

Poynton Town Council Child Protection Policy

TOWN COUNCIL MISSION STATEMENT

TO SERVE *the local community by efficient management of our present services and proactively respond to future requirements*

TO REPRESENT *the views of the local community to other authorities and agencies and thus influence and improve their service provision*

TO CONSULT *with the local community, where appropriate, on existing and new*

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

services and to act as focus for local issues.

The nature of the work of the Town Council community engagement is to operate primarily through collaborative projects, often with multiple partner organisations and volunteers. **Poynton Town Council aims to work within the multi-agency Child Protection Procedures established by Cheshire East Local Safeguarding Children Board.** For the purpose of this policy, each Project will have a Project Leader who is responsible for implementing the Town Council Policy for Child Protection.

This policy applies to any Project that is initiated or run under the auspices of the Town Council whether through Projects 4 Poynton or other partner(s). The Project Leader and Project Team Members may be paid staff or volunteers, whether independent or part of another organisation, who are officially recognised as part of the team with responsibility for leading or co-ordinating the project or an activity within a project.

TOWN COUNCIL CHILD PROTECTION MISSION STATEMENT

Poynton Town Council recognises the importance of its work with children and young people and its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to its care, notably their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions that affect them directly.

The Council is committed to:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting children and young people as well as promoting their welfare and protection.
- Exercising proper care in the selection and appointment of project leaders and members, whether paid workers or volunteers.
- Supporting, resourcing and training those working with children or young people and to providing appropriate supervision.
- Adopting ways of working so as to minimise situations where abuse may occur.
- Adopting a procedure for dealing **with disclosures and concerns** about possible abuse.
- Encouraging and supporting parents/carers.
- Supporting those affected by abuse during a project.

- Maintaining good links with the statutory childcare authorities and other organisations.

COUNCIL POLICY

The Council recognises the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children and young people. It also acknowledges that children and young people can be victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect and has therefore adopted the procedures set out in this document.

The Council is committed to promoting on-going child protection training for all children/youth workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines set out. It undertakes to follow the principles found within the Abuse of Trust guidance issued by the Home Office, and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council has appointed a Child Protection Officer (CPO) who will oversee the implementation and review of this policy. The Town Council supports the CPO in carrying out their responsibilities.

Each Project will nominate a Project Leader who will report to the appropriate Town Council Committee and to the Child Protection Officer in matters regarding this Policy.

Where multiple agencies are involved each project will nominate a lead partner agency, who will normally nominate the Project Leader.

The Project Leader will nominate a Child Protection Supervisor (CPS) for each project to ensure that the Policy and Procedures laid down in this document are implemented and ensure each Team member **is trained and aware** of their responsibilities within the law.

RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF PROJECT TEAM

Applicants to join a Project Team must

- complete an application form
- provide at least one suitable referee who is familiar with their work with children or young people
- *complete the correct level of Disclosure Certificate check*
- undergo an interview exploring their experience of working with, or contact, with children or young people. **Where appropriate young people will sit on the interview panel.**

Occasional Helpers will be asked to complete a simple form in the same way as children or young people complete a consent form. References for Occasional Helpers must be obtained. If the "occasional help" becomes regular, then in the case of adults, the full recruitment policy should be applied.

Where Team Members are nominated by an established, recognised youth organisation or group, with appropriate child protection policies and procedures in operation covering these requirements, recommendations and references from the nominating organisation will be deemed to fulfil the above requirements.

The Project Leader must verify that these policies and procedures are valid.

Project Team Members **must have read the relevant policies** and procedures covering child protection for the project.

For each Team Member the CPS will log details of CRB/DBS, Reference no, date and umbrella body used. This will be renewed every 3 years.

Participating in Town Council / Projects 4 Poynton initiatives is at the discretion of the Town Council/ Projects 4 Poynton and subject to review.

ORGANISATION OF WORK

Each team member will be given clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Project work and activities shall be planned to minimise situations where risk of abuse may occur.

The Project Leader will provide details of the supervision for each specific event or activity in the description of the project.

Occasional helpers and those not covered by disclosure must not work alone with children or young people nor be put in the position of working alone. The helper would not be included in the ratio of children to workers.

Children and young people must complete a **signed** consent form for the group/activity they are attending.

