

WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL

CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULTS PROTECTION POLICY

Policy Statement

Westerham Town Council is firmly committed to practices that protect children and vulnerable adults from harm.

Staff in this Council recognize and accept our responsibilities to develop the awareness of the issues that may cause children or vulnerable adults harm.

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identify, have the right to protection from abuse.
- Any suspicion or allegation of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff working for the Town Council have a responsibility to report concerns to the Town Clerk or Chairman.
- Any local amenity or volunteer group that comes under the mantle of Town Council are aware and comply with a Child Protection Policy.
- Children's' Social Services will be immediately informed if any child reports or suggests they may be the victim of Child Abuse.

Good child protection practice protects not only children, but also the staff who may encounter them. This is called a safeguarding culture.

The reason for creating this procedure is:-

- The Town Council is aware that Child Abuse can occur anywhere and wants to ensure this organization is as safe as possible for children and its employees.
- Any reports of Child Abuse may be dealt with in a professional, effective manner.

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy a Child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children's Act 1989). However, this policy may also be used to protect vulnerable adults.

The scope of this policy will include:-

- Children undertaking work experience,
- Children participating in 'take a Child to Work days', an event promoted by some schools for children of all ages to spend a day at a parents workplace.

- Children attending events in the Council chamber, including activities under the control of other groups.
- Children present at Russell House.

Adults aged 18 and over have the potential to be vulnerable (either temporarily or permanently) for a variety of reasons and in different situations.

An adult may be vulnerable if he/she:

- Has a learning or physical disability
- Has a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs
- Has a reduction in physical or mental capacity
- Is in the receipt of any form of healthcare
- Is detained in custody
- Is receiving community services because of age, health or disability
- Is living in sheltered or residential care home
- Is unable, for any other reason, to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Good Practices

All personnel should adhere to the following principles, and ensure that all children and vulnerable adults: –

- All current Health and Safety Legislation applicable to any activity in which they will participate are strictly adhered to. This may include restricted or prohibited use of equipment.
- Nominate an Officer to be the first point of contact for them whilst in the care of the Town Council.
- They enjoy and benefit from any work experience with the Town Council.
- They are treated fairly and not subjected to bullying.
- Personnel are good role models and do not drink alcohol or smoke when working with them.
- Treat them all, this means giving both the more and less able similar attention, time, respect and dignity.
- Respect the developmental stage of each person and structure any tasks allocated to them accordingly.
- Wherever possible conduct any training and meetings in an open environment, avoiding one to one contact in unobserved situations. If one to one meetings are unavoidable, ensure office doors are kept open at all times.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with them.
- Be aware of any medical conditions, food allergies, existing injuries and medicines that should be taken at specific times.

- Ensure a qualified first-aider or emergency medical support is always available , and they are aware of emergency procedures in the event of a fire alarm sounding.
- Any injury or incident is accurately recorded.
- Comply with any rules/recommended by a school or parent.
- Be totally sure that any instructions given to them are appropriate and understandable.

If a members of staff is concerned that a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, or requires immediate medical treatment, they should call the police and/or emergency medical services on 999 straight away.

Unacceptable Practices

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with them away from others.
- Never engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Never allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Never allow them to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Never make sexual suggestive comments to them, even in fun.
- Never reduce them to tears as a form of control.
- Never allow allegations made by them to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Never do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves.
- Never give them gifts of any nature.
- Never indicate to them that any activity or discussion is secret and should not be disclosed to anyone else.
- Never take photographs, videos or use any other photographic device to record images of any child.

Observations

If any member of staff notices a child/vulnerable adult exhibits signs of physical injury, such as cuts and bruising, scratches etc. where a satisfactory explanation cannot be given, this should immediately be notified to the Town Clerk and recorded.

Disciplinary Procedures

Any employee considered to be behaving inappropriately toward any child will be subject to immediate suspension and disciplinary procedures currently in place with the Town Council.

Any employee with concerns that they may be mistakenly reported for or suspected of any behaviour that may be deemed appropriate, must request

an immediate interview with the Appropriate Officer, who will instigate the appropriate investigations for the protection of that employee.

June 2015

Reviewed 29th November 2024

REVIEWED ANNUALLY

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