

Tidenham Parish Council
Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy

Adopted 8th December 2021 – 2021/22 Page 26 Item 19.

Tidenham Parish Council will work with children, parents and the community to ensure we support children's rights and create and maintain the safest possible environment for children.

We do this by:

- Recognising that all children have the right to freedom from abuse and harm
- Promoting joint working with parents and carers in the interest of children's welfare
- Following safe recruitment procedures which ensure that staff are carefully selected, vetted and have the relevant qualifications and experience.
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of and accept responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of a child
- Designating a Child Protection Officer (DCP) who takes specific responsibility for children's protection, safety and well-being
- Supporting all staff in bringing concerns to the Designated Child Protection Officer
- Responding quickly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse
- Providing parents, carers, and children with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have. This includes having knowledge of, and ensuring children have access to their preferred methods of communication and that staff are trained in a variety of communication tools.
- Adopting positive behaviour management strategies which are non-violent and do not impose humiliation
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the organisations Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Working in partnership with external organisations and professionals to ensure that children are protected

Safeguarding Disabled Children

Any child with a disability is by definition a 'child in need' under s17 of the Children Act 1989. Disabled children can be more vulnerable to significant harm through physical, sexual, emotional abuse and / or neglect than children who do not have a disability. The presence of multiple disabilities increases the risk of abuse and neglect.

Safeguards for disabled children are essentially the same as for non-disabled children. Particular attention should be paid to promoting a high level of awareness of the risks of harm, high standards

of practice, and awareness of barriers to communication which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening.

Where there are concerns about the welfare of a disabled child, they should be acted upon in accordance with the guidance, in the same way as with any other child. We recognise that children with disabilities are at greater risk of abuse for several reasons, including increased need for practical assistance and physical dependency, increased need for intimate care provided by a number of different carers, communication difficulties and lack of access to appropriate communication methods. Staff members who work with children will:

- Have important information about individual children's presentation, needs and preferred methods of communication.
- Be particularly sensitive to changes in children's behaviour that may indicate possible abuse
- Will receive appropriate training in order to meet individual children's needs

Procedures

All staff and volunteers should be familiar with the leaflet What to do if you're worried a child is being abused. (HM Government, March 2015)

Named person's role and responsibilities

It is the role of the Designated Child Protection Person (DCP) to act as a source of support and guidance on all matters of child protection and safeguarding within the setting.

Everyone in the organisation should know who the Designated Child Protection Person (DCP) is and how to contact them.

It is not the role of the Designated Child Protection Person to decide whether a child has been abused or not. This is the task of Children's Social Services who have the legal responsibility. But it is the responsibility of the Designated Child Protection Person to ensure that concerns are shared and appropriate action taken.

The designated member of staff is responsible for:

- Liaising with the Children's Social Care
- Ensuring that all staff receive appropriate child protection training so that they are up to-date with current legislation, policy and practice and can respond sensitively and appropriately to any child protection concerns.
- Ensuring that all staff new to the setting receive induction training to enable them to understand and adhere to the setting's policies
- Ensuring that child protection referrals are made using the format laid out by GCSE
- Ensuring the setting's child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are maintained, up-to-date and are disseminated and adhered to by all staff

Understanding and identifying abuse and neglect

The four main categories of abuse are physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms including hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Physical abuse can also occur outside of the family environment.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It can cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child. It involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during

pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. This could be when a child's/young person's personal or intimate requirements are ignored, not ensuring children/young people are safe, or exposure to undue cold, heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

Bullying

Bullying can also be a category of abuse. Bullying is the abuse and/or intimidation by a person, people or an organisation against another or others. It may be a specific act, or it may be institutional. It is an abuse of a perceived power relationship. Children can also bully other children. Bullying may include verbal abuse and intimidation, acts of physical or sexual abuse and coercion, e-bullying, through texting, filming on mobiles and posting on social networks. Whatever its form it is unacceptable. It must be challenged and appropriately addressed.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is defined by the Home Office as: 'Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling*, coercive** or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

**Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.*

***Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.*

This definition includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

All agencies need to work together to identify and protect these children/young people. It has been widely understood for some time that coercive control is a core part of domestic violence and it is important to recognise coercive control as a complex pattern of overlapping and repeated abuse perpetrated within a context of power and control.

