

Cottenham Parish Council: Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

Cottenham Parish Council fully accepts its role and responsibility in safeguarding children and vulnerable people. This policy applies to all staff, councillors, volunteers and contractors. This policy is vital to the Council's role as an owner, provider and operator of children's play areas including any facility the council provides. However, any agency working with children and vulnerable people has full responsibility to ensure the users are safeguarded.

2. Key Elements of Policy

- 2.1 Cottenham Parish Council's primary aim is to ensure as far as possible that children and vulnerable people are safe and secure in any facility or environment it provides.
- 2.2 Cottenham Parish Council shall ensure that anyone employed by the Council shall be appropriately checked for suitability when working with or around children and vulnerable people by ensuring that staff are DBS checked to a standard disclosure unless informed otherwise in which case an enhanced disclosure shall be applied for.
- 2.3 Cottenham Parish Council shall ensure that all staff, Councillors, volunteers and contractors are aware of child protection and shall know the procedure to follow if there is a child protection issue.
- 2.4 Cottenham Parish Council shall take advice and guidance from its Child Protection Councillor, and/or Local Safeguarding Children's Board, Every Child Matters and any other relevant body or agency. *(See Appendix 3: Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy Useful Contacts.)*
- 2.5 Cottenham Parish Council's Clerk has responsibility in ensuring that all staff, Councillors, volunteers and contractors are in receipt of this policy.
- 2.6 Cottenham Parish Council understands and recognises four main types of abuse and shall ensure that all staff, Councillors, volunteers and contractors are aware of and alert to types and signs of abuse and the procedure in reporting any concerns. *(See Appendix 1: Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse.)*

3. Responding to Suspected incidents of Child Abuse

- 3.1 Cottenham Parish Council shall support in every way that it can children or young people who have been abused by informing the appropriate authority. If it is suspected that abuse or poor practice is taking place there is a clear obligation to report such matters to the proper authority, the decision for such action shall be taken by the Clerk (under delegated powers) following consultation with the designated Councillor for Child Protection and the Chairman. The authority shall make, or cause to be made, such enquiries as they consider necessary to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare (Children Act 1989 section 47(1)).
- 3.2 Cottenham Parish Council shall do its best to ensure that any relevant bodies are notified of any child protection incidents and that good communication and links are made in order to safeguard children.
- 3.3 Cottenham Parish Council shall record any concerns they have about a child immediately even if the concern needs no further action and the record must be kept in a secure and effective way.

Adopted under Resolution 13/147 in November 2013

Appendix 1

Cottenham Parish Council: Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse 2010

1. Neglect -

Occurs when a parent fails to meet a child's essential needs for food, clothing, shelter or medical care, or when children are left without proper supervision which leaves them unsafe or unprotected.

Some indications are:

- Consistently unkempt, dirty appearance
- Medical needs of child unmet
- Delay in the child's development without other clear cause
- Lack of responsiveness with peers or adults in everyday social situations
- Behaviour such as head banging or rocking
- Repeated failure by parents/carers to prevent injury
- Consistently inappropriately clothed for the weather
- Hazardous living conditions
- Failure to attend any sort of appointments
- Non-organic failure to thrive

2. Physical Abuse -

Occurs when parents or adults deliberately inflict injuries on a child, or do not protect the child from injury.

Some indications are:

- Unexplained injuries - bruises, scars, bites or burns, particularly if they are recurrent injuries of varying ages and types
- Child shows fear about returning home
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Bruising on very young babies

3. Emotional Abuse -

Occurs when parents fail to show their children sufficient love or attention or when they threaten, taunt or belittle them, causing them to become nervous, withdrawn, aggressive, or disturbed in their behaviour.

Some indications are:

- Very low self-esteem
- Lack of any sense of fun
- Excessively clingy or attention seeking behaviour
- Over reactions to mistakes or over anxious to please
- Substantial failure to reach potential in learning
- Self harming; compulsive rituals
- Unusual patterns of response to others showing emotion

4. Sexual Abuse -

Occurs when an adult or older child involves a child in sexual activity to which the child does not or cannot consent, because of his or her age or understanding

Some indicators are:

- Withdrawn, fearful or aggressive behaviour to other children or adults
- Poor concentration at school or learning problems which do not match intellectual ability
- Behaviour with sexual overtones inappropriate to age
- Complaints of genital itching or pain
- Unexplained abdominal pain

- Distrust of a familiar adult or anxiety about being left with a particular person, relative, babysitter or lodger
- Unexplained gifts or money
- Apparent secrecy
- Wetting day or night when previously dry and clean
- Severe sleep disturbances or nightmares
- Chronic illness, especially throat infections
- Venereal disease or other sexually transmitted diseases
- Marked reluctance to take part in physical activity or to change clothes for PE, for example
- Phobias or panic attacks
- Self-mutilation or attempted suicide
- Running away from home

Appendix 2

Cottenham Parish Council: Code of Conduct when working with children

1. This code of conduct has been produced as a guide to any Cottenham Parish Council Councillors and officers who come across children.
2. Avoid physical contact unless it is justified in the context of the activity, explained to the individual, and with their permission.
3. Physical restraint may be needed to manage certain situations, such as if a fight breaks out. Ensure the purpose of your actions is clear, and keep any physical intervention to the minimum required to prevent harm to any young people or others.
4. A distressed child may require physical contact, such as an arm round the shoulders, to comfort or reassure them. Try to ensure you are with, or in sight of, a colleague, and ensure the purpose of your actions is clear.
5. Conduct all dealings with children in a public environment in full view of others.
6. Do not place yourself in a situation where you may be open to suspicion or allegation, or where your actions may be misinterpreted.
7. Maintain a safe environment.
8. Avoid being alone with a child in any situation.
9. Avoid spending excessive time with a child or young person.
10. Avoid using inappropriate language in front of, about, or to a child.
11. Try not approach a child when a parent is present. If you have a concern about a child's behaviour take it up with the parent in a non-threatening way.
12. Try to use the disabled toilet when possible to avoid being in a toilet alone with a child.
13. Remember to keep calm when challenging a child's behaviour. Shouting or swearing is not a good idea and try to speak to the child in a way which you would be comfortable with someone speaking to your child.
14. Remember that children are not purposeful trying to aggravate you and generally see no wrong in what they're doing so try to explain why you are asking them to do something.
15. Never ask a child to enter the building with you.
16. If you have any concern with a child or a policy refer to the Cottenham Parish Council's child protection policy and seek advice from the Council's Child Protection Advisor.

Appendix 3:

Cottenham Parish Council: Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy Useful Contacts

Cambridgeshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board
LSCB Administrator
7 The Meadows
Meadow Lane
St Ives
Cambs
PE27 4LG
Telephone: 01480 373522
Fax: 01480 376377
Email: LSCB@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Children's Social Care Services
'During office hours (08:45 am to 5.20 pm Monday to Thursday, 8.45 am to 4.25 pm Friday) you can contact Children's Social Care Services at Cambridgeshire Direct on 0345 045 5203.
If you urgently need help outside office hours you can contact Cambridgeshire Social Care on 01733 234724

Cambridgeshire Constabulary
Cambridgeshire Constabulary
Headquarters
Hinchingbrooke Park
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE29 6NP
Telephone: 0345 456 456 4

NSPCC
NSPCC Helpline, 42 Curtain Road, London, EC2A 3NH.
Helpline website: nspcc.org.uk/reportconcern
Telephone: 0808 800 5000
Email: help@nspcc.org.uk