

## Cheriton Fitzpaine Garden Club Safeguarding Policy as of 2019

**Definitions** Children are defined as persons of less than 18 years of age. Adults are legally defined as vulnerable only if they are receiving health or personal care, but this club recognises that anyone can be subject to abuse and thus this policy should be read with adults as well as children in mind.

### Policy Statement

- The child's welfare is paramount and this organisation is committed to provide a safe place for children.
- All children have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of inappropriate behaviour shall be followed through and dealt with.
- The Club Member with responsibility for Safeguarding is Elizabeth Rogers.

**Recognising abuse** This section explains briefly what child abuse is, how to recognise it, and what to do.

### What Is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed, usually by adults, and includes physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, mental abuse, and bullying.

**Physical abuse** Physical abuse occurs where adults or other children:

- Physically hurt or injure children
- Give children noxious substances (e.g. alcohol/drugs)

**Neglect:** Neglect includes situations in which adults:

- Consistently leave children unsupervised
- Fail to ensure children are safe or expose them to unnecessary risk of injury

**Sexual abuse** Children are sexually abused when adults or children use them to meet their own sexual needs.

Examples:

- Unlawful intercourse
- Inappropriate touching
- Taking pornographic photographs

**Mental Abuse** When children are:

- Taunted or unnecessarily shouted at
- Subjected to undue criticism

- Put under unreasonable pressure to perform

### Bullying

Maybe carried out by adults or by other children:

- Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour usually repeated over a period of time.
- Any child can be a victim of bullying
- More usual victims are shy, sensitive, anxious and insecure

**How to Recognise if a Child is Being Abused** It is not always easy to spot when children have been abused. However, typical symptoms would include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries
- Sexually explicit language or actions
- A sudden change in behaviour
- The child describes an abusive act
- The child has a general distrust and avoidance of adults
- An unreasonable reaction to normal physical contact. Although, a child may be displaying some or all of these signs, it does not necessarily mean the child is being abused.

**Prevention of Abuse** This section offers advice aimed at protecting children from abuse and members from false allegations. The club will point out to parents of under-16s who take part in club activities that the club will take every possible care of children but they cannot be deemed to be in loco parentis in respect of children using club facilities. The exception to this will be if the young person is a member and makes excursions away from the community hall with other club members such as visits to gardens, the required permission form has been signed by the parent or guardian.

### Good Practice Guide Opportunities

Abuse can be minimised, and members can be protected against allegations, by the use of good practice.

- Minimise time spent alone with children
- Do not take children alone in a car
- Do not take children to your home
- Where these situations are unavoidable, ensure they only occur with the authority of the child's parents or a responsible person within the club.

### You Should Never

- Allow children to use inappropriate language
- Make suggestive comments to a child
- Fail to act upon allegations made by a child
- Do things of a personal nature for children

- Engage in physical or sexually provocative games
- Engage in inappropriate touching

**What to do if there are Allegations of Abuse** Where there is an allegation of abuse against a member, there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation (police)
- A safeguarding investigation (social services)
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation

#### **Always**

- Stay calm - ensure the child is safe and feels secure
- Tell the child you are taking the complaint seriously
- Be honest; explain you will have to tell somebody else, emphasising that this will be on a need to know basis
- Document what the child has said as soon as possible – handwritten accounts should be made. In the event that these are subsequently typed up ALWAYS keep the original handwritten copy with it.

#### **Never**

- Rush into actions
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Ask inappropriate questions
- Take sole responsibility

#### **Why should I intervene?**

- Taking the correct action about abuse is never easy
- You may be upset about what the child has said or you may worry about the consequences of your actions
- One thing is certain: you cannot ignore abuse
- The effects of abuse on children can be devastating

#### **Recording information**

- Record basic information
- Do not start an investigation
- Remember that unnecessary interviews with a child may prejudice a police enquiry
- Consider environment carefully if recording information
- Ensure another adult is present

- Avoid touching the child.

**Written Parental/Guardian Consent** Where a child or young person is to accompany other club members, a written parental consent form should be obtained. Likewise, if photographs are to be taken for publication the parent/guardian's permission must be obtained and no addresses, emails or telephone numbers must be publicised.

This policy is approved by the Chair and Committee,