

MARSH GIBBON PARISH COUNCL

Safeguarding Policy

Adopted: May 2025

1. Introduction

Marsh Gibbon Parish Council aims to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom we may come into contact with and to protect them from harm as a result of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect.

2. Disclosure and Barring Service

Staff and Members who may have substantial unsupervised access to children, young people and vulnerable adults must undertake DBS checks. The Council acknowledges that although certain Members may consult or work with groups of children and young people, it is unlikely that this is carried out alone or without parental supervision and as such it does not deem it necessary for its members to undertake DBS checks. However, members should understand and comply with the information in this policy regarding good working practices. The public need to be satisfied that staff employed by the Parish Council who may have access to children are recruited and employed on a safe and sound basis.

3. The Use of Contractors

The Parish Council uses contractors to undertake work on its premises and land. It is expected that any organisation that has their staff working on Parish Council land will ensure that their staff are recruited safely and that it is appropriate for them to work in an area where children, families and young people and vulnerable adults may be present. The responsibility will lie with the organisation to ensure that any staff on council land are appropriately checked.

4. Good Working Practices

It is important that Council staff and Members demonstrate appropriate behaviour to children, young people and vulnerable adults at all times. All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect children and vulnerable adults, and should therefore adhere to the following principles:

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations) and encourage an open environment (e.g. no secrets).
- Treat all young people/vulnerable adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always put the welfare of each young person and vulnerable adult first.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Build a balanced relationship based on mutual trust, which empowers children, young people and vulnerable adults to share in the decision-making process
- Ensure any person working for or volunteering with the council does not transport children, young people or vulnerable adults in their car.
- Be an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.

5. Disclosure of abuse

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult says or indicates that he/she is being abused (by an adult or another child) or information is obtained which gives concern that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being abused, the following action should be taken: The person receiving the information should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child, young person or vulnerable adult.

- Tell the child he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell someone.
- Take what the child, young person or vulnerable adult says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child, young person or vulnerable adult who has a speech disability and/or differences in language.
- Keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- Reassure the child, young person or vulnerable adult, but do not make promises of confidentiality, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
- Make a full record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible using the Child Protection Report form in Appendix A.
- Inform the Clerk immediately.

The person receiving the disclosure should avoid:

- Panicking.
- Allowing their shock or distaste to show.
- Probing for more information than is offered.
- Speculating or make assumptions.
- Making negative comments about the alleged abuser.
- Approaching the alleged abuser.
- Making promises or agreeing to keep secrets.
- Non-action is not an option in Child Protection.

It is important to note that it is not your responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has or is taking place, that is the responsibility of the professional bodies to which the matter will be referred.

6. Suspicion of Abuse

If you suspect that a child or young person is being abused through your observations, you should inform the Clerk immediately and complete the Child protection form in Appendix A.

7. Reporting Procedures

A flow chart identifying the route of information is shown at Appendix B. This identifies where, when and to whom the information is passed. Information passed to Social Care and Health or the Police must be as helpful as possible and it may be used in any subsequent legal action, hence the necessity for making a detailed record.

The report (Appendix A) should be used to record the appropriate information.

8. Records and Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained at all times. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only.

This includes the following people:

- The designated person in charge (the Clerk or appointed Councillor)
- The person who received the disclosure
- The person making the allegation.
- Appropriate professional bodies i.e. Police, Social Care and Health

9. Indicators of Abuse

Definitions of what constitutes abuse are described in Appendix C. Abuse can happen wherever there are young people, and young people and disabled adults of any age can be abused.

The effects of abuse can be so damaging and if untreated, they may follow a person into adulthood.

For example, a person who has been abused as a child may find it difficult or impossible to maintain stable, trusting relationships and may become involved with drugs or prostitution, attempt suicide or even abuse a child in the future.

Indications that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be being abused include the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- The child, young person or vulnerable adult describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her.
- Someone else (a child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper).
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engaging in sexual explicit behaviour.
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Has difficulty in making friends.
- Is prevented from socialising with other children or young people.
- Displays variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite.
- Loses weight for no apparent reason.
- Becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place.

Any one of those behaviours could be related to other family issues such as family upset of parental separation, divorce or bereavement, therefore abuse cannot be assumed in any case.

Appendix A**Child Protection Report Form****Date reported:** _____**Your details:**

	Person reporting the incident	Person recording the incident
Name		
Job/Role		
Knowledge of and relationship to the young person		
Contact address		
Telephone No(s)		
Email address		

Contact details of Child:

Full name	
Date of birth	
Contact address	
Telephone No(s)	
Ethnicity/Disability	

Incident details:

Location of incident (if relevant)	
Date and time of incident	

Detailed information (in child's own words if possible)

Details of any observations made by you or to you (e.g. description of visible bruising, other injuries, young person's emotional state). If injuries are present please record size, location and colour, NB – make a clear distinction between what is fact and what is hearsay.

Action taken so far**Alleged / Suspected Abuser's Details (if known)**

Name	
Date of birth (if known)	
Relationship with young person	
Occupation	
Address	
Telephone No(s)	
Ethnicity/Disability	

External Agencies Contacted

Agency	Yes/No	Contact Name	Contact Number	Date	Time	Details of advice received
Police						
Social Care/Health						
Other (please name)						

I acknowledge that the details described are accurate and will remain strictly confidential between appropriate reporting channels and myself.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please submit this form immediately to:

Clerk of the Council, c/o 1 Darleys Close, Grendon Underwood, Aylesbury, Bucks HP18 0SE

Tel. 01296 770568

Appendix B

Procedures for responding to disclosure, allegations and suspicions

