

The Millennium Farm Trust

## GN3 Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures V11

Next review due March 2026



### Version Control

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# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY AND PROCEDURES

## 1. Purpose

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. 'Children' includes everyone under the age of 18. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interest of the child.

*(Keeping Children Safe in Education)*

This document is compliant with DfE statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe In Education as required by Suffolk County Council.

### **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children**

Depden Care Farm is the trading name of Millennium Farm Trust.

Millennium Farm Trust has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse. We recognise the moral and statutory responsibility placed on all staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people. We aim to provide a safe and welcoming environment in which children can learn, underpinned by a culture of openness where both children and adults feel secure, are able to raise concerns and believe they are being listened to, and that appropriate action will be taken to keep them safe.

MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST recognises that, under the Children Act [1989](#) and [2004](#), it has a duty and responsibility for making arrangements to ensure all its functions are discharged having regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children/young people in their care – this includes all services directly provided and commissioned by the local authority. A child is anyone up until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

"Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children" is defined in [Working Together 2023](#) as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework

## 2. Persons affected

- All staff, paid and unpaid, this includes volunteers
- All service users
- All visitors and contractors

### **3. Safeguarding policy**

MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST is committed to the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It has:

- a clear line of accountability for the commissioning and/or provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- a senior board level lead to take leadership responsibility for MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST's safeguarding arrangements;
- a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services;
- clear whistleblowing procedures which reflect the principles in Sir Robert Francis's Freedom to Speak Up review and are suitably referenced in staff training and codes of conduct, and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed;
- arrangements which set out clearly the processes for sharing information procedures with other professionals and with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB);
- a designated professional lead for safeguarding at MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST, the Director.
- safe recruitment practices for individuals whom MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST will permit to work regularly with children, including policies on when to obtain a DBS check;
- appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking safeguarding training;
- ensuring that staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role;
- staff are given a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with safeguarding responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare;
- all staff should have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they improve over time in their work with children, young people and families.
- clear policies in line with those from the LSCB for dealing with allegations against people who work with children. Such policies should make a clear distinction between an allegation, a concern about the quality of care or practice or a complaint. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:
  - behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
  - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
  - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

### **4. Online Safety**

Millennium Farm Trust believes that children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind and that they should be able to use the internet for education and personal development, at the farm when required to do so but safeguards need to be in place to ensure they are kept safe at all times.

We recognise that:

- the online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however it can also present risks and challenges
- we have a duty to ensure that all children, young people and adults involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online
- we have a responsibility to help keep children and young people safe online, whether or not they are using Depden Care Farm's network and devices
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare and in helping young people to be responsible in their approach to online safety
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

The use of the internet and social media is restricted at that farm. Wifi is password protected and customers only use the internet for farm related purposes (eg research) under supervision. None the less, we will always seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Appointing the safeguarding lead as the an online safety
- providing clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on how to behave online through our social media policy.
- supporting and encouraging the young people using our service to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others
- supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online
- developing clear and robust procedures to enable us to respond appropriately to any incidents of inappropriate online behaviour, whether by an adult or a child or young person
- reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly
- providing supervision, support and training for staff and volunteers about online safety
- examining and risk assessing any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation.

#### **4.1 Managing Online Safety as Part of Provision**

Where access to the internet or digital technology forms part of the provision at Depden Care Farm, we will ensure:

- Children are supervised when accessing online resources.
- Appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place on all devices provided by the organisation.
- Online safety is included in staff safeguarding training and in awareness-raising with pupils.

#### **4.2 Remote Sessions**

Depden Care Farm does not routinely provide remote teaching or online sessions. If circumstances change and remote sessions are introduced, this policy will be updated to set out clear protocols for safe practice, including parental consent, secure platforms, and staff training.

#### **4.3 Ongoing Awareness and Safety Outside of Provision**

We recognise that safeguarding responsibilities extend beyond our setting, as children may be at risk online outside of care farm hours. Our approach aligns with the four areas of risk identified in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)*:

1. **Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful material (e.g. pornography, extremism, self-harm content).

2. **Contact** – harmful online interaction with other users, including grooming, bullying, or exploitation.
3. **Conduct** – children’s own online behaviour, which may increase the likelihood of harm, such as sharing personal information or engaging in aggressive or illegal activity.
4. **Commerce** – exposure to financial risks such as online gambling, scams, phishing, and inappropriate advertising.

Staff will:

- Raise awareness with children about safe online behaviour.
- Reinforce messages about risks during provision where appropriate.
- Support parents/carers with guidance and signposting to resources on online safety.
- Report safeguarding concerns arising from online activity in line with this policy.

**MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST will ensure that staff understand;**

- What they need to do, and what they can expect of one another, to safeguard children.
- As an day care service primarily for adults, children attending the farm is rare. When they do, they must be always accompanied by dedicated support staff who remain with them at all times.
- Core legal requirements, making it clear what individuals and MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST should do to keep children safe. In doing so, MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST seeks to emphasise that effective safeguarding systems are those where:
- The child’s needs are paramount, and the needs and wishes of each child, be they a baby or infant, or an older child, should be put first, so that every child receives the support they need before a problem escalates;
- That all staff who come into contact with children and families are alert to their needs and any risks of harm that individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children;
- The requirement to share appropriate information in a timely way and can discuss any concerns about an individual child with colleagues and local authority children’s social care;
- The necessity to use their expert judgement to put the child’s needs at the heart of the safeguarding system so that the right solution can be found for each individual child;
- The necessity to contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote a child’s welfare and take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific plans and outcomes;
- **Key principles will be communicated that;**
- safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part; and
- a child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

## PART I: SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES (ALL STAFF)

### 1. Responsibilities

The responsibilities for dealing with safeguarding lie with the following:

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All members of staff (paid and unpaid) are required to report any suspected abuse and be aware of the appropriate reporting and support procedure for safeguarding. It is important that Staff are also aware of the Government's PREVENT strategy. The aim of this is to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism in all its forms. This can also be a safeguarding issue but has different reporting mechanisms.