The main characteristic of domestic violence is that the behaviour is intentional and is calculated to exercise power and control within a relationship. Seeing or overhearing violence to another person in the home has adverse effects on a child's development and welfare. Unborn children are also at increased risk; domestic violence is a prime cause of miscarriage, still birth, premature birth, foetal psychological damage, foetal physical injury and foetal death.

Children of all ages living with a parent, most often the mother, who is experiencing domestic violence, are vulnerable to significant harm through physical, sexual, emotional abuse and / or neglect.

The legal definition of significant harm includes "the harm that children suffer by seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, particularly in the home".

Professionals should apply the GCSE guidance to all situations of domestic violence, for example, where it is perpetrated by women or girls against men and boys, within same sex relationships and from a child.

Professionals should be aware of the possibility that teenage girls could be experiencing violence within intimate partner relationship.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The World Health Organisation defines FGM as: "all procedures (not operations) which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons"

FGM is a criminal offence in the UK. It is also illegal to take a child abroad to undergo FGM. A child for whom FGM is planned is at risk of significant harm through physical and emotional abuse.

Where a child is thought to be at risk of FGM, practitioners need to act quickly before the child is abused through the FGM procedure in the UK or taken abroad to undergo the procedure.

Spirit Possession or Witchcraft

Spirit possession is when parents, families and the child believe that an evil force has entered a child and is controlling them; the belief includes the child being able to use the evil force to harm others.

A child may suffer emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect if they are labelled and treated as being possessed with an evil spirit. Significant harm may occur when an attempt is made to 'exorcise' or 'deliver' the evil spirit from the child. Dismissing the belief may be harmful to the child involved.

Forced Marriage

Forced marriage, as distinct from a consensual arranged one, is a marriage conducted without the full consent of both parties and where duress is a factor. Duress cannot be justified on religious or cultural grounds. A child who is being forced into marriage is at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Suspensions that a child may be forced into marriage include: A family history of older siblings leaving education early and marrying early; depressive behaviour including self-harming and attempted

suicide; being kept at home by their parents; being unable to complete their education; a child always being accompanied including to school and doctors' appointments; a child talking about an upcoming family holiday that they are worried about; a child directly disclosing that they are worried they will be forced to marry.

Where a suspicion or allegation of forced marriage or intended forced marriage is raised, there may be only one opportunity to speak to a potential victim, so an appropriate initial response is vital. Professionals should not minimize the potential risk of harm or attempt to be a mediator.

Professionals should see the child immediately, on their own, in a secure and private place and contact the named child protection person at Tidenham Parish Council.

Honour Based Violence

The Metropolitan Police definition of so-called honour-based violence is: 'a crime or incident, which has or may be committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community'. Honour based violence cuts across all cultures and communities.

The perceived immoral behaviour which could precipitate a murder include: Inappropriate make-up or dress; the existence of a boyfriend; kissing or intimacy in a public place; rejecting a forced marriage; pregnancy outside of marriage; being a victim of rape; interfaith relationships; leaving a spouse or seeking divorce.

A child who is at risk of honour-based violence is at significant risk of physical harm (including being murdered) and/or neglect and may also suffer significant emotional harm through the threat of violence or witnessing violence directed towards a sibling or other family member.

Murders in the name of 'so-called honour' are often the culmination of a series of events over a period and are planned. These include: House arrest and excessive restrictions; denial of access to the telephone, internet, passport and friends; threats to kill; pressure to go abroad. There tends to be a degree of premeditation, family conspiracy and a belief that the victim deserved to die.

When receiving a disclosure from a child, professionals should recognise the seriousness / immediacy of the risk of harm. Professionals should not minimize the potential risk of harm or attempt to be a mediator. Professionals should see the child immediately, on their own, in a secure and private place and contact the agency's named child protection person.

