



# **Internal Policy**

## **Child Protection Policy**



**Policy Information:**

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| Policy Title:                                            | Child Protection Policy          |            |
| Original Date:                                           | 13/09/2018                       |            |
| Author(s):                                               | Sarah Houlston – Project Officer |            |
| Approved:                                                | Title:                           | Signature: |
| Ordinary Council Meeting – 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2019 | Child Protection Policy          |            |
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| Annual Council Meeting – 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2025       | Child Protection Policy          |            |
| Annual Council Meeting – 11 <sup>th</sup> May 2026       | Child Protection Policy          |            |



## Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Policy

At **Great Dawley Town Council** we work with children, parents, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life. Children have the right to be treated with respect, be helped to thrive and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

Safeguarding is a much wider subject than the elements covered within this single policy, therefore this document should be used in conjunction with Great Dawley Town Council's other policies and procedures.

### LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND DEFINITION OF SAFEGUARDING

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Working together to Safeguard children 2026
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in relation to this policy is defined as:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children are grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, wherever possible and where this in the best interests of the children
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

*(Definition taken from the HM Government document 'Working together to safeguard children 2026.*

### Policy intention

To safeguard children and promote their welfare we will:

- Create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image
- Provide positive role models and develop a safe culture where staff are confident to raise concerns about professional conduct
- Support staff to notice the softer signs of abuse and know what action to take
- Encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development
- Provide a safe and secure environment for all children
- Promote tolerance and acceptance of different beliefs, cultures and communities



- Help children to understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making and how to promote British values through play, discussion and role modelling
- Always listen to children
- Provide an environment where practitioners are confident to identify where children and families may need intervention and seek the help they need
- Share information with other agencies as appropriate.

Great Dawley Town Council is aware that abuse does occur in our society and we are vigilant in identifying signs of abuse and reporting concerns. Staff have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children. Staff may be the first people to identify that there may be a problem. They may be the first people in whom children confide information that may suggest abuse or to spot changes in a child's behaviour which may indicate abuse.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of each child in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. This includes sharing information with any relevant agencies such as local authority services for children's social care, health professionals or the police. All staff will work with other agencies in the best interest of the child, including as part of a multi-agency team, where needed.

Great Dawley Town Council aims to:

- Keep the child at the centre of all we do
- Ensure staff are trained right from induction to understand the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedures, are alert to identify possible signs of abuse (including the signs known as softer signs of abuse), understand what is meant by child protection and are aware of the different ways in which children can be harmed, including by other children through bullying or discriminatory behaviour
- Be aware of the increased vulnerability of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and other vulnerable or isolated families and children
- Ensure staff understand how to recognise early indicators of potential radicalisation and terrorism threats and act on them appropriately in line with national and local procedures
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported to act in the best interest of the child, share information and seek the help that the child may need
- Ensure that all staff are familiar and updated regularly with child protection training and procedures and kept informed of changes to local/national procedures
- Make any child protection referrals in a timely way, sharing relevant information as necessary in line with procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board
- Make any referrals relating to extremism to the police (or the Government helpline) in a timely way, sharing relevant information as appropriate
- Ensure that information is shared only with those people who need to know in order to protect the child and act in their best interest
- Keep the setting safe online using appropriate filters, checks and safeguards, monitoring access at all times



- Ensure that children are never placed at risk while in the charge of Great Dawley Town Council staff
- Identify changes in staff behaviour and act on these as per Whistleblowing Policy
- Take any appropriate action relating to allegations of serious harm or abuse against any person working or living with children from Great Dawley Town Council including reporting such allegations to relevant authorities.
- Ensure parents have access to policies and procedures if requested
- Regularly review and update this policy where appropriate and make sure it complies with any legal requirements and any guidance or procedures issued by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

### CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Local authority Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub Family Connect **01952 385385**

Local authority Designated Officer (LADO) **01952 385728**

Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership **01952 385385**

Non-emergency police **101** Emergency **999**

NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline **0800 028 0285**

### TYPES OF ABUSE AND PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by harming them or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family, institution or community setting by those known to them or a stranger. This could be an adult or adults, another child or children.

The signs and indicators listed below may not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, but will help us to recognise that something may be wrong, especially if a child shows a number of these symptoms or any of them to a marked degree.

### INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE

- Failure to thrive and meet developmental milestones
- Fearful or withdrawn tendencies
- Unexplained injuries to a child or conflicting reports from parents or staff
- Repeated injuries
- Unaddressed illnesses or injuries
- Significant changes to behaviour patterns.

Softer signs of abuse as defined by National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) include:

- Low self-esteem
- Wetting and soiling
- Recurrent nightmares
- Aggressive behaviour
- Withdrawing communication
- Habitual body rocking
- Indiscriminate contact or affection seeking
- Over-friendliness towards strangers
- Excessive clinginess



- Persistently seeking attention.

We are aware that child on child abuse does take place, so we include children in our policies when we talk about potential abusers. This may take the form of bullying, physically hurting another child, emotional abuse, or sexual abuse. We will report this in the same way as we do for adults abusing children and will take advice from the appropriate bodies on this area.

### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Action needs to be taken if staff have reason to believe that there has been a physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning, where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. These symptoms may include bruising or injuries in an area that is not usual for a child, e.g. fleshy parts of the arms and legs, back, wrists, ankles and face.

Many children will have cuts and grazes from normal childhood injuries. These should also be logged and discussed with the nursery manager or room leader.

Children and babies may be abused physically through shaking or throwing. Other injuries may include burns or scalds. These are not usual childhood injuries and should always be logged.

### **FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION**

This type of physical abuse is practised as a cultural ritual by certain ethnic groups and there is now more awareness of its prevalence in some communities in England including its effect on the child and any other siblings involved. This procedure may be carried out shortly after birth and during childhood as well as adolescence, just before marriage or during a woman's first pregnancy and varies widely according to the community<sup>1</sup>. Symptoms may include bleeding, painful areas, acute urinary retention, urinary infection, wound infection, septicaemia, incontinence, vaginal and pelvic infections with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder as well as physiological concerns. If you have concerns about a child relating to this area, you should contact children's social care team in the same way as other types of physical abuse. There is a mandatory duty to report to police any case where an act of female genital mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, we will ensure this is followed in our setting.

### **FABRICATED ILLNESS**

This is also a type of physical abuse. This is where a child is presented with an illness that is fabricated by the adult carer. The carer may seek out unnecessary medical treatment or investigation. The signs may include a carer exaggerating a real illness or symptoms, complete fabrication of symptoms or inducing physical illness, e.g. through poisoning, starvation, inappropriate diet. This may also be presented through false allegations of abuse or encouraging the child to appear disabled or ill to obtain unnecessary treatment or specialist support.



## **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Action needs to be taken if the staff member has witnessed an occasion(s) where a child indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing, had an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour or language. This may include acting out sexual activity on dolls/toys or in the role play area with their peers, drawing pictures that are inappropriate for a child, talking about sexual activities or using sexual language or words. The child may become worried when their clothes are removed, e.g. for nappy changes.

The physical symptoms may include genital trauma, discharge and bruises between the legs or signs of a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Emotional symptoms could include a distinct change in a child's behaviour. They may be withdrawn or overly extroverted and outgoing. They may withdraw away from a particular adult and become distressed if they reach out for them, but they may also be particularly clingy to a potential abuser so all symptoms and signs should be looked at together and assessed as a whole.

If a child starts to talk openly to an adult about abuse they may be experiencing the procedure below will be followed:

### **PROCEDURE:**

- The adult should reassure the child and listen without interrupting if the child wishes to talk
- The observed instances will be detailed in a confidential report
- The observed instances will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Leads
- The matter will be referred to the local authority children's social care team

## **CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)**

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 (2017 updated version) defines CSE as "...a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology."

We will be aware of the possibility of CSE and the signs and symptoms this may manifest as. If we have concerns, we will follow the same procedures as for other concerns and we will record and refer as appropriate.

## **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Action should be taken if the staff member has reason to believe that there is a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child, caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection.

This may include extremes of discipline where a child is shouted at or put down on a consistent basis, lack of emotional attachment by a parent, or it may include parents or carers placing inappropriate age or developmental expectations upon them. Emotional abuse may also be





imposed through the child witnessing domestic abuse and alcohol and drug misuse by adults caring for them.

The child is likely to show extremes of emotion with this type of abuse. This may include shying away from an adult who is abusing them, becoming withdrawn, aggressive or clingy in order to receive their love and attention. This type of abuse is harder to identify as the child is not likely to show any physical signs.

