



OAKLEY AND DEANE PARISH COUNCIL

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Policy Statement

Oakley and Deane Parish Council believes that it is always unacceptable for any person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all those who come into contact with its services, facilities, staff, and volunteers.

We are committed to practice which protects children, young people, and adults with care and support needs from harm. This policy applies to all staff, Parish Councillors, and members of any organising group or community group using Oakley and Deane Parish Council facilities.

2. Principles

We recognise that:

- The welfare of all is paramount. Everyone, regardless of gender, marital status, race, ethnic origin, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, religion or age, has the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Children and young people have the right to be valued, listened to, and respected.
- Adults with care and support needs (as defined under the Care Act 2014) equally deserve protection and appropriate safeguarding responses.
- Working in partnership with all stakeholders, statutory agencies, and the community is essential in promoting welfare.
- No internal investigation will be conducted where an allegation concerns a member of staff or a councillor, such matters are escalated immediately to the appropriate external authority.

3. Scope and Purpose

This policy applies to:

- All paid employees of the Parish Council.
- All Parish Councillors.
- All volunteers acting on behalf of the Parish Council.
- Members of organising groups and community groups using Parish Council facilities.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide protection for all who receive Oakley and Deane Parish Council services, including staff and volunteers themselves.
- Give staff, councillors, and volunteers clear guidance on the procedures they must follow if they suspect someone is experiencing or at risk of harm.

- Ensure the council meets its obligations under relevant legislation, including the Children Act 1989 and 2004, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, and the Care Act 2014.

4. Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Council's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the Clerk to the Council (in their capacity as Proper Officer). The DSL is the first point of contact for all safeguarding concerns.

In the absence of the Clerk, or where an allegation concerns the Clerk, the matter is escalated to the Chairman of the Parish Council, who will also notify the Chairman of the Staffing Committee.

Where an allegation concerns a councillor, the Clerk will refer the matter to the Monitoring Officer at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC), who may in turn contact the Hampshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) service or Adult Safeguarding, as appropriate. The BDBC Code of Conduct may also be engaged.

The Council will endeavour to maintain a deputy or assistant DSL arrangement and will review this as part of its annual policy adoption.

5. Safeguarding Reporting Procedure

5.1 Concerns about a child or young person

If any member of staff, councillor, or volunteer has a concern that a child or young person may be at risk of or experiencing harm, they must:

- Report the concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Clerk).
- Not investigate the concern themselves or discuss it with the person allegedly causing harm.
- Make a written record of what was seen, heard or disclosed, using the person's own words wherever possible, and give this to the DSL.

The DSL will, without delay, contact:

- Hampshire Children's Services (First Response): 0300 555 1384 (office hours) / 0300 555 1373 (out of hours)
- Police (if a child is in immediate danger): 999

5.2 Concerns about an adult with care and support needs

If any member of staff, councillor, or volunteer has a concern that an adult with care and support needs may be at risk of or experiencing abuse or neglect, they must follow the same initial steps above and report to the DSL.

The DSL will contact:

- Hampshire Adult Social Care Safeguarding Team: 0300 555 1386 (office hours) / 0300 555 1373 (out of hours)
- Police (if the adult is in immediate danger): 999

5.3 Allegations against staff or councillors

Where a safeguarding concern involves an allegation against a member of staff, volunteer, or councillor, the standard internal reporting pathway does NOT apply. The following escalation route must be followed immediately:

- The Clerk is notified (unless the allegation concerns the Clerk, in which case the Chairman is notified).
- The matter is referred to the Hampshire LADO service (for child-related allegations) via Hampshire Children's Services: 01962 876364.
- For allegations concerning adults at risk, referral is made to the Hampshire Adult Social Care Safeguarding Team.
- Where a councillor is implicated, the BDBC Monitoring Officer is also notified. A Code of Conduct investigation may follow.
- There will be no internal investigation by the Parish Council.

6. Safer Recruitment and Volunteer Management

The council is committed to safe recruitment practices, including:

- Obtaining appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all roles working with children or adults at risk.
- Taking up references prior to appointment.
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers are aware of and have read this Safeguarding Policy before commencing their role.
- Providing relevant safeguarding training and refreshing it regularly.

7. Our Commitments

Oakley and Deane Parish Council will safeguard children, young people, and adults with care and support needs by:

- Valuing, listening to, and respecting them.
- Adopting safeguarding guidelines, procedures, and a code of conduct for all staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with all staff, councillors, volunteers, and facilities users.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies that need to know, and involving parents, carers, children, and adults appropriately.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, and training.
- Working in partnership with Hampshire Children's Services, Hampshire Adult Social Care, BDBC, the Hampshire LADO service, and other relevant bodies.

8. Related Policies and Legislation

This policy should be read alongside:

- Oakley and Deane Parish Council Code of Conduct (published on the council website)
- Oakley and Deane Parish Council HR and Staffing Policies
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Care Act 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, current edition)
- The Care and Support Statutory Guidance (DHSC, current edition)

9. Key External Contacts

Organisation	Contact

Hampshire Children's Services (First Response – office hours)	0300 555 1384
Hampshire Children's Services (out of hours)	0300 555 1373
Hampshire Adult Social Care Safeguarding Team (office hours)	0300 555 1386
Hampshire LADO Service (allegations against adults working with children)	01962 876364
BDBC Monitoring Officer	Via BDBC main switchboard: 01256 844844
Police (emergency)	999
Police (non-emergency)	101
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if relevant legislation or statutory guidance changes. This schedule aligns with the council's wider annual policy review cycle, as recommended by the Internal Auditor.

Adoption Record

Date	Version / Notes	Approved by
8th February 2024	Readopted	Full Council
13th March 2025	Readopted	Full Council
12th March 2026	Revised – annual review, DSL procedure, Care Act 2014, reporting pathway added	Full Council
11th March 2027	Next scheduled review	

Approved: 12th March 2026

Date of next review: 11th March 2027

Chairman


Paish Clerk
