
Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre

Safeguarding Policy

Written: 1st April 2024

Standard Review date: 1st April 2025

Author: Mark Sinclair

Introduction

Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre recognises and accepts its duties for providing a caring, positive and safe environment to its employees, volunteers, and other visitors, including ensuring that, so far as reasonably practicable, young people and vulnerable groups are protected. If you have any queries about this policy, or its content, you can contact us at info@blacklandfarm.org.

4th Dimension t/a Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre (registered company in England and Wales 15182683). The Managing Directors have overall responsibility for Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre; for ensuring that we abide by our legal requirements and our own policies.

Purpose

This policy provides an overview of Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre's approach to safeguarding and the provision of safe environments.

Scope

This policy applies to employees, volunteers, work experience students, and other third parties who carry out or contribute to the business.

Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre will not tolerate any form of abuse to children or vulnerable people, whatever form it may take. Any negative or disruptive influence forced upon a guest will be dealt with without delay and with as much influence as possible. No incident will be overlooked. These procedures are in place to keep everyone involved in a course safe.

Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre provides a range of outdoor and social activities for people of all ages and backgrounds. In seeking to protect the physical and emotional safety of each young person who attends a Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre course, our staff, volunteers and visiting staff have a duty to:

1. Be aware of the possibility of people having suffered deliberate harm, either during a Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre event or in their home life;
2. Adhere to the organisation's written safety policies and codes of behaviour for working with young people;
3. Report anything that makes them feel uneasy or gives them cause for concern.

Being Aware

Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre undertakes to provide training at induction as well as updates and refreshers, for all staff and volunteers, in Child Protection issues and procedures.

Instructors will also be made aware that they are in a position where they may be looked upon as a type of 'superstar'. Children will automatically warm to them as they may envy their position - This may put them in a position of influence. This can be highly dangerous if wrongly used.

People in a 'position of influence' have a duty to ensure the well being of children. Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre will never deliberately scare children, embarrass them, single them out or force them to do an activity. We promote a 'challenge by choice' and

an 'active learning' environment where groups will work together and encourage each other.

People in a position of influence will quickly gain the trust and respect of young people. As a result they are more likely to be approached by young people with disclosures about their own lives, and potential abuse.

Signs and Symptoms

There are many ways in which a person can suffer harm. Incidents of actual, deliberate harm are rare but children with learning disabilities and special educational needs are extremely vulnerable and staff must be vigilant. A sign is something you can physically observe (bruises, burns, behaviour etc), while a symptom is something the child may describe to you (pain, unhappiness, nausea etc).

The following notes offer guidance to signs and symptoms of a child having suffered harm or abuse. The list is not exhaustive, and, in some cases, you will need to have known the child over an extended period to be able to make an assessment. The golden rule is, if in doubt, check with a member of the Management Team who will involve visiting staff/supervisors.

Physical Injuries

Physical injuries that have been deliberately inflicted by another person may include burns, bruising, cuts and poisoning. A child may have scratches or bite marks on their skin. Children often sustain bruises when they fall over but beware of finding bruises in places which are hard to mark accidentally, such as behind the ears, the backs of the legs or the groin or stomach area. Is the bruise or mark an unusual shape? Could it have been made by a slap, a strap or other implement? Cigarette burns are particularly worrying but so too are any burns, or indeed any injuries, where the explanation doesn't seem to fit with the marks.

Emotional Harm and Neglect

Behaviour and emotional development can be affected by rejection, verbal attacks or inconsistency in the behaviour of the carer. Healthy development can be impaired where the child is subject to over-protection or exploitation. Many children can be shy of adults but there is cause for concern if a child appears to be very frightened or watchful of adults or ducking away as if expecting to be hit. Children who have suffered emotional abuse or neglect may appear to be extremely withdrawn, lethargic or

aggressive. They may frequently wet or soil themselves, vomit, or persistently 'rock' as if trying to comfort themselves. They may have extreme difficulty communicating with or relating to other children or adults.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is the involvement of children or adolescents in sexual activities to meet the sexual demands of adults. Although most victims of sexual abuse are girls, boys may be abused too and children of all ages may be involved.

