

Friends of Maryhill Park

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Commitment to equality, diversity and safeguarding:

Friends of Maryhill Park (FOMP) is a voluntary organisation supporting activities and funding of Maryhill Park (Glasgow) as a centre for environmental education, events, recreation and to protect the environmental amenity of the park and its precincts. We recognise that volunteer activities and related events require group members and others to be aware of their responsibilities regarding equality, diversity and safeguarding of participants.

FOMP believes that any child, young person or vulnerable adult (vulnerable person) should never experience abuse of any kind. We recognize that we have a responsibility to protect the welfare of all such vulnerable persons, and we are committed to maintaining equality, diversity and safeguarding their well-being whilst they are engaged in activities that we have promoted, to protect them from harm, and to ensure that no volunteer or group participant receives less favourable treatment. We will ensure that individuals are treated equally and on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

Policy review:

This policy and its procedures will be reviewed and amended (if necessary) on an annual basis by appropriate volunteer coordinators and committee members. It will also be reviewed in response to changes in relevant legislation, good practice, or in response to an identified failing in its effectiveness.

Definitions:

- **Equality** is about equal and fair treatment regardless of a person's background, social status or characteristics.
- **Diversity** literally means difference, and places positive value on both individual and group differences which benefit and enrich communities.
- **Discrimination** is unjust or prejudicial treatment of individuals or certain groups on the basis of their characteristics, contravening the ethos of equality and diversity.

About this policy

This policy applies to: all members and anyone who provides a service on behalf of the Friends of Maryhill Park or taking part in any of its activities.

The purpose of this policy is to provide members and anyone who provides a service on behalf of the Friends of Maryhill Park, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of vulnerable people

This policy recognises vulnerable people as:

- Children up to the age of 16 or young people aged 16-18. **Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.**
- Adults aged over 18 defined as vulnerable by the **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2017.** This might include adults with a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs, or reduced physical or mental capacity.

This policy aims to:

- Protect vulnerable people who are: members of, receive services from, or volunteer for the Friends of Maryhill Park.
- Ensure members and anyone who provides a service on behalf of FOMP and engaged with vulnerable people are carefully recruited and understand and accept responsibility for the safeguarding of those vulnerable individuals they are interacting with.
- Ensure that safeguarding vulnerable people is a primary consideration when the Friends of Maryhill Park undertakes any activity, event or project.

How the Friends of Maryhill Park might work with vulnerable people:

Membership is open to all ages and we run regular activities for members and other volunteers in park maintenance and development. As such our involvement with vulnerable people might include, but is not limited to:

- Members of the group who participate in park maintenance, litter-picking, bulb planting, and related biodiversity activities.
- Occasional visitors and family members who may attend in a voluntary capacity or provide a service on behalf of FOMP.

Any projects, events or other activities that will involve vulnerable people must be planned with the involvement of the FOMP Committee and relevant volunteer coordinator.

Safeguarding policy – The Friends of Maryhill Park- Ground rules, ways of working and procedures

This document forms part of the Friends of Maryhill Park’s Safeguarding policy

- The policy applies to: all members and anyone who provides a service on behalf of The Friends of Maryhill Park, and those taking part in any of their activities.
- This policy recognises vulnerable people as:
 - Children up to the age of 16 or young people aged 16-18.
 - Adults aged over 18 defined as vulnerable by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (Scotland) 2017; this might include adults with a learning or physical disability, a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs, or reduced physical or mental capacity.

This document includes:

- Recruitment practices around safeguarding.
- Ground rules and ways for working regarding safeguarding of vulnerable people.
- Procedures for raising safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse.
- Procedures for dealing with concerns and incident of abuse.

When the Friends of Maryhill Park organises an activity or event where they may be responsible for vulnerable people they will ensure:

- Planning is carried out in line with this policy and procedures.
- The Chair/event coordinator will be the contact for safeguarding issues.
- That if vulnerable people of different gender will be taking part in activities adults of different gender will be in attendance too.

Working with parents/guardians:

If a vulnerable person wishes to take part in the Friends of Maryhill Park activities, written permission (email is acceptable) should be obtained from parents/guardians where appropriate, and before the activity takes place. Written permission should include: emergency contact details of any relevant pick-up arrangements – including permission for another adult to pick up the vulnerable person after the activity has finished.

Procedures for raising safeguarding concerns and incidents of abuse

- If any member of the public, FOMP member, volunteer or persons who provide a service to Friends of Maryhill Park witnesses, suspects or is informed of a witnessed or suspected case of abuse they should immediately report it to an appropriate committee member or volunteer coordinator.
- If an individual wishes to report an incident of abuse against themselves they should report it to the FOMP chair or an individual they trust.

Procedures for dealing with concerns and incidents of abuse

The FOMP Chair (or person reported to in their absence) will first make a decision based on the immediacy of the concern and the following two factors:

1. If the vulnerable person is in immediate danger or needs emergency medical attention – call the police and/or ambulance service.
2. If the person at the centre of the allegation is working with vulnerable persons at the current time – remove them, in a sensitive manner, from direct contact with vulnerable people and follow the procedures below.

If none of the above applies the named person will:

- Make a note of the concerns reported to them.
- Speak with committee members to decide how to handle the reported abuse, excluding any committee members who are involved in the incident.
- Escalate the report by either:
 - Raising concerns with the police – for serious or possible criminal offences.
 - Requesting an assessment by the local authority social care department about whether a vulnerable person is in need of protection.
 - An internal investigation – for less serious incidents where they feel internal mediation will be successful.

Where cases are escalated, the committee will cooperate with the police or local authority in dealing with the reported incident.

Where an internal investigation takes place, the committee will:

- Inform all parties involved of the reported abuse as soon as possible.
- Inform the family/guardians of the person reported as being abused of the incident.
- Arrange separate meetings with both parties within 10 days of the reported incident. A joint meeting may be arranged if appropriate.

Both parties should be given the chance to bring a friend or representative to the meeting.

Meetings will be attended by the Chair or Secretary and at least one other committee member.

All parties will also be invited to submit a written statement in advance of the meeting.

Once meetings have taken place the committee will decide on next steps and communicate them to all parties in writing within 5 days. There will be either:

- Escalation of the incident to the relevant authority.
- Further investigation – with established procedures and timelines to work towards a resolution.
- A decision or resolution.

Resolution and disciplinary action

If abuse is found to have taken place, any final resolution or decision will be taken in the best interest of the person who has suffered the abuse and the best interests the Friends of Maryhill Park.

Any disciplinary action will be taken in line with the FOMP constitution.

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