

Betteshanger Country Park

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

This core policy forms part of the induction for all staff. It is a requirement that all members of staff have access to the policy and sign to say they have read and understood its contents.

Date written: July, 2025

Date of last update: July, 2025

Date agreed and ratified by SLT: July, 2025

Date of next full review: June, 2026

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or following any updates to national and local guidance and procedures.

Key Contacts

Role in setting	Name	Contact Information
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Damian Smith	damian.smith@betteshangerparks.co.uk 07562 723 698
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) (DDSL)	Lucinda Smith	lucy.smith@betteshangerparks.co.uk 07949056708
Head of Betteshanger Country Park	Tyler Christy	tyler.christy@betteshangerparks.co.uk 07716077752
Other key staff		

Introduction

Betteshanger Country Park is committed to building a culture of safety in which children in our care are protected from abuse, harm and neglect. Betteshanger Country Park believes that children have the right to be completely secured from both the fear and reality of abuse, and we are committed to protecting all the children in our care from harm. Betteshanger Country Park is committed to ensuring that under no circumstances should any staff member or volunteer inflict physical or psychological harm on a child

Betteshanger Country Park has appointed Damian Smith as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL has suitable experience, training and expertise (DSL Trained). They have a good understanding of specific safeguarding issues, child protection, what abuse and neglect look like, what to expect when they make a referral to Kent's Front Door service and are responsible for ensuring that written records are dated, signed and kept confidentially. They are also responsible for liaising with Kent Safeguarding Children Multiagency Partnership (KSCMP) in any safeguarding and/or child protection matter. Their job description reflects their roles and responsibilities.

Detailed information on the DSL's duties and relevant training is in Part Two of Keeping children safe in education 2025 (KCSIE). Whilst KCSIE applies to schools and colleges, Betteshanger Country Park recognises its contents is considered 'best practice' for other settings working with children.

Betteshanger Country Park's safeguarding and child protection procedures comply with all relevant local and national legislation, guidance and learning including:

- Working together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping children safe in education 2024
- After-school clubs, community activities, and tuition Safeguarding guidance for providers 2023
- Holiday activities and food programme 2025
- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education 2022

- Kent Safeguarding Children multi-agency partnership safeguarding children procedures

Related safeguarding policies

This policy is one of a series in Betteshanger Country Park's integrated safeguarding portfolio and should be read and actioned in conjunction with the policies as listed below;

Anti-bullying
Complaints
Confidentiality
Data protection and information sharing
Emergency procedures
Emergency Action Plan
Health and safety
First aid and accidents,
Administering Medication and
Allergies Policy
Managing allegations against staff
Staff Code of Conduct
Acceptable Use Policy
Whistleblowing

Betteshanger Country Park is committed to reviewing its safeguarding children/child protection policy and procedures at regular intervals. The policy and its procedures will be shared with parents/carers on the company website.

Recognising Child Abuse

Child abuse manifests itself in a variety of different ways, some overt and others much less so. All staff (including volunteers) have undertaken child protection training and are vigilant to signs and evidence of physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect. Betteshanger Country Park uses the definitions of abuse found in Annex A of Keeping children safe in education 2024:

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused by other children or adults, in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.

Physical Abuse: a form of abuse that may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Sexual Abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Females can also be abusers as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as child-on-child abuse) in education. All staff are aware of it and Betteshanger Country Park's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Neglect: -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 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 caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

All staff (including volunteers) have an awareness of wider safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, unexplained and/or persistent absences from education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation, consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as youth produced sexual imagery), exploitation, domestic abuse (including controlling or coercive behaviour), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and mental health issues. Staff (including volunteers and agency and temporary staff) are directed to further information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues found in Part Five and Annex B of Keeping children safe in education 2024.

