



LAWFORD PARISH COUNCIL Safeguarding policy and procedure

June 2022

1. Introduction

Lawford Parish Council believes that safeguarding is about taking steps to protect everyone from harm, abuse or neglect. This includes our parish councillors, staff, volunteers and contractors. Included with this policy are other documents:

Appendix 1 – Do and don't's Guidelines when implementing this policy

Appendix 2 – Guidelines for Identifying Abuse

Appendix 3: Guidelines for Responding to Complaints and Alleged or Suspected Incidents

2. Statement

Lawford Parish Council wishes to provide a safe environment for everyone participating in Lawford Parish Council's activities and projects. However, Lawford Parish Council recognises that children and vulnerable adults are at a potentially greater risk from physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect and recognises its obligations to minimise these risks.

3. Persons affected by this policy

- Parish Councillors
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Visitors and contractors

4. Aims

To ensure that all those employed by, or involved with, Lawford Parish Council fully adhere to this policy for the prevention of physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect of the children or vulnerable adults they come into contact with.

4.1 **The Law** To comply with the Children Act of 2004, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Protection of Children Act of 1999 in all legal duties affecting Lawford Parish Council.

4.2 **Projects** To assess and act on all issues of safety and well-being for children and vulnerable adults, and any other participants who may be vulnerable or at risk participating in Lawford Parish Council's projects and activities.

5. Our Policy

5.1 Lawford Parish Council has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

5.2 There are no excuses for not taking all reasonable action to protect adults at risk and children from abuse, exploitation, radicalisation and mistreatment.

5.3 Lawford Parish Council recognises that under the Care Act 2014 it has a duty for the care and protection of adults who are at risk of abuse. It is committed to promoting wellbeing, harm prevention and to responding effectively if concerns are raised.

5.4 The welfare of the child and/ or adult at risk is paramount and all adults have the right to protection from abuse.

5.5 We are committed to working with appropriate agencies including Essex Social Care, Essex Safeguarding Teams and Essex Police to ensure the reporting of abuse is appropriate and Information Sharing guidance.

5.6 We will create an environment where volunteers and staff feel able to raise safeguarding concerns and feel supported with their safeguarding responsibilities

5.7 All volunteers and staff are given an induction to the organisation; which includes awareness of their safeguarding responsibilities and procedures to be followed if they have a safeguarding concern

5.8 Appropriate Safeguarding training is provided to volunteers and staff as part of their induction; and have a safeguarding refresher course every three years.

5.9 All volunteers and staff are required to report any suspected abuse and be aware of the appropriate reporting and support procedure for safeguarding including the reporting of people at risk of radicalisation and extremism.

5.10 All Volunteers and staff must be clear on appropriate behaviour and responses and follow our agreed Code of Conduct/ Behaviour. Where appropriate, failure to maintain standards will be dealt with using Lawford Parish Council's Procedures.

5.11 All volunteers and staff who come into contact with adults at risk of abuse, and children and their families as part of their Lawford Parish Council duties will be alert to possible signs of abuse and consider whether there may be safeguarding concerns. They will discuss their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, to get appropriate support.

5.12 The Designated Lead for safeguarding at Lawford Parish Council is the Parish Clerk.

5.13 The Designated Safeguarding Lead for Lawford Parish Council will fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities in a way that ensures that adults and children are safeguarded from harm. The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for following up and reporting any suspected reports of abuse.

5.14 Appropriate recruitment of volunteers and staff is in place including policies on when to obtain a DBS check

5.15 The Chair of the Parish Council will have leadership responsibility for Lawford Parish Council's safeguarding arrangements

5.16 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Administration Committee.

6 Whistle blowing policy

6.1 Lawford Parish Council encourages employees and volunteers to voice any concerns they may have about abusive or unethical conduct by colleagues. It takes courage to challenge inappropriate behaviour by colleagues. In order to enable this policy and ensure the process is unbiased:

- All concerns are to be reported to the Chair of the Parish Council.
- All concerns will be investigated thoroughly and may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with Lawford Parish Council's disciplinary policy.

6.2 Feedback on the outcome of investigation will be given to all involved (while safeguarding confidentiality for the person raising the concern and the person about whom the concern have been raised). An appeal process will be made available to those unhappy with the outcome of the investigation.

Policy Implementation Notice

This is the policy statement of: **Lawford Parish Council**

The overall and final responsibility for this policy is that of: **Parish Councillors**

Approved by the **Administration Committee**: 18 July 2022

Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to: **The Parish Clerk**

Policy review date: 4 July 2023

Appendix 1

Guidelines for parish councillors, staff, volunteers and other commissioned service providers when working with Children, Young People and Adults (including Vulnerable Adults)

Do's and Don'ts. (Please note this list is not exhaustive.)

