



Wroughton Parish Council

Safeguarding Policy

Full Council March 2025

Introduction

Wroughton Parish Council advocates that **SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS** and that all people have the right to live in safety, free from abuse, harm and neglect.

Safeguarding is the umbrella term for protecting peoples' physical health, mental wellbeing and human rights and the Parish Council has a duty of care to protect all children, young people **and adults**, who come into contact with our services. This is in-line with the Children Act (2004) and Care Act (2014).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Wroughton Parish Council retains a consistent approach to safeguarding across the organisation. It is designed to ensure that anyone working for, or on behalf of, the Parish Council, including employees, Parish Councillors, volunteers and contractors, is aware of their legal obligations. This guide will sit behind all Parish Council policies.

The Parish Council's Safeguarding Concern/Incident form (see Appendix 1) will be used to report any safeguarding incidents.

All Parish Council employees, Parish Councillors, and volunteers have a responsibility to act in-line with the Safeguarding Policy.

The Council's Role and Responsibilities

Local Authorities have a duty under the Children Act (2004) regulations and the Care Act 2014, to ensure that they consider the need to safeguard, protect and /or empower children, young people and adults, when carrying out their functions. The Parish Council has a role in **identifying** children, young people and adults who may be at risk and alerting the appropriate services.

Wroughton Parish Council is committed to ensuring the safety of all users of our services and facilities. We recognise we have a statutory responsibility and duty of care to co-operate, communicate and report issues relating to safeguarding to the appropriate internal person(s), authorities and partner agencies. This is to be consistent across all service areas.

As adults with trust and influence, Wroughton Parish Council employees, parish councillors, and volunteers are in a powerful position to recognise and receive information about abuse or need for care and support. However, it is not their responsibility to decide if a child, young person, or adult in need of care and support is being abused.

What should be a cause for concern

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. Abuse can take many forms:

TYPE	DEFINITION	SIGNS
Emotional or psychological abuse	The persistent emotional maltreatment such as to cause severe and persistent effects including verbal abuse, humiliation, bullying or the use of threats. It can also include cyber bullying.	Conveying to children that they are worthless or inadequate, imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations, serious bullying, exploitation, isolation, segregation.

Sexual	Forcing or enticing a -person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware that is happening, or where the adult cannot or does not give their consent or is pressured into consenting. This includes use of images through social media or other IT.	Inappropriate sexual behaviour or use of language. Unexplained & expensive items or gifts.
Neglect	The persistent failure to meet a person's basic physical and/or psychological needs. Neglect will likely result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. The repeated denial of help which an adult needs which, if withdrawn, will cause the adult to suffer.	Inadequate food, clothing or shelter. Inadequate access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Isolation, truancy and lateness to appointments can also be signs.
Physical	May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning scalding, drowning, suffocating, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint or sanctions, or otherwise causing physical harm. Also includes bullying and cyber bullying.	Unexplained bruising, burns, fractures, weight gain or loss, as well as repeated illness.
Domestic Violence	An incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour. The violence or abuse is by someone who is or has been an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexuality.	Unexplained bruising, cowering or flinching. Being detached or aloof from what is happening around them.
Financial or material abuse	Includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.	
Modern Slavery	Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude.	

Self-neglect	A wide range of behaviour seriously neglecting to care for ones' personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.	
Discriminatory Abuse	Includes forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment based on a person's ethnic origin, religion, language, age, sexuality, gender or disability.	

There are a number of specific acts that constitute abuse:

Child Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur using technology without the child's immediate recognition. For example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength, economic or other resources. These exploitative relationships are characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

Modern Slavery

There are many different characteristics that distinguish slavery from other human rights violations, however only one needs to be present for slavery to exist. It involves people being forced to work through mental or physical threat, owned or controlled by an 'employer' usually through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse. The person is dehumanised and treated as a commodity.

Forced Marriage

In a forced marriage you are coerced into marrying someone against your will. You may be physically threatened or emotionally blackmailed to do so. It is an abuse of human rights and cannot be justified on any religious or cultural basis. It is not the same as an arranged marriage where you have a choice as to whether to accept the arrangement or not.

Female Genital Mutilation

This is a collective term used for illegal procedures, such as female circumcision, which include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs, or injury to the female genital organs for a cultural or non-therapeutic reason.

Honour Based Violence

This is abuse in the name of honour, covering a variety of behaviours, mainly but not exclusively against females, where the person is being punished by their family and/or community for a perceived transgression against the 'honour' of the family or community. A person may also be required to undergo certain activities or procedures in 'honour' of the family. It is a form of domestic abuse which relates to a victim who does not abide by the 'rules' of an honour code. This will have been set at the discretion of relatives or the community.

Cyber Crime

This is defined as criminal activity carried out by means of the internet. Criminals are increasingly exploiting the

speed, convenience, and anonymity of the internet to commit a diverse range of criminal activities without physical or virtual borders. These crimes can cause serious harm and pose significant threats to victims.

