

OLD CATTON PARISH COUNCIL

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The primary responsibility for children's welfare rests with the adult supervising the child.
- 1.2. Old Catton Parish Council wishes to ensure that children are safe and protected from harm whilst visiting its premises and using its facilities. We believe that all children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to have fun and be safe in the services provided for them and the activities they choose to participate in.
- 1.3. We believe that all children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to live their lives to the fullest potential, to be protected, to have the opportunity to participate in and enjoy any activity and be treated with dignity and respect.
- 1.4. We believe that all children, young people and vulnerable adults irrespective of their age, class, religion, culture, disability, gender, ethnicity or sexual preference have the right to protection.

2. Child Protection Statement

- 2.1. This Council is committed to ensuring that all children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm while they visit the premises of Old Catton Parish Council.

This will be done by:

- Following the appropriate guidelines to recruit staff and carry out enhance Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks;
 - Giving group leaders, service providers and other interested parties information about Old Catton Parish Council's procedure regarding safety of children whilst at the Councils' premises when requested;
 - When requested giving information to group leaders, service providers and other interested parties information about Old Catton Parish Council's expectations regarding child protection responsibilities while visiting the Councils' premises;
 - To ensure that children and vulnerable adults visiting Councils' premises can be protected by setting standards of best practice. This will also ensure that Council's staff and volunteers are protected and do not place themselves in a vulnerable position.
- 2.2. This policy applies to every elected member, staff member, volunteer and anyone working on behalf of and/or representing the Council.

3. Definitions

- The term children or young person is used to refer to anyone under the age of 18 years.
- The term vulnerable adults is used to refer to a person who is over the age of 18 years and who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other

disability, age or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

- The term parent is used as a generic term to represent anyone with legal parental responsibility.
- The terms elected members, staff and volunteers is used to refer to employees, Councillors, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of and/or representing the Council, including temporary and agency staff and contractors.

4. Aims of the Policy

4.1. The Council accepts the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, provide a duty of care for children, young people and vulnerable adults, safeguard their wellbeing and protect them when they are engaged in services organised and provided by the Council or when they come into contact with Council staff, those on work experience, elected members and volunteers.

4.2. The Council aims to do this by:

- Raising awareness throughout the Council and beyond of the statutory “duty of care” relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults and actively encourage good practice amongst all staff, elected members and volunteers;
- Creating a safe and healthy environment within all its services, avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur;
- Respect and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- Listening to children, young people and vulnerable adults, minimising dangers and working closely with other agencies;
- Recruiting, training, supervising and supporting staff, elected members and volunteers who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults to adopt the best practice to safeguard and protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse, and themselves against false allegations. Staff and volunteers who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults will be subject to the appropriate level Disclosure Barring Services check;
- Responding to any allegations appropriately and implementing the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures;
- Requiring staff, elected members and volunteers to adopt and abide by this policy and guidelines.

5. Use of Contractors

5.1. The Council and its staff, elected members and volunteers should take care that contractors doing work on behalf of the Council are monitored appropriately. Any contractor or sub-contractor engaged by the Council in areas where workers are likely to come into contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults should have a similarly robust Child Protection Policy or failing this must comply with the terms of the Policy. Contractors will be monitored by the Officer responsible for the contract.

6. Photography

- 6.1. Staff, elected members and volunteers should be vigilant at all times regarding people using cameras or videos within Council services and at events which involve children, young people or vulnerable adults. Consent must be sought from parents or legal guardians when cameras and other image recorders are used to picture children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- 6.2. Parents or legal guardians must be informed that photographs of their child, young person or vulnerable adult may be taken during Council services, activities or events, and signed parental consent needs to be obtained agreeing this. This must include information about how and where this information will be used.
- 6.3. The names of children, young person or vulnerable adult should not be used in photographs or video footage, unless with the express permission of the child, young person or vulnerable adult's parent or legal guardian.

7. Sources of Information/Support

Norfolk County Council

www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/keeping-children-safe/report-concerns

Telephone: 0344 800 8020 – to report incidents of concern

ChildLine free helpline for children and young people in the UK. Children and young people can talk about any problem

www.childline.org.uk

Telephone: 0800 11 11

NSPCC information for children and adults

www.nspcc.org.uk

Telephone: 0808 800 50 00

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org

Telephone: 01603 611 311 or freephone: 116 123

Appendix 1

General Conduct When Working With Young People

Procedures

These procedures inform staff, elected members and volunteers of what actions they should take if any allegation is disclosed by a child, young person or vulnerable adult, they have concerns or encounter a case of alleged or suspected abuse.

1. Listen and Reassure

Maintain confidentiality but do not make promises you cannot keep, and explain that the information will have to be passed on and what action you will be taking

- Be calm
- Be reassuring and make it clear that you are glad that they have told you
- Show that you are taking the child, young person or vulnerable adult seriously and that you understand and believe them
- Keep questions to a minimum; if you have to ask questions keep them open and not leading
- Try not to display any sign of shock or disapproval when the child, young person or vulnerable adult is making a disclosure
- Do not jump to conclusions
- The child, young person or vulnerable adult may not regard the experience as either bad or painful, they may not feel guilty or angry
- Be aware of your own feelings which may be different to those of the child, young person or vulnerable adult
- Take care of yourself by making sure that you have an opportunity to discuss your feelings with your manager at a later stage
- Do not destroy any evidence as it may be useful in a court of law
- Initial disclosure, even if retracted, must still be referred.

