

STEEPLE ASTON PARISH COUNCIL -

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy has been formulated with reference to Fair Play for Children's model policy. It has been adopted by the Steeple Aston Parish Council (SAPC) and is subject to annual review.
- 1.2 This Policy applies to all activities of SAPC where children and young people under 18 years of age are present, and to all working in such activities, whether as an employee, volunteer, councillor or otherwise.

2. OBJECTIVE

- 2.1 The Objective of SAPC's Child Protection Policy is to contribute to the personal safety of all children and young people through actively promoting awareness, good practice and sound procedures.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

- 3.1 The PC shall appoint one of their number as Responsible Officer (RO) for all aspects of child protection awareness and implementation of this policy.
- 3.2 The RO will be responsible to the PC for:
 - a. ensuring that this policy is implemented throughout the PC's activities;
 - b. ensuring all necessary child protection-related enquiries, procedures and investigations are carried out;
 - c. reporting results of screening enquiries and for preserving a "need to know" level of confidentiality and access to secure records;
 - d. ensuring secure and confidential records relating to child protection matters;
 - e. liaison with councillors to ensure implementation of the policy by all staff and volunteers;
 - f. liaison with Local District Authority, the police and other relevant bodies on child protection matters;
 - g. the reporting to SAPC meetings on the implementation of this policy;

- h. the reporting of allegations and suspicion of abuse to the appropriate authorities;
 - i. ensuring there is adequate induction and training relating to child protection matters;
 - j. ensuring that each activity carried out by SAPC is sound in terms of child protection as regards personnel, practices, premises.
 - k. checking all incident reports made by staff and volunteers, countersigning them, and making such reference to authority as is appropriate, after consultation with councillors.
- 3.3 The Clerk and Council shall ensure active compliance with this policy by all and shall work closely with the RO to ensure this, affording the RO every assistance to this end. All other officers, staff and voluntary workers of the Project will actively endeavour to implement this policy.

4. PERSONNEL - CHECKS

- 4.1 The aim is to ensure as far as is possible that anyone, paid or voluntary, who seeks to work with children and young people through the Council's activities and who gains substantial access to them thereby is as safe to do so in child protection terms as can be guaranteed.
- 4.2 Therefore the RO will ensure that the following checks are carried out on all whose work may create a situation of substantial access to children and young people:
- a. criminal records check at enhanced level via Fair Play for Children or local authority.
 - b. personal referee, nominated by the applicant - a person who is not related to the applicant and who preferably knows of the applicant's character, trustworthiness, any previous experience of working with/looking after children and young people
- 4.3 The written consent of the applicant must be obtained to enable such enquiries to be made. No application may proceed unless such consent is given by the applicant.
- 4.5 The RO shall give to those concerned and receive confirmation of receipt, a letter/notice stating the checks are required as a condition of working in SAPC activities with children and young people.
- 4.6 No persons may work unsupervised without the above enquiries being

completed.

4.7 The RO shall be responsible for sending the enquiries to their destinations, under a strictly confidential heading in all cases, and shall ensure security of records.

4.8 The Council's policy is to recheck all who come into regular direct contact with children every three years, in terms of police and social services. This will be undertaken by the RO in consultation with the council.

4.9 At all times the onus is on the employee/volunteer to reveal any conviction, caution, bind-over, probation order, or pending prosecution, whether imposed prior to or within the period the applicant works on Project activities.

4.10 The RO shall confirm, to the satisfaction of the Council, the true identity of any staff or volunteer working with children.

4.11 The RO will not accept any previous reference, police check, social services endorsement etc provided by an applicant in substitution for the above enquiry process. At all times the initiative must lie with the Council to make its own, completely independent enquiries.

5. REPORTING OF ENQUIRY RESULTS

5.1 The RO will indicate to the Council whether an employee /volunteer is suitable to work on behalf of the Council, as revealed by the results of the checks at 4.2 a-d above.

5.2 Where a Schedule One offence is indicated by the above process, the RO must rule an applicant unsuitable, and that person must not undertake any form of work or help with SAPC. If such an attempt is made by a convicted Schedule One Offender or by any person prohibited under legislation from working with children and young people or from being in proximity to places where they may gather etc, the RO shall immediately inform Social Services and the Police.

5.3 The RO will recommend at SAPC meeting on the acceptance or otherwise of applicants. No details other than an applicant was accepted or otherwise shall be given or minuted. The Council may indicate an opinion on any application at this stage, in child protection terms. The Council shall consider the RO's recommendation and their decision shall be recorded in the minutes.

6. ACTIVITIES

6.1 Prior to any activity/site/programme being commenced, the RO shall ensure that adequate child protection procedures are in place.

6.2 In consultation with the Council, the RO shall ensure a site audit is undertaken to ascertain the layout of premises/site, helpers and supervision required to achieve adequate personal safety of children and young people. The audit shall be undertaken with a view to recognising any problems in terms of e.g. supervision of helpers, extended sites creating communications concerns etc.

