

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY: Friends of Princes Park

Friends of Princes Park [FOPP] are committed to practices that protect children from harm and work in collaboration with Liverpool City Council.

Personnel

The Chair and Secretary will act as Child Protection Officer who will record any incidents to Liverpool Social Services. They can allocate responsibility to someone else to act on their behalf.

The Park

Princes Park is an unstaffed public facility open to all the community and never closed. As such people who use it know that they have the same responsibility for their own & their children's safety within the park, as in any public place.

FOPP will consider the introduction of child protection features in the park that, wherever possible, maintain public visibility at the front and prune shrubs where appropriate.

Activities

Any activities in the park, planned by FOPP, will take account of child protection issues. Members of FOPP will not engage with young people on a one-to-one basis in the park.

Where activities planned by the Friends group take place involving children from local schools, during school time, the Friends will operate under the school's Child Protection Policy, with any volunteers being vetted by the school's Child Protection Officer.

Reporting

Any incidents that are brought to the notice of the Friends group via the Child Protection Officer will be notified to Liverpool Social Services.

INTRODUCTION: FOPP will ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount;
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- All members of FOPP have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

Volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.

POLICY STATEMENT

We have a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in activities organised by FOPP from harm. All children have a right to protection and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable, must be taken into account. FOPP will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved through adherence to the following Child Protection guidelines. A 'child' is defined as under 18 – The Children's Act 1989.

POLICY AIMS

The aim of FOPP Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection during task days and projects in Princes Park.
- Allow all members to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

All members should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment)
- Treating all people equally and with respect and dignity.
- Putting the welfare of each young person first, before achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child).
- Volunteers should not have access to children without the presence of an adult who is deemed to be responsible for the child/children.
- Making conservation fun, enjoyable and promoting a positive attitude towards the natural environment.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly. Parents may be sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Keeping up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance for conservation work.
- Ensuring parents/carers, of children less than 16 years of age are responsible for their children's safety when working with FOPP.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive work programmes and not pushing them against their will.

Practice to be avoided

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If these situations are unavoidable they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of another member of the group or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital:

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Never take children to your home where they will be alone with you.

Practice never to be sanctioned

The following should **never** be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching;
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun;
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control;
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves or their parents can do.

Guidelines for Use of Photographic Filming Equipment

Photographs are used to promote the work of FOPP and encourage more people to volunteer. Any photographs taken appear in our notice boards, printed publications, on our website, or all three. Parental consent will be obtained before any photographs of children are taken.

Recruitment and Selecting Committee Members

FOPP recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. No FOPP members will work with children who are unaccompanied by an adult.

Responding to suspicions and allegations

It is not the responsibility of any member of FOPP to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. FOPP will assure all members that it

will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a member is, or may be abusing a child.

Action if there are concerns:

Poor Practice

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Child Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Parks Development Manager, who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Suspected Abuse

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by a member should be reported to the Child Protection Officer, who will take such steps as are considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question or any other child who may be at risk.
- The Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the Social Services Department who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out of hours.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Social Services Department.
- The Child Protection Officer will deal with any media enquiries.

If the Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the FOPP Executive Committee who will refer the allegation to Social Services.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

Internal Enquiries and Suspension

- The FOPP Child Protection Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended from FOPP pending further police and Social Services enquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the Social Services or police enquiries, FOPP executive Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, FOPP Executive Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of children is always paramount.

Bullying:

If bullying is suspected volunteers should consult with the adults who are deemed to be responsible for the child/children and together with them encourage all children to speak and share their concerns. Where appropriate the volunteer should:

- Help the victims and adults to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority.
- Take necessary action to ensure the victim and adult are safe.
- Keep records of any incidents recording what happened and any volunteer involvement.
- Report any concerns to the Child Protection Officer

Written ... January 2018
To be reviewed ... January 2023

Adopted by Friends of Princes Park

Name:

Committee Role:

Signature:

Date:

