

BROUGHTON ASTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

FEBRUARY 2019

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1. Introduction

The primary responsibility for children's welfare rests with the adult supervising the child (parent/carer). Broughton Astley Parish Council wishes to ensure that children are safe and protected from harm whilst visiting its premises and using its facilities.

The following Child Protection Policy outlines the systems and procedures Broughton Astley Parish Council have put in place in order to achieve this aim. Its successful achievement requires co-operation and partnership between Broughton Astley Parish Council and the users of its facilities.

All staff, councillors and volunteers are responsible for supporting this policy and have a duty to actively safeguard children.

This document sets out the principles underlying the policy. The document also seeks to provide practical guidance to members of Broughton Astley Parish Council staff and volunteers working with children. (For the purposes of this Policy a child is defined as anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday).

This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Parish Manager, taking into account any government changes. Any changes to the Policy will be agreed by the Parish Council.

Section 1: Principles and Definitions

1.1 Child Protection Policy Statement

The council wants to ensure that children are protected from harm while they visit the premises of Broughton Astley Parish Council. This will be achieved by –

- Following the appropriate guidelines to select appropriate staff and to carry out DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks as per these and other guidelines issued from time to time by the Independent Safeguarding Authority – Vetting and Barring Scheme.
- Giving group leaders, service providers and any other interested parties information about Broughton Astley Parish Council's procedures regarding the safety of children whilst at the council's premises when requested.
- Providing information to group leaders, service providers and any other interested parties about Broughton Astley Parish Council's expectations regarding child protection responsibilities while visiting council premises.
- Use of any of the Council's facilities will be conditional upon all current and new club members, with direct access to children, being required to hold a relevant DBS certificate in accordance with government guidelines.

1.2 Key principles

The key principles of this policy are:

To ensure that children visiting the council's premises can be protected by setting standards of best practice. This will also ensure that council staff and volunteers are protected and do not place themselves in an unnecessarily vulnerable position.

1.3 Definition of Child Abuse

Every child has the right to grow up and develop to their full potential in a secure, safe, family environment, free from poverty and exploitation. All children have the right to protection from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.

For further information see the Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidelines 2006

Section 2: Practical Guidance for Council Staff and Volunteers working with children

This section seeks to offer practical guidance to those working at council premises or engaged in council events that involve contact with children to ensure that they and the children with whom they are working are protected.

2.1 General Conduct when working with Children

Council staff, Councillors and volunteers should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from allegations of abuse. Stated below are the standards of behaviour required of council staff, councillors and volunteers to ensure that a positive culture and climate is created during all council activities involving contact with Children:

- To always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment i.e. no secrets)
- To treat all children equally and with respect and dignity;
- To maintain a safe and appropriate distance from the children;
- To build balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision making process;
- To involve group leaders, parents/carers and other key influences wherever possible;
- To be an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children or using inappropriate language;
- To give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism;
- To secure parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administrations of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment;
- To obtain written parental consent if staff members are required to transport children in their cars;
- To obtain consent prior to any photographs, videoing or audio recording;

2.2 Unacceptable Practices

The following should never be sanctioned:

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- Taking children to your home where they will be alone with you
- Allowing children to travel on their own with you in a vehicle
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- Entering a toilet with children 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 (e.g. any game/activity where an individual may be held up to ridicule)
- Allowing children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Making sexually suggestive comments to, or within the hearing of a child, even in fun
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control
- Allowing allegations made by a child to go unchallenged unrecorded or not acted upon
- Doing things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves
- Giving out your personal Mobile number to a child

2.3 Responding to complaints and alleged or suspected incidents

The following guidelines should be used when an allegation is disclosed by a child to a member of council staff and/or volunteer:

i) Listen and reassure

- Maintain confidentiality but do not make promises you cannot keep, and explain that the information will have to be passed on and what action you will be taking in this regard
- Be calm
- Be 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
- Keep questions to a minimum; confined to the facts and ensure they are not leading.

Important points to remember when dealing with a disclosure:

- Try not to display any sign of shock or disapproval when the child is making a disclosure
- Do not jump to conclusions
- The child may not regard the experience as either bad or painful; they may not feel guilty or angry
- Be aware of your own feelings which may be different to those of the child
- Ensure that notes taken are immediately disclosed to the Designated Officer and that relevant details are completed on the Incident Report Form
- Do not destroy any evidence as it may be useful in a court of law
- Initial disclosure, even if retracted, must still be referred.

ii) Recording information

Information will be stored securely in the council office with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

iii) Designated Officer – Parish Manager

The designated officer will handle the child protection issues and oversee the policy's implementation. The designated officer will always be the initial point of contact for all staff and volunteers with concerns or if abuse has been disclosed. Necessary steps can then be taken to ensure the safety of the children.

iv) Informing the appropriate authorities

Whilst it is not the responsibility of any council staff member and/or volunteer to determine if abuse is taking place **it is their responsibility to report concerns to the Designated Officer (or to local social care services or the police) in order that appropriate agencies can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the child.**

Contacts

Social Care Services

The Emergency Duty Team (EDT) provides a response to social work emergencies that occur **outside office hours** including evenings, weekends and bank holidays, to both adults in need of community care services, and to children and families. A professional telephone answering service will take details and arrange for a staff member from the EDT to call back.

Emergency Duty Team

1, Grey Friars
LEICESTER
LE1 5PH
0116 255 1606 (not office hours)

Local Social Care Services

Brooklands
34 Northampton Road

Market Harborough
Leicester
LE16 9HE
Tel: 01858 465331
Fax: 01858 431104

Police
0116 222 2222

Local Authority Designated Officer – County Hall
0116 305 7575

National Contacts

The NSPCC National Centre
42 Curtain Road
London EC2A 3NH
Tel: 0207 825 2500
Helpline: 0800 800 5000

Childline UK
SAFE guarding Children
Partnership – **Local contact, for advice and training**
Freepost 1111
London N1 OBR
The Pineapple, 63
Bracondale, Norwich, NR1
2EE
Tel: 0800 1111
01603 222288

iv) Allegations against Staff or Volunteers

In the case of the allegation being against a staff member or volunteer it is of equal importance to act immediately on the allegation. If activity/contact is on-going when the incident is reported then it is the responsibility of the Designated Officer to ensure the immediate safety of that child by taking the necessary steps, including the removal of alleged individuals. Any individual accused of abuse will be suspended in line with the local disciplinary procedure pending further police and social services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of social services or police inquiries, all individual cases must be assessed under the appropriate misconduct/disciplinary procedure to completion, to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer should be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled with other staff or volunteers. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, a decision must be based on the balance of probabilities in relation to continued risk, and all available information.

**BROUGHTON ASTLEY PARISH COUNCIL
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INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

The welfare of children will always remain paramount.

Referrers name:
Referrers phone number:
Referrers position:
Child's name:
Child's address:
CONTACTED YES / NO
Parents/carers' names, address and phone number:
Child's date of birth:
Date and time of any incident:
Your observations KEEP FACTUAL:
Exactly what the child said (using the child's language) and what you said: (Remember; do not lead the child – record actual details. Continue on separate sheet if necessary)
Details of alleged/suspected abuser: Name Their Position Any other details you feel are important
External agencies contacted in an emergency or when Designated Officer was not contactable : Police Name 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 questions on this matter Sign Date Time

Sign Date Time