**Marlesford Community Council Child Protection Policy 2026**

This policy recognises the obligations and duty of care of organisations working with children and young people as covered in the Children Act (1989). This Act defines children and young people as anyone up to the age of 18 years.

We recognise we have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children we work with, including our responsibility to report any allegations or concerns that come to our attention. The welfare of the child/young person is paramount and Marlesford Community Council holds the view that all children, without exception, have the right to protection from all forms of abuse.

**Who does this policy apply to?**

The Marlesford Community Council recognises that it is the responsibility of each one of its volunteers working with child groups, to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse or acts of neglect or omission of young people and children and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

To safeguard children/young people we plan the work of activities to minimise situations where the abuse of young people and /or children may occur.

The Marlesford Community Council aims to ensure that all young people welcomed on to its premises will experience a safe, caring, environment in a happy and friendly atmosphere. We do an appropriate Risk Assessment of our activities and premises in advance of sessions.

We will always have at least two adults present with a group. We have adopted The Children's Act guidance that recommends that the following staff ratios, number of adults should be present when working with children. We always ensure appropriate ratios of leadership to children are observed according to age and gender.
If there are not enough leaders, the event will not take place.
· 3-8 years 1 leader to every eight children
· Over 8 years 1 leader to eight children and one more for every further twelve children.

**Consent/medical forms**

We have consent forms including medical details for children and young people attending activities. See Annex A. Where special activities or events are run additional consent is received from the parents/carers in advance.

As it is good practice we keep a record of each activity/session. This record includes a register of children, with their address and contact phone number, and a register of staff present and details of any significant incidents. These records are kept securely, in line with the Data Protection requirements.

**Photography/filming**

Any photography or filming of children and young people unaccompanied by their parents or guardians at our activities will be subject to the consent of the parents being received in advance of an event with a clear purpose as to why the photos are being taken, by whom and for what purpose. No young person will be identified by their full name, age or address.

**Training**

We are committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with young people and children and to providing supervision.

All volunteers will be given as part of their Induction/Introduction to the role a guide to recognising the forms of abuse and a copy of this procedure so they know how and who to report any concerns to. (See Annex A for signs and reporting procedures). All volunteers will have the opportunity to be given regular support meetings to help them with their role and to obtain feedback for them on how they can contribute etc.

We are aware of the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership and can obtain updates and information on safeguarding from there.

**Safe Recruitment**

We recognise the importance of having the right people working with the young people.

All volunteers regularly working with children or young people are subject to an enhanced CRB check. This process is done immediately when starting, and in advance when this is possible. While waiting for a CRB check to arrive the person will never be left alone with children unsupervised. Occasional volunteers who have current CRB checks with other organisations will be checked to ensure they are valid.

**Information Sharing**

The Marlesford Community Council is committed to maintaining good links with the statutory child care authorities.

We recognise that the people we work with and their families need to feel reassured that their confidentiality is respected. In most cases we only share information about them with their consent, but there are circumstances where we need to override this consent. The exception to this is where not sharing information would put that child, young person or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm. Or, if it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

The safety and welfare of a child or young person will always be considered when making decisions on whether to share information about them. Where there is concern that the child may be suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, the child's safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration.

To ensure the safety of young people appropriate information will be shared with relevant agencies.

Reporting abuse guidelines are followed, See Annex A.

**Data Protection**

Any information held either electronically or in hard copy will be held securely in a password protected document or sealed envelope in a secure, locked cabinet/
drawer. Any electronic database used for recording and reporting abuse internally will protect the identity of the child and use an identifying code rather than the name so as to ensure

confidentiality.

**Review**

It recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures, which are designed to prevent and to be alert to such abuse. These reviews will be done by the Trustees at least annually, sooner if required. A record of any incidents will be securely held and investigated.

**Annex A**

**Procedure for reporting abuse (actual or suspected)**

The following procedures must be followed:

· Report it – do not delay

All suspected abuse must be reported in confidence as soon as possible and followed up in writing within 24 hours.

