

GODMANCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Safeguarding Policy

**This policy was formally adopted by the Town Council
in September 2020**

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**Vicky Pryce
TOWN CLERK**

Godmanchester Town Council Child Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy

Introduction

Godmanchester Town Council supports the right of all to be protected from harm and recognise that safety and welfare are paramount. Godmanchester Town Council is committed to ensuring that all children are protected and kept safe from harm whilst engaged in services provided by its staff and volunteers.

Whilst not responsible for managing individual cases, Godmanchester Town Council does have a responsibility to ensure that all allegations or suspicions of abuse or significant harm to any child are reported to the Social Care Services Department or other relevant authority.

The purpose of this document is to outline Godmanchester Town Council's Policy on responding to concerns regarding the safeguarding and protection of children and young people aged less than 18 years, with special consideration being given to those within vulnerable groups. This Policy, combined with the associated Procedures, provides guidance to all employees / volunteers who may come across concerns of this nature within the context of their work for Godmanchester Town Council.

Godmanchester Town Council has a linked Policy and Procedure for responding to concerns regarding the protection of vulnerable adults. Whilst the legislative and policy base is different when responding to the safeguarding needs of vulnerable adults, most of the principles and procedures for employees will be the same.

This Policy applies to all members of Godmanchester Town Council workforce, volunteers, Councillors and those that deliver services on behalf of Godmanchester Town Council.

The Care Act 2014 is based on the following safeguarding principles. These principles are a golden thread that run through these procedures 1) Empowerment - Presumption of person led decisions and consent 2) Protection - Support and representation for those in greatest need 3) Prevention - Prevention of neglect, harm and abuse is a primary objective 4) Proportionality - Proportionate and least intrusive response to the risk presented 5) Partnerships - Local solutions through services working with their communities 6) Accountability - Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

All persons have the right to live their lives free from violence and abuse. This right is underpinned by the duty on public agencies under the Human Rights Act (1998) to intervene proportionately to protect the rights of citizens. These rights include Article 2: 'the Right to life'; Article 3: 'Freedom from torture' (including humiliating and degrading treatment); and Article 8: 'Right to family life' (one that sustains the individual)

Any child at risk of abuse or neglect should be able to access public organisations for appropriate interventions which enable them to live a life free from violence and abuse.

Definitions

Child or Young Person - refers to anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, 25th birthday for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Parent - a generic term to represent parent, carer or guardian.

The following definitions are taken from *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010*

Abuse and Neglect – abuse and neglect are forms 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 a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Emotional Abuse – is the persistent emotional maltreatment such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on emotional development including self-neglect. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed. These may include interactions that are beyond developmental capability, overprotective and limiting of exploration and learning, or preventing participation in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing the child to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment, though it may also occur alone.

Neglect – is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment), failing to protect from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness, to a child's basic emotional needs.

Physical Abuse – can include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child.

Sexual Abuse – involves the forcing or enticing of a child to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (rape, buggery or oral sex), or non-penetrative acts. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to act in sexually inappropriate ways.

Safeguarding is the:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Undertaking that role so as to enable children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

Principles

Godmanchester Town Council will ensure that appropriate measures and best practice to safeguard and promote the welfare of children are in place, and that matters requiring attention are reported to the relevant authorities.

Godmanchester Town Council will create safe and healthy environments for children using our services, pre-empting and avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur.

At whatever level we identify risks; we will highlight them and seek to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to safeguard the children concerned.

Godmanchester Town Council places the needs of a child as first concern and will always act to ensure their safety and protection.

Godmanchester Town Council recognises that the best results for children are usually achieved in partnership with their parents / carers and Godmanchester Town Council is committed to working in this way at all times, unless this would cause a child further harm.

Godmanchester Town Council will cooperate effectively between different agencies and professionals and work openly and flexibly with them, as well as with parents / carers and children, to ensure that interventions are the best for the child.