The Safeguarding Officer(s) will discharge their safeguarding functions in a way that ensures that children are safeguarded from harm, and promotes their welfare. They are responsible for following up any suspected reports of abuse and for informing the Police or other appropriate external bodies.

The Director is responsible for supervision of these activities.

### 2. Safeguarding procedures

- Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility
- MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST' commitment to keeping children and young people safe is regularly and consistently referenced in all our key policies, procedures, website and appropriate documents.
- MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST communicates its safeguarding policies and procedures to all staff. This is done as part of induction, at supervision for relevant roles and policies and procedures are available on the staff 'shared drive' under policies and procedures: safeguarding
- MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST communicates its safeguarding policies and procedures to all staff and relevant stakeholders, including the children and young people we support through its website, staff and documentation. Safeguarding updates on practice or referral routes etc is a standing item on internal team meeting agendas.
- MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST communicates its safeguarding policies and procedures to its Board Members as part of a standing agenda item at Board meetings.

### 5 Reporting of Safeguarding concerns

If you are worried about a child, talk to the MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST Safeguarding Lead to discuss your concerns at the earliest opportunity.

#### Designated Safeguarding Officers

Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer	Tim Freathy	mb 07816 828016
Deputy Officer	Nicola King	mb 07542 502610
Deputy Officer	Tom Chapman	mb 07311 466124

You can also seek advice from the MASH Professional Consultation Line: 0345 6061499

The MASH consultation line is for you to discuss the most appropriate and effective way of providing or obtaining help and support for a child (or adult) you feel is at risk of abuse. This will include advice and guidance about making a referral where necessary, including how to involve parents.

In Early Help cases no Multi Agency Referral Form should be sent to the MASH without prior discussion with the Practice Lead or Team manager of the relevant Early Help team.

Where a child and family have an allocated Social Worker, you will need to contact the named Social Worker Directly to discuss any concerns.

If you have an IMMEDIATE safeguarding concern you should contact customer first on: 03456 066 167 (24 hours)

All referrals should be followed up by completion of a [Multi Agency Referral Form \(MARF\)](#) (with accompanying [guidance notes](#)) within 24 hours sent to Customer First via [secure e-mail](#).

For children referred to Depden Care Farm from a school or third party alternative education provider, The DSL or DDSL will report safeguarding concerns to the school or alternative education provider immediately. The DSL or DDSL will record that there has been a concern regarded the child concerned, and the date and time they passed the information on to the school's DSL. They will retain evidence of receipt by the school.

As stated in our missing person's policy, the DSL will immediately inform the school's DSL so they may follow up the absence.

## 6 Recognising child abuse

Abuse can take many forms and the examples in the definitions below are not exhaustive. There may be other situations not covered in the examples below that give you concern for a child's safety and wellbeing. If you have a concern follow the reporting flowchart.

### 6.3 Definitions of abuse

#### **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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

#### **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 conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate... It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber 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, not necessarily involving high levels of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse as can other children.

## **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group coerces, manipulates, or deceives a child into sexual activity in exchange for something the child needs or wants, or for the advantage of the perpetrator. This may occur online, in person, or a combination of both. CSE often involves grooming and can affect any child, regardless of background.

### ***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, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment;
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### ***EXPLOITATION***

Exploitation is a form of abuse where individuals take advantage of a child's vulnerability for personal gain. It can be criminal, sexual, or financial in nature.

## ***Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)***

CCE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate, or deceive a child into criminal activity. This may involve:

- children being forced or enticed into transporting drugs, money, or weapons
- working in illegal activities
- committing crimes on behalf of others.

Victims may still have been criminally exploited even if they appear to have consented.

Definitions from *Working together to safeguard children, 2015*

## **7 Specific Safeguarding Issues**

### **STAFF MUST ALSO BE AWARE OF THE FOLLOWING SAFEGUARDING ISSUES**

## 7.1 Domestic abuse

**Be aware that a referral must be made direct to Children's Social Care, following the reporting flowchart below, if it seems reasonable to suspect that:**

- a child sees, hears, experiences or is otherwise aware of domestic abuse – i.e. that domestic abuse is part of their experience of family life. This applies regardless of whether they actually witness any particular event or are physically harmed, and
- the non-abusing parent will not be able – for whatever reason – to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their child without significant professional assistance and support.

(Refer to [Domestic Abuse policy](#) on LSCB website for further guidance and accompanying MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST procedure for more information).

Recognising signs and symptoms of possible and actual abuse can be found at Appendix B of this document.

## 7.2 Female Genital Mutilation

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers, along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.

Those failing to report such cases may face disciplinary sanctions.

It is unlikely that farm staff or volunteers will see visual evidence and they should not examine anyone, even if they suspect FGM having occurred. But they might be told about it.

