



Kessingland Parish Council

Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all members, staff, volunteers and contractors know what is required in relation to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to participate, have fun and be safe in the services provided for them as well as the activities they, or their parents/carers, choose for them. This policy will help to maintain a safe and positive environment for children and vulnerable adults.

2. Policy Coverage

- 2.1 This policy applies to all members, employees, volunteers and contractors working in partnership with Kessingland Parish Council. Under the Children Act 2004, Kessingland Parish Council has a duty to co-operate with other agencies and authorities to promote the well-being of children and young people. Suffolk County Council is the lead agency for the protection of vulnerable adults.
- 2.2 It is not the role of Kessingland Parish Council to investigate allegations of abuse. However, all members, employees, volunteers and contracted services providers have a responsibility to take action when they suspect or recognise that a child or vulnerable adult may be a victim of significant harm or abuse. This policy is to be used in conjunction with the Council's Risk Management Policy, Health and Safety Policies, Equal Opportunities Policy, Complaints Policy and Procedure, Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.
- 2.3 The phrase 'children, young people and vulnerable adults' refers to:
- Anyone under the age of 18 years,
 - Someone who is over the age of 18 who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reasons of mental health or other disability, age or illness and is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.
- 2.4 When the term 'parent(s)' is used, it is used in the broadest sense to include parent(s), carer(s) and/or guardian(s).

3. Policy Principles

- 3.1 Kessingland Parish Council recognises that all children and vulnerable adults have an equal right to protection from abuse. It is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and protecting them from abuse when they are engaged in services organised and/or provided by, or on behalf of, the Council.
- 3.2 Referrals of suspicions of abuse cannot be anonymous and should be made in the knowledge that, during the course of enquiries, the agency that made that referral will be made clear. Kessingland Parish Council will not tolerate the harassment of any member, employee, volunteer, contracted service provider or child/vulnerable adult who raises concerns of abuse.

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1 Kessingland Parish Council is committed to taking all reasonable precautions to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable persons that use its services and will promote a safeguarding culture and environment.
- It will proactively seek to promote the welfare and protection of all children and vulnerable adults living in the local community.
 - It will endeavour to keep children and vulnerable adults safe from abuse.
 - It will endeavour to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and vulnerable adults through, as appropriate, its recruitment and selection policy and by reminding hirers of their safeguarding responsibilities.
 - It will take any concern made by a member, employee, volunteer or contracted service provider or child/vulnerable adult seriously and treat it with sensitivity.
 - Suspicion of abuse will be responded to promptly and appropriately.
 - It will act in the best interests of the child or vulnerable adult at all times.

5. Procedure and Systems

- 5.1 Definitions of Abuse:
- **Abuse** covers any form of physical, emotional, mental and sexual abuse including bullying, including lack of care that leads to injury or harm. For vulnerable adults abuse may also be financial.
 - **Neglect** is where people fail to meet a child's or vulnerable person's basic physical/psychological needs and is likely to result in the serious impairment to their health or development, e.g. failure to ensure that a child is protected from unnecessary risk of injury or exposing them to undue cold.

- **Physical Abuse** is where physical pain or injury is caused, e.g. hitting, shaking, biting, etc.
 - **Sexual Abuse** is 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 which meets sexual needs.
 - **Emotional/Mental Abuse** is where there is persistent emotional ill treatment that causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's or vulnerable person's emotional status e.g. bullying including cyber and text bullying), constant criticism and unrealistic pressure to perform.
- 5.2 It is important to recognise that children and adults who have 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.
- 5.3 This policy is inclusive of all children, young people and vulnerable adults, irrespective of their age, gender, sex, race or ethnicity, religion, disability or sexual orientation.
- 5.4 **Use of Video and Photography**
The use of photographs and images of young people will be controlled to prevent possible misuse. In general, written agreement will be sought from parents that images can be used as appropriate.

6. Responding to Allegations

- 6.1 **Responding to concerns about a child's/vulnerable adult's welfare where there has been a specific disclosure or allegation.**
- a. If a person discloses abuse by someone else:
- Stay calm, take the allegation seriously
 - Allow the person to speak without interruption, accepting what is said, but DO NOT investigate
 - Only ask questions for clarification, do not ask leading questions
 - 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, do not offer to keep secrets
 - Record the facts as you know them.
 - Refer the allegation immediately and directly to the appropriate person. If an employee, member, volunteer or another child/young person/vulnerable adult is implicated, refer to the council's Safeguarding Officer. If the Safeguarding Officer is implicated, refer directly to the Parish Clerk and/or the Chair of Personnel. If one of them is implicated then refer to the other and/or to the Chair of the parish council. 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.
- b. As soon as possible after the incident or disclosure has occurred:
- Write down notes, dates, times, facts, observations, and verbatim speech.
 - Ensure the correct details are available, the young person's/ vulnerable adult's name and address, and the name and address of their parent or guardian.
 - Ensure that this information is passed on to the council's Safeguarding Officer. Maintain a copy of your report in a secure location in case you need to refer to it as this is the record which you took at the time and your memory may not be perfect if you need to provide information in the future. Only retain the copy whilst there is a need to retain it.
 - Upon receipt of a report the Safeguarding Officer should immediately contact the Social Services Department at Suffolk County Council. Ask for a duty officer and indicate that you wish to discuss a matter of child/vulnerable person protection. Ask for the name of the person with whom you are speaking. Do not filter out or withhold any information. Ask if there is anyone else who should be informed.
 - Inform the Local Authority's Monitoring Officer (Head of Legal Services, East Suffolk Council).
 - Prepare a confidential file. Record all notes, conversations and advice from Social Services. Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.
 - Store information in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection legislation.
 - Follow the advice from Social Services; take no other action unless advised to do so by Social Services.
 - If in doubt about the advice you have received at any stage refer to Social Services for guidance.

