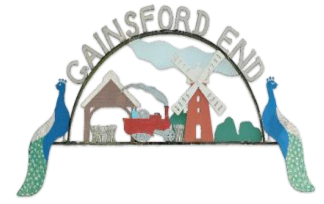




Toppesfield Parish Council



Safeguarding Policy & Procedures for Children, Young People and Adults

Policy statement

Everyone has the right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

Toppesfield Parish Council recognises its responsibility to safeguard children, young people, and adults with care and support needs when they encounter the council or use its services or facilities.

Who is this policy for?

This policy applies to anyone working for or on behalf of Toppesfield Parish Council whether in a paid, voluntary, or commissioned capacity.

What does this policy cover?

It is not your responsibility to investigate concerns or decide if abuse has taken place. But it is your duty to report any concerns to an appropriate professional.

This policy tells you

- What safeguarding means and how to spot the signs
- How to respond if you suspect or are told about abuse or risk to a person
- Managing allegations against staff members, councillors, volunteers or contractors
- Safer recruitment and supervision of staff
- Support for staff
- Good practice guidance

Definitions

- Safeguarding means protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and reduce the risk of abuse and neglect.
- A child or young person is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.
- The term parent is used as a generic term to represent parents, carers and guardians.
- The terms staff, councillors and volunteers is used to refer to employees, parish councillors, volunteers, contractors and anyone working on behalf of, delivering a service for, or representing the council, including commissioned services
- An adult in need of safeguarding is someone who is:
 - Aged 18 years or over **and**
 - Has needs for care and support, for example due to age, illness or disability **and**
 - Is unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect as a result of those needs

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human rights by others which may result in significant harm. It

can be a single act or repeated acts. It can also be an act of neglect or failure to act.

Types of Abuse

There are a number of broad types of abuse affecting children, young people and adults. These include (but are not limited to):

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional and Psychological abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual Abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Exploitation / Modern Slavery
- Discriminatory Abuse
- Institutional / organisational abuse
- Self-Neglect
- Domestic Abuse

Signs and Indicators of Abuse

There are many signs and indicators that abuse of children or adults may be taking place. Examples include:

- Unexplained injuries or bruises, wounds, lacerations, burns
- Unkempt or dirty appearance
- Depression, anxiety or aggression, low self-esteem
- Missed appointments
- Obsessive behaviours
- Substance abuse (alcohol or drugs)
- Self-harm and thoughts of suicide
- Unexplained financial problems, unpaid bills, misuse of money by others

Concern for Welfare

The term **safeguarding** directly relates to a situation where abuse is taking place by a third party. Staff may, however, be concerned about the welfare of an adult where there is no abuse, e.g. if an adult is living in surroundings that are unsuitable or unsafe, or if there are concerns about substance misuse, self-neglect, self-harming or poor mental health.

In these cases, concerns should still be reported to the appropriate agency as a concern for welfare or self-neglect.

It is important to note that **you should always call 999 if you believe someone's life is at risk** - for example they have seriously injured themselves or taken an overdose. You should also call 999 if you do not feel you can keep someone else safe.

A mental health emergency should be taken as seriously as a physical one. You will not be wasting anyone's time.

Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

If you feel there is an immediate risk to a person's safety or wellbeing, always call the emergency services first!

It is your duty to report any concerns you have about the safeguarding or welfare of a child, young person or adult.

You are not expected to investigate suspicions or concerns relating to abuse further than your role would require, other agencies are trained to do this.

If you have a concern, you may:

- Speak to your safeguarding lead if you have one. They will support you to refer your concerns to the appropriate agency or professionals
- Speak to your line manager
- Report your concerns to the relevant professionals

You **must** maintain confidentiality.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned in the protection of children, young people and adults with care and support needs. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only.

You should however be proactive in sharing information as early as possible with relevant professionals in order that any risks or concerns can be responded to without delay.