Staff must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM has been carried out. Staff should still consider and discuss any such case with the school's or college's designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and involve local authority children's social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over.

## 7.3 Vulnerable to radicalisation (VTR) or influenced by Extremism

Staff may notice a change in a child or young person behaviour that may suggest they are vulnerable to violent extremism.

After having discussed concerns with appropriate colleagues, being mindful of confidentiality, where the staff member still has concerns that the individual may be vulnerable to violent extremism, a [Vulnerable To Radicalisation \(VTR\) referral form](#) is to be completed and sent to the [MASH](#) and relevant CYPS team if under 18. The MASH will notify Special Branch to carry out deconfliction checks and an initial assessment of the VTR prior to any further information gathering on the individual.

For urgent safeguarding concerns call Customer First 0808 800 4005

UNLIKE SAFEGUARDING STAFF MUST NOT DISCUSS CONCERNS WITH THE INDIVIDUAL PRIOR TO REFERRAL

#### **7.4 Children missing from Education**

Children missing education, particularly persistently, can act as a vital a warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual abuse and child sexual and child criminal exploitation.

It is important that the school's response to children missing from education supports identifying such abuse and also helps prevent the risk of them going missing in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to LA children's social care and need a social worker (such as on a child in need or child protection plan, or as a looked after child), where going missing from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. As such, all staff should be aware of the school's safeguarding response to children missing from education.

When a child goes missing from the farm, the farm's missing persons policy must be followed, which includes first day calling. In the case of children, the relevant local authority must also be informed.

#### **5.5 Child on Child abuse**

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of school or college and online. All staff should be clear as to the school or college's policy and procedures with regard to child-on-child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos<sup>11</sup> (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- upskirting which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

#### **5.5 Mental Health**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children includes protecting their mental health as well as their physical safety.

- Staff should be alert to signs of poor mental health, such as withdrawal, changes in mood, eating or sleeping patterns, self-harm, or talk of suicide.
- Concerns should be discussed promptly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and recorded.
- Where appropriate, referrals will be made to Early Help, Children's Social Care, or specialist mental health services (e.g. CAMHS).
- Staff are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions but should ensure children receive appropriate support and intervention.

## 8. Preventative Arrangements and Procedures

### 8.1 General Preventative Measures

Depden Care Farm reduces risk across all three areas by:

- Maintaining strong relationships with children, building trust so they can disclose concerns.
- Ensuring staff receive annual safeguarding training, including specific modules on CSE, radicalisation, and county lines.
- Monitoring attendance, behaviour, and wellbeing closely, and responding swiftly to unexplained absence or significant changes in behaviour.
- Keeping open communication with parents/carers, schools, and social workers.
- Maintaining clear boundaries, codes of conduct, and safe supervision ratios.

### 8.2 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

**Procedures to Reduce Risk:**

- Staff are trained to spot signs of grooming, such as unexplained gifts, relationships with older peers/adults, secrecy, or withdrawal from usual activities.
- One-to-one supervision is always risk-assessed, and staff avoid being alone in isolated areas with a child.
- Internet use (where applicable) is supervised and subject to filtering and monitoring systems.
- Any concerns or suspicions are reported immediately to the DSL, who will liaise with the Local Authority MASH and police if required.
- We promote healthy relationships education and self-esteem building as part of everyday provision.

### 8.3 Radicalisation

**Procedures to Reduce Risk:**

- Staff are trained under the *Prevent Duty* to recognise signs of radicalisation, including changes in dress, language, or behaviour, withdrawal from peers, fixation on extreme views, or intolerance of others.
- The DSL is the designated Prevent Lead and will make referrals to the Channel programme or police Prevent Team where appropriate.
- The care farm environment promotes inclusion, diversity, and respect to reduce vulnerability to extremist narratives.
- Online access is monitored to prevent exposure to extremist content.
- If radicalisation is suspected, staff report concerns immediately to the DSL, who will follow safeguarding and Prevent referral pathways.

### 8.4 County Lines and Gang Involvement

**Procedures to Reduce Risk:**

- Staff are alert to indicators such as frequent missing episodes, unexplained possessions or money, older associates, use of drug-related language, or changes in attendance.

- The farm maintains close links with local schools, youth services, and Suffolk Police Community Teams to share concerns and intelligence.
- Travel arrangements to and from the farm are monitored; unexplained changes may trigger concern.
- Staff promote safe, positive activities and provide trusted adult relationships to reduce vulnerability to gang recruitment.
- Concerns about suspected county lines exploitation are reported immediately to the DSL, who will escalate to the Local Authority and police.

#### **8.5 Escalation and Recording**

- All concerns are recorded in the safeguarding log and discussed with the DSL without delay.
- The DSL will determine whether early help, referral to children's social care, or immediate police involvement is necessary.
- Where appropriate, the DSL will consult Suffolk County Council guidance and safeguarding partners.

#### **8.6 Responsibilities**

- **All staff** must remain vigilant and report concerns.
- **DSL/Deputy DSL** must ensure procedures are followed, referrals are made, and staff are trained.
- **Trustees** must ensure compliance with the *Prevent Duty* and wider safeguarding responsibilities.

