



# Sydenham Parish Council Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2024

## **Introduction**

Everyone has a duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. This policy outlines practice that will promote the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults using parish council facilities. The policy will be reviewed by the parish council annually.

## **Definitions**

Children and young people:

Anyone under the age of 18 years

Vulnerable Adult:

Anyone over 18 who is:

- Unable to care for themselves
- Unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation
- Or may be in need of community care services

## **To whom this policy applies**

This policy applies to anyone working for or on behalf of Sydenham Parish Council whether in a paid, voluntary or commissioned capacity.

## **Promoting a safe environment**

In order to promote a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults, Sydenham Parish Council wishes to promote a safeguarding culture in its premises and activity areas. In order to achieve this, Sydenham Parish Council will:

- Provide safe facilities and undertake regular safety assessments.
- Ensure that employees, and councillors are aware of the safeguarding expectations.
- Make available on public notice boards and to employees and councillors, the contact details of the following:
  - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) (contact details dependant of area in which the Parish sits)
  - The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), 01865 810603
  - The NSPCC 0808 800 5000
- Employees, councillors and volunteers all have a duty to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults but are not responsible for deciding whether abuse is taking place. If they have concerns, these should be passed on to the Local Social Care Duty Officer, or MASH as soon as possible.

## **Allegations against staff and volunteers**

- All staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.
- All staff should be aware of the settings behaviour/discipline policy.
- The Parish should follow the OSCB procedures for managing allegations against staff/volunteers, a copy of which can be found or on the through the OSCB website.

No attempt should be made to investigate or act on any allegation before consultation with the LADO (contact details above).

### **Whistleblowing**

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff or volunteers fail to do so.

All staff and volunteers should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues and appropriate advice will be sought from the LADO or Safeguarding Team.

### **What should be a cause for concern**

Staff and Volunteers should be concerned by any behaviour, action or inaction, which significantly harms the physical and/or emotional development of a child. A child may be abused by parents, other relatives or carers, professionals and other children, and abuse can occur in any family OR in any other area of society, regardless of social class, wealth or geographical location.

Abuse falls into four main categories:

1. Physical Abuse
2. Emotional Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Neglect

All staff and volunteers need to have an awareness that there are many other forms of abuse ranging from Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) through to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Ideally, staff and volunteers who engage with children will have accessed appropriate child protection training through the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) but further information about types of abuse, signs to look for and what to do if you are concerned are also available on the OSCB website ([www.oscb.org.uk](http://www.oscb.org.uk)).

All agencies, whether statutory, voluntary or other are obliged to follow the procedures laid out on the OSCB website.

## Reporting Concerns

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB)

### What to do if you think a child is at risk of abuse or neglect

**Immediate danger** *If you think a child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999.*

### **Immediate concern**

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is the front door to Children's Social Care for all child protection and immediate safeguarding concerns. If there is an immediate safeguarding concern where a child is deemed at risk or has potentially suffered significant harm, the MASH team should be contacted immediately.

For example:

- Allegations/concerns that the child has been sexually/physically abused.
- Concerns that the child is suffering from severe neglect or other severe health risks.
- Concern that a child is living in or will be returned to a situation that may place him/her at immediate risk.
- The child is frightened to return home.
- The child has been abandoned or parent is absent.

If you have a concern about a child, please call MASH on **0345 050 7666** during office hours (8.30am – 5pm, Monday to Thursday, 8.30am – 4pm, Friday)

Outside office hours call the Emergency Duty Team on **0800 833 408**

Find out more about the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and referral process at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/information-providers/multi-agency-safeguarding-hub](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/information-providers/multi-agency-safeguarding-hub)

### **Concerns or allegations about a professional working with children**

If you are a practitioner and have concerns about another practitioner or volunteer who works with children, or you need to report them, you will need to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) **on 01865 810603**.

A LADO covers all settings where people work with children e.g. football clubs, church groups, child minders. They should be made aware of all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

## Useful Safeguarding Contact Details

**ASSESSMENT & INFORMATION TEAMS** - To report a concern of abuse or neglect, please contact the relevant Children’s Social Care Assessment team.

Contact	Telephone
<b>Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)</b> Professionals wanting to make a new safeguarding concern (MASH enquiry) on a closed case, should call the MASH Team	<b>0345 050 7666</b> <b>Urgent concerns call 999</b>
<b>Emergency Duty Team</b> (out of hours)	<b>0800 833 408</b>
<b>Kingfisher Team (Child Sexual Exploitation)</b>	<b>01865 309196</b>
<b>Social and Health Care Team</b>	<b>0345 050 7666</b>

**EDUCATION SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY TEAM AND LADO** – To report an allegation against a person in a position of trust, please contact the LADO and Schools Safeguarding team.

Contact	Email	Telephone
<b>Local Authority Designated Officer</b>	<a href="mailto:LADO.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk">LADO.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>	01865 810603
<b>Education Safeguarding Advisory Team</b>	<a href="mailto:Esat.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk">Esat.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>	01865 810603

**Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB)** – For general safeguarding issues, please contact the OSCB team on [OSCB@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:OSCB@oxfordshire.gov.uk), tel. 01865 810603 [www.oscb.org.uk](http://www.oscb.org.uk)

**NSPCC 0808 800 5000**

**Childline (18 or under) 0800 1111**