

Charmouth Parish Council

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Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

Everyone has a duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. This policy promotes good practice in safeguarding for those using Parish Council facilities.

We believe all children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to live their lives to the fullest potential, to have fun and be safe in the services provided for them, to have the opportunity to participate in and enjoy any activity and to be treated with dignity and respect.

We believe that all children, young people and vulnerable adults, irrespective of their age, class, religion, culture, disability, gender, ethnicity or sexual preference have the right to protection.

2. SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

This Council is committed to ensuring that all children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm whilst engaged in services organised and provided by the Council.

This Council recognises its responsibilities under the terms of the relevant legislation to make arrangements for ensuring that its functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

This policy applies to all situations within the Council's operation, which could potentially involve children, young people and vulnerable adults. Good practice guidelines are provided in this policy to guide staff in the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults and to protect staff from allegations of abuse and reassure parents.

The policy affects every elected member, staff member, volunteer and anyone working on behalf of and/or representing the Council.

3. DEFINITIONS

The term children or young person is used to refer to anyone under the age of 18 years.

The term parent is used as a generic term to represent anyone with legal parental responsibility.

The term Vulnerable Adult is used to refer to anyone over 18 who is:

- Unable to care for themselves
- Unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation
- Or may be in need of community care services

The terms elected members, staff and volunteers is used to refer to employees, councillors, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of and/or representing the Council, including temporary and agency staff and contractors.

4. AIMS OF THE POLICY

This Council accepts the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, provide a duty of care for children, young people and vulnerable adults, safeguard their wellbeing and protect them when they are engaged in services organised and provided by the Council or when they encounter Council staff, those on work experience, elected members and volunteers.

The Council aims to do this by:

- Ensuring that employees, Councillors and leaders of activities in the parish or in/on parish facilities, are aware of the safeguarding expectations. Raising an awareness throughout the Council and beyond of the statutory “duty of care” relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults and actively encourage good practice amongst all staff, elected members and volunteers.
- Creating a safe and healthy environment within all its services, avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur and do regular safety assessments.
- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Listening to children, young people and vulnerable adults, minimising dangers and working closely with other agencies.
- Recruiting, training, supervising and supporting staff, elected members and volunteers who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse, and themselves against false allegations. Responding to any allegations appropriately and implementing the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Requiring staff, elected members and volunteers to adopt and abide by this policy and guidelines.

Members of staff and volunteers who have regular unsupervised contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults while carrying out their duties -

MUST undergo appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (“DBS”) checks

BEFORE commencement of such duties

- Display on Parish Council notice boards in the village the relevant safeguarding contacts for advice and help. A copy will also be made available on the Parish Council website.

Expectations of behaviour

All users of Parish Council facilities, organisers of parish events and volunteers should:

- Ensure that communications, behaviour and interaction is appropriate and professional.
- Treat each other with respect and show consideration for other groups using the Parish Council facilities.

- Refrain from any behaviour that involves racism, sexism, homophobia, and bullying and in addition, report any instances of such behaviour to the Chair of the Parish Council, Parish Clerk or parents/carers, as appropriate.

Hiring of facilities to groups for use with children, young people or vulnerable adults

The Parish Council will require the hirer to:

- Have public liability insurance.
- Have a suitable safeguarding policy and/or agree to work to the Parish Council's policy and relevant guidance.
- Ensure leaders make their members aware of the Parish Council Policy and ensure that it is followed whilst using parish facilities.
- Ensure leaders have valid enhanced DBS checks as appropriate and know where the first aid boxes are and how to summon help from the Emergency Services.
- Do risk assessments for individual activities.

Use of Contractors

This Council and its staff, elected members and volunteers should take care that contractors doing work on behalf of the Council are monitored appropriately. Any contractor or sub-contractor, engaged by the Council in areas where workers are likely to encounter children, young people and vulnerable adults, should have a similarly robust Safeguarding Policy, or failing this, must comply with the terms of this policy. Contractors will be monitored by the Officer responsible for the contract.

Safe working practice

All users of Parish Facilities must always follow the policy and procedures. For example, they should:

- Never leave children, young people or vulnerable adults unattended with adults who have not been subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- Plan activities to involve more than one person being present or at least in sight or hearing of others. Alternatively, record, or inform others of their whereabouts and intended action.
- Where possible, have male and female leaders working with a mixed group.
- Ensure registers are complete and attendees are marked in and signed out (under 8's must be collected by a parent/carer).
- Ensure that photos or videos of individuals are not taken without written permission from their parents/carers.
- Ensure they have access to a first aid kit and telephone and know fire procedures.
- When working outside, ensure activities, breaks and clothing are suitable for the weather conditions and that shelter is available where possible.

