

DOWNHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

DATE & MEETING IMPLEMENTED	August 2019	
DATE OF REVIEW		
SIGNED	Cllr Hayes, Mayor	

1. Introduction

1.1 In the interests of child protection and the welfare and protection of vulnerable adults, Downham Market 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 Council. This Policy will apply to councillors, its employees, its members, its contractors and any volunteers engaged in Council events/activities.

2. Policy Objective

2.1 To ensure that where possible all facilities and activities offered by the Town Council are designed and maintained to limit risk to children and vulnerable adults.

2.2 To promote the general welfare, health and development of children by being aware of child protection issues and to be able to respond where appropriate as a local government organisation.

2.3 To develop procedures in recording and responding to accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse and neglect.

2.4 As the Town Council does not directly provide care of supervision services to children and vulnerable adults, it expects all children and vulnerable adults using its facilities to do so with the consent and the necessary supervision of a parent, carer or other responsible adult.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 The Safeguarding Officer is the Clerk and his/her responsibilities will include:

- Ensuring that before any Council organised event with children or vulnerable persons, the relevant systems, processes and documentation is in place.
- 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 any volunteers or paid members of staff recruited to work with children are aware and abide by the safeguarding policy.
- Decisions on whether any person should be DBS checked will be made by the Council or the Chair after consultation with the Clerk following a risk assessment.
- Ensuring the relevant insurances are in place

4. Procedure

4.1 Responding to Concerns and Allegations:

4.2 It is important that all employees, councillors and volunteers are aware that the first person that has concerns or encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. It is not the place of any Officer of the Council to investigate allegations. However, employees, councillors and volunteers do have a duty of care to the child or vulnerable person which means they must report any suspicions they may have.

4.3 It is the duty of any councillor, council employee or volunteer to report any concerns about a child/vulnerable adult being subject to abuse, receive a disclosure or are aware of members, or colleagues behaving in an inappropriate manor. All reports should be treated as confidential and with respect to the person raising the concern regardless of the outcome.

4.4 In general there are 3 situations that employees, councillors and volunteers may need to respond to a concern or case of alleged or suspected abuse:

1. Responding to a child or vulnerable adult disclosing abuse, i.e. they make an allegation of abuse
2. Responding to allegations or concerns about a member of staff, elected member or volunteer from your own observation or due to a complaint.
3. Responding to allegations or concerns about any other person, i.e. parent, carer, other service user.

4.5 In the case of an emergency where a child/vulnerable person is in danger phone 999 immediately.

4.6 Record in writing all the details that you are aware of and what was said using the child or vulnerable person's own words, immediately. In your record you should include the following:

- a) The date and time
- b) The child or vulnerable persons' name, address and date of birth
- c) The nature of the allegation
- d) Your observations – a description of the child or vulnerable persons' behaviour, physical and emotional state and any visible injuries
- e) Exactly what the child or vulnerable person said and what you said. Record the child or vulnerable persons' account of what has happened as closely as possible.
- f) Sign and date what you have recorded.

4.7 Do not ask questions, other than the child or vulnerable persons' name, address and date of birth. Reassure the child or vulnerable person that they have done the right thing in telling you.

4.8 Contact local Social Services or the Police without delay and follow their guidance.

4.9 Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only this is usually Social Services or the Police. It is extremely important that allegations or concerns are not discussed, as any breach of confidentiality could be damaging to the child or vulnerable person, their family, those who are the subject of allegations and any child protection investigations that may follow.

4.10 Informing the parents of a child or vulnerable person of concerns you may have should be dealt with by Social Services. Parents will not be informed if they are the subject of the allegation. Any individual against whom an allegation has been made has the right to be notified about the cause for concern. This should be done by Social Services and the Police. It is important that the timing of this does not prejudice the investigation; therefore, confidentiality is of the utmost importance.

4.11 Recorded information should be handed over to Social Services or the Police and any copies stored in a secure place with limited access in line with data protection laws. If enquiries arise from the public or any branch of the media, it is vital that all employees, councillors and volunteers are briefed to not make any comments regarding the situation.

5. Emergency Contacts

Norfolk Police Operational Command Centre	101
Norfolk Social Services/Children's Services	0344 800 8020
Childline	0800 1111
NSPCC	0808 800 5000