



## **Norwich FarmShare Safeguarding Children Policy**

### **1. Statement of Purpose**

This policy establishes the role and responsibilities of Norwich Community Agriculture Ltd (Norwich FarmShare) and clarifies what is expected from everybody involved within the organisation.

All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse. Every child and young person who participates in the activities of the organisation should be able to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from abuse. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in this organisation.

Norwich FarmShare recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

Definitions of abuse and neglect can be viewed in the Appendix at the end of this policy.

### **2. Our obligations**

Norwich FarmShare will ensure that:-

- the welfare of the child is paramount.
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

All members, volunteers and staff have a responsibility to report concerns to the designated safeguarding officer.

Norwich FarmShare will:

- respect the rights, wishes and feelings of children and young people.
- abide by the appropriate codes of conduct and the Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures outlined within this document.
- respond to any allegations appropriately.
- review the policy annually.

All staff and volunteers who routinely come into contact with children as part of their work with Norwich FarmShare are required to read and follow this policy. This will principally be the growers but may also include farm volunteers.

### **3. Our work with children**

Children participating in the activities of Norwich FarmShare will normally be doing so within one of three contexts:

1. A general volunteering session on the farm
2. A school visit
3. An event such as an open day

a) Children under 16 participating in events or general volunteering sessions must be accompanied by a responsible adult (at least one adult for every four children).

b) Young people aged 16 or 17 are very welcome to help at Norwich FarmShare. However, we will require a permission form signed by a parent or guardian to allow them to work without an accompanying adult.

c) Children on school visits must be accompanied by their teacher or another responsible adult (at least one adult for every six children aged 4-8, or one for every eight children aged 9-15).

Staff and volunteers of Norwich FarmShare therefore do not work unsupervised with children. As such, a DBS check for our volunteer leaders would have no impact on the safeguarding of children

and is not legally required. However, all staff and regular volunteers should be familiar with this safeguarding policy and procedures and be alert to signs of abuse or neglect.

#### **4. Promoting good practice**

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important volunteers understand these feelings and do not allow them to interfere with their judgement about the appropriate action to take.

All suspected cases of poor practice should be reported to the organisation's designated child safeguarding officer and the guidelines in this policy should be followed.

#### **Good practice means:**

- always working in an open environment where possible, avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication
- treating all young people equally with respect and dignity
- always putting the welfare of each child or young person first.
- maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with service users (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child)
- building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children to share in decision making
- keeping up to date with any necessary training, qualifications and insurance.
- recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people, including any special educational needs or learning disabilities
- keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

#### **Norwich FarmShare will:**

- ensure we have a designated child safeguarding officer who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
- ensure every member and volunteer knows the name of the designated child safeguarding officer and their role.
- ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated child safeguarding officer.
- keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- ensure all records are kept securely.
- develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.

#### **Reporting procedure**

If someone discloses that they are being abused, then upon receiving the information you should:

- react calmly
- reassure the child that they were right to tell and that they are not to blame
- take what the child says seriously
- keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. Don't ask about explicit details
- reassure but do not promise confidentiality, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments
- inform the child what you will do next
- make a full written record of what has been said as soon as possible and don't delay in passing on the information.
- talk to your designated safeguarding officer as soon as possible.

#### **The report will include the following:**

- the child's name, age and date of birth
- the child's home address and telephone number

- whether the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and other relevant information. Include quotes where relevant.
- a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- a description of any visible bruising or other injuries, and any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- details of any witnesses to the incidents.

#### **What Norwich FarmShare will do next:**

It is not Norwich FarmShare's responsibility to decide whether abuse has taken place or not. However, if we have a concern about a child or children we will telephone the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) on 0344 800 8021 immediately. We will be put through to a Social Worker who will take all of the relevant details. We will make sure we are prepared with full details of the child and family, plus what our concerns are, details of any support we have provided to the child/family and what we would like to happen. We will ensure we gain consent from the parent/carer unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm or undermine a criminal investigation. If we have not sought consent from the parent/carer we will inform the CADS worker of this and the reason for this.

The CADS worker will agree a way forward with us and keep us informed. They will send us a written record of our conversation within 5 working days. The outcomes could include a full referral to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for further investigation, the Police, or for work with Early Help. We will not investigate and will be led by the Local Authority and/or the Police. We will make written records of all conversations, including the dates and times of who we spoke to, the information shared and the action agreed. We do not need to send a written referral. Full details on this process can be found at [www.norfolkscb.org](http://www.norfolkscb.org) under 'How to Raise a Concern'. We understand that if we are unhappy about a decision made by CADS or MASH we can use the Resolving Professional Disagreements policy on [www.norfolkscb.org](http://www.norfolkscb.org) and contact the Safer Programme for more advice on this process.

Where a child or young person is at risk of immediate harm, immediate action should be taken to protect the child or young person by calling the police on 999.

A direct call to the police on the non-urgent number 101 is appropriate if the child or young person wishes to talk to the police at that time, and/or there is evidence to preserve and/or the alleged perpetrator of the offence may return before you can act to protect the child or young person.

## **Contacts**

Norwich FarmShare designated child safeguarding officer: Joel Rodker

Contact details: 07508 441317

Norwich FarmShare Treasurer: Annelise Savill 07813 817808

Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) 0344 800 8021

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): 0344 800 8020

Police emergency number: 999

Police non-emergency number: 101

Useful information and training sessions can be accessed from the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board website: <http://www.norfolkscb.org>

This policy and procedures will be reviewed annually and signed and dated by the board of directors.

Adopted March 2021. Due for review by March 2022

Policy adopted on: 28 March 2021

Signed on behalf of the board: Annelise Savill

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Annelise Savill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

## Appendix: definitions of abuse & neglect

### What is abuse and neglect?

It is a form of mistreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may take place in a family, in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

### Physical abuse

Is a form of abuse which 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 involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone. It is the persistent emotional mistreatment of a child that can cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development, such as:

- feeling worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- opportunities to express their views deliberately prevented. Silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- imposing inappropriate expectations that are beyond a child's developmental capability,
- overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.
- seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger
- the exploitation or corruption of children.

### Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, 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.

### 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); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.