

SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN PARISH COUNCIL

CHILD/YOUNG PERSON PROTECTION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Sutton Parish Council is a statutory organisation which wishes to ensure that children are safe and protected from harm whilst visiting its premises and using its facilities.

This document sets out the principles underlying the policy. The document also seeks to provide practical guidance to members of Sutton-in-Craven Parish Council staff and volunteers.

The Council believes that:

- The welfare of the child or young person is paramount
- All children and young people, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion, have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff, volunteers and elected Members are not to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.
- All staff, volunteers and elected Members of the Council have responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

The Council recognises that it must, as far as practicable, create and sustain a safe environment for Children and young people that use services or facilities provided by Sutton-in-Craven Parish Council or engage with staff, elected Members and volunteers.

POLICY STATEMENT

Sutton-in-Craven Parish Council is committed to taking all reasonable precautions to safeguard the welfare of children and young people that use its services.

A child or young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children's Act 1989).

The Council will ensure that all staff, volunteers, elected Members and partnerships refer to this policy.

PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE

Good practice protects not only children and young people but also staff, volunteers and elected Members. In addition promoting good practice also protects the Council which is responsible for the provision of services children may use.

By following good practice and the guidelines laid out in this Policy, Sutton-in-Craven Parish Council can reassure the community it serves that it is taking all reasonable precautions to safeguard the welfare of children and young people.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Whilst undertaking duties in Sutton-in-Craven, including the park, all staff and volunteers must act appropriately, treat everyone with respect and provide an example of good conduct for others to follow.

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Types of Abuse

It is generally accepted that there are four main types of abuse. These are Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Neglect.

RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGED OR SUSPECTED INCIDENTS

DO

- **Do take further action – you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse**
- **Do treat allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the child or young person as if you believe what they are saying.**
- **Do reassure the child or young person that they are not to blame.**
- **Do be honest about your own position and that you will have to tell someone else.**
- **Do write down everything said and what was done. Dates, times, facts, observations, verbatim speech, if possible. Ensure correct details are available ie the young person's name and address and name and address of parent/guardian.**
- **Do seek medical attention if necessary.**

DON'T

- **Don't make promises you cannot keep.**
- **Don't interrogate the child – it is not your job to carry out 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.**

Important points to remember when dealing with disclosure:

- Try not to display any sign of shock or disapproval when the young person is making a disclosure
- Do not jump to conclusions
- The young person may not regard the experience as either bad or painful, they not feel guilty or angry
- Be aware of your own feelings which may be different to those of the young person
- Take care of yourself by making sure that you have an opportunity to discuss your feelings with someone at a later stage
- Do not destroy any evidence as it may be useful in a court of law
- Initial disclosure, even if retracted, must still be referred.

Recording Information

Information will be stored securely in the council office with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Designated Officer – Clerk to the Council

The designated officer handles the child protection issues and oversees the policy's implementation. The designated officer will always be the initial point of contact for all staff and volunteers with concerns or if abuse is disclosed. Necessary steps can then be taken to ensure the safety of the young person.

Informing the appropriate authorities

Whilst it is not the responsibility of any council staff member and/or volunteer to determine if abuse is taking place **it is their responsibility to report concerns to the Designated Officer (or to local social services or the police) in order that appropriate agencies can make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person.**

Allegations against Staff or Volunteer

In the case of the allegation being against a staff member or volunteer it is of equal importance to act immediately on the allegation. If activity/contact is on-going when the incident is reported then it is the responsibility of the Designated Officer to ensure the immediate safety of that young person by taking the necessary steps, including the removal of alleged individuals.

Any individual accused of abuse will be suspended in line with the local disciplinary procedure pending further police and social services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of social services or police inquiries, all individual cases must be assessed under the appropriate misconduct/disciplinary procedure to completion, to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer should be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled with other staff or volunteers. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, a decision must be based on the balance of probabilities in relation to continued risk, and all available information. **The welfare of children will always remain paramount.**

SOCIAL SERVICES	0845 03 49 142
POLICE	0845 60 60 247
AIREDALE GENERAL HOSPITAL	01535 652511
CROSS HILLS GROUP PRACTICE	0844 477 3030
NHS DIRECT	0845 4647