



BUDE-STRATTON TOWN COUNCIL
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY 2006

Adopted 15 June 2006

Bude-Stratton Town Council recognises that children are an especially vulnerable group and is particularly concerned to stress the importance of proper safeguards within the Council for the protection of children.

The Council will set in place a rigorous recruitment and selection process that involves checks into the eligibility and suitability of all Councillors, staff and volunteers who work or come into contact with children.

The Council's Child Protection Policy will state:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All Councillors, staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report concerns

The Council's Child Protection Policy will be linked to the procedures that clarify:

- What is good practice amongst all personnel
- What practice is not to be sanctioned
- The ways in which all Council personnel are recruited and selected to ensure their suitability for working with children
- How to properly respond to suspicions and allegations
- How to ensure confidentiality
- What systems are in place to ensure that all staff working with children are routinely and regularly monitored

Introduction

1. All Town Councillors, staff, volunteers and sub-contractors will be aware of the fact that organisations that work with children must have child protection procedures in place. Bude-Stratton Town Council has to take its responsibilities regarding child protection seriously and has developed a clear yet common sense set of procedures covering all children under the age of 18 for whom the Council has responsibility. Fundamental elements of the Council's procedures are:
 - The Council has a legal responsibility to protect children in its care
 - A child is anyone under the age of 18 (this might include staff and volunteers)
 - Town Councillors, staff, volunteers and sub-contractors should not put themselves in positions where they could be accused of any form of abuse
 - If any Town Councillor, member of staff, volunteer or sub-contractor see or hears anything which could be perceived as either poor practice or abuse in relation to the care of children, the incident must to be reported to a senior member of staff

Forms of abuse

2. There are four main forms of abuse
 - Neglect. This includes things like allowing a child to wear inappropriate clothing, providing inappropriate food, providing insufficient attention, lack of supervision, deficient safety provision, exposure to undue cold, unnecessary risk of injury
 - Physical abuse. Physically hurting a child in any way, giving a child alcohol, giving medication without permission, intensity of training beyond the capacity of the individual
 - Sexual abuse. Any aspect of sexual abuse, whether physical or verbal or inappropriate physical contact
 - Emotional abuse. Shouting, threatening or taunting children, constant criticism, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform

Effects of abuse

3. Abuse in all its forms can affect a child of any age. The effects can be so damaging that they may follow an individual into adulthood.
4. A number of studies suggest that children with disabilities are at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse has occurred. Children from ethnic minorities, who may also be experiencing racial discrimination, may be doubly powerless.

Responding to the child

5. If a child says or indicates that he or she is being abused, or information is obtained which gives concern that a child is being abused, the person receiving this information should:
 - React calmly so as not to frighten the child
 - Tell the child that he or she is not to blame and that it was right to tell
 - Take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child who has a speech disability and/or differences in language
 - Keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said
 - Reassure the child but do not make promises of confidentiality which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments
 - Make a full record of what has been said, heard, and/or seen as soon as possible

General guidance notes

6. The following notes are provided to give general guidance to avoid the possibility of claims of abuse against Council staff, volunteers and sub-contractors. If Council staff, volunteers and sub-contractors have any uncertainty over whether they are using good practice they should seek guidance from the senior management.
 - Ensure that all children are treated the same way
 - Avoid favouritism
 - Avoid being overly tactile
 - Avoid fitting clothing or equipment; try to get children to put their own on
 - If it is necessary to assist a child to put on clothing, get him or her to agree that you will fit it and explain what you are doing whilst you are assisting him/her
 - If you have to assist a child to put on clothing, make sure you do so openly and in sight of other participants
 - If you are required to lift, carry or support a child, avoid making contact with sensitive parts of the body, explain what you are doing while you are doing it, and where practicable, gain their consent
 - Do not put yourself in a position where you are alone with a child out of public view
 - Do not make any sexually suggestive comment to any child
 - Do not engage in any rough physical or provocative games or horseplay with any child
 - If you are working with groups where physical contact is inevitable, such as younger children, it is essential that carers or parents consent to the methods of lifting, carrying or other contact which will take place
 - Never leave a child or a group of children unsupervised
7. Being approached by a child. If any child makes approaches to you or is overly familiar you should extract yourself from the situation and report the matter to senior management as soon as possible.
8. Supervision. The Council has a clear responsibility for supervising children when undertaking an event it has organised (for instance *Gurney Day*, or school visits to Bude-Stratton Museum). For such events, the following table identifies who is responsible and when.

