WESTON ARK CHARITY - SAFEGUARDING POLICY

TRUSTEE-APPROVED POLICY

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Our Commitment

Weston Ark Charity is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for everyone who uses the Hughenden Centre facilities, with particular attention to protecting children, young people, and adults at risk. Operating from the Hughenden Centre, our services include the Ark Café and venue hires, alongside supporting a Weston Foodbank outlet operated by dedicated volunteers.

While Weston Ark is not always a direct provider of activities for vulnerable groups, we recognise our fundamental duty of care in ensuring that all users operate within safe practices and maintain appropriate safeguarding standards.

Purpose and Scope

This policy promotes the welfare and safety of children, young people, and vulnerable adults, provides clear guidance to facility users and hirers on their responsibilities, and ensures safeguarding concerns are responded to appropriately and promptly.

This policy applies to:

- All trustees, employees, and volunteers engaging in Weston Ark activities at the Hughenden Centre
- All individuals and organisations hiring or using the Centre for events and activities
- All contractors and visitors to the Centre premises

This policy also applies to Weston Ark website content, online ticketing and related communications.

Key Definitions

Children and Young People**:** Anyone under the age of 18 years.

Adult at Risk**:** A person aged 18 or over who may need community care services due to age, disability, illness, or mental health conditions and who may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation.

Safeguarding**:** Protecting a person's health, wellbeing, and human rights, enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect. It is fundamental to high-quality care and support.

Governance and Responsibilities

Board of Trustees and Centre Manager Responsibilities**:**

- Ensure all hirers are fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities before facility use
- Include safeguarding as mandatory consideration in facility risk assessments and hire agreements
- Act appropriately and promptly on any safeguarding concern reported to the trustees
- Maintain oversight of safeguarding compliance across all Centre activities
- Provide guidance and support to hirers regarding safeguarding best practices
- Review and update safeguarding procedures regularly to reflect current legislation and guidance

Hirers and User Groups Responsibilities**:**

- Take complete responsibility for safeguarding during their use of the Centre premises
- Maintain their own comprehensive safeguarding policy if working with children or adults at risk
- Ensure all adults working with vulnerable groups, including volunteers, are appropriately vetted with DBS checks where legally required
- Report any safeguarding concerns immediately to relevant authorities and inform Weston Ark trustees
- Comply with all safeguarding requirements as condition of facility hire
- Maintain appropriate insurance coverage including safeguarding liability where applicable

Booking Conditions and Requirements

As mandatory condition of hire, all organisations or individuals using the Centre for activities involving children or adults at risk must:

Policy Documentation**:** Confirm they have current safeguarding policy and appropriate procedures in place, providing copies upon request.

Staff Vetting**:** Provide evidence of Enhanced DBS checks with barred list checks for relevant staff and volunteers if requested by Weston Ark management.

Compliance Agreement**:** Formally agree to abide by this safeguarding policy and all associated procedures during facility use.

Insurance Requirements**:** Maintain appropriate public liability insurance including coverage for safeguarding-related incidents where applicable.

Incident Reporting**:** Commit to immediate reporting of any safeguarding concerns or incidents to both statutory authorities and Weston Ark trustees.

Weston Ark reserves the absolute right to refuse or cancel bookings where safeguarding obligations are not met or where concerns exist regarding an organisation's safeguarding practices.

Types of Abuse (Children and Adults at Risk)

Children (under 18)

- Physical abuse
- Emotional/psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse (including online grooming and image-based abuse)
- Neglect
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE)
- Domestic abuse (impact on children)
- Online abuse
- Female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage
- Radicalisation and extremism

Adults at risk

- Physical abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological/emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational/institutional abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Self-neglect
- See the ‘Reporting Safeguarding Concerns’ section for how to respond and who to contact.

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

All personnel and facility users must be familiar with reporting procedures for safeguarding concerns. In the event of any safeguarding issue:

Immediate Emergency Response**:**

- If someone is in immediate danger or a crime has been committed: Call 999 immediately
- For non-emergency crime reporting: Call 101 or report online at www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/report/

Adult Safeguarding Concerns**:**

- *North Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board*: https://nssab.co.uk/
- *Monday to Friday 8am-6pm*: Care Connect 01275 888 801
- *Out of Hours and Weekends*: Emergency Duty Team 01454 615165

Child Safeguarding Concerns:

- *North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership*: https://nsscp.co.uk
- *Monday to Friday 8am-6pm*: Care Connect 01275 888 808
- *Out of Hours*: Calls automatically transferred to Out of Hours team

Internal Reporting: All hirers and users must notify Weston Ark management immediately if any incident or safeguarding concern occurs on the premises, regardless of statutory reporting requirements.

