

**BARKWAY PARISH COUNCIL
CHILDREN, YOUNG PERSONS AND VULNERABLE ADULTS
PROTECTION POLICY**

Policy statement

Barkway Parish Council has a duty of care to safeguard from harm all children, young persons and vulnerable adults visiting any of its premises or using any of its facilities. All children, young persons and vulnerable adults have a right to protection.

This Policy will apply to councillors, employees, contractors, users and hirers.

Barkway Parish Council will:

- Follow the appropriate guidelines to select appropriate staff/volunteers and to carry out Disclosure and Barring checks (formerly CRB checks) as necessary.
- Ensure the safety and protection of all children, young persons and vulnerable adults through the adherence to the Children, Young Persons and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy adopted by the Council on (date). This policy will be reviewed by the Parish Council every three years or earlier if there is any change in legislation.

Definitions

- I. A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).
- II. A vulnerable adult is anyone over 18 years old 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

Appointed Child, Young Persons and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer

For the purposes of this policy it is deemed that the appointed Child, Young Persons and Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer will be the Parish Clerk, whosoever this shall be from time to time.

Policy aims

The aim of the Barkway Parish Council Children, Young Persons and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- To provide children, young persons and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection;
- To allow all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child, young person and vulnerable adult protection issues.

Key principles

The key principles of this policy are:

- To ensure that children, young persons and vulnerable adults visiting the Council's premises or using its facilities can be protected by setting standards of best practice.

- To also ensure that the Council's staff and volunteers are protected and do not place themselves in an unnecessarily vulnerable position.

Good Practice

This section seeks to offer practical guidance to those working at Council premises or engaged in Council events or activities that involve contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults to ensure that they and persons with whom they are working are protected.

Good practice guidelines

All personnel involved in any Barkway Parish Council event/activity should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice when children, young persons and vulnerable adults are involved means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all children, young people and vulnerable adults with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children, young persons and vulnerable adults (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with anyone defined in this policy or to share a room with them).
- Making recreation and sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for the persons in their care in the sports changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the sports changing rooms, always ensure parents, teachers, coaches or officials work in pairs.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

Practices to be avoided

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge. For example, a person sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent/carer fails to arrive to pick up a child/vulnerable adult at the end of a session/activity:

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children, young persons or vulnerable adults away from others
- Taking or dropping off a child/vulnerable to an event or activity

Practices never to be sanctioned when children, young people and vulnerable adults are involved

The following should **never** be sanctioned:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Share a room with a child, young person or vulnerable adults
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children, young persons and vulnerable adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, young person or vulnerable adult, even in fun

- Allow allegations made by a child, young person or vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature for anyone that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow anyone defined in this policy to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child or the carer or person responsible for the vulnerable adult are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a child, young person or vulnerable adult misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Staff/volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.

Advice for sporting and other organisations

All sporting and other organisations visiting Barkway Parish Council's premises or hiring and using its facilities and which make provision for children, young people and vulnerable adults must ensure that:

- The welfare of the child or person is paramount;
- All children, young persons and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- All staff (paid/unpaid) working in sport or recreational activities have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

Use of photographic/filming equipment at sporting events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young, vulnerable and disabled sportspeople in susceptible positions. All organisations should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the appropriate officer.

Videoing as a coaching aid

There is no intention to prevent coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and such films should be stored safely.

Responding to complaints and alleged or suspected incidents

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in the Parish Council, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

Barkway Parish Council will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports his/her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

Where there is a complaint against an individual there may be three types of investigation:

- a criminal investigation
- a child protection investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Reporting concerns about poor practice

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the appointed Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the appointed Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Chair of the Parish Council (or in his/her absence, the Vice Chair) who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Reporting concerns about suspected abuse

- Any suspicion that a child, young person or vulnerable adult has been abused by either by a Parish Councillor, a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the appointed Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the person in question and any other person who may be at risk.
- The appointed Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department, which may involve the police, or go directly to the police, if out-of-hours.
- The parents or carers of the person will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- The appointed Officer should also notify the Chair of the Parish Council (or in his/her absence, the vice chair) who will deal with any media enquiries.
- If the appointed Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Chair of the Parish Council (or in his/her absence, the vice chair) who will refer the allegation to social services.

Confidentiality

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 includes the following people:

- the appointed Officer
- the parents or carers of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- the person making the allegation
- social services/police
- Parish Council Chair (or Vice Chair)

- the alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is under 18 years old).

Advice should be sought from social services as to who should approach the alleged abuser.

Recording information

A book specifically for child/vulnerable adult protection issues will be used and updated when necessary. The book will be kept in the Council office and can be accessed through the Clerk.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Information on social services or the police about suspected abuse

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The abused person's name, age and date of birth.
- The person's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The person's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents or carers been contacted?
- If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
- If the abused person was not the person who reported the incident, has the person been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

Any worries about sharing concerns about abuse with a colleagues, can be discussed by contacting social services or the police direct, or the **NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000**, or **Childline on 0800 1111**.

Important points to note:

- For the purposes of this procedure the term 'Council staff' encompasses both staff working within the Council and also those who represent the Council in relation to any event/activity involving contact with children, young persons and vulnerable adults.
- It is not the Council staff member and/or volunteer's responsibility to determine if abuse is occurring but to report their concerns.
- If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of Council staff or a volunteer these will be fully investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedures.

Declaration

Barkway Parish Council hereby agrees to oversee the implementation of the Children, Young Persons and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

Name:

Name:

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Position within Barkway Parish Council:

Position within Barkway Parish Council:

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Date:

Date:

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One of the signatories should be the Parish Council's appointed Child, Young Persons and Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer.

Reviewed: 14.03.2016