### **NEGLECT**

Action should be taken if the staff member has reason to believe that there has been any type of neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold, starvation or failure to seek medical treatment, when required, on behalf of the child), which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

Signs may include a child persistently arriving at the group unwashed or unkempt, wearing clothes that are too small (especially shoes that may restrict the child's growth or hurt them), arriving at nursery in the same nappy they went home in or a child having an illness or identified special educational need or disability that is not being addressed by the parent. A child may also be persistently hungry if a parent is withholding food or not providing enough for a child's needs.

Neglect may also be shown through emotional signs, e.g. a child may not be receiving the attention they need at home and may crave love and support at the group. They may be clingy and emotional. In addition, neglect may occur through pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

### **REPORTING PROCEDURES:**

All staff have a responsibility to report safeguarding concerns and suspicions of abuse. These concerns will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible.

- Staff will report their concerns at the earliest opportunity to the DSL (in the absence of the DSL they will be reported to the Deputy DSL)
- If appropriate, the incident will be discussed with the parent/carer, such discussions will be recorded, and the parent will have access to these records on request
- Contact the local authority children's social care team to report concerns and seek advice (if it is believed a child is in immediate danger we will contact the police)
- Record the information and action taken relating to the concern raised

Keeping children safe is our highest priority and if, for whatever reason, staff do not feel able to report concerns to the DSL or deputy DSL they should call the Local Authority Children's social care team or the NSPCC and report their concerns anonymously.

These contact numbers are displayed on the safeguarding information board within the office.

### **RECORDING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE AND DISCLOSURES**

Staff should make an objective record of any observation or disclosure. This record should include:

- Child's name
- Child's address
- Age of the child and date of birth





- Date and time of the observation or the disclosure
- Accurate words spoken by the child
- Accurate position and type of any injuries or marks seen
- Accurate observation of any incident including any concern was reported, with date and time; and the names of any other person present at the time
- Any discussion held with the parent(s) (where deemed appropriate).

These records should be signed by the person reporting this and the DSL dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse it is important not to promise the child complete confidentiality. This promise cannot be kept. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly, and disclosure is not forced, or words put into the child's mouth. As soon as possible after the disclosure details must be logged accurately.

It may be thought necessary that through discussion with all concerned the matter needs to be raised with family connect Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information/concerns they have about a child. Great Dawley Town Council expects all members of staff to co-operate with the local authority children's social care and police, in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about the alleged or actual behaviour of a parent or member of staff.

### **INFORMING PARENTS**

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of local safeguarding partnership board/family connect/police does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. In these cases, the investigating officers will inform parents.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared in line with guidance from the local safeguarding partnership board.

### **SUPPORT TO FAMILIES**

Great Dawley Town Council takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relationships among families, staff and volunteers.

Great Dawley Town Council continues to welcome the child/ children and the family whilst enquiries are being made. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst any external investigations are carried out in the best interest of the child.

Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate in line with guidance of the local safeguarding partnership board with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.



## **ALLEGATIONS AGAINST ADULTS WORKING OR VOLUNTEERING WITH CHILDREN**

### **ALLEGATIONS**

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer or any other person who works for Great Dawley Town Council regardless of whether the allegation relates to Great Dawley Town Council premises or elsewhere, we will follow the procedure below.

The allegation should be reported to the DSL. If this person is the subject of the allegation, then this should be reported to the Chair of Great Dawley Town Council.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the local safeguarding partnership board will then be informed immediately in order for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly:

- The LADO will be informed immediately for advice and guidance
- If as an individual you feel this will not be taken seriously or are worried about the allegation getting back to the person in question then it is your duty to inform the LADO yourself directly
- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (LADO, local safeguarding partnership board) to determine how this will be handled
- Great Dawley Town Council will follow all instructions from the LADO and the local safeguarding partnership board and ask all staff members to do the same and co-operate where required
- Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with LADO support and advice
- Great Dawley Town Council reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation
- All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file for access by the relevant authorities
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being reinstated
- Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisations including the local authority children's social care team and where an offence is believed to have been committed, the police, and will result in the termination of employment. Great Dawley Town Council will also notify the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure their records are updated
- All records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 21 years and 3 months years if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future DBS checks and avoids any unnecessary reinvestigation
- Great Dawley Town Council retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry
- Counselling will be available for any member of Great Dawley Town Council who is affected by an allegation, their colleagues at Great Dawley Town Council.

