive or derogatory comments or gestures.
* Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts.
* Exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues.
* Rely on your good name or that of the Trust to protect you from allegations.
* Use racist or sexist language towards them or fellow staff members or volunteers.
* Smoke, drink alcohol or take drugs.
* Let any child or vulnerable adult out of the sight of you or other responsible adults in your group.
* Take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another, more prudent approach.

**Procedures**

The procedures detailed in this section apply to all members of Trust staff and volunteers, including Trustees. The guidelines ensure that everyone knows what to do if they are concerned about a child or vulnerable adult.

**Recognising Abuse**

The term abuse is used to describe when someone in a position of trust hurts, harms or causes distress to a child or vulnerable adult. Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights and can be committed by another person or persons. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated actions directly or indirectly and can happen anywhere. The four main types of abuse are:

**Physical**

This can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or using excessive force. Physical harm can also occur when a parent/carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child or vulnerable adult.

**Sexual**

This is where children or vulnerable adults are forced or enticed into taking part in sexual activities whether or not that child or vulnerable adult is aware of what is happening. This may be assault by penetration or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They can also include non-contact activities such as involving children or vulnerable adults in looking at or the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in an inappropriate sexual way or grooming a child or vulnerable adult in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Men, women and children can all commit sexual abuse.

**Neglect**

This is where there is persistent failure to meet a child or vulnerable adult’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of their health or development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment, or failing to protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger. It can also be failure to provide adequate caregivers or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of or unresponsiveness to a child or vulnerable adult’s basic emotional needs.

**Emotional**

This is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on that individual’s emotional development. This may involve conveying to children or vulnerable adults that they are worthless or unloved or inadequate. It may include not giving the child or vulnerable adult opportunities to express their view, deliberately silencing them or undermining what they say or how they communicate. It can also feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or vulnerable adults, including interactions beyond the individual’s developmental capacity. It can also be the involvement in seeing or hearing somebody else being abused.

**Signs to look out for include:**

* Frequent mood changes.
* Unusual eating patterns (e.g. stealing food from others or refusal to eat).
* Changes in physical appearance.
* Becoming quiet and withdrawn.
* Attention seeking, aggression or self-harm.
* Poor hygiene.
* Never wanting to go home/running away.
* Tiredness.
* Seductive, sexualised behaviour/ sexual knowledge beyond their years.
* Bedwetting.
* Fear of making mistakes.
* Excessive washing.
* Frequent bruises and attempts to hide them.
* Burns, black eyes, broken bones, concussion, missing hair.
* Flinching/fear of physical contact.
* Possession of unexplained amounts of money.
* Taking a parental role at home and functioning beyond their normal age.
* Alluding to secrets which they cannot reveal.
* Compulsive nervous habits such as hair twisting or rocking.
* An excessive need of approval attention and affection.
* An inability to cope with praise.

**How to respond if a child or vulnerable adult reports abuse to you**

**It is never the responsibility of any member of staff or volunteer at The Box Moor Trust to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, we all have a responsibility to act on all concerns through contact with appropriate authorities. The Box Moor Trust will ensure all staff and volunteers are given full support and will protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern that a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk.**

**If a child or vulnerable adult reports abuse to you, you should:**

* React calmly.
* Take what the child/vulnerable adult says seriously.
* Keep questions to a minimum and **listen** to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what is being said.
* Do not ask about explicit details.
* Reassure but do not promise confidentiality which may not be feasible.
* Inform the child/vulnerable adult what you will do next.
* Do not attempt to discuss anything with parents or carers.
* Make a full, dated, written record with everything that was said and heard, as soon as possible.
* Do not talk about any of the details with anyone other than the Safeguarding Officer.

**The report should include all or most of the following:**

* The child/vulnerable adult’s name, age and date of birth.
* The child/vulnerable adult’s home address and telephone number.
* Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concerns or those of someone else.
* The nature of the allegation, including dates and times and any other relevant information.
* Clear definition between fact, opinion and hearsay.
* A description of any physical signs such as bruising and any indirect signs such as behavioural changes.
* Details of witnesses to the incident.
* The child/vulnerable adult’s account of what has happened as heard by the reporter.
* If anyone else been consulted, who and what has been said.