Vulnerability of Disabled Children

Research indicates that children with special educational needs or disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse. This may be for the following reasons:

- Attitudes and assumptions can lead to the denial or failure to report abuse
- Reluctance to challenge carers – misplaced empathy
- Seeing abuse as attributable to the stress and difficulties of caring for a disabled child
- Beliefs that abuse does not impact on disabled children in the same way

- Double standards – unsatisfactory situations accepted for disabled children
- Dependency – exposure to a wide range of carers for personal and intimate care
- Isolation – easier for abuse and neglect to remain hidden
- Lack of participation and choice in decision making – disempowered and less likely to complain
- Especially vulnerable to bullying and intimidation
- Behaviours misconstrued as part of child’s disability
- Communication barriers – may make it difficult to tell others what is happening
- Judgements made about a child’s ability to communicate not based on accurate information and specialist advice
- Child’s preferred method of communication not recognised / equipment and / or facilitation not available
- Communication aids don’t contain the necessary words to help a child describe an experience of abuse

Procedures to Follow if a Child is Suspected to be at Risk of Harm

We have a statutory duty to notify agencies if we have a concern about children’s safety and welfare (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018).

- Where there is a concern about a child’s welfare or wellbeing or a concern that a child is in need of protection, this should be recorded on the concern form and then passed on to the DCP or DDCP for action (or if unavailable then seek advice from Children’s Social Care)
- These running records should be kept securely in the child’s file
- All staff and volunteers are aware that they must report concerns immediately
- All records of concerns, emails, notes of phone conversations and actions are filed confidentially and securely in the child’s file
- Staff know that when they have concerns about a child’s welfare they need to:
 - Be sensitive
 - Talk it over with one of the Designated Members of Staff
- Focus on the needs of the child – their physical and emotional welfare
- The GSCE flowchart for ‘Child protection process’ and this Safeguarding Policy is accessible to all parents and carers on site.
- Concerns will be discussed with parents unless this would put the child at further risk of serious harm

- Unless we are advised otherwise by Children’s Social Care the recording forms will be shared with parents

Managing a ‘Disclosure’

Staff should:

- Stay calm and listen to the child
- Ask questions for clarification only. Avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer
- Consider how to explain to the child about our policies and procedures so that they know what is going to happen
- Tell them who you are going to tell so that they can be made safe – children may fear that what they have said will be passed on to everyone and they need to know that this will not be the case
- Control expressions of panic or shock
- Use the child’s language or vocabulary
- Offer comfort bearing in mind the age and needs of the child
- If the child has disclosed sexual abuse, ask them when it happened but nothing more. Whether a child is asked this question will depend upon the child’s age and understanding
- Tell them that they were right to tell you and it was not their fault and they are not bad
- Do not be tempted to give false reassurances to the child but tell them that you will do your best to protect or help them
- As soon as possible take care to record in writing what was said using the child’s own words. Record the date, time, setting, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and other people present. Sign and date the record
- Record any subsequent events and actions
- It is not your responsibility to decide if a child has been abused. Any disclosure must be raised with the Designated Child Protection Person.

Children can only be interviewed once and this interview must be conducted by a trained police officer and social worker under Home Office ‘Achieving Best Evidence’ guidance. If a child has already been interviewed, it means that the police may not be able to pursue the matter.

A child may recall former abuse once in a safe situation. Although they may be under no current threat to their safety, any disclosure must be raised with the Designated Child Protection Person and followed through appropriately.

You may also have concerns about a child's welfare where there has not been any disclosure or allegation. In the best interests of the child / young person, these concerns should be raised with the Designated Child Protection Person and followed through appropriately.

Recording and Reporting

Recording is a tool of professional accountability and is central to safeguarding and protecting children. It is not always possible to know whether a small or vague concern held today may increase as the days or weeks pass and later form the substance of a child protection referral. For this reason it is vital that concerns are recorded accurately so that they can be monitored and emerging patterns noticed.

