



South Swindon Parish Council

Safeguarding Policy

Name:

Position:

Signature:

Date:

Introduction

South Swindon Parish Council advocates that **SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS** and that all people have the right to live in safety, free from abuse, harm and neglect.

Safeguarding is the umbrella term for protecting peoples' physical health, mental wellbeing and human rights and the Parish Council has a duty of care to protect all children, young people and adults, who come into contact with our services. This is in-line with the Children Act (2004) and Care Act (2014).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that South Swindon Parish Council retains a consistent approach to safeguarding across the organisation. It is designed to ensure that anyone working for on behalf of the Parish Council, including employees, Parish Councillors, volunteers and contractors, are aware of their legal obligations. This guide will sit behind all Parish Council policies and the Parish Council's Safeguarding Concern/Incident form (see appendix 1) will be used to report any safeguarding incidents.

All Parish Council employees and volunteers have a responsibility to act in-line with the Safeguarding Policy.

The Council's Role and Responsibilities

Local Authorities have a duty under the Children Act (2004) regulations, to ensure that they consider the need to safeguard, protect and /or empower children and young people when carrying out their functions. The Parish Council has a role in identifying children and young people who may be at risk and alerting the appropriate services.

South Swindon Parish Council is committed to ensuring the safety of all users of our services and facilities. We recognise we have a statutory responsibility and duty of care to cooperate, communicate and report issues relating to safeguarding to the appropriate internal person(s), authorities and partner agencies. This is to be consistent across all service areas. Safeguarding is not a practice that operates in isolation and is to be embedded within the whole organisation and this guide offers detail behind the Safeguarding Policy on a reporting system.

As adults with trust and influence, South Swindon Parish Council employees and volunteers (including Councillors) are in a powerful position to recognise and receive information about abuse or need for care and support. However, it is not their responsibility to decide if a child, young person, or adult in need of care and support is being abused.

What should be a cause for concern

Staff and volunteers should be concerned by any action or inaction which significantly harms the physical and/or emotional development of a child. The safeguarding of children and young people who may need care & support, encompasses the following types of harm and/or abuse: -

TYPE	DEFINITION	SIGNS
Emotional	The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. This can also include cyber bullying.	Conveying to children that they are worthless or inadequate, imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations, serious bullying, exploitation, isolation, segregation.
Sexual	Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware that is happening. This includes use of images through social media or other IT.	Inappropriate sexual behaviour or use of language.
Neglect	The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. Neglect will likely result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development.	Inadequate food, clothing or shelter. Inadequate access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Isolation, truanting and lateness to appointments can also be signs.
Physical	May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Also includes bullying and cyber bullying.	Unexplained bruising, burns, fractures, weight gain or loss, as well as repeated illness.
Domestic Violence	An incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour. The violence or abuse is by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexuality.	Unexplained bruising, cowering or flinching. Being detached or aloof from what is happening around them.

There are a number of specific acts that constitute abuse which could affect children and Young People, including Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur using technology without the child's immediate recognition. For example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength, economic or other resources. These exploitative relationships are characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

Modern Slavery

There are many different characteristics that distinguish slavery from other human rights violations, however only one needs to be present for slavery to exist. It involves people being forced to work through mental or physical threat, owned or controlled by an 'employer' usually through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse. The person is dehumanised and treated as a commodity.

Forced Marriage

In a forced marriage you are coerced into marrying someone against your will. You may be physically threatened or emotionally blackmailed to do so. It is an abuse of human rights and cannot be justified on any religious or cultural basis. It is not the same as an arranged marriage where you have a choice as to whether to accept the arrangement or not.

Female Genital Mutilation

This is a collective term used for illegal procedures, such as female circumcision, which include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs, or injury to the female genital organs for a cultural or non-therapeutic reason.

