



Children's Safeguarding Policy & Procedure

REVISION DATE

October 2022

REPLACES POLICY

July 2020

INTRODUCTION

Goostrey Parish Council believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

What is meant by children?

A child for safeguarding purposes is any person between birth and under the age of 18. There are some exceptions to this: Children who are placed in local authority care are usually classed as children until aged 21, and those with some special needs are regarded as children while aged Under 25. Unborn children should also be considered in this policy.

Goostrey Parish Council recognises that:

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

POLICY AIM

The purpose of the policy:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who receive Goostrey Parish Council services, including the children of adult members or users.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.
- This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of Goostrey Parish Council.
- We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:
 - Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
 - Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
 - Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made; including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks when appropriate.
 - Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
 - Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
 - Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training and ensuring it remains up to date.

POLICY STATEMENT

Standards

(a) Goostrey Parish Council councillors, staff, volunteers and contractors (PHSA 2.3) are required to:

- Where appropriate and required by regulations have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check when they commence employment. Where this has not been undertaken staff will not be allowed to work with children unless supervised by a member of staff who has had a clear DBS check. (PHSA 7.2)
- Demonstrate respect for all service users as individuals in all matters.
- Reflect on their own approach and style, recognising the inherent power their position bestows.
- Undertake relevant training in safeguarding, disclosure and diversity matters. Ask a senior member of staff if they have any uncertainties about how to deal with a specific service user. (PHSA 7.1)
- Ensure that all service users experience a suitable and supportive environment to encourage service user disclosure of any issues which might affect the way in which they should be treated.
- Ensure all service users are aware of our Equality and Diversity policy and that they know how to complain if they become victims of harassment bullying, unfair treatment or harassment.
- Ensure a diverse range of services and training that is sensitive to difference.
- Invite and encourage constructive feedback from service users about standards and styles of behaviour and promote an open and honest culture of respect for diversity.
- Deal with complaints of abuse, unfair treatment or harassment and bullying promptly, sensitively, confidentially and in accordance with procedures
- Ensure that all persons working for or providing services to Goostrey Parish Council are provided with a briefing on these safeguarding policies and procedures before any work is undertaken or any services delivered.
- Report any incidents immediately to any relevant partners or commissioners.

(b) Service users are required to:

- Help prevent inappropriate behaviour by challenging and reporting behaviour that appears to be causing distress to others.
- Support an open, constructive environment within which diversity is valued positively.

(c) Dealing with claims of abuse perpetrated by internal members of staff

This Policy makes it clear how staff are expected to perform when dealing with all service users including children. It specifically ensures that claims made of abuse by internal staff will be investigated and dealt with.

Designated Person -Safeguarding lead

The details of the named contact for is *Emma Bambrook, Clerk to the Council*. In cases where the lead person is not available, there is an allegation against the lead person, or there is a difference of opinion with the lead person contact *the Chairman* (PHSA 1.1,1.2, 3.5)

The named person will have full awareness of the policy and procedures guidelines and have attended training on safeguarding endorsed by the local Safeguarding Board.

The named contact will be a single point of contact for the organisation in relation to:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Female genital Mutilation
- Prevent
- Domestic Abuse
- Honour Based Violence
- Forced Marriage
- Mental Capacity Act
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

- Trafficking / Modern Slavery

In the event of any concerns regarding a child then the named contact or deputy will be informed at the earliest available opportunity.

If necessary, the named person will inform the relevant Social Services Department without delay and the management committee. The named person will also ensure that the child protection policy and procedures are kept up to date and reviewed.

If there are concerns about sharing the above information with a colleague you can contact Cheshire East Consultation Service 0300 123 5012 (office hours) or 0300 123 5022 (out of hours), or the police direct, or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000.

Safeguarding Procedure

1. First steps

If someone discloses that they are being abused, whether in the home or the setting, then upon receiving the information, you should:

- React calmly
- Reassure the child that they were right to tell and that they are not to blame and take what the child says seriously
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. Don't ask about explicit details
- Reassure but do not promise confidentiality, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments
- Inform the child/young person what you will do next
- Make a full and written record of what has been said/heard as soon as possible and don't delay in passing on the information.

If you think abuse has or may have occurred act immediately. It is the responsibility of the person first becoming aware of a situation where there may be a child subject to, or at risk of, abuse to make safe and deal with the immediate needs of the person. This may mean taking reasonable steps to ensure the child is in no immediate danger and seeking medical treatment if required as a matter of urgency.

- Do NOT discuss the allegation of abuse with the alleged perpetrator.
- Do NOT disturb or destroy articles that could be used in evidence. Where an assault of some kind is suspected do not wash or bathe the person unless this is associated with first aid treatment necessary to prevent further harm.
- Do NOT discuss concerns or disclosures with other members of staff other than the safeguarding lead. (PHSA 3.2)

If the allegation is about a staff member or volunteer of any organisation, ensure that the allegation is properly managed. Tell your safeguarding lead or another manager /Chief Officer if your safeguarding lead is unavailable or is implicated in the allegation.