Godmanchester Town Council will ensure that it fulfills its responsibilities to work jointly with others to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

Godmanchester Town Council respects and promotes the rights, wishes and feelings of children. Safeguards will be put in place to maximise a child's right to protection and children will know that they have the right to:

- **Be Safe** – Teach children that everyone has rights. Tell children that no-one should take away their right to be safe.
- **Protect Their Own Bodies** – Children need to know that their body belongs to them, particularly their private parts.
- **Say No** – Teach children that it is OK to say no to anyone if that person tries to do something to them they feel is wrong. Most children are taught to listen to and obey adults and older people without question.
- **Get Help Against Bullies** – Bullies usually pick on younger children. Tell children to enlist the help of friends or say no without fighting, and tell an adult. Bullies are cowards and a firm, loud “no” from an individual child or group of children, with the threat of adult intervention, often puts them off.
- **Tell** – Children will be assured that no matter what happens if they tell someone about an incident that frightens or confuses them or makes them unhappy, people will not be angry with them.
- **Be Believed** – Children need to know that if they go to an adult for help that they will be believed and supported. This is especially true in the case of sexual abuse, which children very rarely lie about. If the child is not believed when he or she tells, the abuse may continue for years and result in suffering and guilt for the child.
- **Not Keep Secrets** – Teach children that some secrets should never be kept, no matter if they promised not to tell. Child abusers known to the child often say that a kiss or touch is “our secret”. This confuses the child who has been taught to keep secrets.

Godmanchester Town Council will recruit, train, support and supervise staff, elected members and volunteers and adopt best practice in all these areas in order to safeguard and protect children from abuse, as well as minimise risk to individuals.

Godmanchester Town Council's *Code of Conduct* includes statements about appropriate boundaries to behaviour and makes it clear that discriminatory, offensive or violent behaviour is unacceptable and that complaints will be acted upon.

Godmanchester Town Council will ensure that all employees and those who undertake work on our behalf maintain a proper focus on safeguarding children and young people and that this is reflected both in sound individual practice and our internal policies and guidance. All permanent and contracted staff working with children and young people must:

- Give highest priority to children's welfare
- Recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people
- Respond appropriately to disclosure by a child, or young person, of abuse
- Respond appropriately to allegations against employees, other adults, and against themselves
- Act appropriately during work activities and understand safe practice in carrying out their duties
- Be alert to the risks which abusers, or potential abusers, may pose
- Be aware of the importance of the role of the Group in promoting the welfare of children
- Contribute as necessary to all stages of Godmanchester Town Council safeguarding and protection processes.

All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately, in line with this Policy and associated Procedures, and Local Area Safeguarding guidance.

Godmanchester Town Council recognises that the law permits the disclosure of confidential information, in order to safeguard a child, in the public interest.

Godmanchester Town Council will share all relevant information with the respective statutory child protection agencies (Children's Social Care Services and/or Police) without delay and within agreed protocols.

This Policy complements the requirements and guidance contained in local and national Policies and Procedures.

This Policy and associated Procedures applies to all children and young people, irrespective of disability, racial group, age, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, religion/belief or civil/marital status.

Godmanchester Town Council has a nominated Safeguarding Lead, the Clerk, who has overall responsibility for Safeguarding across the organisation and to whom any complaints about Safeguarding within the business should be addressed.

The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- Co-ordinating the implementation of the policy and procedures and associated staff training/briefing sessions
- Monitoring compliance with the policy
- Ensuring that procedures, advice and guidance work effectively and are revised as needed
- Report to the Council on matters relating to Safeguarding.

Safe Staffing

All employees, temporary workers and volunteers are subject to a careful selection and vetting process, as follows:

Recruitment and Pre-Employment Checks

At sift stage, application forms are assessed to ascertain whether the individual has the appropriate skills, knowledge and background to undertake the duties of the post for which they are applying. Applicants are required to complete self-disclosure about previous convictions. Any gaps in employment or inconsistencies are identified and investigated with the individual. Interviews are conducted with a minimum of two people and specific questions are asked about protection of children/young people/vulnerable adults to ascertain whether the individual is suitably aware of potential risks to those groups.

Offers of employment are made subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks, and occupational reference checks are made simultaneous to the offer of employment. Individuals have to provide two referees, one of whom must be their last employer. Where any information is falsely submitted or where information is provided which gives cause for concern, withdrawal of conditional offer of employment is considered, if necessary.

Other checks include an individual's eligibility to work in the EU, their identity and the validity of their qualifications.

