



FOREST ROW PARISH COUNCIL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. CONTEXT

Forest Row Parish Council contains a number of business sections whose operations involve staff coming into contact with children. The various operations coming under their control:

- **Community Centre** – This facility frequently hosts activities for children, provides and accommodates a wide range of arts, entertainments and other activities, including those such as dancing, craft workshops and other ad hoc activities. The Building also incorporates the public library
- **Children’s Playground** – the Playground provides an area where young children gather.
- **Skatepark** – The Skatepark provides an area where young children gather.
- **Litter Warden** – the litter warden provides a function within the parish in relation to the environment carrying out litter picking and emptying of bins which may involve contact with young children using the various public open space areas provided by the Council.
- **Handyman (and as appropriate, other maintenance staff)** – The Handyman carries out various duties within the parish and in the Community Centre such as weekly inspections of the children’s’ playground that may involve contact with young children.
- **Spring Clean** (when held) – an event that includes all family members.
- **Cycle Hire** – a service that includes all family members
- **Forest Row Festival/ Twinning Fun Day** - events that includes all family members.
- **Parish Council Chamber & Office** – facility responsible to the general public in the provision of information and advice with overall responsibility for Council Meetings, organising community events (public meetings), environmental protection, Child Protection Policy, Community Centre, Youth buildings, Play Areas and Public Open Space, etc., all of which can at times involve the participation of young people.

The Council employs different types of staff in order to achieve its objectives, these being:

- Salaried full time staff
- Salaried part time staff
- Volunteers (to include Parish Councillors)

2. POLICY

2.1 In **general** terms the Council acknowledges the following as key principles of its policy:

- Child protection is an issue that should be accorded a high priority and, consequently, adequate resources of finance and officer time should be allocated to addressing the Council’s responsibility for it.

- In all matters concerning child protection the welfare and protection of the child is a paramount consideration. Note: that the context of this document *child* is taken to mean a young person under the age of 18.
- All reasonable precautions should be taken to ensure that children involved in activities that the Council promotes are protected from physical, sexual, neglectful or emotional harm.
- All children have equal rights to protection irrespective of their gender, age, ethnic background, social background or sexuality. However, the Council recognises that some children, due to their particular circumstances, may be confronted with more barriers to accessing help than others.
- Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure that they do not place themselves at risk of being subjected to allegations of child abuse that have no foundation.
- The policy should be accessible to all stakeholders who have an interest in child protection in leisure provision within the Parish (eg., parents, partner organisations).
- Policy relating to child protection should not be regarded as set and unchangeable. Policy is liable to review, amendment and continuous improvement in the light of factors such as updated legislation, changes in published best practice guidance and experience.
- In all issues relating to child protection matters should be addressed with due regard to appropriate levels of confidentiality.

2.2 In **specific** terms the Council undertakes to observe the following measures:

- To ensure all directly employed staff (of any type) who have significant contact with children as part of their job* are issued with **Child Protection Guidelines**. These guidelines will address the following matters:
 - Explaining what child abuse is
 - How to recognise child abuse
 - What to do if you have concerns
 - A code of behaviour for people who work with children
 - What to do if children are not picked up by their parents/carers on time
 - Key contacts
 - A Child Protection Incident Record Form
- To ensure **Supplementary Guidance Notes** are made available to staff/providers/children where necessary. These are as follows:-
 - Guidance to (a) children on acceptable behaviour towards other children, and (b) staff on dealing with bullying.
 - Guidance on appropriate procedures to employ in authorising photographers/cameramen and displaying pictures/footage when staging events that involve children.
 - Guidance on dealing with allegations against staff
 - Guidance on ensuring adequate supervision of children in sessions at all times.

3. SESSION MANAGEMENT

For activity sessions that involve children and come under the direct control of the Council:

- To ensure all sessions comply with relevant legislation (eg., The Children's Act).
- To ensure all sessions are subject to risk assessment covering aspects such as first aid cover and telephone access.
- To ensure all sessions are visited at least once annually by another member of staff.

4. RECRUITMENT

To ensure all directly employed staff (of any type) who have significant contact with children as part of their job undergo relevant screening checks as part of the recruitment process, including (a) Disclosure & Barring Service checks (DBS) at an enhanced level of check, (b) providing two references which are taken up (c) presenting copies of relevant qualifications and (d) issuing Parish Council guidelines to all new employees/volunteers as part of the induction process.

DBS checks should be renewed if required by law for each member of staff who continues to have significant contact with children as part of their role.

5. TRAINING

- To ensure all directly employed paid staff who have significant contact with children as part of their job undertake certificated child protection training within 12 months of commencement of their employment with the Council. This should be reviewed within every three years that the persons remain employed with the Council.
Note: the judgement as to whether a staff member has significant contact with children is agreed by the Chairman of the Finance Committee and the Safeguarding Officer.
- To ensure all directly engaged volunteer staff have access to appropriate child protection training opportunities. Such opportunities should be provided free of charge wherever possible or at least at a level which does not deter volunteers from attending.

6. RECORDS

A record of child protection incidents/situations should be maintained by the Clerk. These records should be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Officer to see if there are any patterns evident relating to child protection issues.

7. SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

To appoint annually a Safeguarding Officer to be responsible for maintaining an overview of child protection issues, keeping up to date with relevant developments in the field, ensuring compliance with the provisions of this policy and for being a key point of contact on matters relating to child protection. This officer to be allocated sufficient time to fulfil these responsibilities properly.

8. THE WIDER COMMUNITY

The Council also recognises that its functions within a number of wider leisure and business communities. Although it cannot control how other organisations conduct their affairs it can exert influence and provide support in a number of ways which include:

- Ensuring that contractors who have staff with significant direct contact with children have child protection policies in place that are effectively implemented. Contract specifications to require that child protection policies are in place.
- Regularly providing child protection training opportunities to staff from other community organisations (eg sports clubs)
- Encourage and advise community organisations that work with children to draft appropriate child protection policies.

9. IMPLEMENTATION

In order to ensure thorough & consistent implementation the following will be observed:

- Completion of annual monitoring forms by line managers and contractors.
- Activity session inspections by the Safeguarding Officer.
- Occasional staff briefings and updates.
- Policy to be reviewed and updated annually by the Safeguarding Officer and approved by the Council.

Policy due for review May 2022
