

# **SILCHESTER PARISH COUNCIL**

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY**

### **GENERAL STATEMENT**

As an organisation that may work with children or vulnerable adults, Silchester Parish Council councillors, staff, and volunteers have both a moral and a legal obligation to ensure the highest possible standard of care for those children or vulnerable adults who use our services. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused regardless of their age, racial origin, social class, gender, culture, religious belief, disability or sexual identity. Most abuse is committed by those who are known to the child or vulnerable adult and who are trusted by them. This can be from within or outside the family.

Silchester Parish Council is committed to providing safe activities and sporting opportunities for young people and vulnerable adults. External Contractors, working on behalf of the Council, will be asked to adopt a suitable Safeguarding Policy if their work brings them into contact with children.

The purpose of the policy is to safeguard children and vulnerable adults who come into contact with representatives of the Council and to facilitate the best possible professional practice from the council, its staff, contractors and volunteers.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Council is committed to ensuring that children and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm whilst they are engaged in any activity associated with the Council.

We will endeavour to achieve this by:

- Ensuring that our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised.
- Ensuring that our councillors, staff and volunteers, that work directly with children and vulnerable adults, undergo a Criminal Records Bureau check.
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with partner organisations, councillors, employees, volunteers, parents and carers.

Decisions on which employees/volunteers will be CRB checked will be taken by the Clerk.

Decisions on which Councillors will be CRB checked will be taken by the Clerk in consultation with the Councillor and his/her Group leader.

### **Policy Aims**

This Safeguarding Policy is provided as part of an induction package to all councillors and those employed by Silchester Parish Council, whether paid or unpaid, who will have direct contact with children or vulnerable adults. The aims are:

- To create a healthy and safe environment at all activities, sport programmes and coaching sessions.
- To ensure children and vulnerable adults are listened to, and kept safe from harm.

- To support and encourage parents and carers to voice their opinions regarding the welfare of their children and vulnerable adults and to raise their awareness of the importance of asking questions about the clubs and activities which they attend.
- To ensure councillors, staff and volunteers, who work with children and vulnerable adults, are well informed, supported and enabled to provide the best possible practice.

## **Objectives**

The objectives are:

- To raise the level of awareness of councillors, staff and volunteers about child and vulnerable adult abuse and its various forms.
- To raise the level of awareness of councillors, staff and volunteers about what children and vulnerable adults are entitled to be protected from.
- To ensure that, all councillors, staff and volunteers are able to recognise signs which could signify the abuse of a child or vulnerable adult.
- To promote the general welfare, health and full development of children and vulnerable adults during all sessions.
- To develop effective procedures in recording and responding to accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse.

## **Employment Issues**

### **Recruitment and Selection of Staff/Volunteers**

All applicants who will work with children or vulnerable adults in the course of their job will complete a disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau to ensure that there are no irregularities in their background which may give cause for concern. All new employees whether paid or unpaid will be provided with the Safeguarding Policy and asked to sign to confirm that they will abide by it.

Application forms are designed to ascertain as much information as possible, such as, but not limited to:

- Past career, relevant interests, any gaps in employment and reasons for leaving, educational, national governing body, First aid qualifications and child protection training.
- Consent for a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure.
- At least one reference is taken up, and where relevant followed up by letter or telephone. References taken up will ascertain the person's suitability to work with children.
- It is made clear that all information remains confidential.
- Personal identification will be confirmed by reference to a passport, driving licence, birth or marriage certificate, National Insurance number or utility bill.

### **Induction and Training**

The recruitment and selection process is followed up by relevant training.

- Staff are made aware that abuse can and does occur and that it could be perpetrated by colleagues, who are members of staff or volunteers within the Council.

- Staff are made aware that children and vulnerable adults can find it very difficult to talk about abuse. They need to be listened to, taken seriously, and have their concerns acted upon.
- Staff are made aware of what they need to do in response to any concerns they may have

## **Supervision**

In general, staff work most effectively where there is a supervisory structure that ensures they are supported, managed and developed. The Council will ensure that staff are sensitive to any concerns about abuse, act on them immediately and offer support to those who report such matters.

It is the responsibility of staff to monitor good practice.

## **Good Practice**

It is possible to reduce situations where abuse may occur. The following are more specific examples of care which should be taken when working with children and vulnerable adults:

### **You should:**

- Always be publicly open when working with children or vulnerable adults. Avoid any situations where you and an individual are completely unobserved (encourage an open environment).
- Where possible, children and vulnerable adults should not be left unattended, however this will depend on age and circumstances.
- In a sports situation, where possible, parents should take on the responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, ensure that you work in pairs, and do not enter changing rooms of the opposite sex, when supervising children.
- Where there are mixed groups, supervision, where possible, should be by a male **and** female member of staff.
- You must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally.

### **You should never:**

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- Share a bedroom with a child or vulnerable adult
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate contact
- Allow children or vulnerable adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun
- Allow allegations made by a child or vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature that children and vulnerable adults can do for themselves
- Enter the changing rooms of the opposite sex when supervising children or vulnerable adults, unless in an emergency

*Failure to follow these guidelines may well result in formal action under the Council's disciplinary procedures*

Everyone should be aware that it is **not good practice to:**

- Spend any time alone with children or vulnerable adults away from others. When talking to them on your own ensure you can be seen by others.
- Take children or vulnerable adults alone on car journeys, however short.
- Take children or vulnerable adults to your home where they will be alone with you.

***If exceptionally any of these situations are expected to occur, plans on how to ensure the child or vulnerable adult is safe and sound must be made prior to and enacted with the knowledge of the parents.***

### **What to do if you have concerns**

Should a Councillor, member of staff or volunteer become aware of an allegation of an incident of abuse taking, or having taken place, they should act immediately.

### **Declaration**

Silchester Parish Council is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children and vulnerable adults by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

As a councillor, employee or volunteer of the Council it is therefore important that you have taken the time to thoroughly read the Safeguarding Policy. By being made aware of the policy, it is our intention to ensure that **all** councillors, employees and volunteers are pro-active in providing a safe environment for the children and vulnerable adults in their care. Any disciplinary measures required as a result of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with normal disciplinary procedures.