Activity	Responsibility
From stated start of activities until declared completion of activities for the day.	Senior management and officers/supervisors undertaking event
Child unable to participate in activities through being unwell.	The responsibility during this period rests with the child's own parent or the accompanying teacher/supervisor.

9. Children who are unwell. If an unaccompanied child is unwell while participating in a Council organised event, the Council is responsible for the child's care. If more than a minor nature, that is, needing to see a doctor or be taken to hospital, the child's own parents (or guardians) must be contacted to inform them of the situation. No young person under the age of 18 can be left unattended with either a doctor or at a hospital.
10. A child is unable to participate in activities through being unwell must be supervised. The event manager must be informed of the situation.

If you suspect abuse or poor practice taking place

11. You have a responsibility to report any concern you may have that a child at a Council organised event is being subjected to any form of abuse or poor practice. If you have a concern, you must take the action identified in the Child Protection Procedures management flow chart overleaf.

Further reference and advice:

Active Sport Cornwall - *Working Together Sharing Good Practice – Child Protection & Good Practice Guidelines in relation to Sports Organisations*

ChildLine - 0800 1111

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) - 0808 800 5000

ROUTINE PRECAUTIONARY PROCEDURES

IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO – if you have a concern that a child might be being subjected to abuse or poor practice by a member of Council staff, volunteer, sub-contractor or accompanying parent.	Record what you saw or heard.
	Report the incident to a senior member of Council staff.
	<i>Due to the sensitive nature and confidential nature of these incidents you should not discuss the matter with other staff or members of the public.</i>
WHAT BUDE-STRATTON TOWN COUNCIL WILL DO	Take report from whoever reported the matter and complete the Child Protection Report Form.
If it appears to be a case of <u>poor practice</u>:	If it appears to be a case of <u>abuse</u>:
Interview the reported person immediately.	Interview the reported person immediately.
Record details on Child Protection Report Form.	Record details on Child Protection Report Form.
If not a member of Council staff, volunteer or sub-contractor, report to the organisation concerned verbally and in writing.	Contact senior member of Council staff to discuss incident.
Identify the poor practice.	Deal with internally or refer to external agencies.
Treat as a misconduct issue. Identify areas for improvement.	If not a member of Council staff, volunteer or sub-contractor, report to the organisation concerned verbally and in writing.
Record details for future reference on Child Protection Report Form.	If internal , treat as disciplinary matter. Record details on Child Protection Report Form. Identify aspects below required standard. Issue warning and file on personal file.
Monitor the situation.	If referred externally , suspend employee pending inquiry, inform Social Services and cooperate with them and /or Police during the inquiry, keep senior Council staff informed of investigation and outcomes, comply with inquiry findings.

Bude-Stratton Town Council Child Protection Procedures Report

Attach all relevant information to this form.

1. Date:
2. Person completing this report:
3. Name and address of the person reporting poor practice or potential abuse:

4. Name and address of person reported for poor practice or potential abuse:

5. Notes of incident:

6. Notes of preliminary investigation:

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7. Is this a case of poor practice or potential abuse?

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8. Poor practice – state action taken:

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9. Is it potential abuse?

Contact senior member of Council staff and explain the situation.

10. Brief notes of this discussion

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If agreed, follow the external investigation procedure

11. Suspend employee in writing, pending investigation:

Date of suspension:

Time of suspension:

Attach copy of letter

12. Inform Social Service, who will undertake investigation and/or involve the Police

Date:

Time of call:

Contact Officer:

Telephone number:

Remarks:

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