

# SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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This document outlines protection of children and young people at risk. The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of staff and volunteers working on behalf of the organisation in relation to safeguarding children and young people at risk.

A child is defined as up to the age of 18. The relevance of this document is inclusive to all staff and the policy and procedures cover all of the Council activities. Every organisation and its individual staff members have a duty of care to ensure the protection of the young people they are working with, from unnecessary risk and/or harm.

The protection of young people is based on the principles outlined within the Children's Act 2004 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child and Working Together 2018 Guidance. The principles recognise the welfare of the young person is paramount and all young people, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have the right to protection from all types of harm and abuse. It is essential that everyone is clear how to report a concern about the welfare of young person.

We are fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and Young People by taking all reasonable steps to protect them from neglect, physical, sexual or emotional harm. All staff will at all times show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of our children and Young People and conduct themselves in a way that reflects our principles.

Every child should be able to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. We recognise that child abuse can be an emotive subject. It is important to understand the feelings involved and not to allow that to interfere with judgment about any action that needs to be taken. We also recognise our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and Young People by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

## **RECOGNISING ABUSE**

It is a part of everyone's role at the Council to do everything possible to keep young people safe from abuse. There is a moral responsibility to report any concerns about a child or young person in any context. Most suspicions of abuse come about from observation of changes in the young person's behaviour, appearance, attitude or relationship with others. Training is important to support staff and volunteers to recognise abuse.

The Council recognises their statutory responsibility to ensure the welfare of young people and work with the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP) to comply with its safeguarding procedures.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Fawley Parish Council's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy shall be adopted by the following:

- its staff, associates, volunteers, young people and trustees
- All other bodies working in partnership with the Council.

## **MONITORING PROCEDURES**

Fawley Parish Council's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy should be monitored annually, and a full policy review to occur bi-annually. The following situations may also trigger a review of the policy:

- Any changes in legislation
- Any changes in youth governance
- The result of a significant case

## **SAFE RECRUITMENT**

- Youth services would not exist without the thousands of staff and volunteers who deliver provision.
- There are many different roles to play in delivering quality services for young people and ensuring we encourage individuals that are suitable to work with young people is essential.
- Getting the right people in place is key to well organised and quality services delivered in a safe and supportive environment. Safe recruitment means taking steps to ensure only individuals who are suitable for working with young people, whilst keeping them safe from harm and risks, are appointed.
- Safe recruitment procedures should be adopted and applied consistently when appointing a staff member, associate or volunteer.
- Under the Protection of Children Act 1999, all individuals working on behalf of, or otherwise representing, an organisation are treated as employees whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- When recruiting the following steps will be taken to support safe recruitment:
  1. Draw up a role profile which highlights the key responsibilities.
  2. Draw up a person specification to define the skills and experience required for the role.
  3. Be clear about the aims and philosophy of your organisation in your advert/information.
  4. Emphasise your organisations stance on safeguarding children and young people and equal opportunities.
  5. Use application forms to collect information on each applicant.
  6. Ensure that more than one person from your organisation looks at each application form.
  7. Ask for original identification documents to confirm the identity of the applicant.

## **PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE WHEN DELIVERING YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES**

Raising awareness of what safeguarding means for everyone will create a safer environment for young people.

## **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

All staff, associates and volunteers should demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect young people and themselves. This includes:

1. Adopting Procedures. Promoting Fawley Parish Council's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures;
2. All staff, associates and volunteers should demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect young people and themselves. This includes: Sharing Fawley Parish Council's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to those they manage, their teams and any associates or volunteers they may work with;
3. Wherever appropriate, conducting one to ones with young people in an open environment, where others are present;
4. Treating all young people equally, and with respect and dignity;
5. Always putting the welfare of young people before organisational aims;
6. Building and maintaining a safe and appropriate relationship with young people;
7. Empowering young people to share in decision-making processes;
8. Attending training as required;
9. Positive role modelling for young people.

## **DEVELOPING AND ADOPTING A CODE OF CONDUCT**

The power and influence a member of staff or someone in a leadership role has over someone attending a group activity cannot be underestimated. Therefore, staff are expected to act within appropriate boundaries with young people, in relation to all forms of communication. Staff should be mindful of any physical contact and should not have intimate or sexual relationships with young people.

## **SUPERVISION RATIOS**

Fawley Parish Council must ensure that an assessment is made, specific to the programme to ascertain staffing requirements, which will enable effective supervision of young people and effectively manage the associated risks.