Child-on-child abuse

All Staff (including volunteers) at Betteshanger Country Park are aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse), and that it can happen both inside and outside of the provision and online. They understand that such abuse is a safeguarding issue and will follow the provision's procedures as set out later in this policy. Such abuse can include:

- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children
- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- physical abuse such as:
 - hitting
 - kicking
 - shaking
 - biting
 - hair pulling

- otherwise causing physical harm
- harmful sexual behaviour, which can include:
 - inappropriate sexual language
 - the sharing of nude or semi-nude images or videos
 - accessing age-inappropriate sexual material online
 - sexual activity without consent
 - sexual violence, such as rape or sexual assault upskirting
 - initiation or hazing type violence and rituals

As with other forms of abuse, all staff (including volunteers) who work for Betteshanger Country Park maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'** when considering child-on-child abuse. All reports of are taken seriously and staff (including volunteers) understand that even if there are no reports in the provision, it does not mean it is not happening and if they are concerned, they will speak to the designated safeguarding lead.

Online Safety

Betteshanger Country Park recognises that it is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate material or behaviours online and are aware of the '4 Cs' of Online Safety; Content, Contact, Conduct and Commerce. Betteshanger Country Park will adopt a whole setting approach to online safety which will empower, protect, and educate our participants and staff (including volunteers) in their use of technology, and establish mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.

The DSL has overall responsibility for online safety within the setting but will liaise with other members of staff, for example IT support and staff as necessary.

The DSL will respond to online safety concerns in line with our child protection and other associated policies. If the DSL is unsure whether an online related issue is of concern, they will follow their child protection procedures and seek advice from appropriate agencies.

Acceptable Use Policy

Betteshanger Country Park recognises the specific risks that can be posed by mobile and smart technology, including mobile/smart phones, watches, cameras and any other technology with imaging and sharing capabilities. Betteshanger Country Park has appropriate mobile and smart technology and image use policies in place which are shared with and understood by all staff (including volunteers) and users of the provision. These can be found in the break room.

Prevent

Betteshanger Country Park understands that children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism and is aware of its duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”, also known as the Prevent duty.

All staff (including volunteers) have received appropriate training and are alert to changes in children’s behaviour which may suggest they are at risk of being drawn into terrorism. Staff (including volunteers) will report concerns to the DSL who, where appropriate, will follow the local procedures for making a Prevent referral. If they are unsure as to how to proceed, advice will be sought from KCC’s community engagement officer, Nadine.Permaul@kent.gov.uk

If there is an immediate threat to safety, the police will be contacted via 999.

Staff responsibilities

Betteshanger Country Park recognises safeguarding and child protection is everyone’s responsibility, our approach is child-centred and gives priority to the interests and needs of the child. Our staff (including volunteers) are aware that they should raise all safeguarding concerns with the DSL immediately. When concerned about a child’s welfare, they will always act in the child’s best interests. Staff (including volunteers), know and understand the Betteshanger Country Park safeguarding processes and the appropriate escalation route.

Our staff (including volunteers) play a particularly important role in safeguarding as they are in a position to observe changes in a child's behaviour or appearance, identify concerns early, provide help for children, promote children's welfare and prevent concerns from escalating.

All members of staff (including volunteers) have a responsibility to:

- provide a safe environment in which children can learn and thrive.
- be aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation so that they can identify cases of children who may need help or protection.
- know what to do if a child tells them that they are being abused, neglected, or exploited and understand the impact this can have upon a child.
- be able to identify and act upon indicators that children are, or at risk of developing mental health issues.
- be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help and understand the early help process and their role in it.
- understand the Betteshanger Country Park's safeguarding policies and systems.
- undertake regular and appropriate training which is regularly updated.

Dealing with disclosures of abuse or harm from children

If a child in Betteshanger Country Park discloses that they have been abused or that they feel at risk of harm we will:

- Listen carefully to the child so they know that their disclosure is being taken seriously
- Ask open questions that encourage the child to speak in their own words ([TED](#))
- Make a record of what the child says as soon as possible after the disclosure (Concern Record Form)
- Reassure them they have done the right thing in telling you
- Ensure the child is safe, comfortable and not left alone
- Explain what will happen next (if age appropriate) and make no promises that cannot be kept, such as promising not to tell anybody what they are being told.