Safe Environment Standards

Weston Ark maintains comprehensive approach to environmental safety through:

Physical Safety Standards: Ensuring the Centre and all facilities are maintained in good repair and meet current health and safety standards with regular professional inspections.

Emergency Preparedness: Maintaining clear emergency exits, accessible facilities, and current emergency procedures with appropriate signage and equipment.

Risk Management: Conducting regular comprehensive risk assessments covering all areas of Centre operations, with particular attention to activities involving vulnerable groups.

Security Measures: Implementing appropriate access controls and security procedures to prevent unauthorised access to areas where vulnerable individuals may be present.

Facility Monitoring: Regular inspection and maintenance of all areas used by hirers, with immediate attention to any safety concerns or hazards.

Website Media: Before publishing identifiable photographs, videos or testimonies, record the rights holder's permission and appropriate permission from those featured. For children, obtain parent or guardian permission and consider the child's wishes. Refer capacity or safeguarding concerns to the safeguarding lead; do not publish while unresolved.

Avoid sensitive circumstances, children's names, routines and location metadata. Participation or a hirer's permission does not establish everyone's consent. Report concerns promptly and remove affected media when consent is withdrawn or safety requires it. Trustees confirm safeguarding appointments and handovers; website role changes do not appoint a safeguarding lead.

Training and Awareness

Trustee and Staff Training: All trustees and employees receive appropriate safeguarding training relevant to their roles, with regular updates to maintain current knowledge of legislation and best practices.

Hirer Education: Guidance and resources provided to all facility hirers regarding safeguarding requirements, best practices, and available support services.

Volunteer Support: Clear guidance and training provided to volunteers regarding safeguarding responsibilities and reporting procedures within their specific roles.

Documentation Requirements: Maintenance of training records and evidence of competence for all personnel involved in safeguarding-sensitive activities.

Incident Management

Immediate Response Protocol: Clear procedures for responding to safeguarding incidents including immediate safety measures, appropriate notifications, and evidence preservation.

Investigation Cooperation: Full cooperation with statutory investigations while maintaining appropriate confidentiality and support for all affected parties.

Documentation Standards: Comprehensive record-keeping of all safeguarding concerns, actions taken, and outcomes achieved in accordance with legal requirements.

Learning and Improvement: Regular review of incidents to identify systemic improvements and prevent recurrence through enhanced procedures or training.

Policy Monitoring and Review

Annual Review Process: Comprehensive annual review of policy effectiveness, incident analysis, and compliance with current legislation and guidance.

Incident-Triggered Reviews: Additional reviews conducted following any safeguarding incident to ensure policy adequacy and identify necessary improvements.

Stakeholder Engagement: Regular consultation with hirers, users, and relevant statutory agencies to ensure policy remains current and effective.

Communication Updates: Systematic communication of policy updates to all regular hirers, users, and stakeholders through multiple channels.

Key Contact Information

Weston Ark Management:

- *Centre Manager*: 07778 378216 • centre.manager@westonark.org.uk
- *Board of Trustees*: trustees@westonark.org.uk

Emergency Services:

- *Emergency (life-threatening)*: 999
- *Non-emergency crime reporting*: 101 or www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/report/

Adult Safeguarding:

- *North Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board*: https://nssab.co.uk/
- *Care Connect (Mon-Fri 8am-6pm)*: 01275 888 801
- *Emergency Duty Team (out of hours)*: 01454 615165

Child Safeguarding:

- *North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership*: https://nsscp.co.uk
- *Care Connect (Mon-Fri 8am-6pm)*: 01275 888 808
- *Out of Hours*: Automatic transfer to duty team

Implementation and Compliance

This policy creates binding framework for all Centre users and Weston Ark personnel. Compliance is mandatory condition of facility use, and non-compliance may result in immediate termination of hire agreements and exclusion from future bookings.

All personnel and hirers must demonstrate understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and actively contribute to maintaining safe environment for all Centre users, particularly vulnerable individuals who may access our services or facilities.

We are committed to continuous improvement in safeguarding standards through regular training, policy review, stakeholder engagement, and implementation of best practices aligned with statutory guidance and regulatory requirements.

This policy represents our firm commitment to the safety and welfare of all individuals who use the Hughenden Centre, with particular attention to protecting those who may be vulnerable to harm or exploitation.

Policy approved by Board of Trustees. Approval confirmed 10 November 2026.