

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Widdrington Station and Stobswood Parish Council

1. Purpose

Widdrington Station and Stobswood Parish Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

The Council recognises its responsibility to take appropriate steps to ensure that children and young people are protected from harm when participating in activities connected with the Council.

This policy follows safeguarding guidance from the National Association of Local Councils, the Society of Local Council Clerks and statutory safeguarding guidance issued by HM Government.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Parish councillors
- Council employees
- Volunteers working on behalf of the council
- Contractors delivering services on behalf of the council

The policy applies where the council:

- Organises events involving children
 - Supports youth activities
 - Provides community facilities used by children
 - Interacts directly with children or young people
-

3. Legal Framework

This policy operates within the framework of:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- UK Government safeguarding guidance such as *Working Together to Safeguard Children*.

While parish councils are not statutory safeguarding bodies, they have a **duty of care to act appropriately if safeguarding concerns arise.**

4. Principles

The Council will ensure that:

- The welfare of children is paramount
 - All children have the right to protection from abuse
 - Safeguarding concerns are taken seriously
 - Concerns are reported promptly to the appropriate authorities
 - All individuals working with children act responsibly and appropriately
-

5. Types of Abuse

Safeguarding concerns may include the following forms of abuse:

Physical Abuse

Deliberate harm or injury to a child.

Emotional Abuse

Persistent emotional harm affecting a child's wellbeing.

Sexual Abuse

Involving a child in sexual activities or exploitation.

Neglect

Failure to meet a child's basic physical or emotional needs.

Councillors and staff should remain vigilant to signs of potential abuse.

6. Safeguarding Responsibilities

The Parish Council

The Council will:

- Promote safeguarding awareness

- Ensure safeguarding considerations are included when organising activities involving children
 - Ensure contractors working with children have appropriate safeguarding procedures
-

Councillors and Staff

Councillors and staff must:

- Be aware of safeguarding responsibilities
 - Report safeguarding concerns appropriately
 - Avoid situations where they are alone with children in an official capacity where possible
-

Parish Clerk

The Clerk will:

- Maintain this policy
 - Ensure safeguarding concerns are reported to the appropriate authorities
 - Provide advice on safeguarding matters where necessary
-

7. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

If a councillor, employee or volunteer has concerns about a child's safety they must:

1. Record the concern as soon as possible
2. Report the concern to the Parish Clerk or Chair of the Council
3. Where appropriate, refer the concern to the relevant safeguarding authority

Where a child is in immediate danger, **emergency services should be contacted immediately.**

Concerns may be reported to the local safeguarding authority or social services.

8. Confidentiality

Safeguarding concerns must be handled sensitively and confidentially.

Information should only be shared with those who need to know in order to protect the child.

9. Safeguarding in Council Activities

When organising activities involving children, the council should consider:

- Appropriate supervision
- Risk assessments
- Safeguarding arrangements by partner organisations
- Safe use of council facilities

Where activities are delivered by external organisations, those organisations should have their own safeguarding policies.

10. Safe Working Practices

Councillors and staff should:

- Avoid unsupervised one-to-one contact with children
 - Avoid sharing personal contact details with children
 - Maintain professional boundaries at all times
-

11. Training and Awareness

Where appropriate, councillors and staff should receive safeguarding awareness training.

Guidance and training resources are available from the:

- National Association of Local Councils
 - Society of Local Council Clerks.
-

12. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains effective and reflects current safeguarding guidance and legislation.

The policy will normally be reviewed **every three years** or sooner if required.

13. Adoption

Adopted by:

Widdrington Station and Stobswood Parish Council

Date: _____

Chair Signature: _____

Clerk Signature: _____