Stalking

The Protection of Freedoms Act (2012) defines “stalking” as an offence. There is no legal definition, but examples include: following or spying on a person or forcing contact with the victim through any means including social media. Any of these examples carried out repeatedly or persistently can cause significant alarm or distress.

Prevent

Prevent is a government strategy which aims to raise awareness and resilience to radicalisation. It recognises that children and vulnerable adults can be susceptible to extremist views and coerced into criminal behaviour.

Human Trafficking

Takes place when a victim is moved from one place to another for the purpose of exploitation, this could be through sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced labour, forced criminality or organ harvesting. The trafficker can control and exploit through violence, coercion, or deception.

Discrimination

Wroughton Parish Council is committed to the principles of the Equality Act (2010) and follows non-discriminatory practices for the protection of all individuals. It should be noted that discrimination does not have to be intentional to be unlawful.

Under the Equality Act, there are nine protected characteristics:

Age Discrimination	This is when you are treated unfairly because of your age.
Gender Reassignment Discrimination	This is when you are treated unfairly on the basis of your actual or proposed gender reassignment. You do not need to have undergone any medical treatment or surgery to reassign your sex/ gender.
Married and Civil Partnership	This is when you are treated differently at work because you are married or in a civil partnership.
Disability	Disability discrimination is when you are treated less well or put at a disadvantage for a reason that relates to your disability.
Race	This is when you are treated unfairly because of your race in one of the situations covered by the Equality Act. This includes direct and indirect discrimination.
Religion and Beliefs	This is when you are treated differently because of your religion or belief.
Sex	This is when you are treated differently because of your sex, as set out in the Equality Act 2010.
Sexual Orientation	This is when you are treated unfairly because of your sexual orientation example you are heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual.
Pregnant and Maternity Leave	This is when you are treated unfavourably because of pregnancy, a pregnancy-related illness, breastfeeding in a public place, or because of taking maternity leave.

Organisation Team

	Name	Phone Number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead for Wroughton SMASH Youth sessions	Kat Rowe SMASH Street Based Mentor	07342 314946	kat@teamsmash.org.uk reports to Amy Cox at SMASH (details below)
Designated Safeguarding Lead for SMASH	Amy Cox SMASH Lead for Communities	07810 628080	amy.cox@teamsmash.org.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead for Wroughton Parish Council	The Clerk Emma Freemantle	01793 814735	clerk@wroughton.gov.uk reports to The Chair of Wroughton Parish Council for safeguarding – details below
Chair of Wroughton Parish Council	Cllr John Hewer	07860 499777	jhewer@cllr.wroughton.gov.uk

Safeguarding Practices

Safe Working Practices

All parish council staff, volunteers and parish councillors must follow this Safeguarding Policy at all times. They should:

- Never leave children, young people or vulnerable adults unattended.
- Plan activities to involve more than one person being present or at least in sight or hearing of others.
- Ensure that photos or videos of individuals are not taken without written permission from their parents/carers.
- Ensure they have access to a first aid kit and telephone and know fire procedures.
- Should Parish Council facilities (including a community centre or an event space) be hired by an organisation or group which works with children, young adults or vulnerable adults, the Parish Council will require the hirer to have in place their own Safeguarding Policy.

Safer Recruitment

Safeguarding is an essential consideration at the recruitment stage. All staff recruited after this policy has been approved, will be required to carry out a Basic DBS check and show the original to the Clerk prior to their contract of employment being confirmed.

All Home Library Service Volunteers, Rhymetime Volunteers and Friendship Group volunteers recruited after this policy has been approved will be required to carry out a Basic DBS check and show the original to the Clerk, as well as satisfactorily completing the volunteer recruitment form, including 2 references being received and deemed satisfactory by the Clerk, prior to starting as volunteers.

- All existing staff will be asked to carry out a Basic DBS check and show the certificate to the Clerk.
- All existing volunteers will be asked to carry out a Basic DBS check and show the certificate to the Clerk.
- All staff and volunteers will be required to read and sign that they have understood this Safeguarding Policy.

- All Parish Councillors will be asked to carry out a Basic DBS check and show the original to the Clerk.
- All Parish Councillors will be asked to read and sign that they have understood this Safeguarding Policy.

NB Parish councillors are elected. There are very limited rules whereby a councillor may be disqualified including failing to attend meetings without reason for 6 months, becoming bankrupt, being sentenced to at least 3 months imprisonment, becoming a paid officer of the council etc. ie: a parish councillor cannot be disqualified for refusing to do a DBS check.

Training

Safeguarding training will be compulsory at Wroughton Parish Council for all staff.

The Clerk is responsible for identifying and ensuring that all new starters have the appropriate level of safeguarding training for their role (within six months of taking up their post) and ensuring that all staff refresh their training every three years.

To ensure awareness of Safeguarding is consistent across all levels of the organisation, the Parish Council is committed to also providing safeguarding training for all Parish Councillors (within 6 months of being elected). All Parish Councillors will be encouraged to attend that training.

Safeguarding training will also be offered to all volunteers. All volunteers will be encouraged and expected to attend. The Clerk is responsible for identifying and ensuring that all volunteers have the appropriate level of training and refreshment training.