2. Responding to Concerns and Allegations

2.1. It is important that all staff, elected members and volunteers are aware that the first person that has concerns or encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. It is not the place of any Officer of the Council to investigate allegations. However, staff, elected members and volunteers do have a duty of care to the child, young person or vulnerable adult which means they must report any suspicions they may have.

2.2. It is the duty of any member of staff, elected member or volunteer to report any concerns about a child, young person or vulnerable adult being subject to abuse, receive a disclosure or are aware of members or colleagues behaving in an inappropriate manner. All reports should be treated as confidential and with respect to the person raising concerns regardless of the outcome. All instances must be reported to the Parish Clerk in the first instance.

- 2.3. In general there are 3 situations that staff, elected member and volunteers may need to respond to a concern or case of alleged or suspected abuse:
- 2.3.1. Responding to a child, young person or vulnerable adult disclosing abuse, ie they make an allegation of abuse.
 - 2.3.2. Responding to allegations or concerns about a member of staff, elected member or volunteer from your own observation or due to a complaint.
 - 2.3.3. Responding to allegations or concerns about any other person ie parent, carer, other service user.
- 2.4. In the case of an emergency where a child, young person or vulnerable adult is in danger phone 999 immediately.
- 2.5. Record in writing all the details that you are aware of and what was said using the child, young person or vulnerable adult's own words immediately. In your record you should include the following:
- The date and time;
 - The child, young person or vulnerable adult's name and address;
 - The nature of the allegation;
 - Your observations – a description of the child, young person or vulnerable adult's behaviour, physical and emotional state and any visible injuries;
 - Exactly what the child, young person or vulnerable adult said and what you said. Record the child, young person or vulnerable adult's account of what has happened as closely as possible;
 - Sign and date what you have recorded.
- 2.6. Do not ask questions, other than the child, young person or vulnerable adult's name and address. Reassure the child, young person or vulnerable adult that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- 2.7. Contact local Norfolk County Council Social Services or the Police without delay and following their guidance.
- 2.8. Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disclosed on a need to know basis only, this is usually Social Services or the Police. It is extremely important that allegations or concerns are not discussed, as any breach of confidentiality could be damaging to the child, young person or vulnerable adult, their family, those who are the subject of the allegations and any child protection investigations that may follow.
- 2.9. Informing the parents or legal guardian of a child, young person or vulnerable adult of concerns you may have should be dealt with by Social Services. Any individual against whom an allegation has been made has the right to be notified about the cause of concern. This should be done by Social Services and the Police. It is important that the timing of this does not prejudice the investigation; therefore confidentiality is of the upmost importance.

Appendix 2

Standards of Behaviour

Staff, elected members and volunteers should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from allegations of abuse. Stated below are the standards of behaviour required of elected members, staff and volunteers to ensure that a positive culture and climate is created during all Council activities involving contact with young people.

1. Be identifiable (eg wearing Parish Council branded clothing or name badges);
2. Always work in an open environment (eg avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment ie no secrets);
3. Treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity;
4. Maintain a safe and appropriate distance from young people;
5. Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers young people to share in the decision-making process;
6. Involve group leaders, parents/carers and other key influences wherever possible;
7. Be an excellent role model – this includes no smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people or using inappropriate language;
8. Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism;
9. Remember that someone else might misinterpret certain actions, no matter how well intentioned;
10. Obtain written parental consent if staff members are required to transport young people in their cars;
11. Obtain written consent prior to any photographs, videoing or audio recording;
12. Ensure that photographs or footage is of the audience and taken into proper consideration when publishing any photographic/film material ie focus on the activity, rather than full shots of children;
13. Always operate within Old Catton Parish Council's Code of Conduct, principles, guidance, policies and procedures;

Unacceptable Practices

The following should never be sanctioned:

1. Inappropriate or unwarranted physical or verbal contact with young people or vulnerable adults;
2. Spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others;
3. Taking young people to your home where they will be alone with you;
4. Allowing young people to travel on their own with you in a vehicle
5. Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
6. Entering a toilet with young people unless another adult is present or gives permission (this may include parent, teacher or group leader);
7. Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate contact;
8. Allowing or encouraging abusive peer activities (eg any game/activity where an individual may be held up to ridicule);

9. Allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
10. Making sexually suggestive comments to, or within the hearing of a young person, even in fun;
11. Reducing a young person to treats as a form of control;
12. Allowing allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
13. Doing things of a personal nature for young people or disabled adults that they can do for themselves; There may be exceptional circumstances where it is necessary to restrain a child or vulnerable adult to prevent them from damaging themselves or others. Only the minimum reasonable force necessary may be used. All incidents of physical restraint must be recorded on an incident form and submitted to the Parish Clerk, as well as informing the parents and/or carer as soon as possible.

Agreed: 11th March 2019

Reviewed: 15th January 2024