



## STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

### SAFEGUARDING PROTECTION POLICY

#### 1. Policy Overview

- 1.1 Stotfold Town Council is committed to ensuring that children and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm whilst they are engaged in any activity associated with the Town Council.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to make clear to all members, staff, volunteers, and contractors what is required in relation to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults should any child protection issue arise during their work.
- 1.3 Children, young people, and vulnerable adults have the right to participate, have fun and be safe in the services provided for them and the activities they choose, or their parents/carers choose for them. This Policy will help to maintain a safe and positive environment for children and vulnerable adults.
- 1.4 The policy has been created in line with the following legislation:
  - Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
  - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
  - The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
  - The Care Act 2014
  - Equality Act 2010

#### 2. Policy Coverage

- 2.1 This policy applies to all members, employees, volunteers, and contractors working in partnership with Stotfold Town Council. The Town Council has a duty to co-operate with other agencies and authorities to promote the well-being of children and young people. Central Bedfordshire Council is the lead agency for the protection of vulnerable adults.
- 2.2 Stotfold Town Council does not investigate allegations of abuse. However, all members, employees, volunteers and contracted services providers have a responsibility to act 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:
  - a) Anyone under the age of 18 years,
  - b) Someone who is over the age of 18 who is or may need community care services by reasons of mental health or other disability, age or illness and is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

When the term "parents" is used, it is in the broadest sense to include parents, carers and guardians.



### **3. Policy Principles**

- 3.1 Stotfold Town 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 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 enquiries, the agency that made that referral will be made clear.
- 3.3 Stotfold Town 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 Stotfold Town 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.
- We will endeavour to keep children and vulnerable adults safe from abuse.
  - Suspicion of abuse will be responded to promptly and appropriately.
  - We will always act in the best interests of the child or vulnerable adult.
  - We will proactively seek to promote the welfare and protection of all children and vulnerable adults living in the local community.
  - We 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.
  - We will take any concern made by a member, employee, volunteer or contracted service provider or child / vulnerable adult seriously and treat it with sensitivity.

### **5. Responsibilities & Procedures**

- 5.1 The Town Council will appoint a Safeguarding Officer within the Council and his/her responsibilities will include:
- Ensuring that before any Council organised event with children or vulnerable persons, the Safeguarding Officer will brief participants appropriately.
  - Ensuring that members are aware of the risk they may face in certain circumstances whilst carrying out their duties.
  - Ensuring that whilst Council members are unlikely to be involved with children during the performance of their duties, they are mindful of the risk they face.
  - Ensuring that before any volunteers or paid members of staff are recruited to work with children and vulnerable persons they are interviewed, and two references taken up.
  - Decisions on whether any person should have a DSB check will be made by the Town Clerk following a risk assessment.
  - All new councillors are to be provided with a copy of this Safeguarding Protection Policy and are required to acknowledge they will abide by it.
  - Councillors will adhere to the 'List of Recommended Behaviour' namely:
    - A minimum of two adults present when supervising children.
    - Not to play physical contact games.
    - Adults to wear appropriate clothing at all times



- Ensure that accidents are recorded in an accident book.
- Never do anything of a personal nature for a young person.

## **6. Procedure and Systems**

### **6.1 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 of 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.

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.

6.2 It is important to recognise that disabled children 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.

6.3 This policy is inclusive of all children, young people and vulnerable adults, irrespective of their age, gender, race or ethnicity, religion, disability or sexual preference.

### **6.4 Use of Video and Photography**

The use of photographs and images of young people will be controlled to prevent possible misuse. In general, agreement will be sought from parents or guardians that images can be used as appropriate.

### **6.5 Digital Safety and Online Conduct**

Where council communications or events involve digital interaction (e.g. via Zoom, Teams, social media), appropriate safeguards will be implemented, including:

- Clear codes of conduct for online interactions.
- Staff and Councillors not initiating private online contact with young people.
- Parental consent for online participation by minors.
- Use of official Council accounts/devices for communication.



## 7. Responding to Allegations

### 7.1 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 and do not attempt to 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, do not offer to keep secrets.
- Record the facts as you know them.
- Refer the allegation immediately and directly to the Town Council's appointed Safeguarding Officer. If an employee or volunteer is implicated, refer to their Line Manager. If a manager or another young person is implicated, refer directly to the Town Clerk. If the Town Clerk is implicated, refer to the Town Mayor. 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.

### 7.2 As soon as possible after the incident or disclosure has occurred, the person who received the report should:

- 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.
- Immediately contact the Town Council's Safeguarding Officer and inform them of the report.
- Both the person who received the report as well as the Safeguarding Officer must initiate contact with Central Bedfordshire Council's Children and Young Person's Integrated Front Door service or the Adult Safeguarding Team as soon as possible regarding the report.
- During your call to Central Bedfordshire Council (refer to Item 6.4 below for direct contact details), carry out the following actions:
  - Request the name of the person with whom you are speaking.
  - Repeat all the information shared by the person – do not filter any information
  - Ask if anyone else should be informed
  - Prepare a confidential file. Record all notes, conversations, and advice from Central Bedfordshire Council. Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.
- Follow the advice from Social Services; take no other action unless advised to do so by Social Services. Do not attempt to investigate any matters this is not the role of the Town Council.
- The Safeguarding Officer will store all information in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection legislation.