The national guidance states that the level of supervision should take account of:

- The age and ability of the young people.
- The activity being undertaken.
- Children's growing independence.
- Children's need for privacy.
- The geography of the facility being used.
- The Risk Assessment.

## **GUIDELINES ON PARTICIPATION CONSENT**

Consent to participate in an activity led by the Council should be obtained and processed before the event. Any young person under the age of 18 should have consent from a parent or guardian. If this is not possible, seek advice from the DSL or Deputy DSL. Any exceptions should be recorded in the Risk Assessment. Information provided on for the consent of the activity will not be kept longer than necessary.

## **GUIDELINES ON MEDIA CONSENT**

If any material is going to be shared wider than Fawley Parish's Council, then Media Consent needs to be obtained. Any young person under the age of 18 should have consent from a parent or guardian.

Material will be kept no longer than two years and young people can withdraw consent at any time.

## **GUIDELINES ON YOUNG PEOPLE AND USE OF THE INTERNET AND E-SAFETY**

The Internet is significant in the distribution of indecent photographs/pseudo photographs of children and young people. Adults often use the Internet to establish contact with young people to "groom" them for inappropriate or abusive relationships.

When a worker, employee or volunteer is discovered to have placed child pornography on the internet, or accessed child pornography, the police will normally consider whether that individual might also be involved in the active abuse of young people. In particular, the individual's access to young people should be considered.

Any project that provides service users with direct access to the Internet must have protocols in place to ensure safe use. Many websites contain offensive, obscene or indecent material such as:

- Sexually explicit images and related material
- Advocating of illegal activities
- Advocating intolerance for others

Staff authorised to use the internet must not download pornographic or any other unsuitable material on to their Council technical equipment or distribute such material to others. In addition, users must not upload any material to the internet that could be considered inappropriate, offensive or disrespectful of others. Disciplinary action will be taken against staff in breach of this policy. Where this is done unintentionally, the user must exit the website and/or delete all material immediately. Breach of this will be treated as gross misconduct. Where exemption is required, because of the nature of the work of the member of staff, written permission must be given in advance with the manager. If your project allows young people access to the internet, ensure that you have a protocol in place that ensures safe use.

## **RECOGNISING ABUSE**

It is part of all our staff involved to keep young people safe from abuse. There is a moral responsibility to report any concerns about a child or young person in any context.

Most suspicions of abuse come about from observation of changes in the young person's behaviour, appearance, attitude or relationship with others.

## **DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE**

Working together to safeguard children 2018 defines abuse as: "A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children."

There are four major types of abuse

- Physical abuse.
- Emotional abuse.
- Sexual abuse.
- Neglect.

There are other types of abuse that fit into these categories and are key areas for children and young people in the UK. These include but are not restricted to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Extremism, contextual safeguarding, mental health, domestic abuse and homelessness (Working Together guidance 2020). Key areas will be covered in annual training, but it is important for staff to be aware of particular safeguarding areas that may affect specific programmes.

The Council will review new programmes and activities to ensure any key areas are flagged in the risk register and will identify any additional training needs if necessary.

## **SIGNS OF ABUSE**

Signs which may indicate abuse include:

1. Unexplained bruising and injuries.
2. Sexually explicit language and actions. Sudden changes in behaviour, such as absences, withdrawal or having unexplained material goods. Something a child has said. A change observed over a long period of time e.g. losing weight or becoming increasingly dirty/unkept.
3. Such signs do not necessarily mean a child or young person is being abused.

Equally, there may not be any signs; you may just feel something is wrong. It is not a member of staff's responsibility to decide if it is abuse, but it is their responsibility to act on such concerns and report it accordingly. The signs of abuse are not always obvious, and a young person may not tell anyone what is happening to them. Individuals are often scared that the abuser will find out, and worried that the abuse will get worse. Quite often they think that there is no-one they can tell or that they will not be believed. Occasionally, individuals do not even realise what is happening to them is abuse. It is key for associates and volunteers to be able to recognise signs of abuse. This will be covered in-depth within annual training.

## **VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE**

Fawley Parish Council has a responsibility to be aware that some children and young people who take part in our activities may experience difficulties that adversely affect their lives at home and/or within their lives outside of the organisation and therefore be at risk of harm. Particularly vulnerable groups could include:

### **1. Children and young people with a disability**

We recognise that young people with a disability are more likely to be abused than non-disabled children.