- Report to the DSL (or deputy) as soon as possible.

If a child is at risk of immediate harm, we will call the police on 999

Betteshanger Country Park is committed to ensuring that it meets its responsibilities in respect of child protection by treating any disclosure seriously and sensitively. Betteshanger Country Park will not carry out any investigation itself into a suspected child abuse incident and the DSL will refer the . 24 hours. Further information can be found in the flowchart in Annex A.

Betteshanger Country Park will assist children's social care and the police, as far as it is able, during any investigation of abuse or neglect. This will include disclosing written and verbal information and evidence

Where possible, Betteshanger Country Park will always respect the wishes of children and young people who do not consent to share confidential information. However, the lack of consent will be overridden if the facts of the case are in the public interest.

Betteshanger Country Park will always consider the safety and welfare of a child or young person when making decisions to share information about them. Where there is concern that the child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, the child's safety and welfare must be the overriding factor

Allegations against staff

Betteshanger Country Park recognises its responsibilities in relation to concerns/allegations which might indicate a person will pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position or in any capacity with children. Betteshanger Country Park uses the definitions as set out in Part four of KCSIE where it is alleged a member of our staff (including volunteers), has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or

- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Any allegations about staff should be reported to the DSL without delay. Information will be recorded in line with Betteshanger Country Park's recording systems (follow the Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy) and dealt with appropriately in line with Part four of KCSIE and the local Kent allegations arrangements, including discussions as necessary with Kent's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). In depth information can be found within Betteshanger Country Park's 'Managing Allegations against Staff' and/or staff behaviour policy/code of conduct policy. This can be found in the break room.

If an allegation of abuse is made against the DSL Damian Smith, Tyler Christy the Park Director, will be informed as soon as possible. They will then assume responsibility for the situation or delegate this role to a senior member of staff.

If a referral is needed to the LADO regarding an allegation against a member of staff, a LADO referral will be made via the Kent Integrated Children's Services Portal. Where the Director or DSL is unsure how to respond, for example if they are unsure if a concern meets 'the harm thresholds', advice will be sought via the LADO and Education Safeguarding Advisory Service (LESAS) enquiry form.

Safer recruitment, induction, training and support

Betteshanger Country Park is committed to ensuring that it meets its safeguarding responsibilities through the provision of support and training to all staff (including volunteers). To this end, Betteshanger Country Park will ensure that:

- All staff are carefully recruited in line with safer recruitment guidance. They will have two verified references and before employing them, their identity is checked, including their right to work in the UK.

- All staff and volunteers who have contact with children will have an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) check ([including via the update service](#)) before they commence their role.
- Volunteers and helpers without DBS checks are never left alone with a child.
- All staff and volunteers are given a copy of Betteshanger Country Park's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy during their induction and are asked to read and sign that they have understood the policy
- All staff are provided with supervision (new staff will shadow sessions for the first week, once confident with how sessions run the new staff member will run sessions under the supervision of an experienced team member for the second week until they are competent and can be signed off) and management support commensurate with their role.

Safer working practice

Betteshanger Country Park has a staff behaviour policy which is located in the break room. The principle of this policy ensures that staff (including volunteers) understand their responsibilities in ensuring a safe culture within Betteshanger Country Park.

Key principles:

- Every effort will be made to avoid or minimise time when members of staff are left alone with a child. If staff are alone with a child, the door of the room should be kept open and another member of staff should be informed and be within a close distance
- If a child makes inappropriate physical contact with a member of staff or volunteer, this will be recorded fully in the Incident Record Book (incident form)
- Staff will never carry out a personal task for children that they can do for themselves. Where this is essential, staff will help a child whilst being accompanied by a colleague.
- Unless a child has a particular need, staff should not accompany children into the toilet (a female staff member will attend any toileting issue if required and a second member of staff will be present but not in the toilet but be able to hear everything). Staff are aware that this and other similar activities could be misconstrued.

