



# Blatchington Court Trust

## **Safeguarding Policy Statement**

Blatchington Court Trust acknowledges its duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of all its beneficiaries, both under and over 18 years of age. It is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and Pan Sussex Safeguarding Board requirements.

BCT's Safeguarding policies recognise that the welfare and interests of our beneficiaries are paramount and aim to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender assignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, and socio-economic background, all beneficiaries have a positive and enjoyable experience and are protected whilst participating in any activity provided by BCT.

We acknowledge that children and young people are deemed as unable to protect themselves from harm and as such will implement the safeguarding policy and procedures to protect them from harm.

The terms 'child,' and 'children' within this statement describe any BCT beneficiary under the age of 18. The terms 'young person/ people/ adults' describe BCT beneficiaries aged over 18.

We also recognise that young adults aged over 18 have the right to make unsafe or unwise decisions about their lives, but we will support them to stay as safe as possible, promote well-being, and make safe decisions.

The children and young people who are vision impaired that BCT works with have a unique set of challenges related to personal safety, recognising unsafe situations and staying safe from abuse. The staff, parents, carers, and other professionals providing services to BCT's beneficiaries must ensure that they are doing all they can to assist children and young people to understand about risky behaviour, promoting body autonomy and self-advocacy, staying safe and how to raise a concern.

Specific risks for the children and young people that BCT works with can include, but are not limited to :

- Being more dependent on peers or adults for navigation or support, creating opportunities for coercion.
- Being less able to visually interpret social cues, making manipulation harder to detect.
- Being more isolated in group settings, increasing risk of targeted bullying.
- Not being alone so often for opportunities to make private disclosures
- Being less able to see warning signs of danger or inappropriate behaviour.

## **Our policies and procedures**

As part of our commitment to safeguarding, BCT will:

## 1. Prioritise safety and wellbeing

- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children, young people, and adults with sight loss.
- Ensure safeguarding is embedded in all activities, services, and environments.

## 2. Value and listen to children and young people

- Value, listen to and respect all BCT beneficiaries, recognising that sight loss may affect how concerns are expressed or recognised.
- Provide safe spaces for children and young people to share worries or disclosures in accessible ways.

## 3. Ensure robust safeguarding arrangements

- Maintain clear safeguarding procedures that reflect the needs of vision impaired children and young people.
- Ensure environments are physically safe and accessible, reducing risks of accidental harm.

## 4. Adopt best practice

- Adopt safeguarding best practice through policies, procedures, and codes of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Ensure all safeguarding information is available in accessible formats (large print, audio, braille, digital accessible formats).

## 5. Provide specialist training

Ensure all staff and volunteers receive training on:

- recognising signs of abuse in people with sight loss
- communicating safeguarding information accessibly
- supporting children and young people who may struggle to identify unsafe people or environments
- digital safety risks specific to vision impaired individuals

## 6. Ensure appropriate action is taken

- Respond promptly to all concerns, from lower-level issues to serious abuse.
- Provide support to individuals who raise or report concerns, ensuring accessible communication throughout.

## 7. Maintain secure and accurate records

- Ensure confidential, detailed, and accurate safeguarding records are maintained and securely stored.
- Record and store information in line with data protection legislation.

## 8. Recruit safely

Prevent the employment or deployment of unsuitable individuals by following safe recruitment practices and completing all necessary checks. Provide ongoing supervision, support, and quality assurance.

## 9. Safeguarding leads

Appoint two Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and a Trustee/Board member responsible for safeguarding. The DSLs will provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training, and quality assurance measures so

that all staff and volunteers know about our policies, procedures and behaviour codes and follow them confidently and competently

## 10. Share information and empower children and young people

- Share safeguarding information with children, young people and families through accessible leaflets, posters, group work, and one-to-one discussions.
- Ensure children and young people know how to seek help and report concerns in ways that meet their communication needs.
- Promote independence, autonomy and safe decision-making for people with sight loss

The policies and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in Blatchington Court Trust.

Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in disciplinary action.

### **Monitoring**

This policy statement will be reviewed every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- as required by Pan Sussex Safeguarding Children board
- as a result of any other significant change or event.

BCT will consult vision impaired young people when reviewing future safeguarding policies and ensure their lived experience shapes risk assessments and procedures.

## Emergency Safeguarding

If any BCT beneficiary is at immediate risk of harm, **call 999**.

### Contact details

<b>Safeguarding Lead</b>	<b>Bernie Dawes</b>	<b>01273 727222</b>	<b>bernie@blatchingtoncourt.org.uk</b>
<b>Safeguarding Lead</b>	<b>Sophie Heiser</b>	<b>01273 727222</b>	<b>sophie@blatchingtoncourt.org.uk</b>
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