### **9 Allegations of abuse or malpractice against a member of staff including volunteers**

It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a person who works with children and young people including those who work in a voluntary capacity are dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

This procedure applies to a wider range of allegations than those in which there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. **It also includes allegations that might indicate that the alleged perpetrator is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. This may be due to concerns about the persons conduct in their personal or professional life that might indicate their unsuitability to work with children.**

It must be used in respect of all allegations that are consistent with the guidance in Working Together i.e. cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child; or
- behaved in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

**If the allegation is against a MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST member of staff or volunteer the allegation must be reported immediately, at least within one working day, to Tim Freathy the MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST Designated Safeguarding Lead**

If the allegation is against the Safeguarding Lead then the allegation must be reported to the MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST Deputy Safeguarding Lead. The MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST Safeguarding Deputy must then report the allegation to the Chair of the Trustees the same day.

**Contact details for LADO's 0300 123 2044**

Email: [ladocentral@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:ladocentral@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk)

## 10 Referral Procedures

We are all responsible for reporting concerns about a child's welfare. Legislation and guidance for each of the UK's 4 nations clearly sets out expectations with regard to professionals reporting their suspicions that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm to the authorities (NSPCC)

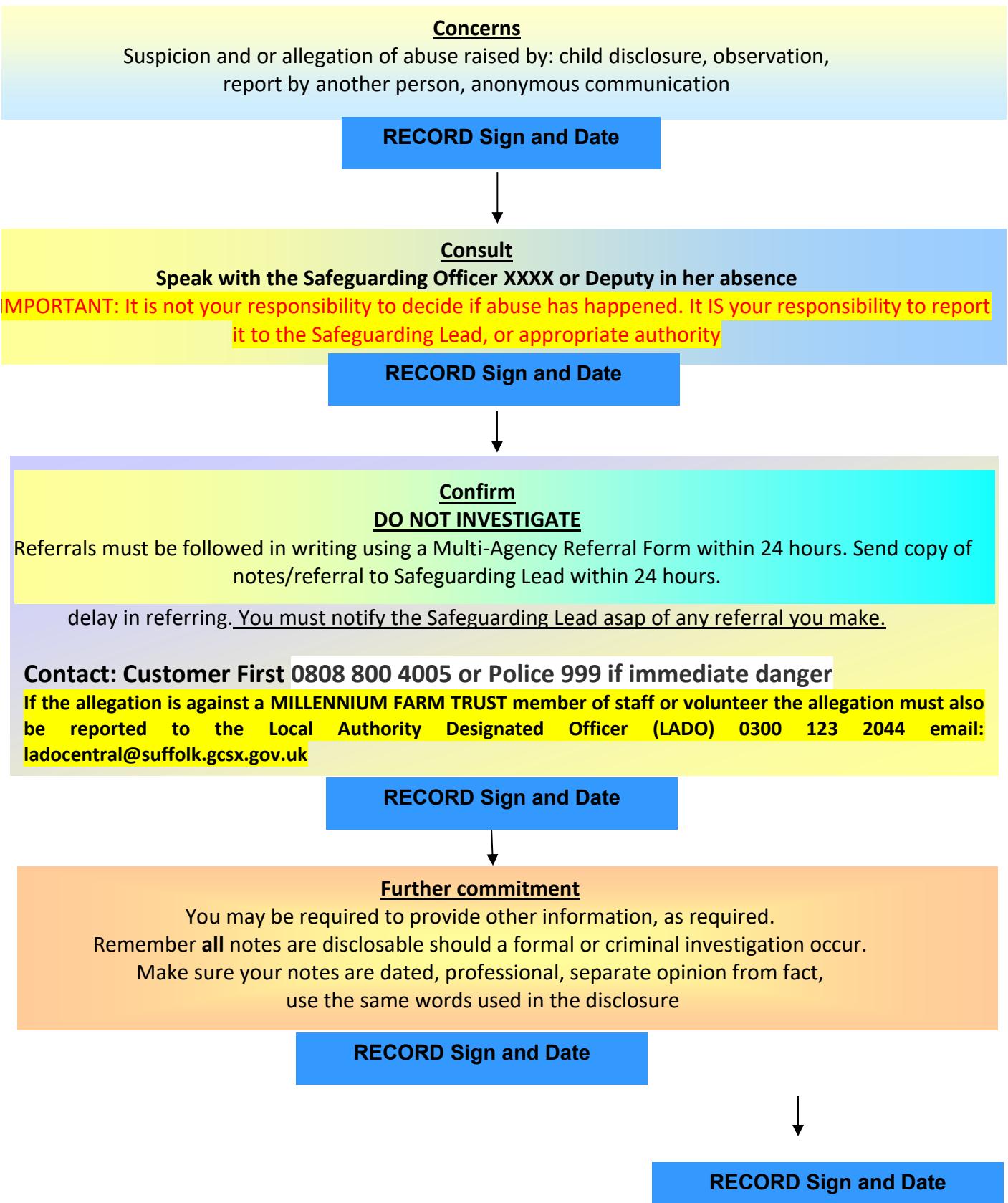
- Referral to children's social care services should be made using the [Multi-Agency Referral Form](#).
- Vulnerable to Radicalisation [\(VTR\) referral form](#)

All professionals making telephone referrals to Suffolk's children's social services (including via Customer First) MUST confirm this in writing **within 24 hours**. If you are worried about the **immediate** safety of a child/young person and cannot contact a Safeguarding Officer, call the police on 999. You can also contact the local authority. Your report must be accurate and where possible use the child's exact words if they disclosed the information to you, not your own.