- Staff will be mindful of how and where they touch children, given their age and emotional understanding. Unnecessary or potentially inappropriate physical contact will be avoided at all times.
- Any requirement to transport a child in the event of illness or unforeseen emergency will be subject to discussions with the DSL and in reference to health and safety and safer working practice guidance. This should not delay the child receiving appropriate medical care.
- All staff will read and agree to the requirements set out in the staff code of conduct.
- All allegations made by a child against a member of staff will be fully recorded, including any actions taken, using the Betteshanger Country Park's recording procedures (Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy).

Health and Safety

At Betteshanger Country Park, we have a duty of care to try and ensure the environment is safe for people to visit or attend. We will take reasonable steps to ensure that people will be safe using the venue for the purposes for which they attend.

We will have in place the required health and safety policies and procedures. All associated risk assessments and plans as set out in the guidance produced by the Health and Safety Executive.

Compliments and Complaints Policy (including whistleblowing)

Betteshanger Country Park offers a warm welcome to all children and families and by working in partnership with parents/carers provides a warm, caring environment, where children can learn and develop as they play. Suggestions on how to improve the provision in the scheme are welcomed. At the end of the scheme each parent/carer, staff member and volunteer are offered the opportunity to provide feedback.

Making a Complaint

All staff (including volunteers) should feel able to report any concerns they may have about children's safety and concerns they may have regarding the Betteshanger Country Park's

safeguarding practice, policies and procedures. Whilst we encourage staff (including volunteers) to report concerns and/or complaints directly to us, they can also access the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline if they do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 (8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Monday to Friday) or email help@nspcc.org.uk

Any parent/carers who want to make a complaint about any aspect of the provision should talk over any worries and anxieties with a Manager.

The Manager will communicate a detailed response, including any actions to be taken, to the SLT and the parents concerned within five working days.

The Manager may arrange to meet the child and parent and any other relevant individuals, to discuss the complaint and his/her response to it. The Manager will judge if it is best for all parties to meet together or if individual meetings are more appropriate. Either party may need to consider consulting an external mediator who is acceptable to both parties and will offer support and advice. Any mediator must ensure discussions are kept confidential. A formal response to the complaint will be sent to the child, parent or staff member concerned and copied to all relevant members of staff if appropriate. The response will include recommendations for dealing with the complaint. If there is no satisfactory outcome, or the problem recurs, the parent/carers should, contact the Park Director.

SignedD.Smith.....
Role.....Forest School and Activities Manager.....
Date.....23/07/2025.....

Appendix A

What to do if you have a welfare concern in Betteshanger Country Park

Why are you concerned?

For example:

- Something a child has said, for example, an allegation of harm
- Child's appearance; may include unexplained marks/bruises as well as dress
- Behaviour change(s)
- Witnessed concerning behaviour

Act immediately and record your concerns: If urgent, speak to a DSL first

Follow Betteshanger Country Parks procedure

- Reassure the child
- Clarify any concerns using open questions, if necessary (**TED: Tell, Explain, Describe**)
- Record facts and not opinions and use child's own words. Sign and date your record
- Seek support for yourself as required from DSL

Inform Damian Smith - Designated Safeguarding Lead

damian.smith@betteshangerparks.co.uk 07562 723 698

- If a child is at risk of immediate harm and/or is unsafe to go home, make an urgent Request for Support to the Front Door Service via the portal or call the Police on 999.
- If no immediate risk of harm, provide internal support and/or refer to other agencies in line with Kent Safeguarding Support Level Guidance and KSCMP procedures, as appropriate. For example, signposting to community services and/or early help open access, a non-urgent call to the Police via 101, reporting allegations against staff to the County LADO Service, or make a Request for Support via the Front Door Service Portal.
- Where the setting is unsure, advice can be sought from a Local Authority Social Worker at the Front Door Service via **03000 411 111**
- Where support is required out of working hours, contact the Out of Hours Service via **03000 41 91 91**.
-

If you are unhappy with the response:

DSLs/Staff:

- Follow Betteshanger Country Park's whistleblowing procedures (available in the break room)
- Follow Kent safeguarding partnership escalation procedures.

