

SHILDON TOWN COUNCIL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

This policy identifies procedures, roles and responsibilities for ensuring that Shildon Town Council staff and volunteers deal with child protection issues appropriately and promptly.

Introduction

Shildon Town Council is committed to ensuring that all those associated with it have positive and enjoyable experiences. Consequently we are committed to ensuring that all children and young people who take part in our activities are kept free from harm. We will ensure that:

- everyone is treated with respect
- activities take place in a safe and secure environment
- staff and volunteers who work regularly and unsupervised with children and young people will be checked with the Criminal Records Bureau
- opportunities exist for young people and parents / primary carers to talk to us about any concerns they may have
- children, young people and parents / primary carers feel comfortable and confident enough to discuss attitudes and behaviours they do not like
- adults associated with the club / group will take appropriate action when children, young people or parents / primary carers express concern about abuse
- no adult is left alone with individual children / young people

Rights

- children and young people have a right to proper care and protection from all forms of abuse
- staff and volunteers have the right to proper support in carrying out their work and providing children and young people with due rights and respect. The Town Council is responsible for ensuring adequate induction, supervision and training of all staff and volunteers

What is child abuse?

- **Physical Injury** – The intentional, non accidental use of physical force that aims to hurt, injure or destroy that child.
- **Sexual Abuse** – The involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children or adolescents in sexual activities they do not fully comprehend, or to which they are unable to give informed consent, or that violate the social taboos of family roles.
- **Emotional Abuse** – The persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.
- **Neglect** – When chronic inattention is given to the child by their parents / primary

carers or care givers in the areas of medical, educational, stimulative, environmental, nutritional, physical or emotional needs.

Possible signs of child abuse

Staff and volunteers will look out for the following possible signs of child abuse. However, it is understood that not all young people manifesting these symptoms will necessarily be suffering abuse.

Caution, sensitivity and common sense will shape precisely how adults respond to these symptoms.

If a child or young person:

- Becomes withdrawn or isolated
- Becomes aggressive or starts seeking attention
- Becomes afraid of certain people
- Develops chronic medical problems such as stomach pains or headaches
- Acts in sexually inappropriate ways toward adults or peers
- Becomes anorexic or bulimic
- Fails to thrive
- Is often hungry
- Has regular accidents
- Has poor personal hygiene
- Is regularly tired
- Is reluctant to go home
- Wears inappropriate clothing
- Develops poor social relationships
- Exhibits inappropriate emotional responses
- Exhibits dramatic changes in mood or behaviour
- Engages in drug or alcohol abuse
- Runs away
- Feels depressed
- Has bumps, bruises or wounds and unconvincing explanations for them
- Tells of a friend with a problem of abuse

steps will be taken to establish whether the child or young person is suffering abuse

Roles and responsibilities

The named child protection officer is Tracey Bellas who will ensure the implementation and updating of this policy and should be consulted when any child protection issues arise. If an issue arises that involves the named representative then the Town Clerk should be notified to deal with the situation.

All staff and volunteers who have regular and unsupervised contact with children and young people **must** have a check of their records through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). Any visiting adult or staff member awaiting CRB clearance must **never** be left alone with any child.

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to:

- Treat each child/young person with respect
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children/young people using the club/group
- Be vigilant to possible signs and symptoms of child abuse
- Follow the agreed procedure, as described in this policy, for reporting and recording concerns arising during club/group time
- Ensure that all unfamiliar individuals entering the clubs/groups premises are appropriately challenged
- Ensure that where comments, actions and behaviour of children or young people arising during club/group time gives cause for concern the incidents are dealt with promptly and recorded appropriately.

Safe use of premises

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to

- Ensure that only staff and volunteers who are authorised to work with the children/young people have access to the premises during club/group time.
- All staff and volunteers must carry out a basic risk assessment of the space to highlight vulnerable areas of the room/centre, such as concealed entrances or unsupervised areas.
- Where parents are present throughout the activity they should be made aware that they are responsible for the supervision of their own children and that they should not leave the premises.