The report must be signed and dated, including the year. Ensure the form is emailed safely following the directions on the form and ensure a copy is sent to MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST's Safeguarding Lead in the same manner marked "Confidential SG".

## 10.5 Flowchart for referral for actual or suspected abuse

For staff who are not safeguarding leads



## 12 Information sharing procedures relating to safeguarding children

To be read in conjunction with the MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST Information Sharing policy and procedure

Through the safe and effective sharing of information it aims to ensure that vulnerable adults and or children get the support they require from external services and that the people it works with are protected from harm, abuse or neglect. It also seeks to prevent them from offending.

In many reviews into deaths of children and or vulnerable adults the lack of information sharing between agencies and organisations is often highlighted as a contributory, if not causal, factor in the death. **It is imperative that MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST staff understand the requirement to share safeguarding information in order to protect vulnerable children from harm.**

Confidentiality and information sharing must be integrated across all aspects of MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST services and management as its users have the right to privacy and confidentiality and to understand when “secrets” cannot be protected for their best interests.

### 12.5 Information sharing definitions

**Confidentiality:** Not all information is confidential. Confidential information is information of some sensitivity, which is not already lawfully in the public domain or readily available from another public source, and which has been shared in a relationship where the person giving the information understood that it would not be shared with others.

MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST understands confidentiality to mean that no information regarding a service user shall be given directly or indirectly to any third party which is external to the Staff, without that service user's prior expressed consent to disclose such information.

**Breach of confidentiality:** Confidence is only breached where the sharing of **confidential** information is not authorised by the person who provided it or to whom it relates. If the information was provided on the understanding that it would be shared with a limited range of people or for limited purposes, then sharing in accordance with that understanding will not be a breach of confidence. Similarly, there will not be a breach of confidence where there is explicit consent to the sharing.

**Even where sharing of confidential information is not authorised, MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST may lawfully share it if this can be justified in the public interest.**

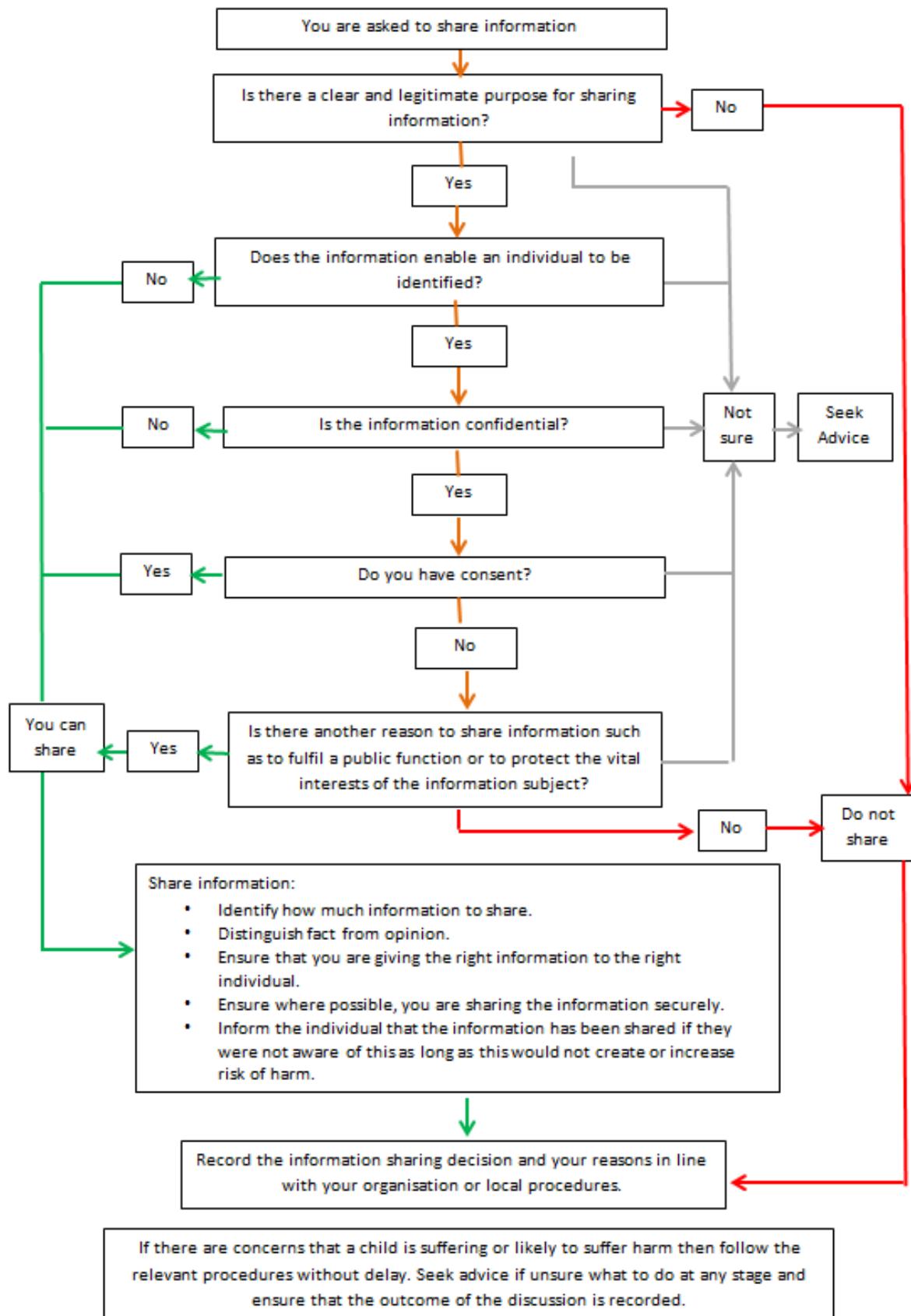
Seeking consent should be the first option, if appropriate. Where consent cannot be obtained to the sharing of the information or is refused, or where seeking it is likely to undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a crime, the question of whether there is a sufficient public interest must be judged by the Manager with the CE on the facts of each case.

