



High Offley Parish Council

(including the Wards of Shebdon & Woodseaves).

SAFEGUARDING POLICY 2024.

Formally adopted by Council: 11 July 2024 (Minute 24/074).

Next Review: July 2027

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Note: Unless the contrary intention appears, words importing the masculine gender include the feminine, words importing the feminine gender include the masculine, words in the singular include the plural and words in the plural include the singular (The Interpretation Act 1978).

Policy Statement.

Everyone has a duty to safeguard children, young people and those adults with care and support needs who are, or may be, at risk of abuse (referred to in this policy as 'adults at risk').

High Offley Parish Council is committed to ensuring that children, young people and adults at risk are protected and kept safe from harm by responding appropriately and legitimately to concerns and disclosures of possible abuse.

Policy Objective.

To ensure that councillors and High Offley Parish Council employees are aware of safeguarding expectations and the need for them to actively contribute toward the protection of children, young people and adults at risk.

Definitions.

Safeguarding: action taken to promote the welfare of and protect children, young people and adults at risk from harm.

Abuse: All forms of ill treatment, including neglect. Somebody may abuse a child, young person or adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Whilst abuse can be in many forms, such as physical, sexual, emotional, neglectful and financial, it may not be limited to a singular type of abuse. Abuse can also be suffered indirectly, such as emotional abuse inflicted by being witness to domestic violence.

Children & Young People: Anyone under the age of 18 years.

Adult at Risk: Anyone over the age of 18 years who,

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs),
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse, and
- as a result of those needs are unable to protect themselves against the abuse, or the risk of it.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): A person who has lead responsibility for Safeguarding and ensures that Parish Councillors and employees understand what safeguarding means, what to look out for and how to pass on any concerns.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): A person who assumes the responsibilities of the DSL in the event of the absence of the DSL.

Disclosure: The disclosure of abuse to another person in whom a child, young person or adult at risk has placed their trust.

Policy Applicability.

This policy applies to anyone working for, or on behalf of High Offley Parish Council, whether in a paid, voluntary or commissioned capacity.

Taking Responsibility for Safeguarding.

All persons to whom this policy applies may, **at any time**, notice or have disclosed to them, something which causes them concern. Whilst it is not the role of Parish Councillors, employees or volunteers to investigate any signs of possible abuse, they do have a **responsibility to act** upon any concerns and alert those agencies who have a statutory duty to investigate, at the earliest opportunity.

In taking responsibility for safeguarding, High Offley Parish Council:

- has nominated Councillor Emma Halls to fulfil the role of DSL.
- has nominated the Clerk to fulfil the role of DDSL.
- follows safer recruitment practices.
- ensures that Parish Councillors and employees who come into regular contact with children, young people and adults at risk during the course of their duties, undergo appropriate Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks.
- requires external organisations working with or on behalf of the council, who have contact with children, young people and adults at risk to accord with this Safeguarding Policy and the procedures herein.
- ensures that where High Offley Parish Council hires facilities to external groups for use with children, young people and adults at risk when parents and/or carers are not present, the group will have their own Safeguarding Policy and procedures, or agree to work in accordance with this policy.
- ensures that attendees at any functions or events organised by High Offley Parish Council are aware that parents remain responsible for their children's safety and that the location of a dedicated safe place for lost children is very clear.
- plans any activities to involve more than one responsible adult being present.
- where possible, has male and female leaders working with any mixed group(s).
- ensures that photographs or videos of children, young people or adults at risk are not taken without their express permission and, where relevant, written permission from parents or carers.
- ensures a first aid kit and telephone are always available and readily at hand during Council led events and activities.

- ensures that where a child, young person or adult at risk needs assistance, this is done in a manner whereby any risk is kept to an absolute minimum for all parties involved. For example, assistance with toilet trips **must** always be conducted by responsible adults in pairs and first aid **must** be provided where all treatment can be seen by other responsible adults.
- ensures that, when working outside, that the clothing worn by children, young people or adults at risk left in the temporary care of councillors, staff or volunteers, is suitable for the weather conditions and that both shelter and appropriate refreshments are available where possible.

Expectations of Behaviour.

All persons to whom this policy applies **must**:

- treat each other with respect and show consideration for others.
- refrain from any using any language or exhibiting any behaviour of a malign or demeaning nature including, but not limited to, racism, sexism and bullying.
- not allow the use of such language or behaviour by others (whether adults or children) to go unchallenged.
- be fully clothed at all times and should never engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative physical contact.
- report any instances of any behaviour of a malign or demeaning nature to group leaders, parish councillors, the parish clerk or parents and carers, as appropriate.
- always ensure that allegations made by children, young people and adults at risk are recorded and acted upon promptly. Recording forms are separate to, but accompany this policy (**Forms A, B & C**). Contact details of relevant authorities are listed both at the end of this policy and on **Form C**.
- take particular care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child, young person or adult at risk.

Duty of Action.

All persons to whom this policy applies will:

- be concerned by any action or inaction, which harms, or may harm, the wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk.
- be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude, actions or inactions of anyone, including colleagues which harms, or may harm, the wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk.

- seek the advice of the Parish Council DSL/DDSL. If neither is available, they should use the contact details (below) to make a formal report forthwith.

Doing nothing is NOT an option. Don't think 'What if I am wrong?' Think 'What if I am right?'

Allegations Against Councillors, Staff and Volunteers.

Should a disclosure or complaint be made against anyone to whom this policy applies, then seek advice from the DSL. Should the disclosure or allegation relate to the DSL, then the DDSL should be informed. In any other circumstances, the advice of the Chair should be sought. Failure to make contact with any responsible persons within High Offley Parish Council, should not preclude contacting the appropriate authorities forthwith.

Actions Upon Receipt of Disclosure.

All persons to whom this policy applies **must** make a record of any disclosure made to them by a child, young person or adult at risk. A Record of Disclosure form accompanies this policy (**Form A**) together with a Continuation Sheet (**Form B**) and they are accompanied by a Guide to completion (**Form C**). This is distributed, electronically, to all persons to whom this policy applies, as and when required. Hard copies of this form are also available from the Parish Council office.

Never promise the person making a disclosure that you will keep it a secret. You will not be able to keep that promise and also act responsibly. Assure the person making a disclosure that you will only share information with those who need to know and who can help.

Information must be handled confidentially and disseminated strictly on a need-to-know basis to Social Services, or the Police. It is extremely important that disclosures are not discussed beyond those people that **NEED TO KNOW**, as any breach of confidentiality could be to the detriment of the person making the disclosure, their family, the person subject of the disclosure and any child protection investigations and possible legal proceedings that may follow.

Contact Information for Making a Referral Regarding a Safeguarding Concern.

In cases where there is an immediate and present risk of harm, contact Staffordshire Police immediately by calling 999.

In all other cases, contact:

| Concern | Day & Time | Contact | Telephone |
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| Child Protection (including young people). | Monday to Thursday between 8.30am and 5pm Friday between 8.30am and 4.30 pm. | First Response Team. | 0800 1313 126 |
| Adult Protection (for Adults at risk). | Monday to Thursday between 8.30am and 5pm Friday between 8.30am and 4.30 pm. | Adult Protection Contact Centre. | 0345 604 2719 |
| Concerns about adults or children at risk of abuse or neglect. | Outside of the above times. | Emergency Duty Service. | 0345 604 2886 |
| Concerns about adults or children at risk of abuse or neglect. | 24 hours a day, every day. | Staffordshire Police Central Referral Unit. | 101 |