

Child Protection Policy



February 2018

Coxhoe Parish Council's Child Protection Policy

1. Policy statement

Coxhoe Parish Council has a duty of care to safeguard from harm all children visiting Coxhoe Parish Council's premises or using its facilities and services. All children have a right to protection. This Policy will apply to councillors, its employees, its members, its contractors and hirers.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

Coxhoe Parish Council will:

- Follow the appropriate guidelines to select appropriate staff/volunteers and to carry out DBS checks as necessary.
- Ensure the safety and protection of all children through adherence to the Child Protection Policy adopted by Coxhoe Parish Council.

2. Policy aims:

The aim of the Coxhoe Parish Council Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice by:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection;
- Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

3. Key principles of this policy are:

- To ensure that children visiting the Council's premises or using its facilities and services can be protected by setting standards of best practice. This will also ensure that Council staff and volunteers are protected and do not place themselves in an unnecessarily vulnerable position.

4. Good practice guidelines

This section seeks to offer practical guidance to those working at Council premises or engaged in Council events that involve contact with young people to ensure that they and the young people with whom they are working are protected.

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.

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. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. 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.

Practices to be avoided

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge or the child's

parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

- • Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.

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.

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

Staff/volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.

Advice for Sporting Organisations

All sporting organisations visiting Coxhoe Parish Council's premises or using its facilities/services 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.

Use of photographic/filming equipment at sporting events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. All clubs should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Club Child Protection Officer.

Videoing as a coaching aid: There is no intention to prevent club coaches and teachers using 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.

The sale, purchase and consumption of alcohol involving under 18s

- It is a criminal offence to sell alcohol to a person under the age of 18 years.
- It is an offence for an adult to purchase or attempt to purchase alcohol for consumption by an under 18.
- An accompanied 16 or 17 year old may drink beer, wine or cider at a meal table. They may not buy the alcohol for themselves – it must be purchased by an adult. This does not apply to bar snacks.
- It is an offence for under 18s to sell alcohol unless each and every sale is specifically approved by a responsible person on the premises (i.e. by the designated premises supervisor).
- The following documents may be required as proof of age:
 - A European Union photograph driving licence.
 - A valid passport.
 - A Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS) accredited proof-of-age scheme card with hologram.

The Parish Council before selling alcohol will endeavour at all times to:

- Look carefully at the person attempting to buy alcohol.
- If they look under 18 ask for photographic proof-of-age documents.
- Check the document is acceptable and has not been tampered with.
- ***If the person is deemed to be under 18 they will firmly but politely refuse the sale giving a reason for the refusal.***

The Parish Council will ensure that all children under the age of 16 are accompanied by an adult on any licensed premises between the hours of midnight and 5.00am when open.

Reducing the risk of drug activity

The Parish Council will have a zero tolerance policy to ensure that customers and staff are aware that action will be taken if illegal drug activity is discovered. All those working on licensed premises will be constantly vigilant and take action to prevent illegal drug activity.

Police advice will be sought immediately any drug activity is suspected.

The Parish Council will consider the following steps in relation to drugs awareness:

- *Provide well-lit area and good lighting in dark corners or corridors.*
- *Ensure all tables and customer areas are visible to staff and managers where practical.*
- *Employ Security Industry Authority (SIA) registered door staff where necessary.*
- *Refuse service to anyone suspected of being involved in the sale or use of illegal drugs.*
- *Have well-lit and monitored car parking areas and outside seating areas.*
- *Create, communicate and enforce a strict zero tolerance policy towards illegal drugs.*
- *Educate staff on drug awareness – particularly in recognising the signs, types of behaviour and paraphernalia.*
- *Be vigilant and watch out for gangs or groups of people acting in a strange manner.*
- *Check premises frequently, particularly toilet areas.*

Responding to complaints and alleged or suspected incidents.

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

a) 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.*

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.*

b) Recording information

A book specifically for child protection issues will be used and updated when necessary. The book will be kept in the Council office and can be accessed through the Clerk.

c) Informing the appropriate authorities

If abuse has been disclosed to you or you suspect that it is happening you must inform a member of Council staff as soon as possible. You must then complete a disclosure form and ensure that the procedure set out overleaf is followed.

Important points to note:

- a) For the purposes of this procedure the term 'Council staff' encompasses both staff working within the Council and also those who represent the Council in relation to any event involving contact with children.
- b) It is not the Council staff member and/or volunteer's responsibility to determine if abuse is occurring but to report their concerns.
- c) If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of Council staff or a volunteer these will be fully investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedures.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact social services or the police direct, or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111.

This Procedure was approved at the meeting of the parish council on 7th February 2018.

Signed:

(Chair)

Date:

Staff and Volunteers: please sign and date to show that you have understood the policy

Name: _____

Job Title: _____

Date: _____

Signed: **Dated:**