

TAVERHAM PARISH COUNCIL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Children and young people have the right to have fun and be safe in the services provided for them and the activities in which they choose to participate.
- 1.2 All children and young people irrespective of their age, class, religion, culture, disability, gender, ethnicity or sexual preference have the right to protection.
- 1.3 Taverham Parish Council recognises its responsibilities under the terms of the Children's Act 2004 and is committed to ensuring that children and young people are protected and kept safe from harm whilst visiting its premises, using the facilities it owns, or attending activities which it may organise.

2. Definitions in this Document

- 2.1 The term child(ren) or young person is used to refer to anyone under the age of 18 years.
- 2.2 The term parent is used to mean any one with legal parental responsibility.
- 2.3 The terms Councillors, staff, volunteers and contractors are used to refer to Parish Councillors, Parish Council employees and anyone working on behalf of and/or representing the Council, whether paid or voluntary.

3. Objectives

- 3.1 To raise awareness of the statutory "duty of care" relating to children and young people and actively encourage good practice amongst all staff, elected and/or co-opted members and volunteers
- 3.2 To provide a safe and healthy environment within all its services; and minimise the opportunities for abuse or allegations of abuse to occur.
- 3.3 To respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children and young people.
- 3.4 To recruit, train, supervise and support staff, elected members and volunteers who work with children and young people to adopt best practice for safeguarding and protecting children and young people from abuse, and themselves against false allegations.
- 3.5 To respond to any concerns or allegations promptly and in accordance with best practice and guidelines current at the time.

4. Implementation

- 4.1 The Council will assess and then review yearly –
 - The extent to which people under its responsibility have contact with children and young people.
 - The risk to the safety of children and young people in specific activities or situations
 - The likelihood of lone workers encountering lone or young, vulnerable children or young people.
- 4.2 Any contractor or sub-contractor engaged by the Council in areas where workers are likely to come into regular contact with children and young people, will be required to provide the Council with a copy of their child protection and recruitment policies, or to confirm in writing that they will comply with the terms of the Council's own policy, a copy of which will be given to them.

5. Recruitment and Selection

- 5.1 Any applicant for a position with the Council which involves access to children and young people must provide at least two references, which must be received and

accepted as satisfactory to the Council before employment commences. Referees must not be related to the applicant, but should be well-aquainted with him/her as, preferably, a teacher or previous (recent) employer. Applicants will also be advised that the Council will require them to complete pre-employment DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) checks. Confirmation of employment will be subject to the receipt of satisfactory DBS clearance. Standard DBS disclosures must be renewed every 5 years. Any appointment which involves substantial and frequent contact with children and young people will be subject to satisfactory Enhanced DBS checks and to a probationary period; and will not be confirmed unless the Council is confident that the person can be safely entrusted with children and young people. Enhanced DBS checks must be renewed every 3 years.

5.2 The Council will not, under any circumstances, allow a Councillor or volunteer acting on its behalf to work or travel with children or young people unless they are accompanied by at least one other adult.

5.3 Councillors, staff and volunteers will be provided with written guidelines on acceptable conduct when working with children and young people (see APPENDIX C).

6. Recording Images of Children/Young People

6.1 The Council will encourage staff, Councillors and volunteers to be vigilant at all times regarding people using cameras or videos at events or activities which involve children and young people. A notice will be placed at specific events organised by the Parish Council to advise that photos may be taken and to contact the Council if parents did not want images of their children included in official Council publicity.

7. Responding to Concerns and Allegations

7.1 The Clerk to the Council is the **Designated Officer** with overall responsibility for implementing this policy and for ensuring that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place for recording, processing and referring concerns and allegations. The Designated Officer will always be the initial point of contact for Councillors, staff and volunteers who have concerns or if abuse has been disclosed to them.

7.2 It is not the responsibility of a Councillor, member of staff or volunteer to determine if abuse is taking place, but it is their responsibility to report any concerns they may have, so that the appropriate agencies can make enquiries and take any action necessary to protect the child or young person. The Designated Officer shall ensure that all staff, Councillors and volunteers are conversant with the procedure to be followed if they have concerns or in the event of a disclosure of abuse being made to them (see APPENDIX D)

7.3 Concerns for a child may come about in various ways – for example, through observation of behaviour or noting injuries. Where concerns are raised with the Designated Officer such that there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child may be suffering, or be at risk of suffering, significant harm, the Designated Officer will, with the parents' consent, seek the advice of Social Services as to whether the matter should be referred to them formally. There is a statutory duty to obtain parental agreement to a referral, UNLESS it is felt likely that it would put a child at an increased risk of harm.

7.4 Where a formal referral is not made, the Council shall keep a written record of the concerns, in a secure file, accessible to authorised persons only.

7.5 Allegations shall be recorded by the person to whom they were disclosed, on a form designed for the purpose (see APPENDIX A/1 & A/2), for passing to Social Services. Copies of any completed forms and any associated reports or records will be kept in a secure place and in such a way as to be accessible to authorised persons only. Personal information about referrers, including identifying details, will only be disclosed to third parties with the referrer's consent.