Therefore, where you have a concern about a child or young person, you should not regard refusal of consent as necessarily precluding the sharing of confidential information

**Public interest:** A public interest can arise in a wide range of circumstances, for example, to protect children or other people from harm, to promote the welfare of children or to prevent crime and disorder. There are also public interests, which in some circumstances may weigh against sharing, including the public interest in maintaining public confidence in the confidentiality of certain services. The key factor in deciding whether or not to share confidential information is proportionality, i.e. whether the proposed sharing is a proportionate response to the need to protect the public interest in question.

**Serious crime:** This means any crime which causes or is likely to cause significant harm to a child or young person or serious harm to an adult.

## 12.6 Information sharing flowchart



## **PART II: RESPONSIBILITIES OF MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST SAFEGUARDING OFFICER(S)**

### **1. Responsibilities of MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST Safeguarding Officer**

This role will work closely with the senior Board level lead. The Lead Safeguarding Officer's role is to support other staff to recognise the needs of children, including identifying and responding to possible abuse. The role will be given sufficient resource and, supervision and support them to fulfil their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively. They will discharge their safeguarding functions in a way that ensures that children are safeguarded from harm, and promotes their welfare.

In the case of allegations made against MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST Staff (including volunteers) the Safeguarding Lead will work with the LADO and must follow local Suffolk County Council/LSCB procedures. In cases of actual or suspected abuse by a member of MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST staff the Safeguarding Lead in consultation with the LADO will ensure the Police and/or other statutory bodies like Social Services are informed as appropriate. The victim must be protected from further abuse while the Police/ external agencies conduct their own investigation.

If not already aware any allegation must be reported to the Safeguarding Lead unless the Safeguarding Lead is the alleged perpetrator, in that situation the report will be made to the MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

Any information held either electronically or in hard copy will be held securely in a password protected document or sealed envelope in a secure, locked cabinet/drawer. Any electronic database used for recording and reporting abuse internally will protect the identity of the child and use an identifying code rather than the name so as to ensure confidentiality.

### **13 Responsibilities of the MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST Safeguarding Trustee**

In its publication Strategy for dealing with safeguarding vulnerable groups including children's issues in charities, the Charity Commission is clear that Trustees have primary responsibility for safeguarding in MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST while some responsibilities can be delegated overall responsibility lies with the Board.

To enable the Board not only to support the management and staff team in Millennium Farm Trust, including the Safeguarding Lead Officer, but also to provide an important mechanism for critically evaluating the information presented to the Board by the management team, and, where necessary, challenging and checking it out.

To ensure that MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST is taking steps to safeguard and take responsibility for the children with whom it works and is acting in their best interests, taking all reasonable steps to prevent any harm to them, assessing and managing risk, ensuring safeguarding policies and procedures are in place, undertaking ongoing monitoring and reviewing of policies and procedures including complaints and recruitment, to ensure that safeguards are being implemented and are effective, that MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST is responding appropriately to allegations of abuse

## **SECTION 2: DETAILED PROCEDURES FOR MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS (OR STAFF REPORTING IN THEIR ABSENCE)**

The following procedures must be followed and referred to as necessary: -

- Common Assessment Framework (CAF)
- Child In Need (CIN)
- Domestic abuse

### **1. Allegations Management : Allegations of abuse or malpractice against a member of staff (including volunteers).**

It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a person who works with children and young people including those who work in a voluntary capacity are dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation. The framework for managing allegations is set out in [Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children 2006](#), and [Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education 2007](#).

The framework for managing cases set out in this procedure applies to a wider range of allegations than those in which there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

It also caters for cases of allegations that might indicate that the alleged perpetrator is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. This may be due to concerns about the persons conduct in their personal or professional life that might indicate their unsuitability to work with children. It should be used in respect of all allegations that are consistent with the guidance in Working Together i.e. cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

**behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child  
possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child; or  
behaved in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.**

In compliance with the Local Safeguarding Board's Allegations Management guidance, the following procedures will be followed;

#### **Reporting procedure for Allegations**

**If the allegation is against a MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST member of staff the allegation must be reported immediately, at least within one working day, to the MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST Safeguarding Lead.** If the allegation is against the Safeguarding Lead then the allegation must be reported to the MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST Deputy Safeguarding Lead. The MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST Safeguarding Deputy must then report the allegation to the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) on the same day.

#### **Contact details for LADO's 0300 123 2044**

**Email: [ladocentral@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:ladocentral@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk)**

Please see [embedded guidance](#) from the Suffolk Safeguarding Board regarding Managing allegations for full details.

## **Initial consideration**

The LA Designated Officer (LADO) will discuss the matter with the MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST Safeguarding Officer and, where necessary, obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded.

