

# Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council

## Safeguarding Policy

**Adopted during the Parish Council meeting on 14th May 2025.**

**Reviewed: 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

**Due for next Review: May 2027**

### SECTION 1: Introduction

Everyone has a duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. This policy promotes good practice in safeguarding for those using parish council facilities. Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council will review this policy annually.

#### 1.1 Definitions

Children and young people:

Anyone under the age of 18 years.

Vulnerable Adult:

Anyone over 18 who is:

- Unable to care for themselves
- Unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation
- Or may need community care services.

#### 1.2 To whom this policy applies

This policy applies to anyone working for or on behalf of Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council whether in a paid, voluntary or commissioned capacity, for example contracted to do a piece of work. This policy also applies to any individual hiring, leasing or using the parish council facilities for the purpose of delivering any service to children, young people or vulnerable adults.

#### 1.3 Different types of abuse

Staff and volunteers should be aware of the different types of abuse (outlined below). Staff and volunteers should be concerned by any action or inaction, which significantly harms the physical and/or emotional development of a child. Abuse falls into four main categories and can include child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation:

- 1) Physical abuse (for example hitting, pushing, shaking, misusing medication).

2) Sexual abuse (for example rape, sexual assault).

3) Emotional or psychological abuse (for example threats of harm or abandonment humiliation, controlling, intimidation)

4) Neglectful abuse (for example ignoring medical or physical care needs)

Abuse can also be:

- Mistreatment that violates a person's human and civil rights.
- Treating someone with disrespect in a way which significantly affects the person's quality of life, to causing actual physical suffering.
- Domestic (for example controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage)
- Self-neglectful (for example neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene or health)
- Discriminatory (for example abuse based on race, sexuality or a person's disability)
- Modern slavery (for example forced labour, debt bondage, sexual exploitation) organisational abuse.

## SECTION 2 Promoting a safe environment

To promote a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults, Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council will appoint a Safeguarding Officer and his/her responsibilities will include:

- Ensuring that whilst Council members are unlikely to be involved with children during the performance of their duties they are mindful of the risk they face.
- Ensuring that before any volunteers or paid members of staff are recruited to work with children and vulnerable persons they are interviewed, and two references taken up.
- Decisions on whether any person should be Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked will be made by the Council or the Chairman after consultation with the Clerk following a risk assessment.
- All new Councillors are to be provided with a copy of the Safeguarding Policy and are required to acknowledge they will abide by it.
- Councillors will adhere to the 'List of Recommended Behaviour' namely:
  - A minimum of two adults present when supervising children.
  - Not to play physical contact games.
  - Adults to wear appropriate clothing at all times.
  - Ensure that accidents are recorded in an accident book.
  - Never do anything of a personal nature for a young person.
  - Keep records in an incident book of any allegations a young person may make to any committee member or volunteer.

- If there is a child abuse incident it should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer who will be responsible for ensuring the matter is Somerset County Council for further action as appropriate.
- Display on parish council web site the relevant safeguarding contacts for advice and help.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with partner organisations, councillors, employees, volunteers, parents and carers.
- In the event of a contractor, working directly for the Parish Council, being deemed to be working in any area where children or vulnerable adults may be at risk, then that contractor will be asked to provide their Safeguarding Policy.

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.

#### 2.1 Hiring of facilities to groups for use with children, young people or vulnerable adults

Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council will require the hirer to:

- Have public liability insurance.
- Have a suitable safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults policy and/or agree to work to the Parish Council's policy and relevant guidance.
- Ensure leaders make their members aware of the Parish Council Policy and ensure that it is followed whilst using parish facilities.
- Ensure leaders have valid enhanced DBS checks as appropriate and know where the first aid box is.
- Complete risk assessments for individual activities. These should be available on demand should Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council require to see a copy.

#### SECTION 3: Safe working practice

All users of Parish Facilities must always adhere to the below requirements in order to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults:

- Never leave children, young people or vulnerable adults unattended with adults who have not been subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- Plan activities to involve more than one person being present or at least in sight or hearing of others. Alternatively, record, or inform others of their whereabouts and intended action.
- Where possible, have male and female leaders working with a mixed group.
- Ensure registers are complete and attendees are marked in and signed out (under 8's must be collected by a parent/carer).
- Ensure that photos or videos of individuals are not taken without written permission from parents/ carers. • Ensure they have access to a first aid kit and telephone and understand fire procedures including emergency exits.

- Ensure that where a child, young person or vulnerable adult needs assistance with toilet trips and when first aid is required, that this is carried out in pairs or in the latter case, that it is carried out where they can be seen.
- When working outside, ensure activities, breaks and clothing are suitable for the weather conditions and that shelter is available where possible.

### 3.1 Expectations of behaviour

All users of Parish Council facilities should:

- Ensure that communications, behaviour and interaction with users are appropriate and professional.
- Treat each other with respect and show consideration for other groups using the facilities.
- Refrain from any behaviour that involves racism, sexism and bullying and in addition to report any instances of such behaviour to group leaders, parish councillors, the parish clerk or parents and carers, as appropriate.

## SECTION 4: Allegations against staff and volunteers

- All staff and volunteers should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child or vulnerable adult. It is advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.
- If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Parish Clerk.
- If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Parish Clerk the recipient of the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of the Parish Council Personnel Committee.

### 4.1 Persons to be notified

No attempt should be made to investigate or act before consultation with the PCSO and Children's Social Care at Somerset County Council.

Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council must inform Somerset County Council within one working day when an allegation is made and prior to any further investigation taking place.

The accused member of staff should:

- Be treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed and processes involved;
- Be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation and the implications for any disciplinary or related process;
- If suspended, be kept up to date about events in the workplace;
- Offered support from the Parish Council.

### 4.2 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

#### 4.3 Support

The Council, together with the respective Children's Social Care and / or Police, where they are involved, should consider the impact on the child concerned and provide support as appropriate. Liaison between the agencies should take place to ensure that the child's needs are addressed. As soon as possible after an allegation has been received, the accused member of staff should be advised to contact their union or professional association.

#### 4.4 Whistleblowing

All staff and volunteers should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues.

#### 4.5 Safeguarding training

All staff and volunteers coming in to contact with children need to have an awareness of safeguarding.

### SECTION 5: Declaration

Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children and vulnerable adults by protecting them from physical, sexual, emotional harm and neglect.

All members of Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council should read the Safeguarding Policy. Having read the policy they should be proactive in providing a safe environment for children and vulnerable people who are involved in Parish Council activities.

#### Safeguarding contact details

If you witness abuse or neglect it is your duty to report it as soon as possible using the contact details below. In an emergency dial 999.

Somerset County Council Children's Social Care on 0300 123 2224