



BISHOPSTOKE PARISH COUNCIL

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

**This Safeguarding Policy was adopted
at the Full Council meeting on 30 April 2024**

**D Wheal
Clerk to Bishopstoke Parish Council**

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SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Amendment Sheet

Amendment No.	Date Incorporated	Subject
01 – Add new 6.09	1st March 2022	Requirement to be aware of risk assessments
02 – Add 2.3	1st March 2022	Do not be left alone with children or vulnerable adults.
03 – Amend 6.11	30th April 2024	Remove examples of inappropriate behaviour
04 – Amend 1.1	30th April 2024	Add definition of “vulnerable people”

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1 Introduction

- 1.1** This policy relates to the safeguarding of persons under the age of 18, vulnerable adults, persons with disabilities and elderly people. For the purpose of this policy the term “vulnerable people” will be used to refer to the aforementioned groups.
- 1.2** The term ‘staff’ shall include any employee, volunteer worker or contractor whilst carrying out their duties for or with the Parish Council.

2 Overarching Principles

- 2.1** The Parish Council values and encourages the involvement of people of all ages and circumstances. It is committed to promoting their well-being and enjoyment, and protecting their health, safety and welfare.
- 2.2** We can all help to provide a welcoming, safe and enjoyable experience. This document is relevant to all staff, whether employees, councillors, volunteers or others working with the Parish Council and supplies basic reference to good practice when in the company of under 18s (these guidelines also should be taken into account when dealing with older vulnerable adults, such as people of any age with learning or physical difficulties).
- 2.3** Wherever possible, Council staff should not be alone with children or a vulnerable adult.

3 Purpose

- 3.1** The purpose of this policy is to provide for the safety of children and vulnerable people who are visiting or volunteering to work with or within any Parish Council location.
- 3.2** Procedures on how to deal with any suspicions, concerns or allegations are set out in appendix A.

4 Legal Framework

- 4.1** This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance. Particularly:
 - 4.1.1** Children’s Act 1989 and 2004;
 - 4.1.2** United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991;
 - 4.1.3** Data Protection Act 2018;
 - 4.1.4** Sexual Offenders Act 2003 and
 - 4.1.5** Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

5 Background

- 5.1** For legal purposes, someone is a child until their 18th birthday; children are the legal responsibility of their parents or carers even if they are not present. A vulnerable person is someone who is or may be in need of community care services for reasons such as disability, age or illness, and is or may be unable to take care of or protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.
- 5.2** Children under 12 must be accompanied to any Parish Council location by an adult. When children and/or vulnerable people visit in family groups, with carers or in school or similar groups with responsible adults, primary responsibility for their care rests with their parent, carer or other responsible adult. The Parish Council seeks to make sure that its activities and policies also afford as much protection as is reasonably practicable. This is achieved by:
- 5.2.1** Treating children and vulnerable people with dignity and respect;
 - 5.2.2** Making sure employees and volunteers are trained, supervised, supported and protected;
 - 5.2.3** Requiring our employees and volunteers to be good role models and not use offensive language;
 - 5.2.4** Complying with legal requirements for the employment of young people under 18 years old and
 - 5.2.5** Providing clear procedures for parents, guardians, supervising adults and children to voice their concerns if they are unsure or unhappy about anything.

6 General Operating Procedures

Parish Council staff should

- 6.1** Remember that they are a role model for young people and always provide an example they would wish them to follow.
- 6.2** Bear in mind that some actions no matter how well intentioned may easily be misinterpreted.
- 6.3** Allow for the fact that people with learning difficulties or special educational needs may have behaviours which, whilst quite harmless, do not conform to social norms.
- 6.4** Respect a person's right to privacy unless they feel they are at risk of harm.
- 6.5** Avoid being left alone with young/vulnerable people.
- 6.6** Where one to one contact is unavoidable, keep it short, be accessible and make sure someone is informed where they are going, what they are doing and why.

- 6.7** Use their common sense and take great care if they are left alone with young/vulnerable people – e.g. lone car journeys, even short ones, should be avoided. Unless it is an emergency get parental or carer approval before taking someone home. If a person must be transported in a vehicle alone with the driver, they should be asked to occupy a rear seat rather than sit alongside the driver.
- 6.8** Carry out any first aid procedures with more than one adult present wherever possible except in rare cases of serious injury requiring immediate treatment.
- 6.9** Be aware of any risk assessments and ensure that they are applied appropriately if required.

Parish Council staff should not

- 6.10** Rely on their good name to protect them.
- 6.11** Show favouritism or get drawn into inappropriate, attention-seeking behaviour.
- 6.12** Allow or engage in suggestive remarks, gestures or touching which could be misinterpreted.
- 6.13** Do anything to undermine the Parish Council's reputation for providing people with a safe environment.
- 6.14** Jump to conclusions without checking the facts.
- 6.15** Physically touch any unsupervised child.

7 Other Relevant Matters

- 7.1** Plan activities carefully so that there is maximum protection at all times and be alert to potential harm.
- 7.2** Arrange for an appropriate number of adults to be present – try to have at least two at all times.
- 7.3** Inform young/vulnerable people about any safety issues associated with their visit and how to cope.
- 7.4** Be alert to potential harm or inappropriate behaviour by others to the people in your care.
- 7.5** Provide access for young/vulnerable people to talk to another adult about any concerns they may have.
- 7.6** Attend to health and safety requirements, seeking advice where necessary and referring to the relevant Parish Council Policies as appropriate.
- 7.7** Make sure that young/vulnerable people are accompanied by their own adult carers (e.g. parents, teachers, youth leaders, carers etc.) and that these adults are directly responsible for those in their care.

