

HUGHENDEN PARISH COUNCIL - CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

(With effect from 9th September 2008, as RESOLVED at the Council Meeting on 9th September 2008)

Hughenden Parish Council owns land and maintains playgrounds throughout the Parish. These land assets are open to the public, including children, at all times. The Parish Council has public liability insurance but people use the facilities at their own risk. Parents and carers are expected to supervise their children at all times. The Parish Council does not currently organize events for children.

Introduction

We believe that children and young people have the right:

- to have fun
- to be safe
- to live their lives to the fullest potential
- to have the opportunity to participate in and enjoy any activity
- to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be protected

The Council, as represented by its members, officers, contractors, volunteers and agents, will take all reasonable steps to preserve the rights of young people as stated above while engaged in Council activities or attending Council venues.

Hughenden Parish Council recognises its responsibilities under the terms of the Children Act 2004, earlier Children's Acts and other relevant legislation to make arrangements for ensuring that its functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

The Council aims to do this by:

- Raising an awareness throughout the Council and beyond of Council's beliefs.
- Requiring all working on behalf of the Council to adhere to these beliefs.
- Creating a safe and healthy environment within all its services, avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur.
- Requiring staff and volunteers who work with children and young people to be subject to the appropriate level Criminal Records Bureau check.
- Implementing the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures where allegations of breaches are made by its staff or members.

Procedures

These procedures inform staff, elected members and volunteers of what actions they should take if they have concerns or encounter a case of alleged or suspected child abuse.

Responding To Concerns and Allegations:

It is the duty of any member, or council employee or volunteer to report any concerns about a child being subject to abuse, receiving a disclosure or being aware of Members, or colleagues behaving in an inappropriate manner. All reports should be treated as confidential and with respect to the person raising the concern regardless of the outcome.

In general there are 3 situations that staff, elected members and volunteers may need to respond to a concern or case of alleged or suspected abuse:

1. Responding to a child or young person disclosing abuse, i.e. they make an allegation of abuse.
2. Responding to allegations or concerns about a member of staff, elected member or volunteer from your own observation or due to a complaint.
3. Responding to allegations or concerns about any other person, i.e. parent, carer, other service user.

In the case of an emergency where a child is in danger phone 999 immediately.

Record in writing all the details that you are aware of and what was said, using the child or young person's own words, immediately. In your record you should include the following:

- a) The date and time.
- b) The child or young persons name, address and date of birth.
- c) The nature of the allegation.
- d) Your observations – a description of the child or young person's behaviour, physical and emotional state and any visible injuries.
- e) Exactly what the child or young person said and what you said. Record the child or young persons account of what has happened as closely as possible.
- f) Sign and date what you have recorded.

Do not ask questions, other than the child or young persons name, address and date of birth. Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing in telling you.

Contact local Social Services or the Police without delay and follow their guidance.

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Social Services, or the Police, must be the ones to inform parents or guardian, and the person about whom allegations are being made.

Recorded information should be handed over to Social Services or the Police and any copies stored in a secure place with limited access in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Photography

Hughenden Parish Council uses CCTV cameras at some of its sites in order to monitor, and try to eliminate, anti social or criminal behaviour. Such films are only viewed by Council staff and Councillors, or by the police, in the Council Offices; they may be used as evidence in court.

All photography should be made in public where young people are involved. The child or young person should be happy with having their picture taken.

The names of children or young people should not be used in photographs or video footage, unless with the express permission of the child or young person's parent.

There may be occasions when photographs of groups of children are taken at public events, eg: at the opening of a playground. Permission to use such images in the press, in village magazines, or on the website would not normally be expressly sought; this is common practice.

Contractors

A copy of this Policy is given to contractors at the commencement of their working on the Council's behalf. Contractors are therefore aware of, and should abide by, the Council's aims and procedures outlined in this policy.

Sources of Information / Support

Wycombe District Council

Designated Person: Jeremy Beake
Tel: 01494-421858

NSPCC

Information for children and adults
www.nspcc.org.uk/html/home/needadvice.htm
Tel: 0808-800-5000

South Area Care and Protection Team (BCC)

Tel. 01494 475037 or 475211

ChildLine

Free helpline for children and young people in the UK. Children and young people can call to talk about any problem.
www.childline.org.uk
Tel: 0800-1111

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org
Tel: 08457-909090