DO put this code into practice at all times and ensure all parish councillors, staff and volunteers understand their obligation to share child safeguarding concerns

DO take any allegations or concerns of abuse seriously and follow the reporting protocol

DO treat everyone with dignity and respect and set an example you would wish others to follow

DO treat all young people equally. Show no favouritism.

DO make sure that there is more than one other person present, or at least be within sight and hearing of others at all times

DO respect a young person's right to personal privacy

DO avoid unacceptable situations within a relationship of trust. It is illegal for a person in a position of trust to engage in a sexual relationship with a young person aged between 16 and 18

DO allow young people to talk about any concerns they may have

DO encourage others to challenge any attitudes

DO make everyone aware of the child safeguarding procedures – young people, parents/carers and other helpers

DO remember this code even at sensitive moments e.g. when responding to bullying, bereavement or abuse

DO keep other officials informed of where you are and what you are doing

DO remember someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned

DO NOT trivialise abuse

DO NOT form personal relationships with a young person, that is an abuse of trust

DO NOT permit abusive peer activities for instance bullying

DO NOT engage in inappropriate behaviour or contact; physical, verbal, sexual

DO NOT make suggestive remarks or threats to a young person, even in fun

DO NOT use inappropriate language, writing, phoning, email or internet

DO NOT let allegations, suspicions, or concerns about abuse go unreported

DO NOT promise a young person or vulnerable adult confidentiality.

DO NOT just rely on your good name to protect you

You should:

- **NEVER** Engage in rough or sexually provocative games.
- **NEVER** share a room with a child or vulnerable adult
- **NEVER** permit or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- **NEVER** make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- **NEVER** allow allegations made by a child to go unrecorded or not acted upon
- **NEVER** do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves. If it is necessary to administer First Aid, this should only be carried out with the parent or carer present and with their full understanding and consent.

Appendix 2: Guidelines for Identifying Abuse

We hope that you will never have to deal with an issue of abuse during your work with Lawford Parish Council. But if you are concerned about a child or vulnerable adult you are working with you have a duty to report it

DEFINITIONS – Child Abuse

The term child abuse is used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults and often by those they know and trust. The main types of abuse are listed below, though a child may experience more than one kind at any time in his/her life.

Physical Abuse – Occasions when parents, adults or other children deliberately inflict injuries on a child or knowingly do not prevent such injuries from occurring. This includes assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, restraining someone or only letting them do certain things at certain times, giving children alcohol, the wrong (or no) medication, inappropriate drugs and involving them in activity which disregards the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.

Domestic Abuse- Includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse. It also covers so-called 'honour' based violence.

Emotional Abuse – Occasions when adults fail to show children due care and attention or threaten, use sarcasm, taunt or shout at a child causing him/her to lose self-confidence or self-esteem and become nervous or withdrawn.

Psychological Abuse- This includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, depriving someone of contact with someone else, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, putting pressure on someone to do something, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or support networks.

Neglect – Occasions where adult fail to meet a child's essential needs such as adequate clothing, food, warmth, personal hygiene and medical care. It also includes leaving a child alone without proper supervision, or not ensuring that the child is safe.

Sexual Abuse – Occurs when adults use children to meet their own sexual needs. Examples include forcing a child to take part in sexual activity, fondling, inappropriate touching or exposure to pornographic or other inappropriate material. This also includes suggestions that sexual favours can help (or refusal can hinder) a career.

Abuse of trust – where young people are indoctrinated with attitudes to social, moral, political, ethical and religious views which are unacceptable to the young persons, family and community, or society at large.

Use of computers – in particular where there is Internet and email access steps should be taken to ensure that inappropriate material is not viewed, shared, accessed, downloaded, copied or printed and that young people are properly supervised whilst using the computers. Care should be taken that young people are not revealing personal details in chatrooms and forums.

Financial or material- This includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, putting pressure on someone about their financial arrangements or the misuse or stealing of property and possessions or benefits.

Bullying – bullying can be verbal and physical, delivered by text message or through on-line messaging and via social networking sites, and is also a form of abuse and there is a requirement for all those associated with Lawford Parish Council to ensure that children feel able to report instances of bullying.

Discriminatory- Harassment or insults because of someone's race, gender or gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Modern Slavery- This covers slavery, human trafficking and forced labour.

Organisational- This includes neglect and poor care in an institution or care setting such as a hospital or care home, or if an organisation provides care in someone's home. The abuse can be a one-off incident or repeated, on-going ill treatment.

Identifying Abuse

In some cases a child's disturbed behaviour, or an injury, may suggest that the child has been abused. In many situations, however, the signs will not be clear cut and decisions about what action to take can be difficult.

Important note: it is not the responsibility of those working with a child to decide that abuse is occurring, but it is a responsibility to follow through on any concerns.