Honour Based Violence

This is abuse in the name of honour, covering a variety of behaviours, mainly but not exclusively against females, where the person is being punished by their family and/or "community" for a perceived transgression against the 'honour' of the family or community. A person may also be required to undergo certain activities or procedures in 'honour' of the family. It is a form of domestic abuse which relates to a victim who does not abide by the 'rules' of an honour code. This will have been set at the discretion of relatives or the "community".

Cyber Crime

This is defined as criminal activity carried out by means of the internet. Criminals are increasingly exploiting the speed, convenience, and anonymity of the internet to commit a diverse range of criminal activities without physical or virtual borders. These crimes can cause serious harm and pose significant threats to victims.

Stalking

The Protection of Freedoms Act (2012) defines "stalking" as an offence. There is no legal

definition, but examples include: following or spying on a person or forcing contact with the victim through any means including social media. Any of these examples carried out repeatedly or persistently can cause significant alarm or distress.

Prevent

Prevent is a government strategy which aims to raise awareness and resilience to radicalisation. It recognises that children and vulnerable adults can be susceptible to extremist views and coerced into criminal behaviour.

Human Trafficking

Takes place when a victim is moved from one place to another for the purpose of exploitation, this could be through sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced labour, forced criminality or organ harvesting. The trafficker can control and exploit through violence, coercion, or deception.

Discrimination

South Swindon Parish Council is committed to the principles of the Equality Act (2010) and follow non-discriminatory practices for the protection of all individuals. It should be noted that discrimination does not have to be intentional to be unlawful.

Under the Equality Act, there are nine protected characteristics:

Age Discrimination	This is when you are treated differently because of your age.
Gender Reassignment Discrimination	This is when you are treated differently because you are transsexual.
Married and Civil Partnership	This is when you are treated differently at work because you are married or in a civil partnership.
Disability	Disability discrimination is when you are treated less well or put at a disadvantage for a reason that relates to your disability.
Race	This is when you are treated differently because of your race in one of the situations covered by the Equality Act.
Religion and Beliefs	This is when you are treated differently because of your religion or belief.
Sex	This is when you are treated differently because of your gender.
Sexual Orientation	This is when you are treated differently because of your sexual orientation example you are heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual.
Pregnant and Maternity Leave	This is when you are treated unfavourably because of pregnancy, a pregnancy-related illness, breastfeeding in a public place, or because of taking maternity leave.

Organisation Team

	Name	Phone Number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead - Chief Executive Officer, South Swindon Parish Council	Jake Mee	01793 312006	ceo@southswindon-pc.gov.uk
Youth Club Designated Safeguarding Lead - Youth Worker	Loreli Huntley	01793 312006	youthwork2@southswindon-pc.gov.uk
Deputy Chief Executive Officer, South Swindon Parish Council	Matthew Leather	01793 317749	deputyceo@southswindon-pc.gov.uk
Chair of the Parish Council, South Swindon Parish Council	Neil Hopkins	07799 866396	nhopkins@southswindon-pc.gov.uk

Designated Safeguarding Lead

South Swindon Parish Council has designated safeguarding leads, who are responsible for championing the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Staff have a legal obligation to report abuse disclosures (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023).

- Jake Mee, the Chief Executive Officer is the Parish Council's Designated Safeguarding Lead. Jake Mee will report to MASH.
- Loreli Huntley is the Parish Council's Youth Club Designated Safeguarding Lead. Loreli Huntly reports to the Parish Council's Chief Executive Officer.

Code of Conduct

The Parish adheres to the following guidelines as to how young people and adults interact with each other:

- Abusive behavior and language, violence, aggression, bullying or discrimination will not be tolerated. Parish Council staff will respond quickly and effectively to any such reports which may result in the offender(s) being suspended.
- The appropriate ratios of trained leaders to young people will be applied:
 - 10 years plus - one adult to ten children during a regular Youth Club session.
 - More support may be required as per the activity/ trip risk assessment.
- Young people are free to leave any Parish-run activity when they wish.
- Whilst the young people are encouraged to stay until the end of youth sessions, staff are not able to detain members should they wish to leave earlier. This will be made clear to parents through the parental consent statement.