If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child or young person is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the LA Designated Officer should immediately inform the police and convene a similar discussion to decide whether a police investigation is needed. That discussion should also involve the employer.

## **Action following initial consideration**

Where the initial evaluation decides that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence, it is dealt with by the MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST Safeguarding Officer or Chair. In such cases, if the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, appropriate action should be instituted within three working days. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, the hearing should be held within 15 working days.

Where further investigation is required to inform consideration of disciplinary action, the Safeguarding Officer or Chair will discuss who will undertake that investigation with the LA Designated Officer. In some settings and circumstances, it may be appropriate for the disciplinary investigation to be conducted by a person who is independent of MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST or the person's line manager to ensure objectivity. In any case, the investigating officer should aim to provide a report to the employer within 10 working days.

On receipt of the report of the disciplinary investigation, the Safeguarding Officer or Chair should decide whether a disciplinary hearing is needed **within two working days**, and if a hearing is needed it should be held **within 15 working days**

## **Suspension**

The possible risk of harm to children posed by an accused person needs to be managed and evaluated. The evaluation will be in respect of the child/ren involved in the allegation and any other children in the individual's home, work or community life. In some cases it will require consideration to be given to the use of suspension for the person involved in the allegation. This may be until the matter is resolved

A MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST member of staff must not be automatically suspended without careful thought and consideration of the circumstances of the allegation. In making the decision, the Safeguarding Officer must consider whether the person should be suspended from contact with children for the duration of the investigation, or until resolution has been reached. In any case, alternatives to suspension should be explored and advice sought from the LA Designated Officer.

If the allegation has been referred and a strategy meeting is to be convened, it will be a task of the strategy meeting to consider the facts of the allegation, and although a senior manager of MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST cannot be directed to suspend, they will be supported in making the decision. This should be done after the views of the designated senior named officer from the police and Area Safeguarding Manager have been canvassed.

If the allegation is reported to a MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST staff member against a member of staff (including a volunteer) of another organisation or agency then the member of MILLENNIUM FARM

TRUST staff should consult with the MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST Safeguarding Officer and agree who should contact the LADO. However, if any delay in this procedure is likely to put a young person at risk of significant harm, then the MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST member of staff should contact the LADO directly.

## **14 Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Procedure**

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a tool that any professional working with children, young people and their families can use to help them identify unmet additional needs. It is intended to be used to support the development of relationships with families and early intervention when it is needed.

CAF is used when we alone are unable to meet all the identified needs and it is necessary to refer a child with whom we are working to another agency for support. In some cases it may be difficult to establish exactly what the needs are, or how those needs will be met.

Consent from family/young person is required, CAF can only be used when the child or young person and family are happy to work alongside professionals to meet the child's needs.

Read LSCB CAF reporting guidance and [practitioner guide](#)

## **15 Children in Need (CIN) procedures**

These procedures set out the requirements for agencies in Suffolk to work together to work to achieve good outcomes with children who are 'in need' under the Children Act 1989 and their families. It (has been) agreed by the Suffolk Local Safeguarding Children Board and is mandatory for all agencies.

In accordance with the Suffolk LSCB's Interagency policy and procedure for children in need under the Children Act 1989 MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST is cognisant that it must:

- build and maintain effective partnerships at a strategic and local level to support good outcomes for children in need.
- promote child centred practice where the focus is on the child's safety and welfare
- designate a senior person within each agency to take the lead role for children in need
- give sufficient priority and resources are given to work with children in need to promote good outcomes
- ensure that staff have appropriate knowledge and skills to work effectively with children in need
- ensure they have quality assurance processes in place and participate in multi-agency audits of practice with children in need

In this procedure:

- 'Child' means those 0 -18 years (19 years if disabled) and includes unborn babies.
- 'Parent or carer' includes birth parents, whether or not they live with the child, adoptive and step parents, partners of parents and those with a significant caring role for the child
- CIN means child in need under Children Act 1989 (Section 17)
- 

Who are children 'in need' under this policy?

- Children with multiple and complex needs who, unless services are provided may be at risk of significant harm and poor outcomes. (Defined in Children Act 1989 Section 17)
- Children in need have needs at Level 3 as defined in [Meeting the needs of children and families in Suffolk 2010](#)

### Principles for work with children in need

- 1) The safety and welfare of the child is central at all times.
- 2) All work with children in need is focussed on achieving the best possible outcomes.
- 3) Help will be given to children in need and their families as early as possible to prevent difficulties escalating.
- 4) Establishing rapport and a constructive working relationship with the child (as appropriate to age and understanding) and their parents and carers will be a cornerstone of the work.
- 5) All relevant agencies have a responsibility to work together to achieve good outcomes for children in need, led by children's social care
- 6) Parents and carers are, as consistent with the child's safety and welfare, supported to parent effectively and the [ACCORD Protocol](#) is used to facilitate support for parents who have a disability or additional support need.

## **16 Domestic Incidents/Abuse procedure**

(Refer to [Domestic Abuse policy](#) on LSCB website for further guidance)

A referral must be made direct to Children's Social Care if it seems reasonable to suspect that:

- a) a child sees, hears, experiences or is otherwise aware of domestic abuse – i.e. that domestic abuse is part of their experience of family life. This applies regardless of whether they actually witness any particular event or are physically harmed, and
- b) the non-abusing parent will not be able – for whatever reason – to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their child without significant professional assistance and support.

