

# **LITTLE OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**Adopted 23rd November 2022 (Minute Number 22/104)**

**Reviewed biennially – Last Reviewed 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024 (Minute No. 24/101)**

**Next Review Date November 2026**

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Children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to participate and be safe in the services provided for them regardless of age, race, disability, culture or gender. This includes a right to protection from abuse.

Under the Children Act 2004 and the Apprenticeships Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, Little Oakley Parish Council has a duty to co-operate with Essex County Council in discharging its duties as a Children's Services Authority and to promote the well-being of children and young people.

Little Oakley Parish Council can carry out its responsibilities by ensuring that the needs and interests of children, young people and vulnerable adults are considered by all Councillors, employees, volunteers and contracted services, and when taking decisions in relation to service provision.

### **Policy statement**

Little Oakley Parish Council provides a range of services and facilities. This policy aims to ensure that an overarching approach to safeguarding covers all services. Little Oakley Parish Council will promote the welfare and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults within all services by:

- Respecting the rights, wishes, feelings and privacy of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Preventing abuse by promoting good practice, creating a safe and healthy environment and avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse occur.
- Taking seriously and responding appropriately and promptly to all concerns, incidents and allegations.
- Providing training appropriate to the level of involvement with children, young people and vulnerable adults to ensure that Councillors, employees and volunteers understand the different forms of abuse as well as their roles and responsibilities under the Council's Code of Conduct and this Safeguarding Policy.
- Requiring organisations that the Council contracts with or that provide the Council with services, to have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place.
- Not tolerating harassment of any Councillors, employees, volunteers, contracted service providers or children, young people or vulnerable adults who raise concerns of abuse.
- In order to stay at the forefront of safeguarding, Little Oakley Parish Council is committed to reviewing this safeguarding policy at least every two years.

This policy applies to all services within the scope of Little Oakley Parish Council. In addition to employees and Councillors, this safeguarding policy also applies to volunteers, outside hirers and outside organisations delivering services on behalf of contractors and grant funded organisations.

## **Definitions**

**Abuse** – is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

**Domestic abuse** – is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional
- discriminatory
- institutional

**Controlling behaviour** – is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

**Coercive behaviour** – is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. This definition includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

**'Children and young people'** – anyone under the age of 18 years.

**'Parents'** – This term is used in its broadest sense to include parents, carers and guardians.

**'Vulnerable adult'** – a person over the age of 18 is considered to be 'vulnerable' when (for reasons of mental health, learning disability or other disability, age or illness) they require community care services to take care of themselves, or are unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation. A vulnerable person is at a risk of abuse: physical, sexual, emotional, discriminatory, institutional, financial, neglect and acts of omission. This includes having property / money stolen or misused; being defrauded; being put under pressure in relation to money / property.

**'Safeguarding'** – includes all forms of activity that aim to protect or promote the welfare of a group of people. This generally includes: prevention, raising awareness, activities designed to promote inclusion, providing personalised benefit and risk management, and specialist safeguarding services. The first three examples in the above list are the most relevant to Little Oakley Parish Council.

## **Safeguarding responsibilities**

In Essex, safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults is an inter-agency responsibility involving the city/borough/district councils, Essex County Council, the Essex Safeguarding Childrens Board and the Essex Safeguarding Adults Board.

### **The role of Little Oakley Parish Council**

It is the responsibility of all employees and Councillors to adhere to best practice, participate in relevant training and report any concerns, incidents or allegations to a designated person in accordance with the relevant procedure. Safeguarding reports cannot be anonymous and should be made in the knowledge that, during the course of enquiries, the person making the report may be required as a prosecution witness.

If anyone has any cause for concern, please contact the Clerk to the Council.