Allegations against a staff member or councillor

Any allegation against a member of staff should be addressed via the parish/town council grievance procedures.

An allegation made against a councillor needs to be reported to the monitoring officer at the district or borough council that covers your area.

Recruitment of Staff

It is important that everyone responsible for, or involved in, staff recruitment and selection operates within an agreed and structured recruitment process.

Matters relating to staff issues should be dealt with confidentially by the parish council.

Support for Staff

If an allegation is made towards another member of staff, full support will be given in line with the Good Employer Guide issued by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), this also covers whistleblowing.

Further information is available from NALC including:

- *Legal Topic Note 86*

- *Being a Good Employer*
- *Civility and Respect Recruitment Manual*
- *Civility and Respect Model Councillor-Officer Protocol*

Key Contacts

The Essex Duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Telephone: 03330 139 797 .

Essex Police - Tel: 999 or 112 if there is an immediate risk of harm

Tel: 101 if you think a crime has been committed but there is no immediate danger

Essex County Council Social Care for Children Tel: 0345 603 7627

Essex County Council Adult Social Care Telephone: Tel: 0345 603 7630

The Social Care Emergency Duty Team (EDT) – Tel: 0345 606 1212

National Domestic Abuse Helpline/Refuge - Tel: 0808 2000 247 (24 hours)

Samaritans - Tel: 116 123

NSPCC Childline (for persons under 18 years) - Tel: 0800 1111

NSPCC Advice Line (for adults who are concerned about a child) - Tel: 0808 800 5000

E-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk

Hearing impaired 18001 0808 800 5000

Appendix

Promoting Good Practice

You will be better placed to avoid any misinterpretation of your actions and ensure the welfare of children and adults if you engage in the following good practice. Failure to adhere to these could be perceived as poor practice and become a disciplinary issue or even result in prosecution.

- Always put the welfare of the child or adult first.
- Provide a good role model of behaviour.
- Treat all children and adults equally with respect and dignity using positive constructive encouragement.
- Stay vigilant for the safety of all children or adults around you, not just the ones immediately in your care.
- If you have to physically touch a child or adult e.g. Coaching, for restraint, assisting in and out of vehicles etc., then do so with consideration, never touch intimate areas and always tell the child or adult what you are going to do.
- If a child or adult is upset or needs first aid, then take them to one side but do not enclose yourself in a room with them on your own.
- Always wear appropriate clothing when working with children or adults, e.g. dress according to the duties to be undertaken in a manner befitting the responsible care. If you have a uniform this must be worn as part of your contracted condition of employment. Name badges must be worn where provided and/or identification that you are representing the Council.
- Ensure a code of behaviour is established so that everyone knows what is expected of them and what is acceptable. If you have to challenge unacceptable behaviour, then do so in a positive constructive manner making sure that the child or adult knows it is the behaviour and not the person that is not welcome.
- Use appropriate language and explanations (it is not always what is said but how it is said that can be of concern and of great importance).

If you are responsible for a group of children:

- Maintain correct statutory staff to child ratios.
- Always have a register of children in your charge and make sure they are signed out when collected. Be aware of who is and is not authorised to collect the child and do not let them leave with anyone else without checking with a parent first.
- If working with children without parents present, an appropriate consent form should be filled in by parents detailing emergency contacts and medical issues.
- If children are old enough to make their own way home after a session this should be clarified on the consent form

Practice that is not acceptable

- Allowing inappropriate language of all parties to go unchallenged.
- Transporting children should never be undertaken by just one member of staff, there should always be two adults within your selected mode of transport.
- Transporting an adult in need of safeguarding on your own should be avoided. However, if this

is required you should be accompanied by another member of staff and/or contact the appropriate emergency service.