Contact the police if it is thought a crime has just been committed. Telephone 101 or 999 if an emergency

The individual who first received/witnessed the concern should make a full written record of what was seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible after observing the incident/receiving the report. This is the 'report of the first account' and must be kept securely. It is important that the report is an accurate description. The named person (if appropriate) can support the worker during this process but must not complete the report for the worker. This report must be made available on request from either the police and/or social care teams and should include include:

- a) The allegation or concerns, including the date and time of the incident or allegation
- b) The child's name, age and date of birth
- c) The child's home address and telephone number
- d) Whether or not the person making the report is expressing his or her own concerns of those of someone else, making a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay

- e) What the child said about the abuse and how it occurred or what has been reported to you.
- f) The appearance and behaviour of the victim.
- g) Any injuries observed.
- h) Details of witnesses to the incidents
- i) Have the parents been contacted? And if so, what has been said?
- j) Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details
- k) Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact that took the referral should be recorded.
- l) Whether any other children are also at risk (PHSA 4.4)

(PHSA 1.3)

2. If the allegation is against a member of staff a volunteer or a service user of [name of organisation] (PHSA 3.6)

Goostrey Parish Council will ensure that any allegations made against members or a member of staff will be dealt with swiftly and in accordance with these procedures:

- The worker must ensure that that the child is safe and away from the person against whom the allegation is made.
- The named person for safeguarding should be informed immediately.
- In the case of an allegation involving the named person, alternative arrangements should be sought to ensure that the matter is dealt with by an independent person. (Note: this could be a committee member, director or anyone within the organisation that is in a senior position within the organisation and believed to be independent of the allegations being made).
- The named person should contact the Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS) and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for advice on how to proceed with the immediate situation. Outside of working hours the Emergency Duty Team can give advice and/or in the event of an emergency situation arising, the police.
- The individual who first received/witnessed the concern should make a full written record of what was seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible after observing the incident/receiving the report. This is the 'report of the first account'. It is important that the report is an accurate description. The named person (if appropriate) can support the worker during this process but must not complete the report for the worker. This report must be made available on request from either the police and/or social services. (see above for details)
- Regardless of whether a police and/or social services investigation follows, [Goostrey Parish Council] will ensure that an internal investigation takes place and consideration is given to the operation of disciplinary procedures. This may involve an immediate suspension and/or ultimate dismissal dependant on the nature of the incident.
- [Goostrey Parish Council] will also inform the Charity Commission and report this as a serious incident even if this is an allegation or suspicion as soon as is reasonably possible. This report will outline how the trustees will investigate this and actions taken to prevent this from reoccurring.
- Whistle blowing will not prejudice the position or prospects of [Goostrey Parish Council] staff or volunteers (PHSA 3.3)

3. Bring the concern to the attention of your Safeguarding Lead

It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead to:

- i. Decide without delay on the most appropriate course of action once the allegation or suspicion of abuse has been raised.
- ii. Deal with any immediate needs:
 - a) Ensure that the victim of the alleged abuse is safe
 - b) Ensure that any necessary emergency medical treatment is arranged
 - c) Ensure that no forensic evidence is lost

- iii. If the alleged perpetrator is also a child, ensure that another member of staff/manager is allocated to attend to their needs and ensure that other service users are not put at risk.
- iv. Clarify the facts stated by the member of staff but do NOT in any circumstances discuss the allegation of abuse with the alleged perpetrator or, if possible, the victim.
- v. Check that the circumstances fall within the safeguarding children procedure i.e. meeting the definition of abuse as defined in this Policy and Procedure.
- vi. Address issues of consent and confidentiality, taking care not to promise confidentiality
- vii. A formal referral must be made on the same day as the alert is raised when:
 - a crime has been, could have been, or yet could be committed.
 - there is a suspicion that an abuse has taken place.
 - The allegation involves a child
 - They are unsure if abuse has taken place
- viii. Where a decision is made NOT to refer, the alert must be recorded, with the reasons for the decision not to refer.
- ix. All incidents, allegations of abuse and complaints must be recorded , monitored and available for internal and external audit. (PHSA 2.1, 2.2)

The referral stage

Services for Children and Young People, Children’s Social Care, have a statutory duty under The Children Act 1989 to ensure the welfare of a child. When a child protection referral is made, they have a legal responsibility to investigate and all agencies have a duty to co-operate with those investigations. This may involve talking to the child and their family, and gathering information from other people who know the child. Enquiries may be carried out jointly with the police. Clearly then concerns about children must not be taken lightly.

This involves bringing the concern regarding alleged abuse or potential abuse formally to the attention of the following authorities as appropriate:

- All referrals should be made to: Children’s Social Care Tel: 0300 123 5012 (office hours) or 0300 123 5022 (out of hours).
- The police if you think a crime may have been committed - Tel: 101 and specify it is a safeguarding issue (999 in an emergency).
- The person making the referral should ideally have the following information available; however, the lack of any of this information should not delay the referral:
- The name of the child
- Date of birth and age
- Address and telephone number
- Why the child is considered to be at risk
- Whether the police are aware of the allegation, and whether a police investigation is underway
- If possible, use the Cheshire East Safeguarding referral form

This policy and procedure should be read in conjunction with the following relevant policies:

- Equality and Diversity
- Bullying and Harassment
- Whistleblowing
- Boundaries and Behaviours (PHSA 7.3)
- Safer Recruitment (PHSA 7.2)
- Information Sharing (PHSA 6.1)

Local Safeguarding Boards

The Local Safeguarding Boards are multi-agency organisations that provide strategic leadership for the development of safeguarding policy and practice.

Cheshire East Council: Cheshire East Consultation Service

<http://www.cheshireeastlscb.org.uk>

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually

IMPLEMENTATION

Councillors, Parish Clerk and Staff

MONITORING

The policy will be monitored by the Safeguarding Lead.

POLICY APPROVAL

Council Minute 10.22.11

POLICY REVIEW DUE

October 2024