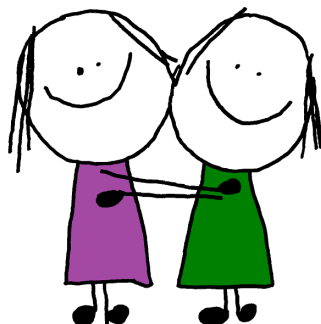


Friends – Play for Disabled Children



Friends – Play for Disabled Children
Email: info@friendsplay.org.uk
Website: www.friendsplay.org.uk
Registered Charity Number: 1167995

Safeguarding Policy

Status: Approved

Approval date: 2 October 2026

Version: 1.0

Next review: October 2027

**Supersedes: 2025 Safeguarding / Child Protection
Policy**

1. Purpose

Friends – Play for Disabled Children (“Friends”) is committed to promoting the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the children, young people and adults at risk who take part in our activities.

Friends is a family-led charity providing social, recreational and accessible activities for disabled children, young people, adults and their families.

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. This policy explains the arrangements Friends has in place to help prevent harm, respond to concerns and provide a safe environment for members and their families.

2. Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to:

- trustees;
- volunteers;
- members;
- parents and carers;
- children and young people;
- adults at risk;
- guests attending Friends activities; and
- anyone acting on behalf of Friends.

3. Our safeguarding principles

Friends will:

- treat children, young people and adults at risk with dignity and respect;
- listen to concerns and take them seriously;
- promote a culture in which safeguarding concerns can be raised;
- take reasonable steps to reduce risks at activities and events;
- respond appropriately where there is a concern about abuse, neglect, exploitation or other harm;
- share safeguarding information only where necessary and appropriate; and
- place the welfare of the person at risk above concerns about reputation or inconvenience.

4. Parent and carer supervision

Friends activities are **parent/carers supervised**.

A child, young person or adult who requires support must not be left in the sole care of a Friends trustee or volunteer.

Parents and carers remain responsible for the supervision, care and safety of the person they are accompanying throughout Friends activities.

This applies even where:

- an activity is being led by an instructor or venue employee;
- Friends trustees or volunteers are present;
- a child or young person is participating in a group activity; or
- transport has been arranged by Friends.

Parents and carers should remain available and able to respond to their child or family member's individual needs.

5. Trustees and volunteers

Friends trustees and volunteers may assist with activities including:

- welcoming families;
- taking attendance registers;
- providing information;
- helping activities run smoothly;
- monitoring general safety;
- supporting venue or transport arrangements; and
- responding to concerns or incidents.

They do not take over parental or caring responsibility for individual members.

Friends will carry out appropriate recruitment and safeguarding checks for trustees and volunteers, including Disclosure and Barring Service checks where the role is eligible and such checks are appropriate.

Safeguarding arrangements and DBS checks will be reviewed periodically and whenever roles or responsibilities change.

6. Safeguarding Lead

Friends will maintain a designated safeguarding function.

Safeguarding concerns should be reported to:

The Safeguarding Lead or a Friends trustee

Email: info@friendsplay.org.uk

If the concern relates to the Safeguarding Lead, it should be reported to another trustee.

Where there is an immediate risk of serious harm, emergency services or the appropriate safeguarding authority should be contacted without delay.

7. Responding to a safeguarding concern or disclosure

Anyone receiving a safeguarding concern or disclosure should:

- remain calm;
- listen carefully;
- allow the person to speak in their own words;
- take the concern seriously;
- offer reassurance without making promises;
- avoid leading questions or investigating the allegation themselves;
- explain that the information may need to be shared with people who can help;
- record what was said as accurately as possible; and
- report the concern promptly to the Safeguarding Lead or a trustee.

A person must **not promise to keep a safeguarding concern secret**.

8. Recording concerns

A safeguarding record should include, where relevant:

- the date and time;
- the people involved;
- what was seen, heard or disclosed;
- the person's own words wherever reasonably possible;
- any immediate action taken; and
- who the concern was reported to.

Records should be factual rather than speculative.

Safeguarding records must be kept securely and access restricted to those who genuinely need the information.

9. Referrals and information sharing

Where Friends believes that a child, young person or adult at risk may be at risk of harm, information may be shared with appropriate organisations where necessary.

This may include:

- children's social care;
- adult safeguarding services;
- the police;
- emergency services;
- healthcare professionals; or
- another appropriate safeguarding body.

Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with Friends' Data Protection Policy.

Consent will be sought where appropriate, but Friends may share safeguarding information without consent where this is necessary to protect someone from harm or where there is another lawful reason to do so.

10. Behaviour and safety

Everyone attending Friends activities is expected to behave in a way that supports the safety and wellbeing of others.