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Under no circumstances should a team member carry out their own investigation into the allegation or suspicion of abuse. The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse will do the following:

- Concerns must be reported as soon as possible to the Youth Coordinator (hereafter the **“Child Protection Officer”**) **tel.01625 872238**. They in turn will report to Town Clerk, (hereafter the **“Coordinator”**) who is nominated by the Town Council to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities. **In the absence of the Child Protection Officer, or if the concern involves the Child Protection Officer, concerns must be reported directly to the Co-ordinator.**
- The **Coordinator** may also be required by conditions of the Council Insurance Policy to inform immediately the Insurance Company.

In the absence of the **Co-ordinator**, or if the suspicions in any way involve the Co-ordinator then the report should be made directly to the Mayor of the Council. If the suspicions implicate both the Co-ordinator and the Child Protection Officers, then the report should be made in the first instance to **Cheshire East Children’s Assessment Team on 0300 123 5012 (8.30am – 5pm) At all other times contact the Social Care Out of Hours Team on 0300 123 5022.**

- Suspicions **must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above**. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with Council procedures and kept in a secure place.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Coordinator, the absence of the Coordinator or Child Protection Officer **should not delay** referral to **Cheshire East Children’s Assessment Team**.
- The Town Council will support the Coordinator/ Child Protection Officer in their roles, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the child protection agencies, although the Council hopes that participants will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Coordinator/ Child Protection Officer

have not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Coordinator as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct.

The role of the **Co-ordinator/ Child Protection Officer** is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to **Cheshire East Children's Assessment Team**. **They must also keep the young person involved in what will happen, let them know what to expect and that concerns must be passed on and who these concern will be passed to.**

ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL INJURY OR NEGLECT

If a child has a physical injury or symptom of neglect, the **Coordinator / Child Protection Officer** will:

- Contact **Cheshire East Children's Assessment Team** for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Will not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so having contacted **Cheshire East Children's Assessment Team**.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of injury.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact **Cheshire East Children's Assessment Team** for advice.

ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the **Coordinator / Child Protection Officers** will:

Contact Cheshire East Children's Assessment Team on 0300 123 5012 (8.30am – 5pm) At all other times contact the Social Care Out of Hours Team on 0300 123 5022. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.

DEFINITIONS

Project: An individual event, course or programme of events

Project Leader: Individual nominated to lead the project and who has overall responsibility for ensuring the policies of the Town Council relating to Child Protection and Health & Safety are implemented.

Team Member: An individual who is formerly part of an organising team who holds responsibility for leading or co-ordinating part of the project or activities.

Occasional Helper: Someone helping on the project who is not part of the leadership and co-ordinating team and who will be under the supervision of and responsible to a Team Member.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Physical abuse

This is when a child is hurt or injured by a child or an adult. Physical abuse includes hitting, kicking, punching and other ways of inflicting pain or injury such as poisoning, drowning or smothering. It also includes giving a child harmful drugs or alcohol.

Emotional abuse

This is when adults deny children love or affection, or constantly threaten or humiliate them. Sarcasm, degrading punishments and ignoring a child are also forms of emotional abuse and undermine a child's confidence and sense of self-worth.

Neglect

This is when a child's basic need for love, food, warmth, safety, education and medical attention is not met by parents or carers.

Sexual abuse

This is when a child is used sexually by an adult or young person. Sexual abuse can include kissing, touching the child's genitals or breasts, vaginal or anal intercourse and oral sex. Encouraging a child to look at pornographic magazines or videos is also sexual abuse.

In general this policy will be reviewed annually.

Next review: April 2016

Signed _____ Date _____

Print Name _____ Appointment Mayor of Town Council

Signed _____ Date _____

Print Name _____ Appointment Youth Co-ordinator

Useful Contacts:

Poynton Town Clerk: 01625 872238

Cheshire East Children's Assessment Team: 0300 123 5012 (8.30am – 5pm)

At all other times contact the Social Care Out of Hours Team: 0300 123 5022

Safe from Harm: A Summary of the Code Practice

Summary Recommendations

1. Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children.
2. Plan the work of the organisation so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur.
3. Introduce a system whereby children may talk with an independent person.
4. Apply agreed procedures for protecting children to all paid staff and volunteers.
5. Give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles.
6. Use supervision as a means for protecting children.
7. Treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children.
8. Gain at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicant's paid work of volunteering with children.
9. Explore applicant's experience of working or contact with children in an interview before appointment.
10. Find out whether an applicant has any conviction for criminal offences against children.
11. Make paid and voluntary appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period.
12. Issue guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse.
13. Train paid staff and volunteers, their line managers or supervisors, and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse.

Flow chart for action

This is not a substitute for a formal child protection policy.

