

EXMINSTER PARISH COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Policy Statement

Exminster Parish Council ('the Council') recognises its responsibilities under the terms of the Children Act 2004, earlier Children's Acts and other relevant legislation to make arrangements for ensuring that its functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults

This policy applies where the Council's operation, work, activities, or services could potentially involve children or young people and vulnerable adults.

Good practice guidelines are provided in this policy for protection to these vulnerable groups and to offer protection from allegations of abuse and reassure parents.

The policy affects every elected member, staff member, volunteer and anyone working on behalf of and/or representing the Council and ensures they are aware of the safeguarding expectations.

Definitions

- The term Children or Young Person is used to refer to anyone under the age of 18 years.
- Vulnerable Adult:
 - Anyone over 18 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
- The term Parent is used as a generic term to represent anyone with legal parental responsibility.
- The term Elected Members is used to refer to employees, councillors, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of and/or representing the Council, including temporary and agency staff and contractors.

Policy Objectives

- To ensure, where possible, that all facilities and activities offered by the Council are designed and maintained to limit risks to children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- To promote the general welfare, health and development of children by being aware of child protection issues and to be able to respond where appropriate as a community organisation.
- To develop procedures in recording and responding to incidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse or neglect.
- As the Parish Council does not directly provide any care or supervision services to children and vulnerable adults, it expects that those at risk using

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its facilities do so with the consent and any necessary supervision of a parent, carer or other responsible adult.

- To ensure all suspicions or allegations of abuse against a child or adult at risk of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and dealt with speedily and appropriately. Any suspicions or concerns about abuse should be reported either through the Council or directly to the Devon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub who have the responsibility for responding to concerns that may arise.
- To ensure that all Activities or events that are organised or take place on Parish Council land or in Parish Council facilities that involve children, young people and vulnerable adults will need to comply with the requirements for safeguarding. **It is the responsibility of organisers of such events or activities to ensure that they comply with the relevant legislation and have the appropriate policies and procedures in place. Each group should have its own safeguarding policy, a copy of which must be sent to the council, or agree to work to the Parish Council's policy and relevant guidance.**
- To provide safe facilities and ensure regular safety assessments are undertaken.
- To promote Safeguarding within Exminster by for example displaying on notice boards the relevant safeguarding contacts for advice and help.
- When Council services or activities mean that people working on behalf of the Council are to have unsupervised access to children or adults at risk of abuse or neglect, DBS checks will be undertaken, currently this does not apply. Any volunteers working on behalf of the Council and having unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults may also be required to undergo these checks.

Council Facilities

Areas owned by Exminster Parish Council include all the facilities at Deepway Green. The land on which the Deepway Centre is built is owned by the Parish Council. The Victory Hall is the responsibility of its Managing Trustees, which is responsible for the day to day running of the hall. The football ground in Reddaway Drive is leased to the Exminster Recreational Trust who follow safeguarding procedures issued by the Football Association.

The Parish Council has currently no specific person, either Councillors or staff members who are involved in the care of children or vulnerable adults at the facilities listed above, but will ensure that, should this change and a concern arises, the correct procedures related to this policy are followed.

Policy Procedures

All users of Council facilities must follow its safeguarding policy and procedures at all times:

- When the Parish Council organises events to include children, it is always expected and stated that children must be accompanied by parents or guardians
- Never leave children, young people or vulnerable adults unattended with adults who have not been subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

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- Plan activities that involve more than one other person being present, or at least within sight and hearing of others. Do not plan to be alone with a young person
- Where possible, have male and female supervisors working with a mixed group.
- Ensure registers are complete and attendees are marked in and signed out.
- Ensure that photos or videos of individuals are not taken without written permission from parents/ carers.
- Ensure they have access to a first aid kit, telephone and know the fire drill procedures
- When working outside, ensure activities, breaks and clothing are suitable for the weather conditions and that shelter is available where possible.

Code of Conduct for Users of Parish Council Facilities

- Treat each other with respect.
- Show consideration for other groups using the facilities.
- Provide an example of good conduct that you wish others to follow.
- Refrain from any behaviour that involves racism, sexism and bullying and in addition to report any instances of such behaviour to group leaders, Parish Councillors, the Parish Clerk or parents and carers, as appropriate.
- Encourage an open atmosphere within user groups so that discussion about issues that will affect participants whilst they are attending sessions can contribute to the smooth running of events and activities.
- Do create an environment where young people feel safe to voice their concerns
- Do report all allegations, suspicions and concerns immediately

DECLARATION

Exminster Parish Council is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children and adults at risk by protecting them from physical, sexual, emotional harm and neglect.

All members of Exminster Parish Council should read the Safeguarding Policy. Having read the Policy, they should be proactive in providing a safe environment for children and vulnerable people who are involved in Parish Council activities.

This Policy will be reviewed annually.

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SAFEGUARDING CONTACT DETAILS

Children

Devon County Council Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

If you are concerned about a child or young person in Devon and want to speak to someone, contact

Telephone: 0345 155 1071

Email: mashsecure@devon.gov.uk

NSPCC

0808 800 5000

help@nspcc.org.uk

Adults

Devon Safeguarding Adults Partnership

If you think that you, or someone you know, is being abused or neglected contact Care Direct:

0345 1551 007

Email: csc.caredirect@devon.gov.uk

(Monday-Friday 8am-8pm and Saturday 9am-1pm – outside of these hours or on bank holidays call 0845 6000 388 or email the address above)

If you think a child, young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger – do not delay, call the police on 999

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Annex A

Guidelines for responding to suspicion of abuse – some DO's and DON'T's

- Do treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the child as if you believe what they are saying.
- Do tell the child they are right to tell you.
- Do reassure them that they are not to blame.
- Do be honest about your own position, who you have to tell and why.
- Do tell the child what you are doing and when and keep them up to date with what is happening.
- Do take further appropriate action or seek advice if unsure – you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse – tell your nominated person immediately.
- Do write down everything said and what was done (see notes on recording).
- Do seek medical attention if necessary.
- Do inform parents/carers unless there is suspicion of their involvement.
- Don't make promises you can't keep.
- Don't interrogate the child – it is not your job to carry out an investigation – this will be up to the police and social services, who have experience in this.
- Don't cast doubt on what the child has told you, don't interrupt or change the subject.
- Don't say anything that makes the child feel responsible for the abuse.
- Don't Do Nothing – make sure you tell your nominated child protection person immediately – they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice.

Annex B

Definitions of Abuse

“A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.” (Working Together Guidance 2015)

Types of child abuse (taken from NSPCC) include:

- Physical abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Grooming
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child Trafficking
- Neglect
- Female Genital Mutilation

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- Bullying
- Online Abuse

Definition of an Adult at risk of abuse or neglect

An adult at risk of abuse or neglect is defined as a person who: “may be in need of services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness: and who may not be able to take care of him or herself, or is unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.”

Types of adult abuse (informed by the Care Act 2014) include:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Financial abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Institutional abuse