- 7.8** Make sure you know which young/vulnerable people are in your charge, the extent of your responsibility, where they are and what they are doing.
- 7.9** Try to avoid having helpers of all one gender, especially if the group is of mixed gender.
- 7.10** Use your common sense and take great care if you find yourself left alone with young/vulnerable people – for example, don't escort a young child to the toilet; offer to stay with the group whilst a carer does so. Alternatively, check the toilet for safety, then remain outside whilst the child/vulnerable person uses it.
- 7.11** Where appropriate, the Parish Council may require employees, volunteers or others involved in providing Council activities or services to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. Where third party entertainers are sub contracted proof of checks shall be obtained.
- 7.12** Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks shall be carried out by the Clerk of the Council who will retain detailed records.

8 Parish Council Services (open to the general public)

- 8.1** All staff, whether employees, councillors, volunteers or others working with the Parish Council will seek the permission of parents, guardians or carers before assisting children or vulnerable adults on or within any Parish Council managed or owned location. Except in an emergency, a good approach will usually be to enquire from the person being provided with assistance how that help can best be given.
- 8.2** There is no requirement for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to be carried out for employees or volunteers that are not directly involved in a regulated activity.
- 8.3** Young people remain the responsibility of their parents, carer or teachers when attending Parish Council events as visitors.

9 Photography

- 9.1** Whilst there is no outright restriction on the photography of children or other members of the public, in the case of pictures where individuals form a major part of the subject it is a courtesy that such images are not published for wider consumption without first seeking the agreement of the person(s) depicted or, in the case of children or vulnerable adults, their parent, guardian or carer.

10 Training

- 10.1** Training will be provided by the council to make sure all staff, whether employees, councillors, volunteers or others working with the Parish Council recognise the issues involved in Safeguarding including where the appropriate guidance may be located.
- 10.2** Where staff, whether employees, councillors, volunteers or others working with the Parish Council work in the areas of regulated activities the specific training shall be given appropriate to the activities being undertaken.
- 10.3** Responsibility for the delivery of training shall rest with the Clerk to the Council.

Appendix A – Reporting any suspicions, concerns or allegations

1 Ways you might find out about a possible case of abuse

- 1.1** Child or parent makes direct allegation.
- 1.2** Child or parent expresses discomfort, short of allegation.
- 1.3** Another member of staff, employee, councillor, volunteer or others working with the Parish Council reports concern.
- 1.4** A member of the public reports concern.
- 1.5** A member of staff, employee, councillor, volunteer or others working with the Parish Council witnesses an incident.
- 1.6** A member of staff, employee, councillor, volunteer or others working with the Parish Council has suspicions an incident has occurred.

2 Reporting Procedures

- 2.1** Act immediately without delay
- 2.2** Where any Parish Council member of staff, employee, councillor, volunteer or others working with the Parish Council becomes aware of a matter of concern or suspects that any form of child abuse, abuse of vulnerable adults or bullying has taken place it must be reported promptly to the respective operating group leader, the chair of the Parish Council or the Clerk to the Council as appropriate at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.3** All individuals have a right to report any concerns or suspicions in confidence and free from harassment, being treated unfairly or being penalised.
- 2.4** The operating group leader, the chair of the Parish Council or the Clerk to the Council should consider whether it is appropriate to take immediate action to escalate the matter forthwith to the Borough Council's Safeguarding Officer, HCC Children Services or the Police.
- 2.5** All matters reported should be brought to the attention of the Clerk to the council even where any escalation is not considered to be appropriate.
- 2.6** The Clerk to the council shall retain all such reports in a confidential manner.
- 2.7** The matter may be escalated directly to appropriate authorities if necessary.
- 2.8** All Parish Council members of staff, employee, councillor, volunteer or others working with the Parish Council involved shall promptly make a written report of the circumstances and suspicions which shall be passed to the Clerk to the Council, or Borough Council's Safeguarding Officer via the Chair of the Parish Council where the Clerk to the Council is not available.

- 2.9** The Clerk to the Council will decide, in conjunction with the Chair of the Council, whether the matter requires further investigation and may escalate the matter for formal investigation or deescalate the matter if no further action is appropriate. If the matter is deescalated the reports made shall still be retained for future reference.
- 2.10** Where a formal investigation is to take place it shall be undertaken by appropriate external agencies, members of staff and councillors along with the Clerk to the Council who shall chair all proceedings, except in cases where the Clerk is directly involved in the investigation, in which case the Chair of the Council, or other designated Council Officer will take the role of Chair for the proceedings. All written reports of the incident shall be taken into account including witness statements. All matters shall remain confidential within the investigation and the result shall only be made known to those involved.
- 2.11** Nothing in the foregoing shall over-ride the normal responsibility of a citizen to involve the police and / or other emergency / statutory services or local authority where there is an immediate apprehension of danger.
- 2.12** Nothing in the foregoing will over-ride the Parish Council's existing reporting procedures for accidents and incidents.