Relevancy assessments for Disclosure and Barring (DBS) are carried out for all who routinely deal with protection issues or who may find themselves alone with children or vulnerable adults in the course of their duties. Where any offence is disclosed by the DBS, these are investigated fully, having consideration of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. Offers of employment or placement may be withdrawn; employees or volunteers moved or dismissed where necessary.

No unsupervised access to children/young people is allowed until these processes have been completed.

Induction and Training

During a 3 month supervised probationary period, where appropriate to the role, information and training is provided about Safeguarding Policies and associate procedures.

Those with specific responsibilities detailed within those Policies and Procedures are provided with specific training interventions associated with their role and responsibilities. These will ensure that they know and understand:

- The signs and symptoms of abuse
- How abusers behave
- The Local Safeguarding guidelines for dealing with concerns about abuse
- Who to contact within Social Services to ask for advice and to refer a case without delay where there are protection concerns.

Allegations of Staff or Volunteers

All staff must be aware of the necessity to raise concerns about a member of staff. All staff must report concerns to the Safeguarding Lead who will co-ordinate investigations, decisions and any actions to be taken, including any referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), social services, the police, or the DBS referral unit.

Mobile Phone and Photographic Images

Mobile phones play an increasing part in everyone's lives. Godmanchester Town Council believes that in order to fully ensure the protection of the children and young people in its care, certain procedures for mobile phone use need to be abided by.

Photographs of children are often used in gathering observations of children's achievements. How these are collected, developed and stored is also a consideration of Godmanchester Town Council to ensure children are adequately safeguarded.

Responsibilities Associated with the Policy

The Council in consultation with the Clerk has specific responsibility for effective implementation of this Policy.

The Council and Safeguarding Lead (Clerk) are responsible for monitoring and reviewing the Policy in accordance with legislation and good practice.

All employees are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of, understand and comply with this Policy and associated Procedures.

References

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children – *Department for Education*.
- *The Apprenticeships, Children, Skills and Learning Bill 2009* – *Department for Education*
- *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006*
- *Protection of Freedom Act 2012*
- Positively safe: A guide to developing safeguarding practices – National Council of Voluntary Childcare Groups
- Department for Education - www.education.gov.uk
- The National Society of Prevention of Cruelty for Children - www.nspcc.org.uk
- The Department of Health - www.doh.gov.uk
- The Disclosure and Barring Service - www.homeoffice.gov.uk/disclosure-and-barring

Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety of adults by outlining clear procedures and ensuring that all staff members and volunteers are clear about their responsibilities.

This policy covers all members of staff and volunteers who may come into contact with adults.

The Care Act 2014 is based on the following safeguarding principles. These principles are a golden thread that run through these procedures 1) Empowerment - Presumption of person led decisions and consent 2) Protection - Support and representation for those in greatest need 3) Prevention - Prevention of neglect, harm and abuse is a primary objective 4) Proportionality - Proportionate and least intrusive response to the risk presented 5) Partnerships - Local solutions through services working with their communities 6) Accountability - Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

All persons have the right to live their lives free from violence and abuse. This right is underpinned by the duty on public agencies under the Human Rights Act (1998) to intervene proportionately to protect the rights of citizens. These rights include Article 2: 'the Right to life'; Article 3: 'Freedom from torture' (including humiliating and degrading treatment); and Article 8: 'Right to family life' (one that sustains the individual)

Any adult at risk of abuse or neglect should be able to access public organisations for appropriate interventions which enable them to live a life free from violence and abuse.

Definitions

An adult - a person aged 18 years or over

Safeguarding – care of a person who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.

This may include a person who:

- Has a mental illness
- Has a physical or sensory disability
- Has a learning disability
- Has a severe physical illness
- Is a substance misuser
- Is homeless
- Has experienced any kind of abuse

Abuse - a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take a number of forms:

- Physical abuse e.g. hitting, pushing, shaking, inappropriate restraint, force-feeding or forcible administration of medication.
- Sexual abuse e.g. involvement in any sexual activity against his/her will, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and exhibitionism.
- Emotional/psychological abuse e.g. threats of harm, intimidation, bullying, humiliation, verbal abuse, exploitation or enforced isolation.
- Financial abuse e.g. theft, fraud or exerting improper pressure to sign over money, possessions or benefits.
- Neglect and acts of omission e.g. ignoring medical or physical care needs, withholding the necessities of life, such as medication, nutrition, hydration and heating.
- Discriminatory abuse e.g. racial, religious, or based on a person's disability, sexual orientation or gender.
- Violation of rights e.g. preventing an individual from voicing his/her thoughts and opinions.
- Organisational abuse e.g. failure to ensure privacy and dignity.