Safeguarding Practices

Safe Working Practices

The staff and volunteers of the Parish Council must follow the safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults policy and procedures at all times. They should:

- Never leave children, young people or vulnerable adults unattended or in the control of an adult 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.
- When only two leaders are present, ensure there is no close personal relationship between the two leaders conducting the session that may lead to a conflict of interest.
- 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.
- Should Parish Council facilities (including a community centre or an event space) be hired by an organisation or group work with children, young adults or vulnerable adults, the Parish Council will require the hirer to have in place their own Safeguarding Policy.

Safer Recruitment

Safeguarding children and young people who the Parish Council has contact with is an essential consideration at the recruitment stage. All staff, Parish Councillors and volunteers who come in to contact with children and young people on behalf of the Parish Council are required to have a DBS check and provide references. They will also be expected to read and sign that they have understood this Safeguarding Policy.

Training

All Parish Council staff will be expected to read this policy and understand the expectations of them in terms of safeguarding. Safeguarding training equivalent to levels 1 and level 2 will be compulsory at South Swindon Parish Council for staff and volunteers who are in direct contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Line managers and the Parish Council's Deputy Chief Executive are responsible for identifying and ensuring that all new starters have the appropriate level of safeguarding training for their role (within six months of taking up their post) and ensure that all staff refresh their training every three years. To ensure awareness of Safeguarding is consistent across all levels of the organisation, the Parish Council is committed to also providing safeguarding training for Parish Councillors.

The Parish Council will work closely with the Swindon Safeguarding Partnership to ensure suitable training is available for Parish Councillors, officers, and volunteers.

Safeguarding Allegations against a Member of Staff

South Swindon Parish Council takes any allegations or complaints about the conduct of staff and volunteers very seriously in respect of their contact with children, young people in need of care and support. If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer (this would include Parish Councillors), the person receiving the

allegation will immediately inform the Parish Council's Chief Executive Officer. If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Chief Executive Officer, the recipient of the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of the Parish Council. The Parish Council will obtain advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at Swindon Borough Council on the action to be taken. A decision will be made whether the matter can be dealt with by the Parish Council or if the severity of the allegation warrants a different course of action. No attempt should be made to investigate or act before consultation with the Swindon Borough Council Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Support for Staff/Volunteers

Support will be provided for any member of staff or volunteer who may be subject to an allegation. The Parish Council will also ensure all staff and volunteers that they will be fully supported and protected should they come forward in good faith (without malicious intent) to report their concerns about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a child, young person or adult may be being abused or bullied.

The person who receives information concerning a suspected case of abuse by another member of staff or volunteer should make a full record of what has been said, as soon as possible and use the Concern/Incident Form (see appendix 1, passing the information to the Parish Council's Chief Executive Officer.

Safeguarding Procedures

Parish Council Employee Responsibilities

It is not the responsibility of a Parish Council employee to make decisions on whether abuse is taking place. However, all employees have a responsibility to safeguard children and young people in need of care and to inform their Line Manager or the Chief Executive Officer in a timely manner.

The employee will then work with the Chief Executive Officer to inform the appropriate external agencies via the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). It is the responsibility of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to then make enquiries, decisions and take any necessary action.

Parish Council Volunteers Responsibilities

It is not the responsibility of a Parish Council volunteer to make decisions on whether child abuse is taking place. All volunteers have a responsibility to safeguard children and young people in need of care and to inform their Line Manager such as the Youth Worker or the Libraries Manager in a timely manner.

If the allegation concerns their Line Manager, volunteers are to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Jake Mee, Chief Executive Officer.

The volunteer will then work with the Chief Executive Officer to inform the appropriate external agencies via the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). It is the responsibility of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to then make enquiries, decisions and take any necessary action.