### **STAFFING AND VOLUNTEERING**

Our policy is to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. We only allow an adult who is employed by Great Dawley Town Council to have contact with children who have clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to be left alone with children. We



will obtain criminal records checks (DBS) for all volunteers and do not allow any volunteers to be unsupervised with children.

All staff will attend child protection training and receive initial basic child protection training during their induction period. This will include the procedures for spotting signs and behaviours of abuse and abusers/potential abusers, recording and reporting concerns and creating a safe and secure environment for the children.

We have named persons within Great Dawley Town Council who take lead responsibility for safeguarding and co-ordinate child protection and welfare issues, known as the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL). These designated persons will receive comprehensive training at least every two years and update their knowledge on an ongoing basis, but at least once a year.

Great Dawley Town Council DSL's liaise with the local safeguarding partnership board and the local authority children's social care team, undertakes specific training, including a child protection training course, and receives regular updates to developments within this field. They in turn support the ongoing development and knowledge update of all staff on the team.

Although we are not required to have a Designated Lead for safeguarding, for best practice Great Dawley Town Council will have two. This always enables safeguarding to stay high on our priorities. Designated Leads will be contactable by mobile phone.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) at Great Dawley Town Council are: ***Sarah Houlston, Deputy Clerk and Abi Beady, Youth Engagement and Events Officer.***

- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of all children
- Applicants for posts within Great Dawley Town Council informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information
- We give staff members, volunteers and students regular opportunities to declare changes that may affect their suitability to care for the children. This includes information about their health, medication or about changes in their home life such as whether anyone they live with in a household has committed an offence or been involved in an incident that means they are disqualified from working with children
- This information is also stated within every member of staff's contract
- We ensure we receive at least two references BEFORE a new member of staff commences employment with us
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors of Great Dawley Town Council and take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the premises.
- All visitors/contractors will be supervised whilst on the premises, especially when in the areas the children use
- All staff have access to and comply with the Whistleblowing Policy which will enable them to share any concerns that may arise about their colleagues in an appropriate manner, if a member of staff has a concern they can report to the Clerk, if the concern



is the about the Clerk they can raise the concern with the Chair or if not the LADO or NSPCC.

- Signs of inappropriate staff behaviour may include inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images. This is not an exhaustive list, any changes in behaviour must be reported and acted upon immediately
- Any concerns are raised with the designated lead and dealt with in an appropriate and timely manner

### **EMPLOYEES OR VOLUNTEERS OF GREAT DAWLEY TOWN COUNCIL OR ANY OTHER PERSON WORKING FOR GREAT DAWLEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Staff are aware of the need to disclose changes to circumstance and use the whistle blowing policy where required.

### **EXTREMISM – THE PREVENT DUTY**

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 we have a duty to refer any concerns of extremism to the police (In Prevent priority areas the local authority will have a Prevent lead who can also provide support).

This may be a cause for concern relating to a change in behaviour of a child or family member, comments causing concern made to a member of the team (or other persons in the setting) or actions that lead staff to be worried about the safety of a child in their care.

Alongside this we will be alert to any early signs in children and families who may be at risk of radicalisation, on which we will act and document all concerns when reporting further.

### **E-SAFETY**

Great Dawley Town Council is aware of the growth of internet use and the advantages this can bring. However, it is also aware of the dangers and strives to support children, staff and families in using the internet safely.

Within Great Dawley Town Council we do this by:

- Ensuring we have appropriate antivirus and anti-spyware software on all devices and updating them regularly
- Ensuring content blockers and filters are on our computers, laptops and any mobile devices
- Ensure management monitor all internet activities in the setting
- Using approved devices to record/photograph in the setting
- Never emailing personal or financial information
- Reporting emails with inappropriate content to the internet watch foundation (IWF [www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk))
- Never use personal mobile devices to take images/ videos, work phones are only permitted for this where consent has been gained to take an image of a young person by an appropriate adult



Great Dawley Town Council has a clear commitment to protecting children and promoting welfare. Should anyone believe that this policy is not being upheld, it is their duty to report the matter to the attention of the DSL..