7.6 Where an allegation is made against a Councillor, member of staff, or volunteer who has ongoing contact with the child/young person making the allegation, the Designated Officer shall take immediate action to prevent any further contact. The Designated Officer will consult local Social Services as to any action to be taken. No investigation into the allegation shall take place prior to such consultation. Depending on the nature of the allegation, one or more of the following confidential investigations may take place:

- An internal investigation in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedure/Code of Conduct, during which the person may be suspended from duty;
- A child protection investigation by local Social Services;
- A criminal investigation by the Police.

Irrespective of the findings of social services or police inquiries, all individual cases shall be assessed under the appropriate misconduct/disciplinary procedure, to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer be re-trained or reinstated. Where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police, this decision will be based on the balance of probabilities in relation to continued risk, and all available information. **The welfare of children will always be the Council's over-riding consideration.**

SAMPLE INCIDENT RECORD FORM

Referrer's name: _____

Referrer's phone number: _____

Referrers position: _____

Child's name: _____

Child's address: _____

Parents/carer contacted? YES NO (*delete as applicable*)

Parents'/carers' names, address and phone number: _____

Child's date of birth: _____

Date and time of any incident: _____

Your observations - KEEP TO THE FACTS, stating what the child said (using the child's language) and what you said. (Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Sign Date Time

DO NOT DELAY IN THE SUBMISSION OF THIS FORM BECAUSE YOU ARE UNABLE TO COMPLETE ALL OF THE DETAILS, PLEASE CONTINUE TO NEXT PAGE

Details of alleged / suspected abuser:

Name: _____

Their position: _____

Address: _____

Any other details that you feel will be important:

External agencies contacted in an emergency or when a Designated Officer was not contactable:

Police:
Name and number of contact: _____

Action Agreed:

Social Services:
Name and number of contact: _____

Action Agreed:

I can confirm that to the best of my knowledge the information provided above is correct, and that I will be available to answer any further questions on this matter.

Referrers Signature: _____

Print name: _____

Date: _____

Child Protection Matters – Contact Details

Local Contacts

Social Services (Broadland Area)	01603 787363
Norfolk County Council	0344 800 8014
Also, if you need to report an allegation of abuse against a person who works with children contact the Local Area Designated officer	01603 223473
24 Hr Social Worker	01603 614022
Police Child Protection (Family Protection Unit)	01603 276313
Police	101 or 999
Norfolk Safeguarding Children Board Suite B Sapphire House Roundtree Way Norwich NR7 8SS	01603 222288

National Contacts

The NSPCC	0207 825 2500
National Centre	0808 800 5000 (Helpline)
42 Curtain Road	
London	
EC2A 3NH	
Childline UK	0800 1111
Freepost 1111	
London	
N1 0BR	

Code of Conduct When Working with Children and Young People

Council members, staff and volunteers are encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour on order to protect themselves from allegations of abuse. This information sheet provides practical guidance for those working at Council premises or engaged in Council events that involve contact with young people, to ensure that they and the young people with whom they are working are protected.

Good Practice:

- Always work in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations;
- Treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity;
- Keep a safe and appropriate distance from the young people;
- Involve other people – eg group leaders, parents/carers and other key influences – whenever possible;
- Be an excellent role model – don't smoke or drink alcohol in the company of young people, or use inappropriate language;
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than criticism;
- Obtain parental consent in writing to act *loco parentis*, if the need arises to give permission for the administrations of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment;
- Obtain written consent prior to any photographs, video/audio recording.

Bad Practice:

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others;
- Taking young people to your home where they will be alone with you;
- Allowing young people to travel on their own with you in a vehicle;
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
- Sharing a room with a young person;
- Entering a toilet with young people unless another adult is present or gives permission (this may include parent, teacher or group leader);
- Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate contact;
- Allowing or encouraging abusive peer activities (eg any game/activity where an individual may be held up to ridicule);
- Allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- Making sexually suggestive comments to, or within the hearing of a young person;
- Reducing a young person to tears as a form of control;
- Allowing allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- Doing things of a personal nature for young people that they can do for themselves

How to Respond when an Allegation is Disclosed by a Child or Young Person

Listen and reassure

- Maintain confidentiality but do not promise to keep the disclosure secret. Explain that the information will have to be passed on and how that will be done.
- Be calm and reassuring and make it clear that you are glad that they have told you.
- Show that you are taking the child seriously and that you understand and believe them.
- Allow the child to make the disclosure at their own pace, in their own way.
- Try not to interrupt the disclosure: if you have to ask questions keep them open and not leading – do not probe for information which the child has not volunteered.
- Try not to show shock or disapproval while listening to the disclosure.
- Don't jump to conclusions.
- Remember that the child/young person may not regard the experience as either bad or painful, and may not feel guilty or angry about it.
- Be aware of your own feelings, which may be different to those of the child/young person.
- Take care of yourself by making sure that you have the opportunity to discuss your feelings with someone at a later stage.
- Do not destroy any evidence, as it may be useful in a court of law.
- Record the conversation and report it to the Council's Designated Officer as soon as possible.

Please note: Initial disclosure, even if retracted, must still be referred.