Report your concern to the parish Safeguarding Officer, or if you do not have one direct to Suffolk County Council Customer First Support Service

In the instance of a referral assist Children's Social Care and/or the Police.

During office hours: Customer First on 08456 023023 option 1, out of office hours: Emergency Duty Service on 01473 299669

If you are worried about the immediate safety of a child/young person and cannot contact the parish Safeguarding Officer call the police on 999.;

Record what you have seen, heard and said.

Your report must be accurate and where possible use the child's exact words if they disclosed the information to you, not your own.

· Record the time and date
· Don't promise to keep what you are told a secret
· Tell the child or young person what you will do next
· Do not make promises you cannot keep

For further guidance you can get a copy of "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused" published by HM Government, Department for Education and Skills can be downloaded at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

**Allegations of abuse or malpractice against a member of staff or volunteer**

If the complaint is against a volunteer then the alleged volunteer will be asked to refrain from volunteering for a stated period and will not be permitted to return until they have been contacted and briefed on the investigation. This in no way implicates blame but is a measure taken to protect the child and the volunteer.

This policy will be reviewed every two years

Signed (chair) : Ross Proctor [signed electronically]

On behalf of Marlesford Community Council Committee

Date : 14 January 2026

Review Date : 13 January 2028

**Parental Consent form**

This consent form covers Marlesford Community Council activities.

This form must be completed by a parent/guardian before you are able to participate in any Community Centre activities. Anything written on this form will be held in confidence.

**Young Person Information**

Full name of young person ……

Gender Male /Female

Date of birth ……

Home Address ……
……
……

Postcode ……..

Home phone number ……
Young persons mobile ……

**Parent/Guardian Information**

Name of Parent/Guardian ……

Telephone numbers: Day ……
Evening ……
Mobile number ……
Email ……

**Collection of your child from the Community Centre**

Please indicate how your child will travel home after Community Centre events

…….. Collected by parent/Guardian/Named person
…….. Walk home with others as a group
…….. Cycle home

Please ensure your child brings a torch and or reflective clothing if they intend to walk home during winter months and ensure your child wears suitable clothing and has lights and reflectors in their bike if they intend cycling home during the winter months

Is there any person we should know about who has restricted access to your child/children?
Yes/ No

If yes, please contact Lesley Bensley on 07901882464 with details

**Young Persons Medical Details**

Please supply details of any regular medication, medical problems or disability that may affect regular activity

Is your child allergic to or sensitive to any food/medication?
Yes/No

Penicillin, plasters, nuts, fizzy drinks etc If yes please give details

Has your child received a Tetanus injection in the last 10 years?
Yes/No

**Emergency Contact details**

We would appreciate an alternative contact name and details in case of an emergency.

Contact name
……...…….

Telephone number
…….

Relationship to young person
……

Any other comments or information you feel we should know

**Declaration**

· I understand that this consent form covers my child to take part in Marlesford Community Council activities.
· In an emergency and/or if I am not contactable, I am willing for my child to receive emergency dental, medical or surgical treatment which is considered necessary by a medical authority.
· I will inform Lesley Bensley of any changes in any of the information requested on this form.
· I ensure that my child understands as far as reasonably possible that it is important for his/her safety and the safety of the group as a whole, that any instructions given by volunteers are obeyed.
· I understand that while Marlesford Community Council Volunteers are in charge they will take all reasonable care of the young people. And unless they are negligent, can not be held responsible for any loss, damage or injury suffered by any young person arising during Community Centre. I understand that young people are counted to be in the charge of Marlesford Community Council volunteers from the times they arrive at the Centre to the time they leave the premises (for any reason, unless part of the club activity), and that those running the activity are not responsible to see that young people arrive at the Centre or arrive home after they have left.

I give permission for my child to be photographed or videoed at Marlesford Community Council Community Centre activities. I understand these may be used for display or public purposes. I understand that the Council will not identify any young person by name in any promotional

material.

Signed …….

Date …….

Relationship to the young person ……..

(Note: if you do not sign this form, the young person may not be able to attend Community Centre youth activities.)

Many thanks for your support.