6.3 As a basic principle, no helper should work with less than three children on their own for any period longer than 10 minutes, and each activity would have two or more helpers and/or regular visits, at not less than 15 minute intervals. The Project's regulations as regards helper:child ratios shall be observed.

6.4 All sessions shall be conducted with the provisions, aims and objective of this policy in mind.

6.5 Every activity shall be undertaken with the possibility in mind that a child may be suffering abuse outside the project, that a disclosure or symptom relating to this may become apparent within an activity, or that there will be children present who have not as yet revealed they are being abused. It is important that the environment created for an activity is as conducive to support of a child in such a situation as is possible.

6.6 For their own protection, but mainly as good practice and good manners, helpers are advised that children should initiate physical contact with helpers - this will not apply e.g. where a child needs to be removed from a situation threatening its or others' safety..

8. REPORTING OF CONCERNS

8.1 Those working on Council activities have a duty to ensure that any suspicion, incident, allegation or other manifestation relating to child protection is reported

6.2 IT IS VITAL FOR THE SUCCESSFUL OPERATION OF THIS POLICY THAT ALL INCIDENTS, OBSERVATIONS, HOWEVER INSIGNIFICANT-SEEMING, ARE LOGGED BY THE OBSERVER(S) IN THE APPROPRIATE ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORT BOOK/FORMS.

6.3 The observer will make a verbal report to the session leader, and also will make a written report outlining in adequate detail what was heard, seen, reported, alleged etc. Verbatim quotes from a child are important.

6.4 Where the matter is serious enough to warrant the Social Services being brought in, the RO will take an appropriate course of action as follows:

a. Immediate Report to Duty Officer at Social Services and/or Police: this covers any situation where, in the judgement of the RO, after due consultation with those involved there is perceived to be an immediate danger to a child or detection of criminal offences against a child or other form of obvious, ongoing/future/recent serious harm. Where a child seems at imminent harm of danger/ injury or worse, then the RO is authorised to make a complaint to the Police in order to secure immediate action and protection of a child. **NO PROTOCOL SHOULD EVER INHIBIT THIS COURSE OF ACTION IF IT IS TRULY WARRANTED.**

7. ALLEGATIONS

7.1 If a child or parent makes allegations against any person working for SAPC whether paid or unpaid, the following procedure will come into force - incident reports will be made at all stages as appropriate:

a. The person receiving the complaint will contact the RO. On receipt of the complaint, the RO will contact Social Services to appraise them of the situation.

b. The Chairman should inform the person against whom an allegation has been made as soon as possible **UNLESS THERE APPEARS TO BE A CASE THAT THIS MIGHT PREJUDICE A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION.** This will require consultation with the police to ascertain.

7.2 The course of action to be taken from thereon will be decided by the nature of the allegation(s).

a. If a criminal allegation e.g. of sexual abuse and impropriety is made, or physical assault, or inappropriate behaviour, the Chairman will suspend the person from any activity for the Council under the heading of alleged Gross Misconduct. If it is warranted, this may be without pay, should the evidence appear strong enough to justify the matter. The matter must then be reported immediately to the police and duty social worker. The suspension will remain in force unless and until the police and/or social services confirm there was no substance to the report. An incident report will be made and treated as confidential.

b. If there is no criminal allegation the RO will gather as much detail from available sources of information as possible, by way of investigation, but not including seeking to interview any child if there is a criminal

allegation (which is a matter for the authorities).

c The RO will report to the Chairman on the outcome of such an investigation and will recommend whether the circumstances constitute grounds either:

A. to treat the matter as a disciplinary issue, either as misconduct or gross misconduct, with associated rights of appeal

or B. to dismiss the allegations as unfounded, or to make such other non-disciplinary recommendations as are appropriate. The Chairman shall consider such recommendations and report to the next meeting of the Council of action taken.

The person against whom such non-criminal allegations are made should have opportunity to give an explanation or answer to any allegation at an interview conducted by the RO with another Parish Councillor present and the course of such an interview should be minuted.

8 RIGHTS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

If a complaint or allegation is made against an employee he or she will be made aware of his or her rights under employment law procedures. This responsibility lies with the R.O

SAPC recognises the right of the alleged abuser and the person who is thought to have been abused to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998.

9. INDUCTION AND TRAINING

9.1 The R.O shall ensure that there is adequate and appropriate induction and ongoing training and information to all employed staff and voluntary workers concerning child protection matters. All employees and voluntary workers shall have this policy drawn to their attention.

10. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

9.1 The Council shall review this policy, its effectiveness and regarding its implementation every two years and the RO shall ensure that the views of all workers, paid and voluntary, are sought and reflected in such a review process, and that any statutory authority input is sought as appropriate.

Sensible precautions

Groups of unaccompanied children or young people will be no more than 20

Ensure that an appropriate number of legally responsible adults will be present

Ensure that there is adequate space

Only use equipment that meets safety standards

Risk assessments will be carried out (see Risk Assessment form)

Ensure that there is a first-aid box which meets current Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations and a member of staff trained in first aid

Ensure if possible that groups have a legally responsible staff member present

Ensure that all know the evacuation procedures

5.2007