Lympstone Parish Council Child Protection Policy

The following policy was adopted and agreed by Lympstone Parish Council on **7th November 2022.**

The following policy was reviewed and agreed by Lympstone Parish Council on **2nd March 2026.**

Lympstone Parish Council Child Protection Policy

Introduction:

- Lympstone Parish Council believes that children and young people have the right to have fun and be safe in the services provided for them and the activities they choose to participate in.
- Lympstone Parish Council believes all children and young people have the right to live their lives to the fullest potential, to be protected, to have the opportunity to participate in and enjoy any activity and to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Lympstone Parish Council believes that all children and young people irrespective of their age, class, religion, culture, disability, gender, ethnicity or sexual preference have the right to protection.

Child Protection Statement:

- Lympstone Parish Council is committed to ensuring that all children and young people are protected and kept safe from harm whilst engaged in services organised and provided by the Council.
- Lympstone Parish Council will also safeguard the welfare of children and young people who use the Council's services or who attend activities within its venues, by protecting them from abuse.
- Lympstone Parish Council recognises its responsibilities under the terms of the Children Act 2004, earlier Children's Acts and other relevant legislation to make arrangements for ensuring that its functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.
- This policy applies to all situations within the Council's operation, which could potentially involve children or young people. Good practice guidelines are provided in this policy to guide staff in the protection of children and young people and to protect staff from allegations of abuse and reassure parents.
- The policy affects every elected and co-opted member, staff member, volunteer and anyone working on behalf of and/or representing the Council.

Definitions:

- The term children or young person is used to refer to anyone under the age of 18 years.
- The term parent is used as a generic term to represent anyone with legal parental responsibility.
- The terms elected members, staff and volunteers is used to refer to employees, councillors, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of and/or representing the Council, including temporary and agency staff and contractors.
- Aims of the Policy Lympstone Parish Council accepts the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, provide a duty of care for children and young people, safeguard their wellbeing and protect them when they are engaged in services organised and provided by the Council or when they come into contact with Council staff, those on work experience, elected members and volunteers.

The Council aims to do this by:

- Raising an awareness throughout the Council and beyond of the statutory “duty of care” relating to children and young people and actively encourage good practice amongst all staff, elected members and volunteers.
- Creating a safe and healthy environment within all its services, avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur.
- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children and young people. Listening to children and young people, minimising dangers and working closely with other agencies.
- Recruiting, training, supervising and supporting staff, elected members and volunteers who work with children and young people to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children and young people from abuse, and themselves against false allegations. Staff and volunteers who work with children and young people will be subject to the appropriate level The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- Responding to any allegations appropriately and implementing the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Requiring staff, elected members and volunteers to adopt and abide by this policy and guidelines.

Use of Contractors:

- Lympstone Parish Council and its staff, elected members and volunteers should take care that contractors doing work on behalf of the Council are monitored appropriately.
- Any contractor or subcontractor, engaged by the Council in areas where workers are likely to come into contact with children and young people, should have a similarly robust Child Protection Policy, or failing this, must comply with the terms of this policy.
- Contractors will be monitored by the Officer responsible for the contract.

Procedures:

These procedures inform staff, elected members and volunteers of what actions they should take if they have concerns or encounter a case of alleged or suspected child abuse.

Responding To Concerns and Allegations:

- It is important that all staff, elected members and volunteers are aware that the first person that has concerns or encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. It is not the place of any Officer of the Council to investigate allegations. However, staff, elected members and volunteers do have a duty of care to the child or young person which means they must report any suspicions they may have.
- It is the duty of any member, or council employee or volunteer to report any concerns about a child being subject to abuse, receive a disclosure or are aware of Members, or colleagues behaving in an inappropriate manor. All reports should be treated as confidential and with respect to the person raising the concern regardless of the outcome. In general. there are 3 situations that staff, elected members and volunteers may need to respond to a concern or case of alleged or suspected abuse:
  1. Responding to a child or young person disclosing abuse, i.e. they make an allegation of abuse
  2. Responding to allegations or concerns about a member of staff, elected member or volunteer from your own observation or due to a complaint.
  3. Responding to allegations or concerns about any other person, i.e. parent, carer, other service user.
- In the case of an emergency where a child is in danger phone 999 immediately. Record in writing all the details that you are aware of and what was said using the child or young person's own words, immediately.
- In your record you should include the following:
  1. The date and time
  2. The child or young person's name, address and date of birth
  3. The nature of the allegation
  4. Your observations – a description of the child or young person's behaviour, physical and emotional state and any visible injuries.
  5. Exactly what the child or young person said and what you said.
  6. Record the child or young person's account of what has happened as closely as possible.
  7. Sign and date what you have recorded.
- Do not ask questions, other than the child or young person's name, address and date of birth.
- Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing in telling you.

- Contact Devon County Council Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0345 155 1071 or the Police on 101 or 999 without delay and follow their guidance.
- Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.
- Information should be handled and disseminated on a “need to know” basis only this is usually MASH or the Police.
- It is extremely important that allegations or concerns are not discussed, as any breach of confidentiality could be damaging to the child or young person, their family, those who are the subject of allegations and any child protection investigations that may follow.
- Informing the parents of a child or young person of concerns you may have should be dealt with by MASH.
- Parents will not be informed if they are the subject of the allegation.
- Any individual against whom an allegation has been made has the right to be notified about the cause for concern. This should be done by MASH and the Police.
- It is important that the timing of this does not prejudice the investigation; therefore, confidentiality is of the utmost importance.
- Recorded information should be handed over to MASH or the Police and any copies stored in a secure place with limited access in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).
- If enquiries arise from the public or any branch of the media, it is vital that all staff, elected members and volunteers are briefed to not make any comments regarding the situation.

Photography:

- Staff, elected members and volunteers should be vigilant at all times regarding people using cameras or videos within Council services and at events or activities which involve children and young people.
- Consent must be sought from parents when cameras and other image recorders are used to picture children and young people.
- Do not allow unsupervised access to children or young people or one to one photographic sessions.
- Do not allow photographic sessions outside of the activities or services, or at a child’s or young person’s home.
- The child or young person should be happy with having their picture taken.
    1. Parents must be informed that photographs of their child or young person may be taken during Council services, activities or events, and signed parental consent needs to be obtained agreeing to this.
    2. This must include information about how and where these photographs will be used.
    3. The names of children or young people should not be used in photographs or video footage, unless with the express permission of the child or young person’s parent.

Sources of Information / Support: DDC – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub on 0345 155 1071 or mashsecure@devon.gov.uk and NSPCC Information for children and adults on 0808 800 5000

Lucy Tyrrell, Clerk and RFO to Lympstone Parish Council

Date of next review: ***March 2027***