



DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL

STAFF DOCUMENTS SERIES

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to make clear to all what is required in relation to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. The policy will help to maintain a safe and positive environment for children and vulnerable adults.

2. POLICY COVERAGE

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, Gardens tennis court members and Members of Dorchester Town Council.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act, 1989).

3. POLICY PRINCIPLES

- Dorchester Town Council is committed to providing a safe environment for all.
- The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- All children and vulnerable adults have an equal right to protection from abuse.
- Everybody at the Council has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Dorchester Town Council is committed to taking all reasonable precautions to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable persons that use its services and promotes a safeguarding culture and environment.

5. PROCEDURES AND SYSTEMS

5.1 Definitions of Abuse:

Abuse is any form of physical, emotion or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm.

Neglect – where adults fail to meet a child's or vulnerable person's basic physical/psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. For example, failure to ensure that a child is protected from unnecessary risk of injury, or exposing them to undue cold.

Physical Abuse – where physical pain or injury is caused, e.g. hitting, shaking, biting, etc.

Sexual Abuse – where children or vulnerable adults knowingly or unknowingly take part in an activity that meets the sexual needs of the other person or persons involved. This includes inappropriate photography or videoing.

Emotional Abuse – where there is persistent emotional ill treatment that causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s or vulnerable person’s emotional status. Examples of emotional abuse include bullying (including cyber and text bullying), constant criticism and unrealistic pressure to perform.

People with disabilities may be particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have added difficulties in communicating what is happening to them. Dependency on others for primary needs, e.g. feeding and clothing, may make a person feel powerless to report abusive treatment.

5.2 Responding to a child or vulnerable adult who says either they or another child or vulnerable adult is/are being abused and responding to allegations against an employee/volunteer/Member or another young person:

If a person discloses to you abuse by someone else:

- Allow the person to speak without interruption, accepting what is said, but DO NOT investigate.
- Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement. Reassure them that they did the right thing by talking to you.
- Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you MUST pass the information on.
- Record the facts as you know them.
- Refer the allegation immediately to the Town Clerk (or the Community Development Officer in respect of the Gardens court members). If the Town Clerk is implicated, refer to the Deputy Town Clerk. All allegations must be referred, no matter how insignificant they seem to be, or when they occur.
- Try to ensure that no-one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise.

Action to be taken by the person receiving the referral as soon as possible, in any event within 24 hours:

- Write down notes, dates, times, facts, observations, verbatim speech, if possible, as soon as possible after the incident or disclosure has occurred.
- Ensure correct details are available: young person’s/vulnerable adult’s name and address, and the name and address of their parent or guardian.

- Immediately contact the Dorset Safeguarding Board. Ask for the name of the person you are speaking with. Do not filter out or withhold any information. Ask if there is anyone else who should be informed.
- Prepare a confidential file. Record all notes, conversations and advice from the Safeguarding Board. Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.
- Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection legislation.
- Follow advice from the Safeguarding Board. Take no other action unless advised to do so by the Board.

5.3 Responding to concerns about a child’s welfare where there has been no specific disclosure or allegation:

All employees, volunteers and Members are encouraged to share concerns with the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk will, if appropriate, make the necessary referral.

Recognising abuse is not always easy. The list below provides some indicators of abuse, however, the list is not exhaustive and contains only indicators, not confirmation, of abuse:

- Having unexplained or suspicious injuries, e.g. bites or bruising.
- Having an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent or which has not been treated adequately.
- Change in behaviour, including becoming withdrawn, or becoming aggressive.
- Displaying inappropriate sexual awareness for their age.
- Refusal to remove clothing for normal activities, e.g. swimming.
- Looking neglected in appearance.
- Losing or putting on weight for no apparent reason.
- Lack of trust in adults.

