

1. Introduction

Puddletown Area Parish Council is committed to providing a safe environment for children. The purpose of this policy is to safeguard children who come into contact with representatives of the council and to facilitate the best possible professional practice from the council, its staff, elected members and volunteers.

2. Policy Statement

Puddletown Area Parish Council is committed, wherever possible, to facilitating and maintaining a safe environment for children enabling them to enjoy the play area, open spaces and any activities provided by or on behalf of the Parish Council, while ensuring that their safety is respected.

3. The Aim of the Policy

To provide a safe and healthy environment for those children who come into direct contact with the council's staff, parish councillors and volunteers while on council property.

4. Policy Objective

To contribute to the personal safety of all children using the facilities and resources of the Parish Council, through actively promoting awareness, good practice, and sound procedures.

5. Implementation of Policy

In order to implement the child protection policy Puddletown Area Parish Council will undertake to:

- a. Promote a safe and supportive environment for all children in open and indoor spaces managed by the Council insofar as it is possible to promote a safe and supportive environment.
- b. Ensure that all staff of Puddletown Area Parish Council and elected members are aware of the importance of child protection issues and their responsibilities arising from the policy.
- c. Ensure that any activity carried out by staff and elected members of Puddletown Area Parish Council which involve any exposure to children is sound in terms of child protection as regards personnel, practices, and premises.
- d. All meetings/consultations involving children to be open to all and held in a public place.
- e. A minimum of two adults to be present at all times during the meeting/consultation.

6. Allegations against Employees/Councillors/Volunteers

If a child, parent, or guardian makes allegations to the Parish Council against any person working for or acting on behalf of the Parish Council it will be recorded by the Parish Clerk. On receipt of the complaint the Parish Clerk will contact The Chairman & Vice Chairman and then Dorset Council Social Services and/or the Police (if appropriate), to appraise them of the situation.

The Parish Clerk should inform the person against whom the complaint has been made as soon as possible. If the allegation appears to be a case where to do so might prejudice a criminal investigation, this will require consultation with the Police to ascertain the appropriate procedure. The Course of action to be taken in relation to any allegation will be decided by the nature of such an allegation, and if it is of a criminal nature, upon the advice of the Police.

In the event that the allegation is made against the Parish Clerk, the above procedures will be dealt with by the Chairman of the Parish Council.

7. Reporting of Concerns

Those working on Parish Council activities have a duty to ensure that any suspicion, incident, allegation, or other manifestation relating to child protection is reported to the Parish Clerk.

The Parish Clerk will take appropriate action and report to the Police and/or Social Services, if it is deemed to be the necessary course of action.

8. Review of this Policy

The Parish Council shall review this policy, its effectiveness, and its implementation four yearly. It will ensure that employees and statutory authorities are consulted as and when appropriate.