

GURNARD PARISH COUNCIL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

2010

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

		Page
	STATEMENTS	3
	Introduction	3
	Definition	3
	Procedure	3
	Responding to concerns	4
	Responding to disclosures	4
	Allegations involving members of staff or volunteers	5
	APPENDICES	
1	Types of abuse	6
2	Code of behaviour	8
3	Procedures following an allegation/suspicion of child abuse	9
4	Procedures following an allegation against a staff member/volunteer	10
5	Concern Form	11
6	Referral Form	12
7	Other Agencies involved	13

# **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

## **STATEMENTS**

All children or vulnerable people who take part in any Gurnard Parish Council initiatives have the right to be assured of their own safety and protection. This is the responsibility of every adult and agency coordinating such activities.

Gurnard Parish Council can provide opportunities for enjoyment and achievement as well as developing valuable qualities such as self-esteem, leadership and teamwork. These positive benefits can only take place if activities are managed by people who place the welfare of all young and vulnerable people first, and adopt practices that support, protect and empower young people.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Gurnard Parish Council takes seriously its responsibility to promote the welfare and safeguard all the children and young and vulnerable people entrusted to its care. Gurnard Parish Council undertakes to provide a safe environment and any suspicion of abuse is responded to appropriately and in confidence.

Gurnard Parish Council works to the principles embodied within the Children's Act 1989 and 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010. These guidelines are designed to protect all children and vulnerable people coming into contact with Gurnard Parish Council and persons employed by them or volunteers through any of its initiatives.

## **DEFINITION**

Child protection involves excluding known offenders, preventing abuse in our care and recognising and responding to the signs of abuse. The law defines someone as a child until they are 18 years old and children of all ages can be abused. Concerns may also relate to poor practice or bullying. Any individual with concerns should discuss them immediately with the Chairman or designated person. Abuse can take many forms, but they are usually divided into four categories (see Appendix 1):

- Physical Abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse

## **PROCEDURE**

The Parish Council aims to:

- a. Ensure that sufficient staff/volunteers who have access to children and vulnerable people will undergo a criminal records disclosure by the Criminal Records Bureau and that the Parish Council complies with any recommendations or obligations imposed by the Independent Safeguarding Authority;
- b. Make sure that all staff/volunteers understand and have access to Gurnard Parish Council's Child Protection Policy and that all staff/volunteers understand the principles and procedures including the different roles and responsibilities;

- c. Follow procedures in cases where concerns become apparent and where referrals are being made to the Isle of Wight Council's Children's Services;
- d. Have consistent ways of: -
  - recording and monitoring concerns involving agencies
  - gathering information
  - keeping staff/volunteers informed
- e. Keep a central file which is easy to use, up-to-date, known to exist and accessible to those with a 'need to know' but secure from others;
- f. Ensure that all staff/volunteers follow a code of behaviour designed to protect children, vulnerable people and other staff/volunteers;
- g. Ensure that sufficient staff/volunteers have the opportunity to undertake up-to-date awareness training to identify signs and symptoms of abuse and are able to deal with any concerns or disclosures.

## **RESPONDING TO CONCERNS**

Concerns for a child may come to the attention of a member of staff/volunteer in various ways through observation of behaviour, injuries or through disclosure. Any member of staff/volunteer who has a concern for a child should discuss this with the Chairman or designated person as soon as is practically possible. (As per Procedures in Appendix 3)

The Chairman or designated person will decide whether the child should be referred to Children's Services. They may well wish to consult with Children's Services for advice in order to take that decision.

If the child is referred to Social Services, the Chairman or designated person will keep the member of staff up-to-date with the progress of the referral. If referral is not made the member of staff/volunteer will complete a concern form, which will be stored on a central file held by the Clerk to Gurnard Parish Council.

Concerns will usually be discussed with parents of the child concerned by the member of staff/volunteer with the concern (after the member of staff/volunteer has spoken with the Chairman or designated person). The exception to this is when it is inappropriate to do so for reasons of possible increased risk to the child, staff member of volunteer, or because doing so might undermine a resulting investigation.

## **RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES**

If a child makes a disclosure of abuse to a member of staff/volunteer they should:

- Allow the child to make the disclosure at their own pace in their own way.
- Avoid interrupting except to clarify what the child is saying.
- Not ask leading questions or probe for information that the child does not volunteer.
- Reassure the child that they have been heard and explain what you will do next and to whom you will talk.
- NEVER promise to keep it a secret.
- Record the conversation as soon as possible.
- Tell the Chairman or the designated person

The Chairman or designated person will consult with Children's Services for advice about referral as soon as is possible.

