



Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

Introduction

Brentwood Horticultural Society CIO ("BHS") is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all members, volunteers, visitors, and especially children and vulnerable adults. We recognise our duty of care and ensure that our safeguarding measures reflect statutory responsibilities, government guidance, and recognised best practice.

BHS is run by trustees working with the Society's committee. We do not employ staff, but volunteers — including young people or vulnerable adults — may occasionally work on our sites. Plot-holders ("members") are adults, but many bring children with them. Our Site Rules require that children are **supervised at all times** and must not play with water tanks or enter other plots.

A vulnerable adult is defined as any person aged 18 or over who requires special care, support, or protection due to age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect.

This policy applies to trustees, committee members, volunteers, members, and visitors.

Guiding Principles

We believe that:

- The welfare and best interests of children and vulnerable adults are paramount.
- Children and vulnerable adults must never experience abuse of any kind.
- Everyone involved with BHS has a responsibility to take reasonable steps to protect them.
- All children and vulnerable adults, regardless of background or identity, have an equal right to protection.
- Some individuals may be more vulnerable to abuse, including those with disabilities or from minority communities, and must be protected without discrimination.

Legal Framework

Safeguarding in England is supported by a wide range of legislation. The NSPCC provides an overview of key laws and guidance:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/england>

Our Commitments

BHS will:

- Ensure trustees and committee members understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Take appropriate action if concerns, incidents, or allegations of abuse arise.
- Review safeguarding incidents confidentially through the committee.



Responding to Concerns

1. Recognising Signs of Abuse

Members and volunteers should remain alert to possible signs of abuse. Concerns may arise if:

- A child or adult makes a direct allegation.
- Someone observes behaviour that causes concern.

Useful guidance on recognising abuse:

- NSPCC:
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/recognising-and-responding-to-abuse>
- Citizens Advice: Reporting child abuse

2. What To Do

If a child or vulnerable adult is in **immediate danger**, speak to a supervising adult, or report to a Site Representative, or another adult on site.

If you notice signs of distress or concerning behaviour:

- Speak to the individual sensitively and ask appropriate questions.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Make brief notes of what you saw or heard.
- Report concerns promptly using the contact numbers below.
- Inform a member of the BHS committee.

Essex safeguarding contacts:

- Children & Families Hub: 0345 603 7627 or 03330 139797
- Emergency duty team (out of hours): 0345 606 1212
- Vulnerable adults (Essex Social Care): 0345 603 7630
- 24-hour protection line: 0345 603 7634

National contacts:

- NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- Childline: 0800 1111

Remember: safeguarding concerns must never be kept to yourself.



BHS-Specific Arrangements

Community Plots

Three plots at Hartswood are allocated to the Wilderness Foundation UK (WFUK). Participants using these plots are supervised by WFUK staff or volunteers who hold enhanced DBS certification and appropriate safeguarding training. Any future work with local schools will involve designated school leaders with DBS clearance, approved by WFUK.

Site Rules

Members must supervise children at all times and ensure they do not play with water tanks or enter other plots. Gardening on allotments involves hazards; members should be aware of risks on their own plots.

Further Information

Additional safeguarding resources:

- Essex Safeguarding Adult Board: <https://www.essexsab.org.uk>
- Essex Safeguarding Children Board: <https://www.escb.co.uk>
- Children & Families Hub: <https://www.essexeffectivesupport.org.uk>

This policy is available on our website: <https://brentwoodhorticulturalsociety.org.uk>