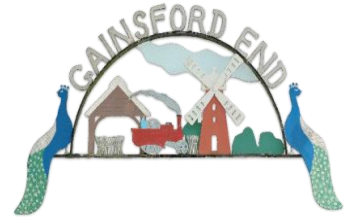




TOPPESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL



Introduction

Everyone has a duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

This policy outlines practice that will promote the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults using Parish Council facilities. The policy will be reviewed by the Parish Council annually.

Definitions

Children and young people:

Anyone under the age of 18 years

Vulnerable Adult:

Anyone over 18 who is:

- Unable to care for themselves
- Unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation
- Or may be in need of community care services

This policy applies to: -

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

Promoting a safe environment

In order to promote a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults, Toppesfield Parish Council wishes to promote a safeguarding culture in its premises and activity areas. In order to achieve this, Toppesfield Parish Council will:

- Provide safe facilities and undertake regular safety assessments.
- Ensure that employees, and Councillors are aware of the safeguarding expectations.
- Make available on public notice boards and to employees and Councillors, the contact details of the following:
 - o Safeguarding Hub (contact details dependant of area in which the Parish sits)
 - o The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
 - o The NSPCC 020 7825 2500
 - o The Social Care Emergency Duty Team (EDT)
- Employees, Councillors and volunteers all have a duty to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults but are not responsible for deciding whether abuse is taking place. If they have concerns, these should be passed on to the Local Social Care Duty Officer, the safeguarding hub or EDT as soon as possible.

Allegations against Councillors, staff and volunteers

- All Councillors, staff and volunteers should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.
- The Parish should follow the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) procedures for managing allegations against staff/volunteers, a copy of which can be found on the through the ESCB website.

No attempt should be made to investigate or act on any allegation before consultation with the LADO (contact details above).

Whistleblowing

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where Councillors, staff or volunteers fail to do so.

All Councillors, staff and volunteers should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues and appropriate advice will be sought from the LADO or Safeguarding Team.

What should be a cause for concern:

Staff and Volunteers should be concerned by any behaviour, action or inaction, which significantly harms the physical and/or emotional development of a child. A child may be abused by parents, other relatives or carers, professionals and other children, and abuse can occur in any family OR in any other area of society, regardless of social class, wealth or geographical location.

Abuse falls into four main categories:

1. Physical Abuse
2. Emotional Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Neglect

All staff and volunteers need to have an awareness that there are many other forms of abuse ranging from Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) through to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Ideally, Councillors, staff and volunteers who engage with children will have accessed appropriate child protection training through the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) but further information about types of abuse, signs to look for and what to do if you are concerned are also available on the ESCB website (www.escb.org.uk).

All agencies, whether statutory, voluntary or other are obliged to follow the procedures laid out on the ESCB website.