

Safeguarding Policy



At Friends of Gipton Wood, we believe that everyone has the right to be safe, regardless of who they are or their circumstances.

Safeguarding is about protecting children, young people, and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect.

We are all responsible for ensuring the safety of these individuals. Our collective efforts must aim to protect the most vulnerable members of our community.

What is a Vulnerable or "At Risk" Person?

These terms apply to:

- Young people under the age of 18 years.
- Adults (18 years or older) who require support due to age, disability, mental health needs, substance misuse, or other illnesses; and/or who are, or may be, unable to care for themselves or protect themselves from harm.

What is Abuse?

Abuse can take many forms, and may be:

- A single or repeated act.
- A failure to act.
- Intentional, or due to a lack of understanding.
- A criminal act.

Different types of abuse include:

- Physical abuse: Being hit, slapped, or kicked; including being locked in a room or inappropriately restrained.
- Sexual abuse: Coercing someone into a sexual activity without their consent.
- Emotional or psychological abuse: Being shouted at, ridiculed, bullied, or pressured into decisions.
- Financial and material abuse: Misusing, withholding, or stealing someone's money or belongings.
- Neglect: Failing to provide care, resulting in harm, such as lack of food or necessary health care.
- Discriminatory abuse: Ill treatment or harassment based on age, gender, sexuality, disability, race, or religious belief.

Volunteering and Safeguarding Duties

If you have any concerns about abuse, it is your responsibility to act. Doing nothing is not an option.

Volunteers involved in substantial or unsupervised contact with children and/or vulnerable adults must undergo a DBS check. Even without a check, or if you do not work in an environment with these concerns, you still have safeguarding responsibilities. Public areas such as Gipton Wood may attract children and vulnerable persons, requiring vigilance.

Abuse can happen anywhere – anyone can be an abuser.

While abuse is uncommon, it is important to report anything concerning. As a volunteer, you represent Friends of Gipton Wood's policies and standards. Reporting concerns allows us to investigate and address potential issues.

If you observe something concerning, report it immediately to a member of the Committee. If you cannot contact them, email us at friendsgiptonwood@gmail.com.

Do:

- Take all concerns seriously.
- Listen carefully if someone shares a concern. Use open-ended questions for clarification.
- Do not promise to keep secrets.
- Inform your manager or supervisor as soon as possible.
- Do not investigate concerns yourself.
- Assess immediate risks and consider necessary actions to ensure safety.
- Call the police or an ambulance if required to ensure someone's safety.

Propriety and Behaviour

Volunteers should maintain high standards of personal conduct to uphold confidence and respect.

Volunteers should not:

- Behave in ways that could cause others to question their suitability.
- Make unprofessional personal comments that scapegoat, demean, or humiliate others.

An individual's behaviour, inside or outside the volunteering setting, should not compromise their role. Volunteers must uphold Friends of Gipton Wood's policies on Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity, which means:

- Avoiding inappropriate, offensive, or discriminatory remarks (including in emails, text messages, phone calls, or letters).
- Not discussing or disclosing personal information about others inappropriately outside the volunteering context.
- Being cautious with social contact (e.g., Facebook, Whatsapp) to avoid misunderstandings, especially with vulnerable people. Do not share personal contact details. If in doubt, discuss any

social contact outside formal volunteering with a member of the Committee before sharing personal information/contact details.

Safeguarding Officer

The designated Safeguarding Officer for the Friends of Gipton Wood is Dora Goldsbrough. Dora works in a local primary school and has extensive experience of safeguarding.

Reporting Process

When the committee have been informed of a safeguarding issue they will assess the severity of the incident and deal with the matter and record the outcome. If the incident is of a serious nature it will be reported to (social services/ the police?)

Dissemination

The policy will be shared with the group via email and at Volunteer Action mornings. A record will be made of these events.

Review

The policy will be reviewed every year by the committee prior to the Annual General meeting in April and then agreed at that meeting.

Agreed 11/07/2024

Amended 06/08/24 DS. Review, dissemination and reporting added.