Referrals should be made with the agreement of a parent unless the child's best interests are not served by seeking or obtaining consent. Non-consent should not be a barrier to referral if there is on the face of it reasonable cause to suspect that the child may suffer significant harm of otherwise not have significant needs met.

A disclosure or allegation by a victim is not a pre-requisite for referral of concerns regarding a child. Concern about the effects of domestic abuse on a child may be triggered in other ways – for example, by hidden or inadequately explained injuries to a parent or carer, or damage to the home or personal property, or by the behaviour of parents, or concerns expressed by the child, or concerns about the child's wellbeing.

The Government defines domestic abuse as;

***"Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality"***

**The legal definition of "significant harm" to children was extended in January 2005 to include harm suffered from seeing or knowing of the abuse of another, particularly in the home. This was reinforced by the Adoption and Children Act 2002.**

**Child protection referrals where the primary concern relates to a domestic abuse incident may include:**

Verbal Altercation

- Children not present but usually part of the household
- Children in house but not witness to the incident
- Children present
- Children present and victim of abusive behaviour

#### Damage to Property

- Children not present but usually in the household
- Children present but not witness to the incident
- Children present

#### Physical Assault

- Children not present but usually part of the household
- Children in house but not witness to the incident
- Children present and witness the incident
- Children present and a victim of assault

#### Sexual Assault

- Children not present but usually part of the household
- Children in house but not witness to the incident
- Children present and witness to the incident
- Children present and a victim of sexual abuse

## **APPENDIX A: GOOD PRACTICE**

### **1. How to react when a child/young person wants to talk about abuse**

- **General points**
  - Take seriously what the child/young person says (however unlikely the story may sound)
  - Keep calm
  - Look at the child/young person directly
  - Be honest
  - Let them know you will need to tell someone else – don't promise confidentiality
  - Reassure them they are not to blame for the abuse
  - Be aware that the child/young person may have been threatened
  - Never push for information
  - Ask questions for clarification only; avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- **Helpful things to say or show**
  - Show acceptance of what the child/young person says
  - "I am glad you have told me"
  - "It's not your fault"
  - "I will help you"
- **Avoid saying**
  - "Why didn't you tell anyone before?"
  - "I can't believe it"
  - "Are you sure this is true?"
  - Never make false promises
  - Never make statements such as "I am shocked!", or "don't tell anyone else"
- **Concluding**
  - Reassure the young person that they were right to tell you and that you take them seriously
  - Let the young person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what might happen Immediately report the matter, as per procedures

### **17 Staff ratios**

**Plan the work of the group so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children and/or young people may occur**

Arrange that an adult is not left alone with a child or young person where there is little or no opportunity of the activity being observed by others. This may mean groups working within the

same large room or working in an adjoining room with the door left open. This good practice can be as much benefit to the adult as to the child or young person.

Ensure that all staff, paid and unpaid, who work with children and young people do not meet one of the children or young people outside designated MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST premises without a parent or other adult being present.

Always have at least two adults present with a group, particularly when it is the only activity taking place on MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST premises. OFSTED recommends that the following number of adults should be present when working with children. If there are not enough leaders, the event should not take place.

- Age 13 - 18: 1 adult to 10 children.

However, these are just general recommendations in addition we must always ensure appropriate ratios of leadership to children and young people are observed according to age and gender and reflect the needs identified in the risk assessment for the activity and the group of children and young people involved.

## **18 Other good practice**

**Consent forms** including medical details should always be used for children and young people attending the activity and should be readily available during the activity.

Never take a group off the premises with fewer than two adults. Consent forms including medical details should always be used for specific outings or activities outside the MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST premises.

As it is good practice to keep a **record of each activity/session** these will be used. This record should include a register of children and staff and details of any significant incidents.

**Always keep a register** with the address and contact phone number of every child. These records are to be kept securely, in line with the Data Protection policy.

All staff working with children or young people will be subject to a **DBS enhanced check**. While waiting for a DBS check to arrive the person will never be left alone with children unsupervised.

Any photography or filming of children and young people at MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST activities will be subject to the **Photography and filming policy**.

## **APPENDIX B: RECOGNISING POSSIBLE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON ABUSE**

The following behavioural signs *may* be indicators of child/young person abuse, but care should be taken in interpreting them in isolation.

### **Physical signs**

- Any injuries, bruises, bites, bumps, fracture, etc. which are not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Injuries which appear to have been caused by a weapon e.g. cuts, welts, etc.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention.
- Instances where children/young people are kept away from the group inappropriately or without explanation.
- Self-mutilation or self-harming e.g. cutting, slashing, drug abuse.

### **Emotional signs**

Changes or regression in mood and behaviour, particularly where a child/young person withdraws or becomes clinging. Also depression/aggression.

- Nervousness or inappropriate fear of particular adults.
- Changes in behaviour e.g., under-achievement or lack of concentration, inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults e.g., excessive dependence attention-seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness, wetting or soiling of bed or clothes by an older child.

### **Signs of neglect**

- Regular poor hygiene
- Persistent tiredness
- Inadequate clothing
- Excessive appetite
- Failure to thrive e.g. poor weight gain, consistently being left alone and unsupervised

### **Indicators of possible sexual abuse**

- Any direct disclosure made by a child/young person concerning sexual abuse.
- Child/Young person with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of.
- Adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play.
- Preoccupation with sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Child/Young person who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.
- Other emotional signs (see above) may be indicative of sexual or some other form of abuse.