Behaviour associated with disability, neurodivergence, distress, communication difficulties or unmet support needs will not automatically be treated as misconduct.

Where behaviour presents a significant risk of harm to the individual or others, Friends may work with the parent/carers and venue to take reasonable and proportionate steps to manage the immediate risk.

Serious safeguarding concerns will be dealt with under this policy rather than solely as a behavioural issue.

11. First aid and emergencies

Friends does not normally provide its own first-aid service.

Where activities take place at external venues or through activity providers, Friends will normally rely on the venue or provider's first-aid arrangements.

In an emergency, Friends trustees or volunteers may contact emergency services and assist with obtaining appropriate help.

Parents and carers remain responsible for informing relevant staff about any individual medical information that may be required during an activity.

12. Medication and personal care

Friends trustees and volunteers do not routinely:

- administer medication;
- provide toileting or intimate care;
- undertake personal care;
- carry out medical procedures; or
- undertake lifting or transferring of members.

These remain the responsibility of the individual's parent, carer or appropriately trained support worker.

Medication should remain under the control of the responsible parent or carer unless another specific arrangement has been made with an appropriate provider.

13. Moving and handling

Where a person requires assistance with lifting, transferring or positioning, this should be carried out by their parent, carer or appropriately trained support worker.

Friends trustees and volunteers should not undertake lifting or manual-handling procedures for individual members unless appropriately trained, authorised and covered by relevant arrangements.

14. Transport

Where Friends arranges group transport, reasonable steps will be taken to support safe travel.

This includes:

- using reputable transport providers;
- carrying out headcounts at appropriate points during the journey;
- reminding passengers that seatbelts must be worn where provided;
- challenging unsafe behaviour where necessary;
- ensuring mobility equipment is transported or secured appropriately;
- communicating relevant transport instructions to families; and

- arranging vehicles with toilet facilities for longer journeys where this is required by Friends' booking arrangements.

Parents and carers remain responsible for supervising the children, young people or adults they accompany throughout the journey.

Appropriate car seats or other legally required restraints remain the responsibility of the parent or carer unless the transport provider has expressly agreed otherwise.

15. Attendance and registers

Friends may maintain attendance registers for activities and transport.

Registers are used for operational and safety purposes, including confirming attendance and carrying out headcounts.

Only the minimum information reasonably required should be recorded, and registers must be handled in accordance with Friends' Data Protection Policy.

16. Photographs and social media

Photographs and personal information must be handled in accordance with Friends' Data Protection Policy, Family Privacy Notice and the permissions given by families.

Members must not share confidential or identifying information about another family without appropriate permission.

Private Friends groups are intended to provide supportive spaces for members, but information may need to be shared outside the group where there is a safeguarding concern, serious risk of harm or other legal obligation.

17. Working with venues and providers

Friends frequently uses external venues, instructors, transport companies and activity providers.

Those organisations remain responsible for their own:

- staff;
- safeguarding arrangements;
- health and safety procedures;
- first aid provision; and
- legal and regulatory responsibilities.

Friends will take reasonable care when selecting providers and will raise safeguarding or safety concerns where appropriate.

18. Concerns about trustees, volunteers or other adults

Any allegation or concern involving a trustee, volunteer, member, parent, carer, professional or other adult attending a Friends activity must be taken seriously.

The concern should be reported to the Safeguarding Lead or another trustee.

Where appropriate, Friends may seek advice from or make a referral to the relevant safeguarding authority, police, Disclosure and Barring Service or other appropriate body.

Friends will not attempt to conduct its own investigation where this could interfere with a statutory safeguarding process.

19. Confidentiality

Safeguarding information will be treated sensitively.

However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where information must be shared to protect a child, young person or adult at risk.

Information will only be shared with people or organisations who have a legitimate need to know.

20. Training and awareness

Friends will take reasonable steps to ensure that trustees and volunteers understand:

- this Safeguarding Policy;
- how to recognise and report concerns;
- the limits of their role;
- confidentiality and information sharing; and
- what to do in an emergency.

Safeguarding arrangements will be reviewed as the charity develops.

21. Insurance and risk management

Friends will maintain appropriate insurance for its activities.

Risk assessments may be carried out by Friends, venues or activity providers as appropriate.

A risk assessment does not remove the responsibility of parents and carers to supervise the individuals they accompany.

22. Review and approval

This policy will be reviewed:

- at least annually;
- following a serious safeguarding concern or incident;
- where Friends' activities or safeguarding arrangements change; or
- where relevant legislation or guidance changes.

Approved by: Friends – Play for Disabled Children Trustees

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Next review: October 2027