Safeguarding Policy

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Policy Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to guide members of the Council in how the Council intends to act in relation to the protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults generally and how they individually should respond should they become aware of any Child protection or Adult Safeguarding issues.

Policy Objective(s):

1. To ensure that where possible all facilities and activities offered by the Parish Council are designed, adapted and maintained to limit risk to Children and Vulnerable Adults.
2. To promote the general welfare, health and development of Children and Vulnerable Adults by being aware of Child protection and Vulnerable Adult safeguarding issues and to act at all times as a responsible local government organisation in accordance with this policy and good practice.
3. To develop, use and maintain suitable and effective procedures for recording and responding to accidents and complaints and to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse and neglect involving Children or Vulnerable Adults.
4. Meriden Parish Council expects all Children and Vulnerable Adults using its facilities or attending its events will do so with the consent and the necessary supervision of a parent, carer or other responsible adult.

Types and Indicators of Abuse

1. Physical abuse (assault, hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, hair-pulling, biting, pushing, scalding and burning, intentional misuse of medication to sedate or cause pain, forcible feeding or withholding food, inappropriate restraint) – indicators can include fractures, bruising and marks due to hitting, biting or kicking, scold marks, drowsiness and vomiting due to head injuries.
2. Domestic violence or abuse (physical, psychological, financial, sexual, emotional) – indicators can include damage to property, social isolation, low self-esteem, limited access to money, physical evidence of violence.
3. Sexual abuse (non-consensual sexual activity, inappropriate touching, rape and attempted rape, indecent exposure) – indicators can include bruising, bleeding, pain, reluctance to be alone with a particular person, self-destructive behaviour and self-harm, sudden changes in behaviour and temperament, inappropriate advances to others.
4. Psychological or emotional abuse (bullying (including cyber) intimidation, coercion, harassment, use of threats, humiliation, enforced social isolation, not respecting privacy) – indicators can include withdrawal, low self-esteem, excessive compliance, feelings of helplessness, shame and resignation, signs of distress.
5. Financial or material abuse (theft, fraud, scamming, exploitation of another person's money, assets or home, undue pressure, duress, or influence to make

the person take out loans or give money away, abuse of power over financial affairs) – indicators can include missing possessions, unexplained lack of money, recent changes to a property deed or title, others showing an unusual interest in a person's assets, significant bank withdrawals, no money for essential items.

6. Modern slavery (human trafficking, forced labour, sexual exploitation) – indicators can include physical, emotional or sexual abuse signs, malnourished, isolation, fear of law enforcers, dirty and overcrowded living conditions, lack of personal effects or identification documents.
7. Discriminatory abuse (unequal treatment based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation, verbal abuse, derogatory remarks, harassment) – indicators can include expressions of anger, frustration, fear or anxiety, withdrawal and isolation.
8. Organisational or institutional abuse (discouraging visits or the involvement of relatives or friends, abusive and disrespectful attitudes towards people using the service, inappropriate use of restraint, lack of respect for dignity and privacy, not offering choice or promoting independence, not taking account of individuals' cultural, religious or ethnic needs, failure to respond to abuse appropriately) – indicators can include the absence of care plans, people being hungry or dehydrated, absence of visitors, lack of adequate procedures, unnecessary exposure during bathing or using the toilet, public discussion of personal matters.
9. Neglect or acts of omission (failure to provide or allow access to food, shelter, clothing, heating, stimulation and activity, personal or medical care, refusal of visitors, ignoring or isolating the person) – indicators can include malnutrition and unexplained weight loss, dirty or unhygienic living environment, poor physical condition and/or personal hygiene, inappropriate or inadequate clothing, untreated injuries, reluctant contact with medical and social care organisations.
10. Self-neglect (lack of self-care, inability to avoid self-harm, neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings, failure to seek help or access services) – indicators can include poor personal hygiene, unkempt appearance, lack of essential food, clothing or shelter, malnutrition, dehydration, living in unsanitary conditions, inability or unwillingness to take medication or treat illness or injury.

Responsibilities and Procedures

A Safeguarding Officer(s) will be appointed from within the Council (this will be the Clerk unless otherwise stated) and his/her responsibilities will include:

1. Ensuring that before any Parish Council organised event with Children or Vulnerable Adults, the Safeguarding Officer briefs participants appropriately. For example, determining the nature of the activity, highlighting any expected risks and reminding adult participants of this policy. This briefing would be kept on record.

