

Old Stratford Parish Council

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Old Stratford Parish Council Safeguarding Policy For Children, Young People & Vulnerable Adults

1: Scope:

1.1 This policy applies to all Councillors and Employees of Old Stratford Parish Council, whether paid, volunteer or in a commissioned capacity.

1.2 It also applies to any individual using Parish Council facilities for the purpose of delivering any service to children, young people or vulnerable adults.

2: Definitions:

2.1 Children and young people are defined as those aged under 18.

2.2 A vulnerable adult is someone aged 18 or over:

- Who is, or may be, in need of community services due to age, illness or a mental or physical disability;
- Who is, or may be, unable to take care of himself/herself, or unable to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation.

For example, a person who:

- Is frail due to age
- Has drug or alcohol problems
- Has a learning disability
- Has mental or physical ill health or disability.

Vulnerability is related to how able an adult is to make and exercise their own informed choice, free from duress or undue influence, and to protect themselves from abuse, neglect and exploitation. There is no hard and fast rule: an adult should be assumed to be covered by this policy unless there is information to indicate that they are not.

3. The Reason for this Policy:

3.1 Everyone, including children, young people and vulnerable adults, has the right not to be abused. Old Stratford Parish Council recognises the need to ensure their welfare when they come into contact with the services that the Parish Council provide.

4. Types of abuse:

4.1 Physical:

Causing physical harm, including hitting, shaking, biting, grabbing, withholding food or drink, force-feeding, wrongly administering medicine, unnecessary restraint, failing to provide care and aids for living;

4.2 Sexual:

Including sexual assault, rape, inappropriate touching/molesting, forcing or enticing someone into sexual acts they do not understand or feel powerless to refuse; grooming a child or young person in preparation for abuse.

4.3 Emotional or Psychological:

Persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection, including verbal abuse, shouting, swearing, threatening abandonment or harm, isolating taking away privacy rights, bullying/intimidation, blaming belittling, silencing, controlling or humiliating;

4.4 Financial or Material:

Illegal or improper use of an adult's property, money or other assets without their informed consent or where the consent is obtained by fraud. It can include withholding money or possessions, theft of money or property, fraud intentionally mismanaging finance, borrowing money and not repaying;

4.5 Neglect:

Persistent or severe failure to meet a person's basic physical and psychological needs. It will result in serious impairment of their health or development, and can include withholding shelter, food, drink and clothing, failing to provide access to health, social and educational services, ignoring physical care needs, exposing a person to unacceptable risk, failing to ensure adequate supervision or unresponsiveness to the basic emotional needs of a child.

4.6 Discriminatory abuse:

Including slurs, harassment and maltreatment due to a protected characteristic (Equality Act 2010);

4.7 Institutional abuse:

Including the use of systems and routines which neglect a person receiving formal care e.g. in a children's home.

5. Signs of abuse:

5.1 There are many possible signs of abuse, none being conclusive on their own.

Examples include:

- Unexplained injury / weight loss / cuts and bruises / dirtiness
- Changes in behaviour
- Lack of self-care / dehydration / abnormal eating pattern
- Self-harm
- Obsessive behaviour
- Bills not being paid
- An overly critical or disrespectful carer who may bully or undermine
- Isolation from usual network of friends, family or community

6. Safeguarding:

6.1 Safeguarding children from abuse and promoting their welfare means

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- Ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcome.

6.2 Safeguarding vulnerable adults means protecting them from maltreatment and preventing injury or significant harm. Abuse violates an adult's human and civil rights. It can vary from treating someone with disrespect in a way which significantly affects the person's quality of life, to causing actual physical suffering.

6.3 A safeguarding concern arises if abuse is suspected or disclosed. Abuse can happen anywhere – at home, in a residential home, hospital, in the workplace, at a day centre or educational establishment or in the street.

7. Reporting safeguarding concerns:

7.1 We all have a responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns over the welfare of children, young people or vulnerable adults. This extends to the identification of signs of abuse; poor practice by staff, councillors and others acting for or on behalf of the council, and allegations brought to our attention by a member of the public. Reporting safeguarding concerns can prevent serious abuse or harm from happening, or from escalating.

7.2 Councillors must not attempt to investigate abuse themselves; neither must they confront anyone who is allegedly responsible for the abuse nor tell them that allegations have been made about them.

7.3 The officer responsible for receipt of concerns and for forwarding them on is the Clerk. If the clerk is absent do not wait for him/her to return to work.

7.4 Report safeguarding allegations or concerns to Northamptonshire County Council's Children's and Adult Safeguarding Board at the earliest possible opportunity, and at least within 24 hours.

For Adult Safeguarding Board contact: Customer Services Centre c/o Northamptonshire County Council. One Angel Square, Northampton NN1 1ED

Telephone No: 0300 126 1000 Option 2.

Emergency Duty Team Telephone number: 01604 626 938

For Northamptonshire Child Safeguarding Board Address as above

Telephone No: 01604 364036

7.5 Dial 999:

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be in imminent danger or a criminal offence may have been committed.

7.6 Northamptonshire County Council or the Police should be given as much factual information as possible. For example:

- The child's, young person or vulnerable adult's name and address (and parent's/carer's address if different);
- The reason for concern – a note of significant events or conversations should be made as promptly as possible to assist with any referrals and subsequent investigation; Evidence such as texts or Facebook entries should be preserved;
- Any other known factors which may be contributing to the problem;
- Additional information such as age (date of birth), ethnicity, religion, language and disabilities / specific needs.

However, the safeguarding concern should be reported whether or not the information is complete

8. Confidentiality, record keeping and sharing information:

8.1 Information about safeguarding concerns should be regarded as confidential. The information is not secret, however, Old Stratford Parish Council will co-operate with investigations conducted by Northamptonshire County Council's Children's or Adult Services, or the Police as applicable, and follow their advice that any risk to the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults is addressed.