If the advice is that the child is to be referred to Children's Services, the Chairman or designated person will ensure that a referral form is completed with the member of staff/volunteer. The Chairman or designated person will keep the member of staff/volunteer up to date on the progress of this referral.

If the advice is that no referral is to be made the member of staff/volunteer will complete a concern form, which will be stored in the central file held by the Clerk to Gurnard Parish Council.

The exception to the referral procedure is when the situation is urgent or grave (such as when a child has disclosed abuse). The referral can be made by telephone to the Children's Services duty officer for children and the referral form completed afterwards.

To fulfil the Parish Council's duties under the Human Rights Act 1998, the agreement of the child's parents should be obtained in writing before a referral of a child is made to Children's Services. This will include where the child is in need of protection, providing this will not put the child at an increased risk of harm. Advice should be sought from Children's Services if it is unclear whether parents should be told of the referral before it is made.

#### **ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING MEMBERS OF STAFF/VOLUNTEERS**

Any concerns that involve allegations against a member of staff or a volunteer should be referred immediately to the Chairman or designated person. The Chairman or designated person will contact Children's Services to discuss and agree further action to be taken about the child and any necessary investigation into the allegation. No investigation into the allegation should take place before this consultation has been made.

The Parish Council's complaints procedure or the Model Code of Conduct, which ever is appropriate, will be followed in respect of the member of staff/volunteer. Any proven allegation of misconduct may result in the dismissal of the member of staff or appropriate alternative disciplinary action.

**Adopted and approved by Gurnard Parish Council 13<sup>th</sup> July 2010**

## APPENDIX 1

### TYPES OF ABUSE

- Physical abuse** Where adults or other young people physically hurt or injure a child by hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child whom they are looking after (for example, fictitious illness by proxy or Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy).
- Neglect** Where adults fail to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development (for example, failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment). It may also include refusal to give children love, affection and attention. Neglect in sport could include a teacher or coach not ensuring that children were safe, exposing them to undue cold, heat or to unnecessary risk of injury.
- Sexual abuse** Involving a child or adolescent in sexual activities that she/he does not understand, cannot give consent to and which are not acceptable in our society. Where girls and boys are abused by adults and sometimes by other children and young people, to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing children pornographic material (books, videos, pictures) is also a form of sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse** The persistent emotional ill-treatment so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child very nervous and withdrawn. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child.

Indications that a child may be being abused include:

- **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 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.
- **Unexplained changes in behaviour** (for example, becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper).
- **Inappropriate sexual awareness**.
- Engaging in **sexually explicit** behaviour.
- **Distrust of adults**, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.

- Difficulty in **making friends**.
- Is **prevented from socialising** with other children.
- **Variations in eating patterns**, including overeating or loss of appetite.
- Unexplained **weight loss** for no apparent reason.
- **Increasingly dirty or unkempt** appearance

This is not an exhaustive list and the presence of one or more of the indicators are not proof that abuse is actually taking place. It is **not** the responsibility of those working for or connected with Gurnard Parish Council to decide that child abuse is occurring but it **is** their responsibility to report any concerns.

## **Bullying**

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It is important to recognise that in some cases the abuser or bully may be another young person.

Bullying can be:

- **Physical** - Hitting, kicking and theft
- **Verbal** - Name-calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racist or homophobic taunts, threats, graffiti and gestures
- **Emotional** - Tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring
- **Sexual** - Unwanted physical contact or abusive comments

There are a number of signs that may indicate that a young person is being bullied:

- **Behavioural changes** such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go to school, training or sports club;
- **A drop-off in performance** at school or standard of play;
- **Physical signs** such as stomach ache, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed-wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes and bingeing for example on food, cigarettes or alcohol;
- **A shortage of money** or frequent loss of possessions.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**

This code of behaviour is designed to give staff/volunteers guidance about how they should behave when working with children and young people.

**Do** treat everyone with respect

**Do** provide an example you wish others to follow.

**Do** plan activities, which involve more than one person being present, or at least are within sight of hearing others.