2. Ensuring that, whilst Council members are unlikely to be involved with Children or Vulnerable Adults during the performance of their duties, they still have adequate knowledge of safeguarding as well as potential risks to adults and Children and Vulnerable Adults; have completed any mandatory training as adopted by the Council and are aware of this policy.
3. Ensuring that before any volunteers or paid members of staff are recruited to work with Children and Vulnerable Adults they are interviewed in accordance with the Meriden Parish Council Recruitment policy.
4. Decisions on whether any person should be DBS checked will be made by the Chairman after consultation with the Safeguarding Officer(s) following a risk assessment of the role. This decision will be determined based on the person undertaking activities which are categorised as 'Regulated Activity'. Any tainted DBS Disclosure will be considered by the Chairman and Safeguarding Officer(s).
5. Ensuring all Councillors are provided with a copy of this Safeguarding Policy and require them to acknowledge they will abide by it.
6. Requiring all Councillors adhere to the 'Required Behaviours' namely:
    - 6.1 A minimum of two Adults to be present when engaging in any Council activity involving Children or Vulnerable Adults.
    - 6.2 If the activity is a 'Regulated Activity' for Children and/or Vulnerable Adults one of the adults will be DBS checked and will supervise the Activity.
    - 6.3 Not to play physical contact games.
    - 6.4 Adults to wear clothing which is suitable and befitting the occasion or activity.
    - 6.5 Ensure that all accidents are recorded in the accident book.
    - 6.6 Never do anything of an intimate personal nature for a young person, for example accompanying them to the toilet or helping them dress or undress.
7. Keep records of any allegations a young person may make to any Councillor, employee or volunteer and inform the Safeguarding Team at Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council immediately (see contact details below). Records will be held securely and may only be accessed, where necessary, by the Safeguarding Officer. Councillors may be informed that an allegation(s) has been made but not informed of any specific details and that it is being (or has been) dealt with in accordance with this policy. In no circumstances will any information be released that would or could lead to the identification of the complainant(s) or person(s) accused.
    - i. The Safeguarding Officer is to be monitored by and required to discuss any cases with their supervisor(s). Under normal circumstances, this supervision should be carried out by the Chair.
    - ii. If there is a incident or disclosure made indicating that there may be a Child or Vulnerable Adult safeguarding issue, it should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer without delay. The Safeguarding Officer will raise the

matter with the Safeguarding Team at Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council immediately.

iii. Facilities offered by the Parish Council will be inspected on a regular basis and at least annually by a representative of RoSPA or similar organisations. For example, this would include that rooms in use are appropriate and comfortable, facilities such as toilets and showers are safe and working and amenities such as play equipment are safe and maintained to a high standard.

iv. Meriden Parish Council will share information about any protection issue with the relevant agencies when required to do so.

v. Sharing good practice with partner organisations, Councillors, employees, volunteers, parents and carers – for example, sharing a thorough and rigorous policy with other Parish Councils in order to strengthen safeguarding in other districts.

8. In the event of a contractor, working directly for the Parish Council, being deemed by the Safeguarding Officer to be working in any area where Children or Vulnerable Adults may be at risk, then that contractor will be asked to provide a copy of their Safeguarding Policy for inspection and retention. If such a policy is found to be inadequate or absent, Meriden Parish Council reserve the right to refuse access to premises or permission to work for the Council.
9. A similar condition applies to all clubs or teams who use Parish facilities such as football fields. Any organisation which may make contact with Children or Vulnerable Adults shall be required to show proof of its own appropriate Safeguarding Policy before being allowed to participate in the use of any Council owned facilities. This policy should be shown upon first use of the facilities, and then annually thereafter.

Safeguarding Contacts

In the event of an immediate risk and danger to life and health please telephone 999.

Solihull Council
To report a **child or young person** at risk telephone 0121 788 4300 (Monday to Thursday 8.45am to 5.20pm, Friday 8.45am to 4.30pm). If you are calling out of working hours (evenings, weekends or bank holidays) please telephone 0121 605 6060.

To report an **adult** at risk telephone 0121 704 8007 or email **ccadults@solihull.gov.uk**.

Meriden Parish Council
For safeguarding concerns relating to the Parish Council's events please contact the Clerk to Meriden Parish Council at **clerk@meridenparishcouncil.gov.uk** or telephone 07767 162423.