8.2 Where a disclosure is made it is important that the member of staff does not promise the child, young person or vulnerable adult to keep the information secret but says that they will only disclose it to someone who can help them.

9. Allegations against a Councillor or member of Staff:

9.1 If someone witnesses behaviour by a Councillor, member of staff, contractor or partner, or an allegation is made about them that indicates that they have, or may have:

- Harmed a child, young person or vulnerable adult, or put them at risk of harm;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, young person or vulnerable adult;
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, young people or vulnerable adults.

They must report it as a safeguarding concern to the Police and/or Northamptonshire County Council's Children's or Adult Services at the earliest possible opportunity.

9.2 A councillor or member of staff must report any allegation made against them to the Parish Clerk.

9.3 Safeguarding concerns relating to staff will be dealt with in accordance with disciplinary procedures (including incidents where the member of staff resigns or leaves). However,

Investigations by the appropriate authorities will take precedence over internal council procedures relating to conduct. The Parish Council Clerk will liaise with the responsible authorities to agree the appropriate course of action.

9.4 The Parish Council Clerk will seek advice from Northamptonshire County Council's Children's or Adult Services or Police prior to informing a member of staff of an allegation against them. The Clerk will offer appropriate welfare support to the member of staff and ensure that they are kept appropriately informed during any investigation process.

9.5 In accordance with the law the Parish Council will refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) any member of staff who:

- Was dismissed because they harmed a child or adult;
- Was dismissed or removed from working in a regulated activity because they might have harmed a child or adult;
- Would have been dismissed for either of these reasons, but they resigned first;
- Works with children or vulnerable adults in regular activities and has been cautioned or convicted for a relevant offence.

9.6 Safeguarding concerns and allegations relating to Councillor's will be referred to the Parish Clerk and dealt with in accordance with the Parish Council's Code of Conduct.

10. Whistleblowing:

10.1 All Parish Councillor's, staff and volunteers should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of other colleagues and appropriate advice will be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the Local Authority Safeguarding Team.

11. Recruitment and Selection:

11.1 Criminal record checks will be made where appropriate. Roles that involve "regular activities," such as caring for, supervising or being in sole charge of children or vulnerable adults, require an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. This may include checking whether someone is included in the two DBS 'barred lists' of individuals who are unsuitable for working with children and adults. DBS checks must be obtained for staff and volunteers undertaking these roles, and they will not be permitted to commence unaccompanied work until they have been received. It is against the law for employers to employ someone, or allow them to volunteer for this kind of work if they know they are on one of the barred lists.

12. Information and Training:

12.1 Appropriate information will be made available to staff and Councillor's in the form of this policy and any necessary training.

13. External organisations licensed by or working with on behalf of the Parish Council:

13.1 The Parish Council works with and through a number of external organisations such as charities, contractors, other public sector bodies. Where these organisations are likely to have significant contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults as direct result of their work for, on behalf of, or in partnership with the Parish Council, they are required to have safeguarding procedures, such as safe recruitment and selection processes in place. They must be made aware of this policy and must provide the Parish Council with a copy of their safeguarding procedures.

14. Promoting a safe environment:

14.1 In order to promote a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults, the Parish Council will:

- Provide safe facilities and do regular safety assessments.
- Ensure that employees, councillors and leaders of activities in/on Parish facilities are aware of the safeguarding expectations.
- Ensure that the Policy for users of Parish facilities includes a requirement that they are safe to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults, (e.g. any adult who have regular unsupervised contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults

during the course of their duties should undergo appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service checks).

- Ensure that attendees at village functions, e.g. Fireworks evening etc., are aware that parents are responsible for their children and the location of a dedicated safe place for lost children is clear.
- Display on notice boards the relevant safeguard contact for advice and help.

15. Use of facilities by groups for use with children, young people or vulnerable adults:

15.1 For example: Cubs / organisations using the Parish's recreation ground or community and memorial halls.

15.2 The Parish Council will require the leaders to:

- Have Public Liability Insurance.
- Have suitable safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adult policy and/or agree to work to the Parish Council's Policy and relevant guidance.
- Ensure that leaders make their members aware of the Parish Council's Policy and ensure that it is followed whilst using Parish facilities.
- Ensure leaders have valid enhanced DBS checks as appropriate and know where the first aid box is.
- Do risk assessments for individual activities.

16. Safe working Practice:

16.1 All users of Parish facilities must follow the safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adult's policy and procedures at all times.

16.2 For example they should:

- Never leave children, young people or vulnerable adults unattended with adults who have not been subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- Plan activities to involve more than one person being present or at least in sight or hearing of others. Alternatively, record, or inform others of their whereabouts and intended action.
- Where possible, have male and female leaders working with a mixed group.
- Ensure registers are complete and attendees are marked in and signed out (under 8's must be collected by a parent/carer).
- Ensure that photos or videos of individuals are not taken without written permission from parents/carers.
- Ensure they have access to a first aid kit and telephone and know fire procedures.
- Ensure that where a child, young person or vulnerable adult needs assistance with toilet trips and when first aid is required, that this is carried out in pairs or in the latter case, that it is carried out where they can be seen.
- When working outside, ensure activities, breaks and clothing are suitable for the weather conditions and that shelter is available where possible.

17. Expectations of behaviour:

17.1 All users of Parish facilities should:

- Ensure that communications, behaviour and interaction with users should be appropriate and professional.
- Treat each other with respect and show consideration for other groups using the facilities.
- Refrain from any behaviour that involves racism, sexism and bullying and in addition to report any instances of such behaviour to group leaders, Parish Councillor's, Parish Clerk, parents and carers, as appropriate.