**Do** respect a young person's right to personal privacy.

**Do** provide access for young people to talk about any concerns they may have.

**Do** encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like.

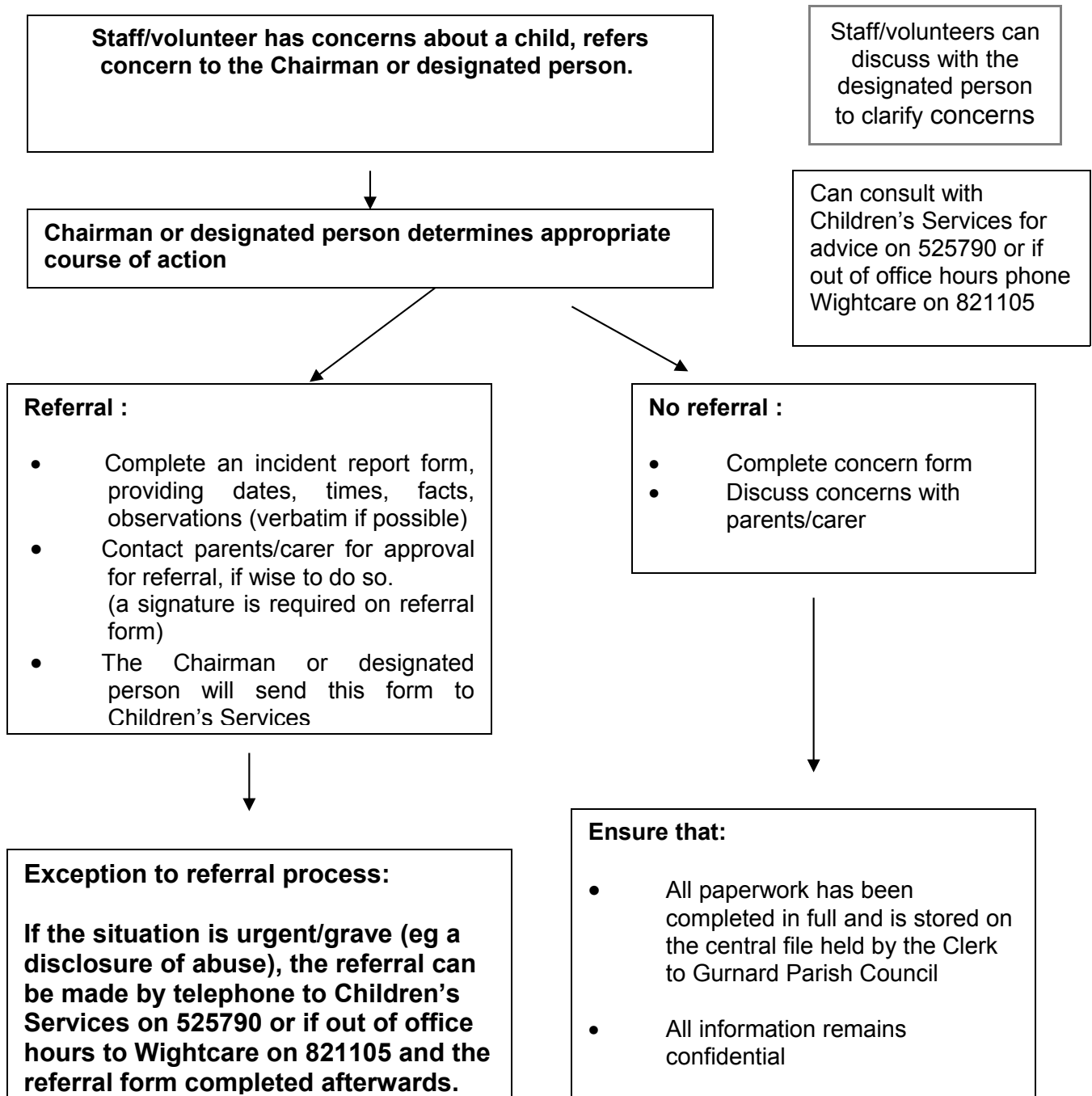
**Do** avoid situations that compromise your relationship with young people and are unacceptable within a relationship of trust (eg a sexual relationship between a member of staff/volunteer and a youth member over the age of consent)