Possible signs include:

- Uncharacteristic changes in the child's behaviour, attitude and commitment e.g. becoming quiet and withdrawn, or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
- Bruises and injuries not typical of, for example, taking part in a sporting event or injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- Signs of discomfort and pain.
- The child becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.
- The child loses weight for no apparent reason.
- Nervousness when approached or touched.

- Fear of particular adults – especially those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- The child wishes not to speak with or be near a particular person without a reasonable explanation.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Children who are always alone and unaccompanied and/or are prevented from socializing with other children.
- Children who are reluctant to go home.

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, and the presence of one or more indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place. It may also apply to adults who are vulnerable or otherwise at risk.

DEFINITIONS – Adult Abuse

Physical Abuse May include hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, misuse of restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

Domestic Abuse May include psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so-called “honour” based abuse and forced marriage.

Sexual Abuse May include rape and sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented, or could not consent, or where pressure was applied to secure their consent.

Psychological Abuse May include verbal abuse, emotional abuse, threats, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Financial Abuse May include theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property of inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Modern Slavery May include human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude.

Discriminatory Abuse May include racist or sexist remarks or comments based on a person's impairment, disability, age or illness, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Organisational Abuse Involves the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to adults with care and support needs. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour that amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping. It includes a failure to ensure the necessary safeguards are in place to protect adults and maintain good standards of care in accordance with individual needs, including training of staff, supervision and management, record keeping and liaising with other providers of care.

Neglect May include acts of omission, ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, food and drink and heating.

Self-neglect May include behaviours neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surrounding, includes hoarding.

Other types of abuse

Elder Abuse There are four main types of elder abuse - physical, financial, emotional and neglect.

Honour Based Abuse Honour Based Abuse is an international term used by many cultures for justification of abuse and violence. It is a crime or incident committed in order to protect or defend the family or community 'honour', this may include, forced marriages, honour crimes and genital mutilation.

Radicalisation This can be a type of process that causes someone to adopt radical positions on political or social issues.

Appendix 3: Guidelines for Responding to Complaints and Alleged or Suspected Incidents

Abuse may become apparent in a number of ways:

- A child or adult may tell you.
- A third party may report an incident or may have a strong suspicion
- You may have a suspicion
- You may witness abuse directly

The guidelines below apply equally to adults.

Step 1: Listen and Reassure

- **DO** stay calm – do not rush into inappropriate action.
- **DO NOT** make promises you cannot keep, including promising confidentiality.
- **DO** reassure the child or adult that they are not to blame and confirm that you know how difficult it must be to confide.
- **DO** listen to what the child or adult says and show that you take them seriously
- **DO** keep questions to a minimum – in many cases it may be more appropriate to nod and acknowledge the child's or adult's account.
- **DO** ensure that you clearly understand what the child has said – so that you can pass it on to the appropriate agencies.
- **DO** inform the Safeguarding Lead at Lawford Parish Council or the Chair of Lawford Parish Council immediately – ensuring that you communicate all the information accurately.
- **DO NOT** make the child or adult repeat the story unnecessarily.
- **DO NOT** delay.
- **DO NOT** take sole responsibility for further action

Step 2: Involve the appropriate people

Report the incident, allegation, or suspicion to the Clerk of Lawford Parish Council who is the lead Safeguarding Officer for Lawford Parish Council. Contact details are 01206 395898 or clerk@lawfordpc.org.uk

Step 3: Record

Record what the child or adult has said and/or your concerns legibly and accurately in a Safeguarding Incident Report Form. Details should include:

- The child's or adult's name, address and date of birth.
- Date and time of the incidents and/or nature of allegations.
- Your observations e.g. describe the behaviour and emotional state of the child and/or bruising or other injuries.
- The child's or adult's account – if it can be given – of what has happened.
- Any action that you took as a result of your concerns e.g. comments made to the child, whether the parents/carers have been contacted.
- Record whether you are expressing their own concerns, or passing on those of someone else.
- Sign and date the report.
- Keep a copy of the report.

HOW TO MAKE A REPORT – CHILD ABUSE – CONTACT SOCIAL CARE

Contact Children's Social Care

If a child or young person is in immediate danger, call 999.

If you're worried that a child is being abused or neglected, call **Children's Social Care** on 0345 603 7627.

Out of hours or bank holidays, call the emergency duty team on 0345 606 1212.

You can also report a concern using our [request for support form](#) on our online **Social Care Portal**.

HOW TO MAKE A REPORT – ADULT ABUSE – CONTACT SOCIAL CARE

Raising a concern/enquiry by phone: 0345 603 7630

Out of hours:

- General public - 0345 606 1212
- Statutory organisations – 0300 123 0778

By post to: Social Care Connect, Essex House, 200 The Crescent, Colchester, Essex, CO4 9YQ

Email: businesssupport.adultsovas@essex.gov.uk

Fax: 0345 601 6230