The Clerk will work closely with the Swindon Safeguarding Partnership to ensure suitable training is arranged for employees, Parish Councillors, and volunteers.

Safeguarding Allegations against a Member of Staff

Wroughton Parish Council takes any allegations or complaints about the conduct of staff and volunteers very seriously in respect of their contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults. If an allegation is made against a member of staff, volunteer or parish councillor, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Clerk. If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Clerk, the recipient of the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of the Parish Council. The Parish Council will obtain advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at Swindon Borough Council on the action to be taken. A decision will be made whether the matter can be dealt with by the Parish Council or if the severity of the allegation warrants a different course of action. No attempt should be made to investigate or act before consultation with the Swindon Borough Council Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Support for Staff/Volunteers

Support will be provided for any member of staff or volunteer who may be subject to an allegation. The Parish Council will also ensure that all staff and volunteers will be fully supported and protected should they come forward in good faith (without malicious intent) to report their concerns about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a child, young person or adult may be being abused or bullied.

The person who receives information concerning a suspected case of abuse by another member of staff or volunteer should make a full record of what has been said, as soon as possible and pass the information to the Clerk.

Safeguarding Procedures

Parish Council Employee Responsibilities

It is not the responsibility of Parish Council staff, volunteers or parish councillors to make decisions on whether abuse is taking place. However, all employees have a responsibility to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults and to inform the Clerk in a timely manner.

The employee will then work with the Clerk to inform the appropriate external agencies via Swindon Safeguarding Partnership. It is the responsibility of Swindon Safeguarding Partnership to then make enquiries, decisions and take any necessary action.

Procedure for being reported alleged abuse

Where a child, young person or vulnerable adult comes to speak to you directly and tells you information which may suggest they are at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation, this is known as a disclosure. You should:

- Reassure them that they being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- Listen to what they are saying, without displaying any signs of shock or disbelief
- Allow them to talk freely without interrupting
- Reassure them but do not make promises about keeping the information a secret
- Reassure them that this is not their fault
- DO NOT ASK LEADING QUESTIONS
- Explain to them that they have done the right thing by telling you and explain what you will do next, in line with the procedure outlined below.

All staff should be aware that children, young people and vulnerable adults may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. This should not prevent you from speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead if you have concerns.

Complete the Concern/Incident Form immediately (see Appendix 1). If you don't have the form to hand, write down what was said, as far as you can in the person's own words, not making assumptions, and then hand it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in person. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, please contact Swindon Safeguarding Partnership immediately – contact details overleaf.

Maintain Confidentiality

It is extremely important that any allegations are not discussed outside of a conversation with the Clerk or if an allegation is against the Clerk, the Chair of the Parish Council. Any breaches may jeopardise an ongoing investigation. Requests for information from members of the public (including parents, guardians, or carers) or the media should be directed to the Clerk.

Quick Reference Contacts Guide (<https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk>)

	Name	Phone Number
Designated Safeguarding Lead for Wroughton SMASH Youth sessions	Kat Rowe SMASH Street Based Mentor kat@teamsmash.org.uk	07342 314946
Designated Safeguarding Lead for SMASH	Amy Cox SMASH Lead for Communities amy.cox@teamsmash.org.uk	07810 628080
Designated Safeguarding Lead Wroughton Parish Council	The Clerk (Emma Freemantle) clerk@wroughton.gov.uk	01793 814735
Chair Wroughton Parish Council	Councillor John Hewer jhewer@cllr.wroughton.gov.uk	07860 499777
Swindon Safeguarding Partnership	https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/	

Children	contactchildrenandfamilies@swindon.gov.uk	01793 464646 01793 436699 (out of hours)
Adults	adultsafeguarding@swindon.gov.uk	01793 463555
Police and/ or Ambulance Service	If someone is in immediate danger or in need of medical attention or if a crime has been committed	999
NSPCC	NSPCC Helpline Whistle-blowing Helpline	0808 800 5000 0800 028 0285
Childline	For young people aged 18 or under	0800 1111

**A paper copy of this policy and the form at Appendix 1
will be kept in both the Parish Council Office and Wroughton Library.**

This Policy was initially adopted at the Full Council meeting on 17th March 2024

This policy will be updated when any legislative/best practice changes take place or annually in May, beginning May 2026.

Signed:

Position: J Hewer, Chair of Wroughton Parish Council

Signed:

Position: E Freemantle, Clerk, Wroughton Parish Council

Appendix 1

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Concern / Incident Form

CONFIDENTIAL

Date:		Time:	
Name and role of person completing form			
Name of Child, Young Person or Vulnerable Adult:		Age/DOB:	
Location (if applicable)			
<u>What have I seen/heard/noticed which concerns me?</u>			
<u>What has the child, young person or vulnerable adult told me</u>			
<u>What am I worried about?</u>			
<u>Is this concern linked to any previous concerns I have recorded or reported?</u>			
<u>Action I have taken (eg: contacting Swindon Safeguarding Partnership in the absence of the Clerk)</u>			