Children or Parents:

- Follow Betteshanger Country Park complaints procedures (email info@betteshangerparks.co.uk to request policy)

Record decision making and action taken (to be held securely in the park office)

Monitor

Be clear about:

- What you are monitoring, for example, behaviour trends, appearance.
- How long you will monitor
- Where, how and to whom you will feedback, and how you will record

Review and request further support if necessary.

At all stages, the child's circumstances will be kept under review
The DSL/staff will request further support if required to ensure the **child's safety is paramount**

Appendix B

National Organisations

NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk

Barnardo's: www.barnardos.org.uk

Action for Children: www.actionforchildren.org.uk

Children's Society: www.childrenssociety.org.uk

Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse: www.csacentre.org.uk

Local Support

Kent Resilience Hub <https://kentresiliencehub.org.uk/>

We are with you (formerly Addaction): www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/kent-for-young-people/

Early Help Contacts: <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/integrated-childrens-services/early-help-and-preventative-services>

Kent Family Hubs: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/kent-family-hub>

Kent Support Levels Guidance: <https://www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/worried-about-a-child>

Kent Integrated Children's Services Portal:

<https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ChildrensPortal.Web.Sites.Public.Default.aspx>

Out of Hours telephone number: 03000 41 91 91

Kent LADO arrangements: <https://www.kscmp.org.uk/procedures/local-authority-designated-officer-lado>

Support for Staff

Education Support Partnership: www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk

Professional Online Safety Helpline: www.saferinternet.org.uk/helpline

Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Service: <https://swgfl.org.uk/harmful-sexual-behaviour-support-service>

Support for Children

ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk

Papyrus: www.papyrus-uk.org

The Mix: www.themix.org.uk

Shout: www.giveusashout.org

Fearless: www.fearless.org

Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk

National information Centre on Children of Offenders (NICCO): www.nicco.org.uk/

Mind: www.mind.org.uk

Moodspark: <https://moodspark.org.uk>

Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk

Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk

Support for Adults

Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk

Crime Stoppers: www.crimestoppers-uk.org
Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
The Samaritans: www.samaritans.org
NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood): www.napac.org.uk
MOSAC: www.mosac.org.uk
Action Fraud: www.actionfraud.police.uk
Shout: www.giveusashout.org
Advice now: www.advicenow.org.uk

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse services: www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk
Refuge: www.refuge.org.uk
Women's Aid: www.womensaid.org.uk
Men's Advice Line: www.mensadviceline.org.uk
Mankind: www.mankindcounselling.org.uk
National Domestic Abuse Helpline: www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
Respect Phonenumber: <https://respectphonenumber.org.uk>

Radicalisation and hate

Educate against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com
Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit: www.gov.uk/report-terrorism
True Vision: www.report-it.org.uk

Online Safety

NCA-CEOP: www.ceop.police.uk and www.thinkuknow.co.uk
Internet Watch Foundation (IWF): www.iwf.org.uk
Childnet: www.childnet.com
UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
Report Harmful Content: <https://reportharmfulcontent.com>
Marie Collins Foundation: www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk
Internet Matters: www.internetmatters.org
NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk/online-safety
Get Safe Online: www.getsafeonline.org
Parents Protect: www.parentsprotect.co.uk
Cyber Choices: <https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/cyber-crime/cyberchoices>
National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC): www.ncsc.gov.uk

Criminal and Sexual Exploitation

National Crime Agency: www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are
It's not okay: www.itsnotokay.co.uk
NWG Network: www.nwgnetwork.org
County Lines Toolkit for Professionals:
www.childrenssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/county-lines-toolkit
Multi-agency practice principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm: <https://tce.researchinpractice.org.uk/>