Inappropriate Behaviour by Staff

All staff must be vigilant in relation to inappropriate behaviour displayed by members of staff, or any other person working with the children. Examples include inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual roles and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images. Staff should behave in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Training

All members of staff will regularly access appropriate safeguarding training (depending on their level of responsibility) as advised by the GSCE and ensure their knowledge is up to date on safeguarding issues. Tidenham Parish Council will ensure that the training made available will enable staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in a timely and appropriate way.

Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children. For example, inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual roles and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images.

Safer Recruitment

Safe recruitment and selection practice is vital to safeguarding and protecting children.

- All staff and volunteers are carefully selected. Tidenham Parish Council recruitment procedures are in line with the GSCE safer recruiting guidelines.
- DBS checks are carried out in accordance with legislation for all staff, student on placements, volunteers and agency supply workers before they can work with us.
- DBS disclosures are recorded in staff files.
- All new members of staff, volunteers, students on placement and agency staff complete the induction process and sign to agree they have understood our policies, procedures and basic safeguarding practices.

Responding to Allegations Made Against a Member of Staff/Volunteer

Any allegation made against a professional must be shared with the DCP immediately. Staff members and the DCP will follow the Whistleblowing Policy outlined by Tidenham Parish Council.

All staff have a duty to protect children from abuse and keep children safe. Wanting to support a colleague or finding it difficult to believe what you have seen or heard must come second to that.

- If any worker is concerned that no action is being taken, it is their responsibility to report the matter directly to the LADO.
- It is the responsibility of all staff to share concerns about the actions or attitudes of colleagues with the DCP/Council Clerk who will deal with the concerns appropriately
- Staff must give management details of any incident, order, determination, conviction or any other possible issue which may impact on their suitability to work with children.
- If any such event should lead to disqualification appropriate action will be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of children in the setting.

Children Harming Other Children

It is part of our duty of care that we make sure children are protected from harm from other children.

If you think that a child is targeting another child, it is important to raise this with the DCP immediately.

In recording and reporting incidents it is important that the identity of the child that did the hurting is not disclosed. This is part of our duty of confidentiality to all children and families. If a parent asks who has hurt their child, show understanding of their upset, anger or pain but explain that we are not able to share this information.

E-safety and Use of Digital Devices

Our aim is to:

- Protect children and young people who receive services provided by Tidenham Parish Council and who make use of information technology (such as mobile phones, games consoles and the internet) as part of their involvement with us
- Provide staff and volunteers with the principles that guide our approach to e-safety
- Protect professionals
- Ensure that, as an organisation, we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use information technology

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the children/young people who come into contact with our services is paramount and governs our approach to the use and management of information communications technologies
- Mobile phones and digital devices can present several problems when not used appropriately
- Phones and personal devices can allow internet access and bypass the centre security settings and filtering
- Mobile phones with integrated cameras could lead to child protection, bullying and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images of children or staff.

Cameras

It is not the intention to prevent parents/carers from taking pictures, but to ensure that photographic practices are monitored and to reduce the risks of inappropriate photography/filming.

No one is permitted to photograph or record images in the following areas:

- Changing areas
- Toilet areas
- Children /young people can only be photographed if permission of parents/carers is given
- Those taking photos, including staff/volunteers must identify themselves
- Staff should not use personal devices such as mobile phones or cameras to take photos or videos of the children and will only use designated equipment for this purpose.
- Photographers will be required to have formal identification which must always be worn
- Children's/young people's images will not be used for promotional or press releases unless parents/carers have consented
- Unsupervised access to children/young people or one-to-one photo sessions are prohibited
- Photo sessions outside the organisation/organisation's activities or at a child's/young person's home are not allowed
- Personal details which might make a child/young person vulnerable, for example, address, email address, phone number, should never be revealed.

Mobile phones

- Parents, carers and visitors are requested not to use their mobile phones while on premises where designated youth activities are taking place. Staff will remind parents of the policy by asking them to leave the area/ building and take calls elsewhere when necessary.
- Staff should not have personal mobile phones with them whilst working on a designated youth service provided by Tidenham Parish Council.
- Staff mobile phones should be kept in bags and used only when staff are on break time outside the setting.
- Staff must only use the mobile provided by Tidenham Parish Council for contacting families outside the setting in a professional capacity.