**Do** remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned.

**Do** recognise that caution is required even in sensitive moments of counselling, such as when dealing with bullying.

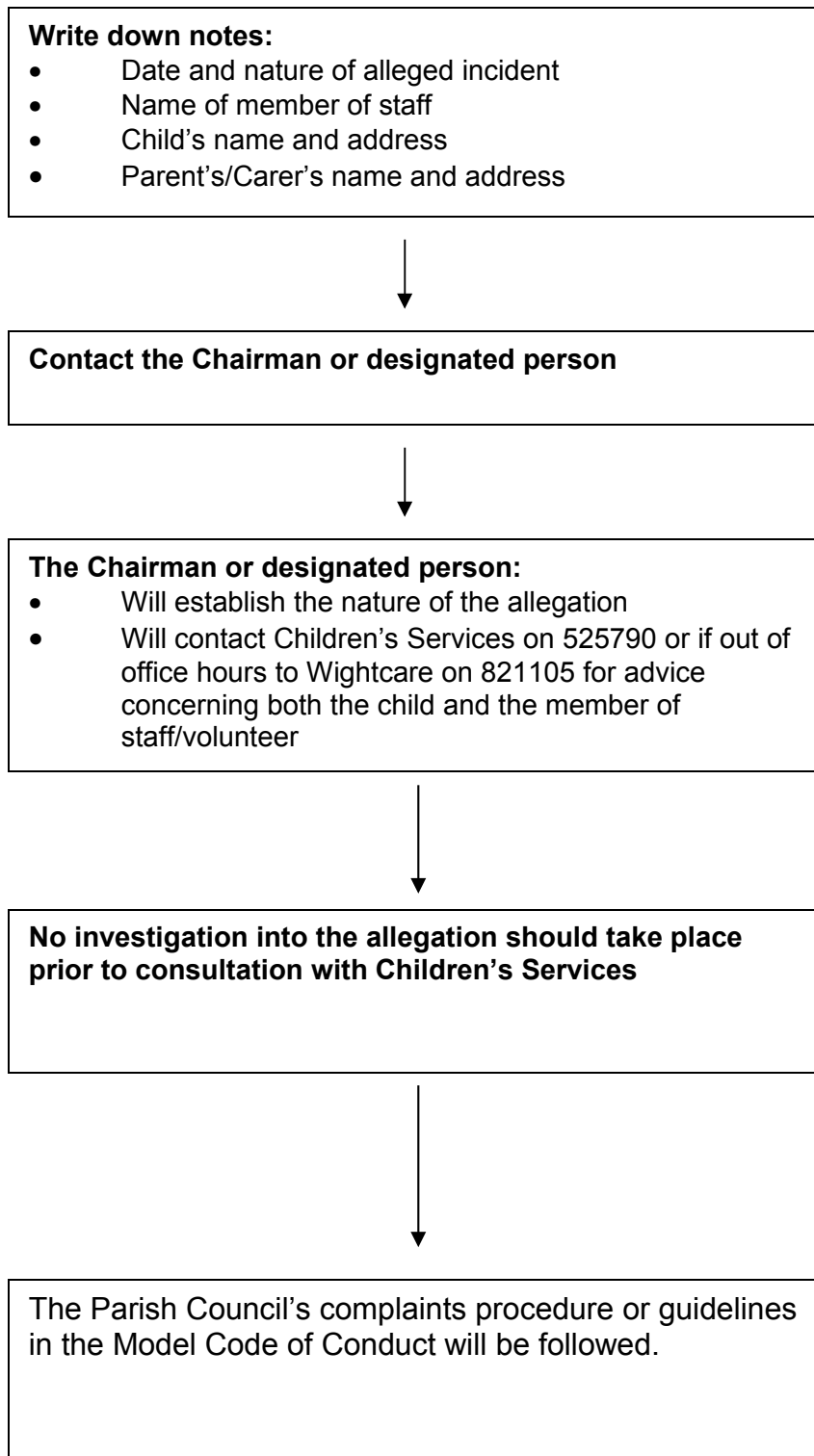
## APPENDIX 3

### PROCEDURES FOLLOWING AN ALLEGATION OF CHILD ABUSE



## APPENDIX 4

### PROCEDURES FOLLOWING AN ALLEGATION AGAINST A STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER



# APPENDIX 5

## CONCERN FORM

### ABOUT YOU

Your name

Position

Address

Tel

Mobile

Email

### ABOUT THE CHILD

Child's name

Date of birth

Child's address

Parent's/  
Carer's names

Address



### ABOUT THE INCIDENT

Date		Time		Location	
<i>Write exactly what the what the observations if necessary</i> (Continue on separate sheet if necessary)					
<i>Write exactly what the what the</i>					

separate responsibility (Continued) said and what	

Signe .....

Dated .....

# APPENDIX 6

## REFERRAL FORM

### ABOUT YOU

Your name

Position

Department

Address

Tel

Mobile

Email

### ABOUT THE CHILD

Child's name

Date of birth

Child's address

Parent's/  
Carer's names

Address



### ABOUT THE INCIDENT

Date		Time		Location	
Write exactly what the observations (Continue on separate sheet if necessary)					
Write exactly what the					

separately (Continued) said and what

**ABOUT THE ALLEGED/SUSPECTED ABUSER**

**APPENDIX 7**

**OTHER AGENCIES INVOLVED**

**Police**

Name of contact

Time of contact

What was their advice?

**Children's Services**

Name of contact

Time of contact

What was their advice?

**External Organisations**

Name of contact

Time of contact

What was their advice?

**APPROVAL FOR REFERRAL**

**Parents/Carer**

Name

Time of contact

Parent's signature approving referral

.....

Time ..... Dated .....

.....

Time ..... Dated .....

Signature.....

Dated .....

**SEND TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES**