



LANDFORD PARISH COUNCIL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

As an organisation that occasionally works with children, Landford 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 who use our services. Children 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 and who are trusted by the child. This can be from within or outside the family.

Landford Parish Council is committed to providing safe activities for young people and to this end, this Child Protection Policy Document has been compiled. External Contractors, working on behalf of the Council, will be asked to adopt a suitable Child Protection Policy if their work brings them into contact with children.

The purpose of the policy is to safeguard children 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. For the purpose of this policy "a child" means anyone under the age of 18. This policy does not apply to employees of the council who are under the age of 18. Such employees are covered by employment policies and legislation.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The Council is committed to ensuring that children 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, undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service check, where permitted by law.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with partner organisations, councillors, employees, volunteers, parents and carers.

Decisions on which employees/volunteers will be DBS checked will be taken by the Parish Clerk, in compliance with relevant legislation. Decisions on which councillors will be DBS checked will be taken by the Parish Clerk in consultation with the councillor and the council Chair.

2.1 Policy Aims

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

- To create a healthy and safe environment at all activities.
- To ensure children are listened to, and kept safe from harm
- To support and encourage parents to voice their opinions regarding the welfare of their children and to raise their awareness of the importance of asking questions about the clubs and activities which they send their children to.
- To ensure councillors, staff and volunteers, who work with children, are well informed, supported and enabled to provide the best possible practice.

2.2 Objectives

The objectives are:-

- To raise the level of awareness of councillors, staff and volunteers about child abuse and its various forms.
- To raise the level of awareness of councillors, staff and volunteers about what children 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.
- To promote the general welfare, health and full development of children during all activities.
- To develop effective procedures in recording and responding to accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse.

3. EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

3.1 Recruitment and Selection of Staff/ Volunteers

All applicants who will work with children in the course of their job will complete a disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service 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 Child Protection 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.
- 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.

3.2 Allegations against Employees/ Councillor/ Volunteers

If a child, parent or guardian makes allegations to the Parish Council against any person working for or acting on behalf of the Parish Council it will be recorded by the Parish Clerk. On receipt of the complaint the Parish Clerk will contact Wiltshire County Social Services and/or the Police (if appropriate), to appraise them of the situation.

The Parish Clerk should inform the person against whom the complaint has been made as soon as possible. If the allegation appears to be a case where to do so might prejudice a criminal investigation, this will require consultation with the Police to ascertain the appropriate procedure.

The Course of action to be taken in relation to any allegation will be decided by the nature of such an allegation, and if it is of a criminal nature, upon the advice of the Police.

In the event that the allegation is made against the Parish Clerk, the above procedures will be dealt with by the Chair of the Parish Council.

3.3 Reporting of Concerns

Those working on Parish Council activities have a duty to ensure that any suspicion, incident, allegation or other manifestation relating to child protection is reported to the Parish Clerk.

The Parish Clerk will take appropriate action and report to the Police and/or Social Services, if it is deemed to be the necessary course of action.

4. 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:-

4.1 You should:-

- Always be publicly open when working with children. Avoid any situations where you and an individual child are completely unobserved (encourage an open environment).
- Where possible, children 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/ volunteer/ councillor.
- You must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally.

4.2 You should never:-

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

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 away from others. When talking to children on your own ensure you can be seen by others.
- Take children alone on car journeys, however short.
- Take children 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 is safe and sound must be made and recorded with your manager/ Parish Clerk/ Chair and enacted with the knowledge of the parents.

5. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

The Parish Council are to review this policy, its effectiveness and its implementation annually. It will ensure that employees and statutory authorities are consulted as when appropriate.

DECLARATION

Landford Parish Council is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children 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 Child Protection 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 young people in their care. Any disciplinary measures required as a result of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with normal disciplinary procedures.

You should sign and date the attached form and return it to the Parish Clerk once you have read the policy.

LANDFORD PARISH COUNCIL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Councillor, employee or volunteer declaration

I have read and fully understood the Child Protection Policy and hereby declare that I will carry out my role in line with policy statements and procedures contained therein.

Signed

Name

Date