- Making sexually suggestive comments.
- Engaging in rough physical or sexually provocative play.
- Allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching.
- Inviting or allowing a child or adult in need of safeguarding to stay in your home, for however short a time.
- Sharing a room with a child or adult with care and support needs on residential based activities.
- Performing personal care for someone which they can do themselves or that you are not trained to do or authorised to undertake.
- Forming inappropriate relationships with children in your care, N.B Remember this legally means a child up to 18 years of age.
- Allowing allegations made by a child or adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or un-acted upon.
- Giving a home or mobile number to children or adults in need of safeguarding or obtaining a person's mobile phone number unless this is an agreed part of the service/ activity being delivered.

Responding to a disclosure of abuse

Abused children, young people and adults are more likely to disclose details of abuse to someone they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening and taking seriously what they are saying you are already helping the situation. The following points are a guide to help you respond appropriately.

What to do if a person discloses information to you:

- React calmly.
- Take what the person says seriously.
- Do clarify your understanding of what the person has said but avoid asking detailed or leading questions.
- Reassure the person that they were right to tell and do not make promises of secrecy.
- Be open and honest, explain to them that you will have to share your concerns with your safeguarding lead.
- Immediately record all details in writing, using the child or young person's own words whenever possible.
- As soon as possible take appropriate action by contacting your safeguarding lead and referring to the relevant professional agencies

The person receiving the disclosure should not:

- Dismiss the concern.
- Panic.
- Allow their shock or distaste to show.
- Probe for more information than is comfortably offered – do not overpressure for a response.
- Speculate or make assumptions.
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser.
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets.

- Say what might happen as a result of the disclosure.

First Aid and Treatment of Injuries

If a person requires first aid or any form of medical attention whilst in your care, then the following good practice should be followed:

- Be aware of any pre-existing medical conditions, medicines being taken by participants or existing injuries and treatment required.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Where possible, ensure access to medical advice and/or assistance is available.
- Only those with a current, recognised First Aid qualification should respond to any injuries.
- Where possible any course of action should be discussed with the person in a language that they understand, and their permission sought before any action is taken.
- In more serious cases, assistance must be obtained from a medically qualified professional as soon as possible.
- The person's parents/guardians or carers must be informed of any injury and any action taken as soon as possible, unless it is in their best interests and on professional advice not to.
- An accident form must be completed and signed and passed to the relevant member of staff.

Transporting Children and Adults at Risk

If it is necessary to provide transport in a car the following good practice must be followed:

- Staff are not specifically required to transport people in their own vehicles unless it is part of their job description or they have indicated that they are willing to do so. The use of a competent, professional driver should always be considered as a preferred option, where reasonable and practical
- You should only transport a person where there are two members of staff/adults present in the selected mode of transport
- Ensure, where possible, a male and female accompany mixed groups of children or adults with care and support needs. These adults should be familiar with and agree to abide by the Council's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- In addition to this, where practical, request written parental/guardian/carer consent
- Members of staff should discuss any proposals for transporting people in their own vehicles with their manager and agree appropriate arrangements. For some journeys, for example, over 20 miles or in circumstances where the young person is unfamiliar with the vehicle, driver or accompanying staff and potential risks have been identified, a risk assessment should be produced
- Ensure that the vehicle used to transport people is legal and roadworthy and complies with the Council's requirements that those using a vehicle for work purposes have a valid driving licence and up to date car tax, MOT and insurance
- It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that every person travelling in his/her car is properly

restrained. The law says that all children up to 135cm tall (around 4'5"), or the age of 12, whichever comes first, in the front or rear seats in cars, vans and other goods vehicles must travel in the correct child restraint for their weight with very few exceptions

Use of Contractors

Toppesfield Parish Council and its staff, elected members and volunteers should undertake reasonable care that contractors working 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, or adults with care and support needs, should have their own equivalent safeguarding policy, or comply with the terms of this policy.

Safeguarding measures must be detailed within the Request for Quotation or Invitation to Tender (as appropriate) that require the contractor to make appropriate and proportionate provision of the protection of adults and children.