Procedure for being reported alleged abuse

If someone tells a member of staff about potential or alleged abuse, all employees and volunteers are to ensure that they: -

- Remain calm.
- Listen carefully to all they say.
- Tell them you believe them and it's not their fault.
- Let them know you will do everything in your power to help them, but do not make promises.
- Let the child know that you will need to tell someone to help keep them safe. Though this may upset the child, it is very important that you act protectively and, in the child's, best interest.
- Do not force them to talk about it, you are there to listen to what they want to tell you.
- Do not use direct or leading questions.
- Do what you need to do to make the child feel safe within the limits of your safeguard training.
- Importantly: follow your obligation to report as soon as practically possible.
- When documenting, use the child's exact words as best you can.
- Do not contact or confront the individual who is alleged to be responsible.
- Re-assure the child / young person / adult in need of care and support that they have done the right thing.
- Complete the Concern/Incident Form (see appendix 1).

Maintain Confidentiality

It is extremely important that any allegations are not discussed outside of a conversation with your Line Manager, Parish Council CEO or if an allegation is against the CEO, the Chair of the Parish Council. Any breaches may jeopardise an ongoing investigation. Requests for information from members of the public (including parents, guardians, or carers) or the media should be directed to the Parish Council's Chief Executive Officer.

Quick Reference Contacts Guide

Title	Name	Phone Number	E-mail
Designated Safeguarding Lead - Chief Executive, South Swindon Parish Council	Jake Mee	01793 317532	ceo@southswindon-pc.gov.uk
Youth Club, Designated Safeguarding Lead - Youth Worker	Loreli Huntley	01793 312006	youthwork2@southswindon-pc.gov.uk
Deputy Chief Executive, South Swindon Parish Council	Matthew Leather	01793 317749	deputyceo@southswindon-pc.gov.uk
Chair of the Parish Council, South Swindon Parish Council	Neil Hopkins	07799 866396	
Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	https://safeguardingpartner.ship.swindon.gov.uk/info/15/for_professionals/34/request_for_help_and_support_guidelines_and_contact_information	01793 464646	contactswindon@swindon.gov.uk
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	https://safeguardingpartner.ship.swindon.gov.uk/info/15/for_professionals/35/allegations_against_staff	01793 463854	LADO@swindon.gov.uk
Early Help/CAF Team /Hub	https://safeguardingpartner.ship.swindon.gov.uk/downloads/file/791/early_help_hub	01793 466479	EHHub@swindon.gov.uk
Children's Social Care	https://www.swindon.gov.uk		

Title	Name	Phone Number	E-mail
	k/info/20018/children_and_young_people		
Emergency Duty Service (Adults and Children)	https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20182/social_care_and_health/1359/social_work_support_emergency_duty_team	01793 436699	
Adult's Social Care (if 18+ students on site)	https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20011/adult_social_care_and_support	01793 463555	
Police		999/101	
NSPCC Whistle-blowing Helpline		0800 800 5000/ 0800 028 0285	
Childline		0800 1111	

Appendix 1

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Concern / Incident Form

CONFIDENTIAL

Date:		Time:	
Name and role of person completing form			
Name of Young Person:		Age/DOB:	
Location (if applicable)			
<u>What have I seen/heard/noticed which concerns me?</u>			
<u>What has the child told me</u>			
<u>What am I worried about?</u>			
Is this concern linked to any previous concerns I have recorded or reported?			
<u>Action I have taken</u>			
<u>Record of discussion with another professional/agency/school (Giving full name/role and agency)</u>			
Has local authority threshold guidance been referred to at this point? Yes/No			

Policy Review

This Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually by the Parish Council. Details of the review and/or amendment will be recorded below.

Date	Description	Page Number	Who
May 2024	Issue	All	CEO/JM
June 2024	Updates to reflect the opening of the new youth club at St John's church hall	7, 8, 9, 10	CC/LM
May 2025	Annual Review	All	CEO/JM
May 2026	Annual Review	All	GSL/MT