6.2 Responding to concerns about a child's/vulnerable adult's welfare where there has been no specific disclosure or allegation.

All members, employees, volunteers and organisations contracted to provide services on behalf of the Council are encouraged to share concerns with the Parish Clerk. The Parish Clerk will consult with the council's Safeguarding Officer and, if appropriate, one of them will make a referral to Social Services.

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:

- unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body e.g. cigarette burns, bite marks
- bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching)
- an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent or which has

- not been treated adequately
- sudden changes in behaviour, including becoming withdrawn or becoming aggressive, severe temper outbursts
- reluctance to get changed e.g. for swimming.
- neglected in appearance, dirty or 'smelly'
- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from others
- inappropriate dress for the conditions
- fear of parents or carers being approached for an explanation
- flinching when approached or touched
- neurotic behaviour e.g. hair twisting, rocking
- being unable to play
- fear of making mistakes
- self-harm
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people, lack of trust in adults
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or development age
- sexual drawings or language
- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- not allowed to have friends

6.3 Contact Details for Social Services, the Monitoring Officer, the Police and NSPCC:

- Social Services Child Protection – Suffolk County Council:
Telephone: 0808 800 4005
- East Suffolk Council – Monitoring Officer: Telephone: 0333 0162 000
- NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: Telephone: 0808 800 5000
- Suffolk Police: Telephone: 101 or in an emergency 999

6.4 Confidentiality

Members, employees, volunteers and contracted service providers must not discuss allegations of abuse, substantiated or not, with anyone other than in connection with the formal investigation. Where it is necessary to put in procedures to prevent continuing abuse the matter should be shared with the Parish Clerk so that appropriate risk assessments may be undertaken.

7.0 Prevention

7.1 Recruitment

- Prospective employees will be interviewed and previous, relevant experience will be noted. Two appropriate references will be taken up for all employees. All employees will undergo a probationary period.
- All members, employees and volunteers who are required to carry out duties that involve working with children or vulnerable adults or whose roles mean they come directly into contact with children or vulnerable adults will be checked by the Government's Disclosure

and Barring Service (DBS) and/or appropriate safeguarding agency. In line with best practice, these checks will be repeated at a minimum of every four years.

7.2 Training

- The council will make the Safeguarding policy available to all members, staff, volunteers, external contractors and the hirers of council facilities. The Parish Clerk & Personnel Committee will encourage good practice and identify any training needs required through the Council's internal training records and staff appraisal system. Where an external organisation is involved, the council will raise concerns with an appropriate person within that organisation.
- All members, employees, volunteers, external contractors and the hirers of council facilities will be expected to read this policy and signing of a council contract will indicate the signatory's agreement to abide by this policy.
- Members will be offered appropriate training on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

7.3 Reporting

The Council is committed to maintaining an open culture where members, employees, volunteers, children, vulnerable persons, parents, guardians and carers feel able to express concerns both about child protection and issues of poor practice. In addition to the procedures outlined in this policy, the Council's Complaints Policy and Whistleblowing Policy are available to all members, staff, volunteers, and the general public.

8. Codes of Practice and Behaviour

These guidelines have been devised to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, as well as to protect members, staff and volunteers from situations where false allegations may occur. The guidelines apply to those working with children or vulnerable persons involved in activities organised by or on behalf of Kessingland Parish Council or at services provided by Kessingland Parish Council.

8.1 Members, staff and volunteers must:

- Treat everyone with respect, regardless of their age, gender, sex, ethnicity, social background, ability, sexual orientation, culture or religious beliefs
- Provide an example of good conduct they 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 and vulnerable adults to talk to others about any concerns they may have.
- Encourage all individuals, but especially young people and vulnerable

adults, to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviours that they do not like or that make them uncomfortable.

- Remember that someone else might misinterpret their actions, no matter how well-intentioned
- Recognise that special caution is required when 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, sex, 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 around young persons & vulnerable adults whilst on council business.

8.2 Members, staff and volunteers 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 their good name to protect them
- 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.

