

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Section 1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 We in the Toller Porcorum Parish Council are committed to a practice that protects children from harm. Volunteers in this organization accept and recognize our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues, which cause children harm.
- 1.2 We will endeavour to safeguard children by:
- a) Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for volunteers;
 - b) Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and carers, staff and volunteers;
 - c) Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately;
 - d) Following carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of volunteers;
 - e) Provide effective management for volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- 1.3 We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice at regular intervals.
- 1.4 For the purposes of this policy, a child is deemed to be any person under the age of eighteen years.
- 1.5 The welfare of the child is of paramount consideration.
- 1.6 All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious belief and sexual identity have a right to protection from harm or abuse.

Section 2 Procedures

2.1 Definitions of Abuse

2.1.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described as factitious illness, fabricated or induced illness in children or 'Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy' after the person who first identified this situation. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick child.

Physical abuse, as well as being a result of a deliberate act, can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

2.1.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel of believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may also cause children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

alone.

2.1.3 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, buggery or oral sex or non-penetrative acts such as fondling.

Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Males and/or females, by adults and by other young people, can sexually abuse boys and girls. This includes people from all different walks of life.

2.1.4 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, leaving a young child at home alone or the failure to ensure that a child receives adequate and appropriate medical care and treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

It is accepted that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse, and that some children are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any one time. These four definitions do not minimize other forms of maltreatment.

Recent inter-agency guidance draws attention to other sources of stress for children and families, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, and the mental illness of a parent or carer, or drug or alcohol abuse. All these areas may have a negative impact on a child's health and development and may be noticed by an organization caring for a child. If it is felt that a child's well-being is adversely affected by any of these areas, the same procedures should be followed.

2.2 Response to Abuse Allegations

In responding to a child making an allegation of abuse, the following points should be borne in mind.

- a) Stay calm.
- b) Listen carefully to what is being said.
- c) Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – others do not keep secrets.
- d) Allow the child to continue at his/her own pace.
- e) Ask questions for clarification only and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- f) Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- g) Tell the child what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
- h) Record in writing as soon as possible what was said using the child's own words. Note date(s), time(s) any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the statement is dated and signed.

NOTE: It is important that everyone in the organization is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies following a referral to them of a concern about a child.

Samples of forms to be used in cases of suspected or alleged cases of child abuse and those for recording concerns about children and young people can be found at the end of this document. These forms are also available from the Parish Clerk.

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

Section 3 Code of Conduct

3.1 Positive Actions

All volunteers working with Toller Porcorum Parish Council must observe the following;

- a) All children and young persons are to be treated with respect,
- b) Your own behaviour and conduct must set an example that you wish others to follow,
- c) **At all times there is to be more than one person present during activities involving young children and young people or that any one supervisor is within sight and/or hearing of others,**
- d) A young person's right to personal privacy is to be respected,
- e) Young people and adults should be encouraged to feel comfortable in each other's company in order that young people do not feel inhibited about reporting attitudes or behaviour that they find unacceptable or objectionable,
- f) **Be aware that your intentions and/or actions might be misrepresented, no matter how well intentioned,**
- g) **Be aware that any physical contact with a child or a young person may be misinterpreted,**
- h) Take special caution when discussing sensitive issues with children and young people,
- i) Instances of unacceptable behaviour are to be challenged and all allegations/suspicions of abuse are to be reported.

3.2 Negative Actions

All volunteers working with Toller Porcorum Parish Council must avoid the following;

- a) **Inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or an young people,**
- b) **Being drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour or make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people,**
- c) **Jumping to conclusion without checking facts,**
- d) **Exaggerating or trivializing issues of child abuse,**
- e) **Showing favouritism to any individual within a group,**
- f) **Reliance on the good name of the Parish Council to protect in the event of unseemly behaviour or actions,**
- g) **Taking a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach.**

Section 4 Safe Recruitment

4.1 Recruitment Policy

All volunteers and helpers are subject to careful selection by the following means;

- a) All volunteers and helpers are required to complete an application form (References to be soused at the discretion of the Council)
- b) All volunteers will undergo checks by the Criminal Records Bureau,
- c) Any volunteers and helpers under the age of 18 years must be supervised by an adult and should not be involved in any Disclosures/claims made by young person.
- d) All volunteers and helpers are required to read and sign this Child Protection Policy.

Examples of the appropriate forms for application can be found on pages at the end of this document.

