



ALTON TOWN COUNCIL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

As an organisation that occasionally works with children, Alton Town Council councillors, staff, and volunteers have both a moral and a legal obligation to ensure the highest possible standard of care for those children who use our services. Children may be abused regardless of their age, racial origin, social class, gender, culture, religious belief, disability or sexual identity. Most abuse is committed by those who are known to the child and who are trusted by the child. This can be from within or outside the family.

Alton Town Council is committed to providing safe activities and sporting opportunities for young people and to this end, this Child Protection Policy Document has been compiled. External Contractors, working on behalf of the Council, will be asked to adopt a suitable Child Protection Policy if their work brings them into contact with children.

The purpose of the policy is to safeguard children who come into contact with representatives of the Council and to facilitate the best possible professional practice from the Council, its staff, contractors and volunteers. For the purpose of this policy “a child” means anyone under the age of 18. This policy does not apply to employees of the council who are under the age of 18. Such employees are covered by employment policies and legislation.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The Council is committed to ensuring that children are protected and kept safe from harm whilst they are engaged in any activity associated with the Council.

We will endeavour to achieve this by:-

- Ensuring that our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised.
- Ensuring that our councillors, staff and volunteers, that work directly with children, undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service check, where permitted by law.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with partner organisations, councillors, employees, volunteers, parents and carers.

Decisions on which employees/volunteers will be DBS checked will be taken by the Town Clerk, in compliance with relevant legislation. Decisions on which councillors will be DBS checked will be taken by the Town Clerk in consultation with the councillor and his/her Group leader.

2.1 Policy Aims

This Child Protection Policy is provided as part of an induction package to all councillors and those employed by Alton Town Council, whether paid or unpaid, who will have direct contact with children. The aims are:-

- To create a healthy and safe environment at all activities, sport programmes and coaching sessions.
- To ensure children are listened to, and kept safe from harm.
- To support and encourage parents to voice their opinions regarding the welfare of their children and to raise their awareness of the importance of asking questions about the clubs and activities which they send their children to.
- To ensure councillors, staff and volunteers, who work with children, are well informed, supported and enabled to provide the best possible practice.

2.2 Objectives

The objectives are:-

- To raise the level of awareness of councillors, staff and volunteers about child abuse and its various forms.
- To raise the level of awareness of councillors, staff and volunteers about what children are entitled to be protected from.
- To ensure that, in conjunction with the Child Protection Code of Practice, all councillors, staff and volunteers are able to recognise signs which could signify the abuse of a child.
- To promote the general welfare, health and full development of children during all sessions.
- To develop effective procedures in recording and responding to accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse.

3. EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

3.1 Recruitment and Selection of Staff/Volunteers

All applicants who will work with children in the course of their job will complete a disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service to ensure that there are no irregularities in their background which may give cause for concern. All new employees, whether paid or unpaid, will be provided with the Child Protection Policy and asked to sign to confirm that they will abide by it.

Application forms are designed to ascertain as much information as possible, such as, but not limited to:-

- Past career, relevant interests, any gaps in employment and reasons for leaving, educational, national governing body, First aid qualifications and child protection training.

- At least one reference is taken up, and where relevant followed up by letter or telephone. References taken up will ascertain the person's suitability to work with children.
- It is made clear that all information remains confidential.
- Personal identification will be confirmed by reference to a passport, driving licence, birth or marriage certificate, National Insurance number or utility bill.

3.2 Induction and Training

The recruitment and selection process is followed up by relevant training:-

- Staff are made aware that child abuse can and does occur and that it could be perpetrated by colleagues, who are members of staff or volunteers within the Council.
- Staff are made aware that children can find it very difficult to talk about abuse. They need to be listened to, taken seriously, and have their concerns acted upon.
- Staff are made aware of what they need to do in response to any concerns they may have.
- Staff should inform their line manager if they feel they need any specific training regarding child protection.

3.3 Supervision

In general, staff work most effectively where there is a supervisory structure that ensures they are supported, managed and developed. The Council will ensure that staff are sensitive to any concerns about abuse, act on them immediately and offer support to those who report such matters.

It is the responsibility of staff to monitor good practice; this can be done in a number of ways, for example:-

- Observation of working or coaching practice.
- Annual appraisals.
- Provide feedback on performance against work programme.
- Feedback from participants attending activities.

4. GOOD PRACTICE

It is possible to reduce situations where abuse may occur. The following are more specific examples of care which should be taken when working with children:-

4.1 You should:-

- Always be publicly open when working with children. Avoid any situations where you and an individual child are completely unobserved (encourage an open environment).
- Where possible, children should not be left unattended, however this will depend on age and circumstances.
- In a sports situation, where possible, parents should take on the responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms,

ensure that you work in pairs, and do not enter changing rooms of the opposite sex, when supervising children.

- Where there are mixed groups, supervision, where possible, should be by a male **and** female member of staff.
- You must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally.

4.2 You should never:-

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- Share a bedroom with a child
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate contact
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves.
- Enter the changing rooms of the opposite sex when supervising children, unless in an emergency.

Failure to follow these guidelines may well result in formal action under the Council's disciplinary procedures

Everyone should be aware that it is **not good practice to:-**

- Spend any time alone with children away from others. When talking to children on your own ensure you can be seen by others.
- Take children alone on car journeys, however short.
- Take children to your home where they will be alone with you.

If exceptionally any of these situations are expected to occur, plans on how to ensure the child is safe and sound must be made with your manager and enacted with the knowledge of the parents.

5. WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS

Should a councillor, member of staff or volunteer become aware of an allegation of an incident of child abuse taking, or having taken place, they should act in accordance with the Council's Child Protection Code of Conduct.

DECLARATION

Alton Town Council is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

As a councillor, employee or volunteer of the Council it is therefore important that you have taken the time to thoroughly read the Child Protection Policy. By being made aware of the policy, it is our intention to ensure that **all** councillors, employees and volunteers are pro-active in providing a safe environment for the young people in their care. Any disciplinary measures required as a result of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with normal disciplinary procedures.

Revised February 2015

You should sign and date the attached form and return it to the Town Clerk once you have read the policy.

(Should there be a need to investigate an alleged breach of this policy occurring during an Active Sports activity, Alton Town Council will liaise with the relevant sports national governing body (County or Regional Officer) and the Local Authority within whose boundaries the alleged incident took place).

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Councillor, employee or volunteer declaration

I have read and fully understood the Child Protection Policy and hereby declare that I will carry out my role in line with policy statements and procedures contained therein.

Signed

Name

Date