

Wolston Parish Council

Child Safeguarding Policy

1. Child Abuse

Wolston Parish Council, in the management of its 'Youth Project' considers Child Safeguarding to be very important and undertakes to ensure that all staff and volunteers who work with children have been checked under recognised procedures and have received information that will enable them to recognise the signs of a child in distress and to follow the referral process.

2. Responsibilities of staff and volunteers

- 1) Volunteers have a responsibility to protect children from abuse;
- 2) Volunteers must be able to respond appropriately to a child's disclosure of abuse, ensuring that the information they receive is handled correctly.
- 3) Volunteers are not responsible for judging whether an allegation is true or for sorting it out.
- 4) Volunteers have a duty to report and protect.

3. Behaviour procedures for staff and volunteers working with young people

The aim is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all young people and to support the staff and volunteers in providing a safe, caring environment. These behaviour procedures require all staff and volunteers to:

- 1) set examples of appropriate behaviour, avoid using sarcasm or discrimination, direct criticism, labelling and unnecessary competition or comparison;
- 2) Positively encourage good behaviour;
- 3) not allow physical punishment of any young person;
- 4) not deprive any young person of, or force any child to consume, food or drink;
- 5) not humiliate or frighten any young person;
- 6) avoid situations in which they risk putting themselves or the young person at risk, including being alone with a young person unnecessarily;
- 7) offer respect to the young person at all times and strive to be sensitive to their feelings;
- 8) adhere to an adult to young person 'best practice' ratio of 1:10 max for 10 years and over.

4. Procedures to follow with a child if abuse is suspected

If abuse to a child is suspected these behaviour procedures require all staff and volunteers to:

- 1) talk to a child sensitively to find out if there is anything worrying them;
- 2) keep questions to a minimum but make sure you are absolutely clear about what the child has said;
- 3) do not take sole responsibility. Discuss your concerns with the Clerk.
- 4) contact with parents should be delayed until advice has been sought from Social Services;
- 5) the Clerk shall be responsible for seeking this advice.

5. Procedures to follow when child discloses abuse.

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When a child discloses abuse these procedures require all staff and volunteers to:

- 1) never promise to keep a secret. If you do so and the child is hurt you will not be able to help them;
- 2) tell a child you may need to talk to someone about it. Emphasise that you will be talking to someone who wants to help;
- 3) allow the child to decide if they want to open up. Do not push them to do so;
- 4) avoid using "leading" or "directing" questions;
- 5) allow the child to talk at their own pace, do not pressure them to disclose anything they do not want to;
- 6) do not leave the child until they are ready for this, then talk to the Clerk as soon as possible. Even if the child has decided not to disclose, you should still inform the Clerk as soon as possible;
- 7) compile a written report, which details all the factual information, which shall be submitted to the Clerk;
- 8) be aware that anyone dealing with a child that has disclosed information can be referred for professional help to enable them to deal with the experience.

Original signed by

Maria Meede
Clerk and RFO
Wolston Parish Council
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Guidance in support of the Safeguarding Policy

All staff and volunteers who have an interface with children and young people on behalf of Wolston Parish Council are required to be familiar with the following

The main forms of abuse are:

Physical abuse

- Where adults physically hurt or injure children, hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning and biting are all forms of physical abuse;
- Giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison and attempted suffocation or drowning are also physical abuse.

Sexual abuse

- Girls and boys are abused by adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs. This might be full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse, or fondling;
- Showing children pornographic magazines, DVDs or websites is also included.

Emotional abuse

- Persistent lack of love and affection damages children emotionally. Being constantly shouted at, threatened, or taunted can make a child very nervous and withdrawn.

Neglect

- An adult may fail to meet a child's basic needs, like food or warm clothing. Children might be constantly left alone unsupervised;
- Abuse in any form can affect a child of any age.

Identifying signs of possible abuse

Child abuse may come to light in a number of ways, and staff and volunteers may be important links in identifying a case where a child needs further protection.

- A child may tell you what has happened to them;
- From a third party (e.g. another child);
- Through the child's behaviour;
- A suspicious, unexplained injury to the child.

Recognising abuse is not easy. Most children will receive cuts, grazes and bruises from time to time and their behaviour may give reason for concern. There may be other reasons for these factors aside from abuse, but any concerns should be immediately discussed with the individuals outlined below.

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Warning signs that may alert to possible abuse include

- Unexplained bruising, cuts or burns on the child, particularly if these parts of the body are not normally injured in accidents.
- An injury which a parent/carer tries to hide or for which they might have given different explanations.
- Changes in behaviour such as a child suddenly becoming very quiet, tearful, withdrawn, aggressive, or displaying severe tantrums.
- Loss of weight without a medical explanation
- An inappropriately dressed or ill kept child who may also be dirty
- Sexually explicit behaviour, for example playing games and showing awareness inappropriate for the child's age
- Continual masturbation, aggressive and inappropriate sex play
- Running away from home, attempted suicides, self-inflicted injuries
- A lack of trust in adults, particularly those who would normally be close to a child
- Disturbed sleep, nightmares and bedwetting, particularly if child has previously been dry
- Eating problems, including overeating or loss of appetite.