Photography

Staff, elected members and volunteers should be always vigilant regarding people using cameras or video cameras within Parish Council buildings and at events or activities organised by the Council which involve children, young people and vulnerable adults. Consent must be sought from parents/carers when cameras or other image recorders are used to picture children, young people and vulnerable adults in such situations

- Do not allow unsupervised access to children or young people or one to one photographic sessions.
- Do not allow photographic sessions outside of the activities or services, or at a child's, young person or vulnerable adult's home.
- The child, young person or vulnerable adult should be happy with having their picture taken.
- Parents/carers must be informed that photographs of their child, young person or vulnerable adult may be taken during Council services, activities or events, and signed parental consent needs to be obtained agreeing to this. This must include information about how and where these photographs will be used.
- The names of children or young people should not be used in photographs or video footage, unless with the express permission of the child, young person or vulnerable adult's parent/carer.

5. PROCEDURES

These procedures inform staff, elected members and volunteers of what actions they should take if they have concerns or encounter a case of alleged or suspected child abuse.

Responding To Concerns and Allegations:

It is important that all staff, elected members and volunteers are aware that the first person that has concerns or encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. It is not the place of any Officer of the Council to investigate allegations. However, staff, elected members and volunteers do have a duty of care to the child, young person or vulnerable adult, which means they must report any suspicions they may have. It is the duty of any member, or council employee or volunteer to report any concerns about a child being subject to abuse, receive a disclosure or are aware of Members, or colleagues behaving in an inappropriate manor. All reports should be treated as confidential and with respect to the person raising the concern regardless of the outcome.

In general, there are three situations that staff, elected members and volunteers may need to respond to a concern or case of alleged or suspected abuse:

1. Responding to a child, young person or vulnerable adult disclosing abuse, i.e. they make an allegation of abuse.
2. Responding to allegations or concerns about a member of staff, elected member or volunteer from your own observation or due to a complaint.
3. Responding to allegations or concerns about any other person, i.e. parent, carer, other service user.

In the case of an emergency where a child, young person or vulnerable adult is in danger phone 999 immediately.

Record in writing all the details that you are aware of and what was said using the child, young person or vulnerable adult's own words, immediately. In your record you should include the following:

- a) The date and time.
- b) The child, young person or vulnerable adult's name, address and date of birth.
- c) The nature of the allegation.
- d) Your observations – a description of the child, young person or vulnerable adult's behaviour, physical and emotional state and any visible injuries.
- e) Exactly what the child, young person or vulnerable adult said and what you said. Record the child, young person or vulnerable adult's account of what has happened as closely as possible.
- f) Sign and date what you have recorded.

Do not ask questions, other than the child, young person or vulnerable adult's name, address and date of birth. Reassure the child, young person or vulnerable adult that they have done the right thing in telling you.

Contact local Social Services or the Police without delay and follow their guidance.

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only, this is usually Social Services or the Police. It is extremely important that allegations or concerns are not discussed, as any breach of confidentiality could be damaging to the child, young person or vulnerable adult, their family, those who are the subject of allegations and any child protection investigations that may follow.

Informing the parents of a child, young person or vulnerable adult of concerns you may have should be dealt with by Social Services. Parents will not be informed if they are the subject of the allegation. Any individual against whom an allegation has been made has the right to be notified about the cause for concern. This should be done by Social Services and the Police. It is important that the timing of this does not prejudice the investigation; therefore, confidentiality is of the utmost importance.

Recorded information should be handed over to Social Services or the Police and any copies stored in a secure place with limited access in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure). If enquiries arise from the public or any branch of the media, it is vital that all staff, elected members and volunteers are briefed to not make any comments regarding the situation.

Whistleblowing

All Parish Councillors, staff and volunteers should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues and appropriate advice will be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Safeguarding Team as to how to handle such allegations. The Parish Council must not make a judgement on whether the allegations have merit for further

investigation, this decision must be for the LADO team. If you would prefer to contact the LADO directly, or to discuss a concern that the LADO is already aware of, then please contact 01305 221122 or email lado@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION / SUPPORT

If you're worried about the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person who lives in Dorset contact:

Children's Advice and Duty Service (ChAD):

Single point of contact for safeguarding concerns Tel: 01305 228866

Dorset Council - Safeguarding Adults Board

If you have a concern an adult is being abused or neglected, call 01305 221016.

ChildLine

Free helpline for children and young people in the UK children
They can call to talk about any problem Tel: 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC

If you have any concerns at all about a child's safety or wellbeing, Tel: 0808 800 5000

Due to an increase in demand across their services, their voice Helpline is currently operating between the hours of 10am–4pm Monday to Friday. However, you can email help@NSPCC.org.uk at any time. It is free and you don't have to say who you are.

Information: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/>

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org

The freephone, 24-hour Helpline: 116 123 or you can email jo@samaritans.org

Domestic Violence

<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>

The freephone, 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247

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