Kessingland Parish Council takes its responsibility very seriously. Employees who breach these guidelines will face investigation and may face disciplinary action, which could lead to a dismissal. Volunteers or contractors in breach of the above guidelines may face investigation which could lead to their services terminated and their parent organisation (as appropriate) being informed. If a hirer is found to have breached these guidelines then their hire may be cancelled and any fees/deposits withheld. If a member breaches this policy, there may be grounds for reporting their behaviour to the Monitoring Officer, who may require an investigation under the Suffolk Code of Conduct. Where there is evidence of illegal activity, the member, employee, volunteer, contractor or hirer will be reported to the relevant authorities and may face a criminal investigation.

9. Procedure in Relation to Specific Services

9.1 Work Experience

Kessingland Parish Council may offer work experience placements. The Council will ensure that employees working with children or vulnerable adults are aware of the Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy. Line managers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare of work experience students who under law are regarded as employees.

9.2 Leisure services/Facility hire

Independent sports clubs and private individuals who regularly use the facilities operated by Kessingland Parish Council should have appropriate child protection and vulnerable adult policies in place, commensurate with the level of contact they have. Furthermore their employees or volunteers who have significant and regular unsupervised contact with children and vulnerable adults should have satisfactory DBS checks.

The Council will state on its Booking Forms and on posters in its Halls for hire that it is the Council's expectation that groups will follow good practice procedures in relation to Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding.

9.3 Use of Contractors

Kessingland Parish Council will take reasonable care that contractors doing work on behalf of the Council are monitored appropriately. Any contractor or sub-contractor engaged by the Council in areas where workers are likely to come into regular contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults, should have its own equivalent Child Protection and vulnerable adult policies, or failing this, must comply with the terms of this policy. This requirement will be written into the contract. If this is not met, the contractor will be deemed to be in breach of their contract.

9.4 Internet and e-mail Policy

Please refer to Kessingland Parish Council's Data Protection policy.

9.5 First Aid

The administration of first aid to children, young people and vulnerable adults can present risks. Under ordinary circumstances, a child or young person can be administered with first aid only if their parent or guardian expressly permits this course of action.

When administering first aid, wherever possible, employees should ensure that another adult is present, or is aware of the action being taken. Parents/carers should always be informed when first aid is administered.

Child welfare is of paramount importance. In certain circumstances members, employees, volunteers and contracted service providers may undertake first aid as a last resort, notifying parents/carers as soon as possible, to minimise a child's or vulnerable adult's distress.

9.6 Special Events - Photography

It is an unfortunate fact that some people have used children and young people's events as opportunities to take inappropriate photographs or footage of children, every attempt should be made to ensure that this does not happen. Members, employees, volunteers, contractors and hirers should be vigilant at all times.

Legally a photographer can capture anyone in public spaces within their photograph as there can be no expectation of privacy in a public space. Whilst it is legal for anyone to take photographs in public places without having to get permission, anyone using cameras or film recorders for or on behalf of the Council should obtain written consent (using a council consent form) from the parents of children being photographed or filmed before the activity commences as well as their permission to hold onto council images in a secure manner. The council will only retain images including people under the age of eighteen for a period of one year unless the photograph is of a special community event where the images are being stored for heritage and posterity. In this case, wherever reasonably possible, the council will contact the young person when they reach eighteen in order to gain their consent as an adult in particular with using the image as a piece of public property.

When commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to cover Council services, events and activities the Council's expectations must be made clear in relation to child protection by checking the credentials of any photographers', ensuring identification is worn and by not allowing unsupervised access to children or one to one photographic sessions.

9.7 Misuse of Procedure

Malicious complaints about members/employees/volunteers/contractor/hirers and/or serious and/or persistent abuse of these safeguarding policies and procedures will not be tolerated. If they are internal. they will be dealt with through Kessingland Parish Council's disciplinary process or via the Monitoring Officer as appropriate. Where they are from an external source, they may initially be dealt with by contacting parent or relevant bodies, the council's complaints procedure or recourse to legal methods.

10. Policy Monitoring and Review

All incidents and allegations of abuse and complaints will be recorded, monitored and reviewed anonymously to consider if there are any alterations to this policy required. The policy will be reviewed annually and in particular if there are any amendments to legislation, case law or best practise.

11. Declaration

Kessingland Parish Council is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults and promoting their welfare.

The council will ensure that all members, employees, volunteers, contractors, and hirers are provided either a digital or paper copy of this policy during their introduction to the council. Members, employees and volunteers will have access to Safeguarding training at the earliest opportunity.

Representing Kessingland Parish Council as an Elected Member or working as an employee, volunteer or contracted service provider of the Council, it is important that you have taken the time to thoroughly read and understand the Safeguarding Policy and any relevant procedures.

It is the Council's intention that, by raising safeguarding awareness amongst those involved with the council and the wider community, it will ensure that more people are proactive in providing a safe and secure environment for the children and vulnerable adults in our community.