The report must then be passed immediately to the Safeguarding Officer for The Box Moor Trust who will make the appropriate referral to Children’s Services 0300 123 4043 or Health and Community Services 0300 123 4042 and/or the Police as appropriate.

If it is not possible to report to the Safeguarding Officer, the information should be passed to another Senior Management Member immediately. All referrals must be confirmed in writing within 24 hours of being reported.

**How to respond to signs or suspicions of abuse**

**It is never the responsibility of any member of staff or volunteer at The Box Moor Trust to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However we all have a responsibility to act on all concerns through contact with appropriate authorities. The Box Moor Trust will ensure all staff and volunteers are given full support and will protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern that a child or vulnerable adult who may be at risk.**

**If you suspect that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused, you should:**

* React calmly.
* Take what the child or vulnerable adult says seriously.
* Make a full, dated, written record of what has been observed/told as soon as possible.
* Do not attempt to discuss anything with parents or carers.
* Do not talk about any of the details with anyone other than the Safeguarding Officer.

**The report should include all or most of the following:**

* The child/vulnerable adults name, age and date of birth.
* The child/vulnerable adult’s home address and telephone number.
* Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concerns or those of someone else.
* The nature of the allegation, including dates and times and any other relevant information.
* Clear definition between fact, opinion and hearsay.
* A description of any physical signs such as bruising and any indirect signs such as behavioural changes.
* Details of witnesses to the incident.
* The child/vulnerable adult’s account of what has happened as heard by the reporter if it can be given.
* If anyone else been consulted, who and what has been said.

The report must then be passed immediately to the Safeguarding Officer for The Box Moor Trust who will make the appropriate referral to Children’s Services 0300 123 4043 or Health and Community Services 0300 123 4042 and/or the Police as appropriate.

If it is not possible to report to the Safeguarding Officer, the information should be passed to another Senior Management Member immediately. All referrals must be confirmed in writing within 24 hours of being reported.

**How to respond to allegations of abuse against a member of staff/volunteer**

**It is never the responsibility of any member of staff or volunteer at The Box Moor Trust to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However we all have a responsibility to act on all concerns through contact with appropriate authorities. The Box Moor Trust will ensure all staff and volunteers are given full support and will protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern that a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk.**

**If you receive an allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer you should:**

* React calmly.
* If allegations were made by a child/vulnerable adult, reassure them.
* Take what the child or vulnerable adult reports seriously.
* Keep questions to a minimum and **listen** to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what is being said.
* Do not ask about explicit details.
* Reassure but do not promise confidentiality which may not be feasible.
* Inform the child/vulnerable adult what you will do next.
* Do not attempt to discuss anything with the staff member or volunteer, involve parents or carers or other members of Trust staff.
* Make a full, dated, written record with everything that was said and heard.
* Do not talk about any of the details with anyone other than the Safeguarding Officer.

**The report should include all or most of the following:**

* The child /vulnerable adult’s name, age and date of birth.
* The child/vulnerable adult’s home address and telephone number.
* Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concerns or those of someone else.
* The nature of the allegation, including dates and times and any other relevant information.
* Clear definition between fact, opinion and hearsay.
* A description of any physical signs such as bruising and any indirect signs such as behavioural changes.
* Details of witnesses to the incident.
* The child/vulnerable adult’s account of what has happened as heard by the reporter.
* If anyone else been consulted, who and what has been said.

The report must then be passed immediately to the Safeguarding Officer for The Box Moor Trust who will make the appropriate referral to Children’s Services 0300 123 4043 or Health and Community Services 0300 123 4042 and /or the Police as appropriate.

If it is not possible to report to the Safeguarding Officer, the information should be passed to another Senior Management Member immediately. All referrals must be confirmed in writing within 24 hours of being reported.