They may find it more difficult to recognise abuse. Disclosing abuse is difficult for any child; for a child with disabilities, it may be especially difficult, for the following reasons:

1. their life experience may be limited, therefore struggle to recognise inappropriate behaviour;
2. communication difficulties can make it hard to report abuse;
3. they may not be able physically to leave an abusive situation;
4. they receive intimate physical care and, therefore, the abuse may seem 'normal';
5. their self-esteem and self-image are poor;
6. they may not be aware of how or to whom they can report abuse.

## **7. Children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation**

Workers need to be aware of young people who may be at risk. Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity:

- a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual.

Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Often the exploitative situation includes contexts and relationships where young people receive 'something' as a result of their performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.

It can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition e.g. being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

In all cases, those exploiting the child have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised by the child's limited availability of choice, resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

There are strong links between children who go missing and the internal trafficking, between towns, of young people for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

Children and young people from loving and supportive families can be at risk of exploitation and workers must be careful not to stereotype specific groups of children as potential victims.

## **3. Young Carers**

A young carer is a child or young person whose life is restricted by the need to take responsibility for another person. The person might be a parent, a brother or sister, grandparent or other relative who is disabled, has some chronic illness, mental health problem or other condition connected with a need for care, support or supervision. Young carers can become isolated, with no relief from the pressures at home, and no chance to enjoy a normal childhood. They are often afraid to ask for help as they fear letting the family down. The council should be aware of the needs of a young carer and be able to offer support and/or signpost him/her to a charity specifically for young carers.

If their needs are more serious or urgent these concerns must be shared with the Designated Person for Safeguarding within the organisation.

#### **4. Children and young people affected by gang activity**

Young people who become involved in gangs are at risk of violent crime and are, therefore, deemed vulnerable and in need of safeguarding. The nature and characteristics of gangs vary but generally: are predominantly young males begin offending early and have extensive criminal histories are often territorially based or linked to a particular religion or culture deal in drugs as a way to make money.

Girls tend to be less willing than boys to identify themselves as gang members but are often drawn into male gangs as girlfriends of existing members. They are at particular risk of being sexually exploited or abused.

Youth workers have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of these young people and to prevent further harm both to themselves and to other potential victims. As the young person may be both a victim and a perpetrator, it is vital that workers recognise their needs and provide support.

#### **5. Children and young people missing education**

The law requires all children and young people between the ages of 5 and 16 to be in full time education.

Children and young people who are not attending school or not being home-educated may be particularly vulnerable. The local authority's Children's Services will be keen to be informed if you know about children and young people who are not either in school or receiving education at home, or if you have any concerns about children or young people who have gone missing from your area or neighbourhood, so that they can make sure that they are safe and that they receive an appropriate education.

Raise your concerns with the designated safeguarding contact within the organisation, who can then make a referral.

#### **6. Young people who are homeless**

Homeless young people are not just those who are sleeping on the streets. Young people may be 'sofa surfing', staying on the floors and sofas of friends or family, in temporary hostel or bed and breakfast accommodation or in unsuitable or unsafe accommodation.

There are many reasons why young people are homeless but, whatever the reason, insecure housing is likely to have a debilitating impact on their lives and increase their vulnerability.

#### **7. Children and young people who are experiencing domestic abuse**

In a house where domestic abuse occurs, the children and young people are being abused too. Children and young people may be aware of the abuse of a parent, through hearing or seeing incidents of physical violence or verbal abuse. They may also continue to witness and/or hear abuse during post- separation contact visits.

The impact on such children and young people may be demonstrated through aggression, anti-social behaviour, anxiety or depression.

#### **8. Children and young people whose parents/carers misuse substances**

Although there are some parents/carers who are able to care for and safeguard their children despite their dependence on drugs or alcohol, parental substance misuse can cause significant harm to children at all stages of their development.

Where a parent has enduring and/or severe substance misuse problems, the children in the household are likely to be at risk of, or experiencing, significant harm primarily through emotional abuse or neglect.

The child or young person's daily life may revolve around the parent's/carer's substance misuse and they may be assuming inappropriate responsibilities within the home.

### **8. Children and young people whose parents/carers have learning disabilities**

Parental learning difficulties do not necessarily have an adverse impact on a child's developmental needs. But, where it is known parents/carers do have learning disabilities, workers should be particularly aware of the developmental, social and emotional needs of the children and young people in the family.