5.5 Contact Details

Adrian Stuart Town Clerk Steve Newman Deputy Town Clerk Emma Scott Community Development Officer	Dorchester Town Council 19 North Square Dorchester Dorset DT1 1JF 01305 266861	a.stuart@dorchester- tc.gov.uk s.newman@dorchester- tc.gov.uk e.scott@dorchester- tc.gov.uk
Dorset Safeguarding Children Board	Dorset Safeguarding Children Board 2nd Floor The Old House Monkton Park	To report a concern in the Dorchester area tel: 01305 221450

	Winterborne Monkton Dorchester Dorset DT2 9PS	info@dorsetlscb.co.uk
Dorset Safeguarding Children Board	Out of hours support	01202 657279
Dorset Police Tel: 101 (in an emergency contact via 999)	Child Protection Unit Western Divisional HQ Radipole Lane Chickerell Weymouth Dorset DT4 9WN	01305 226460
Care Quality Commission	You should contact the social care department at the appropriate local authority if you are concerned about a child or a vulnerable adult. If you cannot get through to your council, you can call the CQC	03000 616161 enquiries@cqc.org.uk
NSPCC	Help for adults concerned about a child. Help for children and young people.	0808 800 5000 0800 1111

6. PREVENTION

6.1 Recruitment and Training

Prospective employees will be interviewed and previous, relevant experience will be noted. Two appropriate references are taken up for all employees. All employees will undergo a probationary period.

All employees, volunteers and Members required to carry out duties that involve regular and consistent working with children or vulnerable adults or whose roles mean they come directly into contact with children or vulnerable adults shall be checked by the Criminal Records Bureau. In line with best practice, these checks will be repeated every three years.

The council will make the Safeguarding Policy available to all staff, volunteers, Gardens tennis club members and Members; and line managers will encourage good practice and identify any training needs required.

6.2 Reporting

The Council is committed to maintaining an open culture where employees, Members, volunteers, Gardens tennis members, children, vulnerable persons, parents and guardians feel able to express concerns both about safeguarding and issues of poor practice.

In addition to the procedures outlined in this policy, the Council's Whistleblowing Policy and Complaints Policy and Procedure are available to all staff, volunteers, Gardens tennis members, Members and the general public.

7.0 CODES OF PRACTICE AND BEHAVIOUR

These guidelines have been devised to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, as well as to protect staff, volunteers and elected Members from situations where false allegations may occur.

The guidelines apply to those working with vulnerable persons or children involved in activities organised by or on behalf of Dorchester Town Council or at services provided by Dorchester Town Council.

You must:

- Treat everyone with respect, regardless of their age, ethnicity, social background, ability, sexual orientation, culture or religious beliefs.
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow.
- Plan activities which involve more than one other person being present, or at least which are within sight or hearing of others.
- Respect a person's right to personal privacy.
- Provide access for young people to talk to others about any concerns they may have.
- Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviours they do not like.
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned.
- Recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues, such as bullying, bereavement, abuse or personal development.
- Recognise that some children or vulnerable adults will be more vulnerable to abuse than others, and may face extra barriers in getting help because of their race, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, social background or culture.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse.
- Be identifiable and wear a name badge at all times.

You must not:

- Engage in physical horseplay, such as wrestling or tickling.
- Have any inappropriate verbal or physical contact with children or vulnerable people, or make suggestive remarks or gestures.
- Permit abusive youth peer activities (e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying, etc.)
- Play physical contact games with children or vulnerable adults.

- Jump to conclusions about others without checking the facts.
- Ask children or vulnerable adults to do things that are potentially dangerous, illegal or otherwise unreasonable.
- Exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues.
- Show favouritism to any individual.
- Rely on just your good name to protect you.
- Believe it could “never happen to me”.
- Take chances when common sense, policy or practice suggest a more prudent approach.
- Allow allegations made to go unchallenged, unrecorded and not acted upon.

8.0 POLICY MONITORING AND REVISION

All incidents, allegations of abuse and complaints will be recorded and monitored.

This policy will be reviewed every two years, and will also be revised in the light of changing needs, changes in legislation and guidance, or in the light of experience.

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