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

Section 5 Disclosure Procedures

- 5.1 In the event that a volunteer helper is approached by a child expressing concerns about how they have been treated, either at a Parish Council event or elsewhere, the following procedures should be followed.
- a) Stay calm, tell and show the child that you have listened to them and have taken what they have told you seriously. If possible, give them some time immediately to listen to their concerns. If this is not possible, tell the child that you will listen to their concerns as soon as is practically possible, and ensure that you do this.
 - b) Keep questions to a minimum but make sure that you have enough information to be clear about what the child is telling you.
 - c) Make sure that you are clear about what the child is telling you. Just repeat facts that you have been told back to the child for clarification.
 - d) Reassure the child that what has occurred, or believed to have occurred, is not their fault and that they have done the right thing in telling you.
 - e) Emphasise that you realise how difficult it has been to bring the matter to your attention.
 - f) Explain that you will have to tell someone else who is better qualified than you to handle the situation. Explain that even though you have to tell someone else, the information remains in strict confidence. As soon as possible you must inform the Designated Person whose name is given at the end of this document. If that is not possible immediately and you have concerns that by returning home, or to another outside environment, that the child would be in immediate danger then you should seek advice from Social Services, the Police, the Child Protection Unit or the NSPCC as a matter of urgency. Contact numbers are given at the end of this document.
 - g) Record carefully what the child has told you and what action has been taken as a result. Forms are shown at the end of this document and are available from the secretary.

Section 6 Whistle blowing Policy

- 6.1 It is the intention of the Committee that any child or young person attending Toller Porcorum Parish Council events or facilities is encouraged to inform the supervisory and/or the volunteers should that individual feel that, at any time, he or she wishes to express to confide in the volunteers on an issue which concerns them personally, whether that issue involves an activity that took place within the Parish Council organisation or not. The individual may be concerned for instance about a level of bullying that is taking place within the confines of the Parish Council activities, or may be concerned about a problem at school or at home. All volunteers are therefore to be aware that this policy exists and be prepared to act accordingly should a child or young person make an approach.

Section 7 Designated Person(s)

- 7.1 At the time of writing the Principle Designated Person referred to within is:

Name- Chairman -Neil Farmer email: neilfarmertollerpc@gmail.com

or if not available:

Parish Clerk, Mrs Michele Harding, West Elworth Farm, Portesham, Weymouth Dorset DT3 4HF

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

07814 016971

If you are unable to contact the above and you have serious concerns, you should contact one of the agencies listed below for directed advice.

Social Services office 01305 251034

Dorchester Police Station 01305 251212

NSPCC Child Protection Help line 0808 800 5000

Any allegations or suspicions of abuse must be reported to the designated person in the first instance.

Start date of policy	
Adopted at the PC meeting	
Reviewed	

Signed.....Chairman

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

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Checklist for reporting suspected abuse. 1 of 3

Name of Child	
Age and Date of Birth	Ethnicity
Religion	First Language
Disability	Any special factors
Parent's/Carer's name(s)	

Home address (and telephone number if available)

Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of somebody else? Give details.

Brief description of what has prompted the concerns: include dates, times etc. of any.

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?

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2 of 3

Child Protection Procedures Record of Concerns

Name of Child

Address:

Telephone No:

Parent/Carers details:

What is said to have happened or what was seen?

When and where did the incident occur?
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TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

Who else, if anyone, was involved and how?

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

3 of 3

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Was the incident disclosed by an affected child or by a third party?

What was said by those involved?

Were there any obvious signs e.g. bruising, bleeding changed behaviour patterns?

Was the child able to say what happened? If so, how did the child describe it?

Who has been told about the incident and when?

As far as you are aware, do the parents/carers know of the incident?

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Signed:

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

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Declaration from all volunteers working with children and young people.

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound over Order

Yes

No

If Yes, please state below the date(s) and nature of the offence(s)

Signed

Date

Print First name(s)

Print Surname

Any surname previously known by

Address

Telephone Number:
Date of Birth

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

Place of Birth

You are advised that under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (UK wide) (1974) (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendments) Order 1986 (UK) wide) you should declare all convictions, including 'spent' convictions.

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

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I have been given and read a copy of the Council's Child Protection Policy
I have understood the policy and know what is expected of me as a volunteer helper.

Signed

Date

I agree to the Council requesting references before accepting me as a volunteer helper. This could be in the form of verbal or written, at the discretion of the committee.

Please give details of a person you would be willing for us to contact to give you a reference. Please state relationship.

Name

Address

Phone number