### **9. Children and young people whose parents/carers have a mental illness**

Parental mental illness does not necessarily have an adverse impact on a child or young person's care and developmental needs.

Risk of harm or to well-being could be:

1. parental aggression or rejection;
2. having caring responsibilities inappropriate to his/her age;
3. witnessing disturbing behaviour arising from the mental illness (e.g. self harm, suicide, uninhibited behaviour, violence);
4. being neglected physically and/or emotionally by an unwell parent.

### **10. Unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children**

Children who have come to the UK without parents or relatives, are some of the most vulnerable children in our society. They are alone in an unfamiliar country, at the end of what has most likely been a long, perilous and traumatic journey. They may have experienced exploitation or persecution in their home country, or on their journey to the UK.

Some may have been trafficked, and many more are at risk of being trafficked or being exploited in other ways, some of which are covered here, such as becoming homeless, becoming involved in gang activity and being out of education. Such children and young people should be living in foster care or supported accommodation.

Asylum seeking children also have a greater risk of going missing or experiencing mental health issues. Reasons for this could be:

1. difficulties in communication
2. frustration at not understanding the asylum seeking process and not feeling believed/supported
3. worries for family members that they may have lost touch with since leaving their country/during the journey to the UK
4. exploitation by the traffickers
5. post-traumatic stress disorder
6. isolation and loneliness

Any concerns relating to particularly vulnerable children and young people must be raised with the designated safety officer as soon as possible.

### **REGULATED ACTIVITY**

If your work either becomes a regulated activity or where you are asked to perform work that is a regulated activity, we will require you to provide a satisfactory check to confirm your suitability to carry out this work.

If you refuse to undertake this check, or if you appear on the barred list, we will investigate whether you can continue to be employed in activities that are not regulated activities before contemplating your dismissal.

### **IF YOU ARE ADDED TO A BARRED LIST DURING THE COURSE OF YOUR EMPLOYMENT**

If you are added to a barred list during your employment, we will be legally obliged not to allow you to continue to engage in regulated activity. This may mean that we cannot continue to employ you.

If we receive notification that you have been barred, we will investigate whether you can continue to be employed in activities that are not regulated activities, but in these circumstances we reserve the right to dismiss you without notice.

### **PROCEDURE – SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

You must remain vigilant at all times of the risk to children and young people of abusive behaviour from different sources including members of their family, guardians/carers, other children and employees.

If you believe that any children have been subjected to abuse, you should refer the circumstances to us for full investigation.

If the alleged perpetrator of abuse is another employee, the circumstances will be investigated fully under our disciplinary procedure.

If necessary, we will refer details of the circumstances to the relevant body.

### **THE ROLE OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

All staff and volunteers working on behalf of the organisation have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of children and young people. Staff and volunteers may receive disclosures of abuse and observe children and young people. This policy will enable staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific adult and children and young people protection issues.

It is important that children and young people are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously. This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a child has been abused.

Promises of confidentiality must not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information. This must include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the adult who it is alleged has been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Designated Adult Protection Lead or Senior Manager on that working day where possible.

The nominated member of staff shall telephone and report the matter to the appropriate body/agency. A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority adult social services department within 24 hours.

If you believe that any children and young people have been subjected to abuse, you should refer the circumstances to us for full investigation. If the alleged perpetrator of abuse is another employee, the circumstances will be investigated fully under our disciplinary procedure.

#### **THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PROTECTION OFFICER**

The role of the designated officer is to deal with all instances involving children and young people protection that arise within the organisation. They will respond to children and young people protection concerns and enquiries.

The designated Children and Young People Protection Lead for the organisation is (name). Should you have any suspicions or concerns relating to Children and Young People, contact (name).

Training will be provided, as appropriate, to ensure that staff are aware of these procedures. Specialist training will be provided for the member of staff with children protection responsibilities.

#### **DATA PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

Fawley Parish Council is committed to the safe and secure management of confidential information.

All personnel information, including volunteer information, is stored securely and can only be accessed by those that require it to carry out their role. Only relevant information is stored and this is regularly reviewed and outdated information destroyed appropriately. is also committed to the rights of children and young people to confidentiality.

However, where a worker feels that the information disclosed by a child or young people should be referred to their line manager for investigation by an appropriate agency, the young person should be told that confidentially cannot be kept.