

## **Safeguarding Policy**

### **Introduction**

Brandon Town Council acknowledges that everyone who uses facilities for which we are responsible, or who may be involved in Council-led activities, should be treated with dignity and respect, and should be protected from harm.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that procedures are in place, and that people are clear about their roles and responsibilities, in respect of children, young people and vulnerable adults who use facilities for which we are responsible or are involved in Council-led activities

This policy applies to anyone directly or indirectly employed by Brandon Town Council including volunteers.

### **POLICY**

We recognise the serious issue of the abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults, whatever form it may take, and we accept our responsibility for ensuring that all people are safe whilst on premises for which we are responsible or involved in Council-led activities.

We will seek to safeguard and protect all children, young people and vulnerable adults in the following ways;

- By managing premises for which we are responsible and Council led activities in a way which promotes safety and prevents abuse
- By recognising that we need to have particular care for people whose vulnerability is increased by situations, by disability, or by reduction in capabilities, whether this is temporary or permanent.
- By recruiting staff, volunteers and Town Councillors safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- We undertake to respond without unnecessary delay to any allegation, complaint or cause for concern that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may have been harmed whilst on premises for which we are responsible or during Council-led activities, and to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.
- Whilst it is not the responsibility of any council staff member/councillor and/or volunteer to determine if abuse is taking place, it is their responsibility to report concerns to the Designated Officer or the agencies (the Children's Services department at the local authority and the police) that need to know so that enquiries can be made and appropriate action can be taken
- We require all hirers of premises for which we are responsible to demonstrate good safeguarding practice and to respect the provisions contained in this policy, a copy of which will be displayed on the Council website.
- It is expected that any organisation which has their staff working on Town Council

land will ensure that their staff are recruited safely and that it is appropriate for them to work in an area where children, young people and vulnerable adults may be present. The responsibility will lie with the organisation to ensure that staff on council land are appropriately checked.

- Safeguarding requirements will be included in Risk Assessments for any proposed Council-led activity or event.

### **Designated Officer – Town Clerk**

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

### **Definitions of Abuse:**

- **Abuse** covers any form of physical, emotional, mental, and sexual abuse, including bullying, including a 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 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 videos.
- **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.

### **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.

### **Responding to Allegations**

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 on no judgment. 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 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 Chair. All allegations must be referred to, no matter how insignificant they may seem to be, or when they occur.
- Try to ensure that no one is placed in a position that could cause further compromise.

**As soon as possible after the incident or disclosure 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.
- 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.
- 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. Do not attempt to investigate any matters – this is not the role of the Town Council.

**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 bruises, 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 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 is beyond their age or developmental age.
- sexual drawings or language.
- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about.
- not allowed to have friends.

**Contact Details for Social Services, the Police and NSPCC:**

Customer First – for Adults and Children: Telephone: 0800 9171109

Suffolk Police:

Telephone: 101 or in an emergency 999



NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: Telephone: 0808 800 5000

NSPCC Help for children and young people Telephone: 0800 1111

### **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.

### **Prevention**

Any 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 their own equivalent Child Protection and vulnerable adult policies, or failing in this, must comply with the terms of this policy. This requirement will be written in the contract. If this is not met, the contractor will be deemed to be in breach of their contract.

This policy will be reviewed annually; to confirm its continuing accuracy and relevance and will be amended and reissued as may be found necessary.