

Etchingam Parish Council



SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1 The legal duty to safeguard children and vulnerable adults is set out in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (England and Wales). Etchingam Parish Council is committed to taking all reasonable precautions to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults who use its services and promotes a safeguarding culture and environment. At the same time the Council will protect its staff from the risk of unfounded allegations.

1.2 The Council will seek to implement its policy on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults by:

- Recognising that the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount and that, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religious belief they have the right to protection from abuse;
- Ensuring that all suspicions of, and allegations of, abuse are taken seriously and investigated swiftly;
- Arranging for all allegations to be dealt with independently and not by staff or Members of the Council, and sharing information about concerns with appropriate agencies;
- Ensuring that there is a clear complaint procedure in place that can be used if there are any concerns;
- Undertaking regular inspections of children's facilities to ensure that they are safe to use;
- Ensuring that all staff, volunteers and Members are aware of this policy and promote good practice.

2. Definitions

2.1 For the purpose of this policy a child is anyone under the age of 18 (as defined in The Children Act 1989). The main forms of abuse covered by the policy and defined in the Act can be categorised as Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Neglect.

2.2 A vulnerable adult is someone over the age of 18 who is 'in need of community care services by reasons of mental health or other disability, age or illness' and 'is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or is unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'. It should be noted that disability or age alone does not signify that an adult is vulnerable.

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3. Taking photographs

- 3.1 Etchingam Parish Council welcomes and encourages children and vulnerable adults to participate in activities, events and schemes organised by the Council, and is fully committed to their safety and wellbeing at all times.
- 3.2 Children and vulnerable adults have a right to be safe and feel secure in the activities, events and schemes that they and their parents, guardians or carers, choose to take part in.
- 3.3 Camera phones, digital cameras and video create the opportunity for misuse. Therefore, consent from an appropriate parent, guardian or carer must be obtained wherever reasonably practicable before any child or vulnerable adult is photographed or filmed by any staff member, volunteer or Council Member at any Council activity, event or scheme (Appendix 1).
- 3.4 The Parish Council commits to only using images of children and vulnerable adults showing them in a positive light, and will not use any image associated with negative, distressing or sensitive issues.
- 3.5 Children who are in special circumstances, e.g. in the care of the local authority, under any kind of court of care order, on Child Protection registers or in open adoption should not be photographed or filmed under any circumstances.

4. Procedure for dealing with alleged abuse

- 4.1 Where, during the course of normal work, a Council Member, member of staff or volunteer is approached by a child or vulnerable adult seeking help:
- Stay calm, approachable and open to what they have to say;
 - Listen to them carefully without interrupting;
 - Treat any allegations seriously and reassure the child or vulnerable adult;
 - Acknowledge that you understand how difficult this might be for them to say what they are saying;
 - Reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling someone;
 - Act in a way which clearly indicates that you believe what is being said and do not make the child or vulnerable adult feel responsible for the abuse;
 - Don't show any shock or disgust;
 - Don't ask any leading questions or make any comments about the alleged abuser;

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- Explain who you are and that you will have to tell other people about what has happened;
- Write everything down – dates, times, facts, observations, verbatim speech if possible. Ensure the child or vulnerable adult’s name, address and parent/guardian details are taken.
- Seek medical attention if that seems required.
- Many reports will be minor in nature – it is important to treat them with due seriousness in case there may already be existing information concerning a child or vulnerable adult.
- Don’t make any promises you can’t keep.

5. Follow-up action

5.1 Once the Parish Clerk or Chairman has received information regarding possible abuse, they should pass this immediately to:

East Sussex County Council
Duty and Assessment Team (Hastings & Rother)
Ground Floor, Ocean House
87-89 London Road
St Leonards-on-Sea
East Sussex TN37 6DH
Telephone: 01424 724144

5.2 If urgent help is needed outside of office hours, contact the Emergency Duty Service for East Sussex and Brighton and Hove on 01273 335905 or 01273 335906.

5.3 If the child is 12 years old and over, the Youth Support Team should also be contacted on 01424 726101. The police should also be contacted.

6. Allegations against staff, volunteers or Members of Council

6.1 The Council will protect its staff, volunteers and Members from risk of unfounded allegations. However, if an allegation is made then;

- The person receiving the complaint will contact the Parish Clerk, who will immediately inform the Chairman.
- The Parish Clerk will contact Social Services. If there is a criminal allegation, the police will also be informed.

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- The Parish Clerk will inform the person whom an allegation has been made against, as soon as possible, but only after consultation with the police, so as to avoid prejudicing any criminal investigation.

- If the matter is not a criminal allegation, the Council will conduct an investigation. The person who has had the allegation made against shall be afforded ample opportunity to answer such allegation at an interview conducted by the Parish Clerk and Chairman, who will either recommend :
 - To treat the matter as a disciplinary issue (misconduct or gross misconduct) with associated rights of appeal, or
 - To dismiss the allegations as unfounded, or to make a non-disciplinary recommendation as appropriate.

Adopted 15 September 2016

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Appendix 1 – Image consent form

Etchingam Parish Council sometimes takes photographs or video footage for publicity purposes. These images may appear in our printed publications and publicity materials, on our website, or both.

We may also send the images to the news media, who may use them in printed publications and on their website, and store them in their archive. They may also syndicate the photos to other media for possible use, either in printed publications, or on websites, or both. When we submit photographs and information to the media, we have no control on when, where, if or how they will be used.

As part of our commitment to safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, we require the permission of an appropriate parent, guardian or carer prior to the photographing or filming of any child or vulnerable adult.

The images we take will be of activities, events or scheme that show the child or vulnerable adult in a positive light. The images will not be associated with negative, distressing or sensitive issues to do with an individual's welfare or that may cause offence or embarrassment. Children who are at risk or cannot have their photograph taken for legal or social reasons, will not be photographed or filmed.

Please note that our websites can be viewed throughout the world, not just in the United Kingdom where UK law applies. In giving your consent, you understand that the photos may be used in both printed and electronic form.

We will take all reasonable measures to ensure the images are used solely for the purposes for which they are intended. However we cannot guarantee this and take no responsibility for the way images are used by other websites or publishers, or for any consequences arising from publication.

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To give your consent, please answer the questions below, then sign and date the form where shown and fill in any other relevant information.

1. May we use your image(s), or those of your child(ren) if under 18, in our publicity material, including printed publications, video recordings and on our website (delete if this does not apply)?

Yes / No

2. We sometimes send publicity material about our services, including photographs where appropriate, to the news media and partner organisations, who may use the image in printed and/ or electronic form and then store it in their archive. Can we use your photograph, or your child's, in this way?

Yes / No

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Print Name: _____

Relationship to child or vulnerable adult: _____

Please print your child's/children's name(s) clearly:

Child 1: _____

Child 2: _____

Child 3: _____

Child 4: _____

Child 5: _____

FOR INTERNAL USE

Event and location:

Photographer's name:

Contact details for person photographed (if needed):