- Self neglect- this covers a wide range of behaviour such as neglecting to care for your personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.
- Domestic abuse-including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional, or so-called 'honour' based violence.
- Modern Slavery - encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Trafficking and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

4. Rights and Responsibilities

a. Adults at risk have the right to:

- be made aware of this policy
- have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously
- have fair and respectful treatment throughout
- be involved in any process as appropriate
- receive information about the outcome.

b. Support for those who report abuse - All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they be staff, service users, volunteers, carers or members of the public should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously
- Their comments will usually be treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared if they or others are at significant risk.
- If service users, they will be given immediate protection from the risk or reprisals or intimidation
- If volunteers or staff, they will be given support and afforded protection if necessary.

c. Responsibilities of Godmanchester Town Council:

- To ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of the adult safeguarding policy and understand their responsibilities
- To notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected
- To DBS employees that have access to or work with vulnerable adults.

d. Responsibilities of Godmanchester Town Council employees and volunteers:

- To be familiar with the adult safeguarding policy and procedures
- To take appropriate action in line with the policies of Godmanchester Town Council
- To declare any existing or subsequent convictions. Failure to do so will be regarded as gross misconduct, resulting in dismissal.

5. Procedure following an allegation of abuse:

a. The first priority is always to ensure that safety and protection of adults at risk. In situations of immediate danger, take urgent action by calling the relevant emergency services (e.g. police, ambulance, GP).

b. If an allegation of abuse is made to a staff member or volunteer that person should

- Stay calm
- Listen patiently
- Reassure the person they are doing the right thing by telling you

- Explain what you are going to do – including that you must share the information with the Clerk.
- Write a factual report of what you have seen and have been told
- **Report to the Clerk as soon as possible**

c. In these circumstances staff members should not

- Appear shocked, horrified, disgusted or angry
- Press the individual for detail (unless requested to do so)
- Make comments or judgements, other than to show concern
- Promise to keep secrets
- Confront the abuser
- Risk contaminating evidence.
- Staff and volunteers should report allegations immediately to the Clerk and in their absence to the Council.

6. Referring the incident on to other professionals.

a. If the situation in which the allegation is made is an emergency, the relevant emergency services should always be called.

b. In the first instance the staff member or volunteer to whom an allegation is made should attempt to get the consent of the person making the allegation to share the information with other professionals outside the organisation.

c. In the event that consent is not given the member of staff or volunteer should, if at all possible, consult the Clerk before a decision is made to share information. The consent of the adult to share information is not required if;

- i. The adult lacks the mental capacity to make a decision and a risk assessment indicates that referral would be in their best interests
- ii. Others may be at risk
- iii. A crime has been committed.

d. The following considerations should be taken into account when making the decision to refer:

- The wishes of the adult and their right to self determination
- The mental capacity of the adult
- The level of risk to the individual
- The seriousness of the abuse
- The level of risk to others
- The effect of the abuse on others
- Whether a criminal offence has been committed
- Whether other statutory obligations have been breached
- The need for others to know
- The ability of others (e.g. Police, Social Services) to make a positive contribution to the situation.

e. If the decision is made to share the information on, in the first instance referrals should be made to:

Cambridgeshire Direct

0345 045 5202 in office hours

01733 234 724 out of office hours

referral.centre-adults@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

7. Summary

- a. The **employee** or **volunteer's** primary responsibility is to protect the adult at risk if they are at risk.
- b. Each employee or volunteer has a duty to take action.
- c. Godmanchester Town Council's responsibility is to ensure that the employee or volunteer does not have to cope with the situation alone.

Amendment History:

Paragraph	Detail	Approval Date
Original	Initial Version	July 2019
Review	Review and Re-adopted	September 2020
Review Due		September 2023