



Battle Town Council



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

All organisations have a duty of care for the children for whom they provide activities or services. The Town Council is committed to practices that create and sustain a safe environment for children and young people who use the services or facilities provided by the Council or engage with staff, elected members or volunteers.

The Council will seek to implement its policy on child protection by:

- Recognising that the welfare of children is paramount and that, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion they have the right to protection from abuse;
- Ensuring that all allegations of abuse are taken seriously, reported and investigated swiftly;
- Arranging for all allegations to be dealt with independently and not by staff or Members of the Council, that there is a clear recording and responding procedure as well as a 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 and Members are aware of this policy and mindful that whilst they are unlikely to be involved with children during the performance of their duties, they are aware of the risk they may face in certain circumstances whilst carrying out their duties;
- All new Members and staff are to be provided with a copy of the Child Protection Policy and are required to acknowledge they will abide by it and promote good practice to protect both children and staff.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy a child is anyone under the age of 18 (as defined in the Children's 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.

PROCEDURE

Where, during the course of normal work, a Council Member or a member of staff is approached by a child seeking help, do:

- Treat any allegations seriously and reassure the child;
- Act in a way which clearly indicates that you believe what is being said and do not make the child feel responsible for the abuse;
- Explain who you are and that you will have to tell other people about what has happened;



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- Write everything down – dates, times, facts, observations, verbatim speech if possible. Ensure the child'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.

Don't make any promises you can't keep.

FOLLOW-UP ACTION

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

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

If the child is 12 years old and over, the Youth Support Team should also be contacted on 01424 724130.

The Police should also be contacted.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF OR MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

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

- The person receiving the complaint will contact the Town Clerk, who will immediately inform the Chairman.
- The Town Clerk will contact Social Services. If there is a criminal allegation, the Police will also be informed.
- The Town 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 Town Clerk and Chairman, who will either recommend:



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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.

See disciplinary policy 1.4) (