If in doubt about the advice you have received at any stage refer to Social Services for guidance.



### 7.3 Contact Details for Central Bedfordshire Council, the Police and NSPCC:

If you believe the person is in immediate danger, please call the Police on 999.

Central Bedfordshire Council – Child protection – Safeguarding Children and Young People: Integrated Front Door Service  
Telephone: 0300 300 8585 (office hours ) 0300 300 8123 (out of hours)

Central Bedfordshire Council - Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults:  
0300 300 8122 (Monday to Friday, 8:45am to 5:20pm)  
0300 300 8123(outside of these hours)  
email at [adult.protection@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:adult.protection@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

First Responders: Telephone: 101 or in an emergency 999

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline:  
Telephone: 0808 800 5000

### 7.4 Responding to concerns about a child'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 Town Clerk. The Town Clerk will, if appropriate, 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.



## **7.5 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 Town Clerk so that appropriate risk assessments may be undertaken.

## **8. Prevention**

### **8.1 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 minimum 6-month 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 every three years.

### **8.2 Training**

The council will make the Safeguarding Protection policy available to all members, staff and volunteers. Line managers will encourage good practice and identify any training needs required through the Council's Annual Performance Management system.

All members and employees will be expected to read this policy and sign the Declaration at the end of the document.

Councillors will be offered appropriate training on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Mandatory safeguarding refresher training will be provided at least every three years or in line with changes to legislation or guidance.

### **8.3 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 is available to all members, staff, volunteers and the general public.

### **8.4 Safeguarding Culture and Risk Assessment**

The council will conduct safeguarding risk assessments for events, venues and activities involving children and vulnerable adults, and take steps to mitigate identified risks.



## 8.5 Whistleblowing Mechanism

Any person who has safeguarding concerns should feel confident in raising these. Where staff or volunteers feel they cannot report their concerns through the usual channels, they are encouraged to use the Town Council's Whistleblowing Policy, ensuring concerns can be raised without fear of reprisal.

## 9. 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 Stotfold Town Council or at services provided by Stotfold Town Council.

### 9.1 Members, staff and volunteers 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 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.
- 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 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, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, social background, or culture.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse.
- Be identifiable and always wear a name badge or branded uniform

### 9.2 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.

Stotfold Town 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 in breach of the above Code of Conduct will have their services terminated with immediate effect and their parent organisation (as appropriate) will be informed. If a member does not adhere to the policy, there may be grounds for reporting their behaviour to the Monitoring Officer, who may require an investigation under the Member Code of Conduct. Where there is evidence of illegal activity, the member, employee, or volunteer will be reported to the relevant authorities and may face a criminal investigation.

## **10. Procedure in Relation to Specific Services**

### **10.1 Work Experience**

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

### **10.2 Employees and volunteers aged under 18**

Stotfold Town Council may employ workers or engage volunteers under the age of 18. The Council will ensure that all employees and volunteers and their parents are aware of this Safeguarding Protection Policy. Line managers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare of all employees.

### **10.3 Grants**

All organisations applying for a grant will be required to supply a copy of their safeguarding policy in order for their application to be progressed.

### **10.4 Council Assets and Facilities**

Independent sports clubs and private individuals who regularly use the assets and facilities operated by Stotfold Town Council should have appropriate child protection and vulnerable adult policies in place, as well as safeguarding training provided to their employees, commensurate with the level of contact they have and activities they provide. 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 that it is the Council's expectation that groups will follow best practice procedures in relation to Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding.

### **10.5 Use of Contractors**

Stotfold Town 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, and/or 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.

Contractors working in close proximity to children or vulnerable adults must provide evidence of safeguarding training and policies or adhere to the Town Council's policy. A signed declaration of compliance will be required as part of any contract agreement.

## **10.6 Internet and e-mail Policy**

Please refer to Stotfold Town Council's Information & Data Protection Policy.

## **10.7 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.

## **10.8 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, and contracted service providers should be vigilant at all times. Anyone using cameras or film recorders for or on behalf of the Council should obtain consent from the parents of children being photographed or filmed before the activity commences.

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 session.

## **10.9 Equality & Diversity Alignment**

This policy is implemented in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Safeguarding actions will be taken without discrimination and with respect to protected characteristics.

## **10.10 Misuse of Procedure**

Malicious complaints about a member or an employee(s) and/or serious and/or persistent abuse of these safeguarding policies and procedures will not be tolerated and will be dealt with through Stotfold Town Council's disciplinary process.



## 11. Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Town Council or sooner if legislation or best practice guidance changes.

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

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### Revision History:

Date Adopted	June 2025	
Date reviewed	June 2027	



## STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

### SAFEGUARDING PROTECTION POLICY

#### **Declaration**

Stotfold Town Council is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults and promoting their welfare. Representing Stotfold Town Council as an Elected Member Working or working as an employee, volunteer or contracted service provider of Stotfold Town Council it is important that you have taken the time to thoroughly read the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures document.

By being made aware of the policy it is our intention to ensure that all are proactive in providing a safe and secure environment for the children and vulnerable adults in our community.

I have received, read, and understood the Stotfold Town Council Safeguarding Policy and Procedures document. By signing I agree to adhere to the principles of the policy.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_