A child may appear to have difficulty in walking or sitting. There could be soreness or unexplained marks. They may also appear to have inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age or make sexual advances towards adults or other children.

Policies on Safety and Behaviour

Fitting Climbing Harnesses

Encourage the child to do as much for themselves as possible. Avoid contact with the inner thighs, buttocks or chest.

Spotting

Aim to 'catch' the child under the armpits and protect their head and neck. Avoid hugging or wrapping arms right round their body.

Work In Pairs

Always work in a team with at least one other adult. Avoid finding yourself alone with a child, even for a short period of time e.g. giving First Aid treatment, adjusting a tent, playing 'hide and seek' games or at the drop-off point after an event. If a one-to-one situation is unavoidable, have another guest present.

Give and Receive Respect

Consider your own language and behaviour when working with young people as they will quickly follow your example. Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre provides an environment in which bullying, sexism, racism, coercion or ridicule are unacceptable.

Restraint

Always seek to calm a situation to avoid the need for physical intervention. If unavoidable, in order to prevent a person from harming others or themselves, then you should use the minimum of force required, as appropriate to the situation. Always work in a team, stay calm, give reassurance to the child and explain what you are doing and why. Treat all such incidents as reportable and record all details immediately.

Sleeping Arrangements

It is usually the responsibility of visiting staff to allocate tents, beds etc but it is our job to ensure there is sufficient provision for separating boys and girls.

Criminal Conviction Checks

All staff and volunteers are checked for criminal convictions (DBS assessment) that may make it inappropriate for them to be working with young people. If any member of staff has concerns about another, this must be reported.

Stranger Danger

Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre staff, volunteers and visiting supervisors must be aware of strangers around activity areas or approaching young people. Any incidents must be reported to and recorded by the Duty Manager.

Reporting

If a Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre staff member or volunteer has any concerns with regard to a child having suffered abuse of any sort, they must report their concerns, in the first instance and as soon as possible, to their Course Director. Visiting supervisors will be involved in this process. Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre staff will use the Incident Report Form to record:

1. The name and contact details of the child concerned;
2. What is said to have happened, what was seen and by whom;
3. When it occurred;
4. Who else was there, who knows about it;
5. Whether there was any actual evidence e.g. bruising, bleeding, behavioural issues.

The Duty Manager will liaise with the visiting group leader and Blackland Farm Outdoor Management Team about contacting the parents and/or Social Services. If this is not possible or appropriate, the Duty Manager will liaise directly with a member of the Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre Management Team. Either way, the completed Incident Report Form will be passed to a member of the Management Team as soon as practically possible.

A member of the Management Team will liaise with Social Services, the Police or other authorities as appropriate. Written notes taken by the member of staff or Duty Manager may be requested as evidence and staff may be interviewed.

Staff and volunteers must be aware that any issues around suspected child abuse are considered strictly confidential. They must not discuss the incident or suspicions with any other person outside of the reporting process. Staff will be made particularly aware that no comments should be made to media personnel and that no names are to be disclosed. All dealings with these agencies will be made through the Duty Manager, or higher.

The dedicated Safeguarding Lead at Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre is **Mark Sinclair**.

Mobile Phones

Instructors are encouraged to carry mobile phones to use in case of an emergency. Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre requests that staff keep mobile phone usage to an absolute minimum and encourage instructors to wear watches rather than using phones to keep track of time. Mobile phones should be kept away from clients, in the instructor's rucksack / pocket, to alleviate the potential for that device to fall in to the possession of a young person and / or vulnerable adult. Under no circumstances will instructors use mobile phones, or other devices such as tablets, to take pictures / videos of Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre clients.