



Safeguarding

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1. Background

We all have a responsibility to make sure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected and cared for properly. A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

Safeguarding is a term which is broader than 'child protection' and relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health and development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Safeguarding is a responsibility that reaches across all public services in a variety of ways. It applies to every organisation, team and individual (including volunteers, partners, contractors, and local councils), that provide services to the public.

Although Speen Parish Council (SPC) as a group of individuals does not work directly with children, young people or vulnerable adults or run centres or activities directly, safeguarding does affect the activities of the council in a number of ways.

SPC provides a range of services to the Parish that might impact children, young people and vulnerable adults including, but not limited to, providing public spaces and play areas, carrying out grounds & general environmental maintenance in these areas, hiring out Speen Pavilion, hosting Speen Parish Fete and a number of local sports clubs for children on Parish Recreation grounds.

- SPC employs contractors to manage our playgrounds and parish environment
- Strong public expectation that public bodies have made effective arrangements for safeguarding.
- Safeguarding should be linked to other policies that good councils already have in place, such as health and safety, equality and diversity, and risk management. It can be seen as an essential part of the risk assessment part of annual audits and is part of the toolkit for a well-run parish council.
- Anyone in charge of or working with children and young people in any capacity are considered both legally and morally, to owe them a duty of care. This means that adults should always act, and be seen to act, in the best interests of the child or young person.



2. Statement:

- 2.1 SPC believes that children, young people and vulnerable adults all have the right to have fun, be safe, live their lives to the fullest potential, have the opportunity to participate in and enjoy any activity, be treated with dignity and respect, and be protected whilst engaging in activities on Parish-managed land or facilities.
- 2.2 Speen Parish Council (SPC) is committed to providing a quality service for the benefit of the people who live or work in its area or are visitors to the locality.
- 2.3 SPC considers Safeguarding a key element of operating by good practice principles which underpin all the work of the Council. Our commitment extends to ensuring that safeguarding risks within our control are properly assessed and that appropriate measures are in place to meet them.
- 2.4 Members are not expected to have specialist knowledge of safeguarding issues but will seek specialist advice, as required.

3. Purpose:

The Council, as represented by its members, officers, contractors, volunteers and agents, will take all reasonable steps to preserve the rights of young people as stated above while at Council venues.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- 3.1 Recognise the legal framework in which the Council operates – Children Act 2004 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>) and earlier versions.
- 3.2 Outline the SPC's attitude & commitment to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults
- 3.3 Identify responsibilities and arrangements to reduce the safe-guarding risks associated with Council operations.
- 3.4 Offer practical, sensible advice to organisations working with children at SPC venues and to contractors operating at grounds and facilities.

4. Scope:

- 4.1 With respect to this policy and the SPC activities, safeguarding extends to children, young people and vulnerable adults. The term 'child' or 'children' will be read to cover children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- 4.2 The scope of this policy is the operations of SPC which would be expected to have an impact on children.
- 4.3 This policy is fully supported by all Members of the council. It confirms that SPC Members are aware of safeguarding issues and are committed to reducing risks appropriately.
- 4.4 This policy confirms that SPC will continue to work to this policy for the forthcoming year until the next review date, unless amendments should be required in the meantime.
- 4.5 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Health & Safety and Risk Management policies.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 SPC recognises and accepts its responsibilities under the terms of the Children Act 2004, earlier Children's Acts and other relevant legislation to make arrangements for



ensuring that its functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- 5.2 Members are individually and equally responsible for 5.1 above.
- 5.3 The Council will meet its responsibilities under the Children Act, and will provide, as far as is reasonably practicable, the resources necessary to fulfil this commitment.
- 5.4 SPC land assets are open to the public, including children, at all times. The Parish Council has public liability insurance but people use the facilities at their own risk. Parents and carers are expected to supervise their children at all times. The Parish Council does not currently organize events for children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- 5.5 If you think a child is in immediate danger it is your responsibility to take action. Don't delay – call the police on 999, or call NSPCC on 08088005000, straight away.

6. Guidance for those working with children

- 6.1 This section seeks to offer practical guidance to those working at Council premises that involve contact with children to ensure that both they, and the children with whom they are working, are protected.
- 6.2 All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

6.2.1 Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all young people with respect and dignity
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Making recreation and sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible.
- If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents, teachers, coaches or officials work in pairs.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

6.2.2 Practices to be avoided

Except in emergencies, you should always avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from other people.

6.2.3 Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching



- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon

6.3 Incidents that must be reported / recorded

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a child.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Speen Parish Council staff and councillors are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.

6.4 Advice for Organisations

All organisations visiting Speen Parish Council premises or using its facilities and which make provision for children and young people must ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount;
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- All staff (paid/unpaid) working in sport have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

6.5 Use of photographic/filming equipment at events:

We recognise that organisations may wish to use video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and such films should be stored safely. Permission should be sought from parents for all such recording and/or publicity.

People may use events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and vulnerable adults. All organisations should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Club Child Protection Officer.

6.6 Contractors

A copy of this Policy is given to regular contractors (e.g. Recreation Ground maintenance companies) at the commencement of their working on the Council's behalf. Contractors are therefore aware of, and should abide by, the Council's aims and procedures outlined in this policy.

6.7 Guidelines to managing a disclosure:

The following guidelines should be used when an allegation is disclosed by a young person to a member of Council staff and/or volunteer:

- Listen and reassure
- Maintain confidentiality but do not make promises you cannot keep, and explain that the information will have to be passed on and what action you will be taking in this regard.
- Be calm.



- Be reassuring and make it clear that you are glad that they have told you.
- Show that you are taking the child seriously and that you understand and believe them.
- Keep questions to a minimum; if you have to ask questions keep them open and not leading.
- Contact the Police

6.8 Important points to remember when dealing with a disclosure:

- Try not to display any sign of shock or disapproval when the young person is making a disclosure
- Do not jump to conclusions
- The young person may not regard the experience as either bad or painful, they may not feel guilty or angry
- Be aware of your own feelings which may be different to those of the young person
- Take care of yourself by making sure that you have an opportunity to discuss your feelings with someone at a later stage
- Do not destroy any evidence as it may be useful in a court of law
- Initial disclosure, even if retracted, must still be referred.
- Details of the disclosure should be recorded in writing as accurately and as soon after the disclosure as possible.
- Inform the appropriate authorities – the designated Child Protection Officer at your club or organisation who will guide you through the process
- Inform the Council in writing via the Clerk who will bring the allegation to the attention of the Council whilst protecting personal data of the person(s) involved
- It is not the responsibility of the person to whom the disclosure has been made to determine if abuse has taken place but simply to report the information to the Child Protection Officer for appropriate further action.
- It is not the Clerk's responsibility to determine if abuse is occurring but to report to the Council.
- If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of Council staff, contractor or a volunteer these will be investigated according to recognised guidelines and reported to the police at the earliest opportunity.

7. Useful resources & contacts

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people/safeguarding-children-and-young-people>
- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/safeguarding/>
- <http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/safeguarding-people>

8 Authorisation of Policy on behalf of Full Council:

The undersigned approves this policy on behalf of Speen Parish Council.

Signature:

Name (print):

Position:

Date: ____/____/____