Procedure for reporting a case of suspected child abuse

If child abuse is suspected, staff and volunteers will:

- Ensure that the appropriate officers are made aware of the issue/situation.
- Complete a child protection report form (attached to this policy)
- Ensure that the allegation/suspicion is taken seriously and that it is reported and recorded.
- Ensure that the appropriate authorities are advised about the allegation/suspicion (e.g. **Durham County Council Children's Services 0845 8505010**)

Procedure for dealing with disclosures of abuse from young people.

Staff and volunteers will:

- Reassure the young person that they are doing the correct thing by telling an adult
- Reassure the young person that it is right to talk
- Not blame the young person for the abuse suffered
- Listen to the young person carefully
- Take the young persons word because young people rarely lie about child abuse
- Promise to support the young person
- Inform the young person about what you will do
- Contact Children's Services or the Police if it is felt that that the young person is likely to be at risk if they return home
- Thank the young person for confiding

- Report and record the allegation.

Complete a child protection report form (attached to this policy)

Staff and volunteers will not:

- Promise confidentiality to the young person, otherwise nothing can be done about the allegation and the problem of abuse will persist
- Be judgemental or show anger, disgust or disbelief
- Ask direct questions of the young person
- Minimise the effects of the alleged abuse
- Become unnecessarily involved
- Over dramatise or criticise
- Confront the young person with the abuser or abusers
- Tell off the young person for not confiding earlier
- Try to force the young person to forget

If allegations are made by a young person against a person not associated with the Town Council, Children's Services will be immediately notified and action taken on their advice. The decision as to whether to notify the young person's parents/primary carers will be made in consultation with Children's Services.

If allegations are made by a young person or parent/primary carer against another young person in the club / group Children's Services will be immediately notified and action taken on their advice. If there are genuine grounds for concern, the parents/primary carers of both children will be notified.

If it proves impossible for both young people to remain within the club / group as an enquiry into the allegations is undertaken, the young person accused of the abuse will not be allowed to attend. The outcome of the enquiry will determine whether the young person accused of the abuse is allowed to return to the club / group

If allegations are made by a young person or parent/primary carer against an individual member of staff or volunteer associated with the club / group Children's Services will be immediately notified and action taken on their advice. If there are genuine grounds for concern, the individual associated with the club / group will be immediately notified of the allegation made against them and they will not be allowed to work in any shape or form with the young people in the club / group

Other staff and volunteers associated with the club / group are advised that they should not discuss with the accused any aspect of the alleged incident/s or the enquiry that follows disclosure, as this may seriously affect the outcome of the enquiry.

The outcome of the enquiry will determine whether the individual accused of abuse is allowed to continue work with the club / group

Early Police intervention may be required in cases of extreme abuse.

Advice about police intervention will be taken from Children's Services.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

Once a year staff and volunteers associated with the club / group will meet to discuss the extent to which practice conforms with the content of the policy. Three years following adoption of the policy, staff and volunteers associated with the club / group will meet to discuss whether the policy needs revising in the light of new child protection legislation and best practice advice.

This Policy was adopted by the Town Council on 28th May 2012.

This Policy will be reviewed periodically as per the monitoring and evaluation provisions above.

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

CHILD PROTECTION REPORT

Staff and volunteers should use this form to record

- **Any allegations that a child has suffered or may be at risk of suffering significant harm**
- **Any concerns or disclosures which lead them to suspect that a child has suffered or is suffering significant harm, or may be at risk of such harm**

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Name of organisation _____ | |
| Staff / volunteers name _____ | |
| Job title _____ | |
| Date and time this report was written Date _____ Time _____ | |
| Child / young person's name _____ | |
| Age _____ | Date of birth _____ |
| Home address _____ _____ | |
| Parent/guardian's contact telephone number _____ | |
| NATURE OF ALLEGATION / CONCERN / DISCLOSURE | |
| Date _____ | Time _____ |
| Place _____ | |
| What happened | |
| Who was present | |

PREVIOUS CONCERNS

Have there been any previous concerns about this child / young person / family?
If so what where they? When did they happen? What action if any, was taken?

ACTION TAKEN BY YOU NOW

**CONSULTATION WITH NAMED CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER /
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Date _____ Time _____

Name _____ Position _____

Decision made

ANY FOLLOW UP ACTION

Date _____ Time _____

Details

Signature of staff / volunteer who has completed this report
